

Engagement Toolkit: Techniques

Technique	SHA Level of engagement					Description
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Co-Lead	
Techniques to collect and compile information						
Comment Forms		■				Mail-in-forms that gather information on public comments, feedback and preferences.
Resident Feedback Register	■	■				A randomly selected database of residents used to collect feedback about an organization and its services or projects.
Public meeting/Town Hall	■	■				A large group meeting that is open to the public. After a presentation, people ask questions and provide feedback and comments.
Open House	■	■				An opportunity for the public to tour a facility at their own pace. Information stations are set up at various locations to provide resources as people make their way around the venue.
Symposia	■	■				A meeting or conference where a particular topic is discussed involving multiple speakers.
Surveys		■				Standardized questionnaires that may sample a population to gather specific information or collect data. This data may be used for statistical validation.



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Interviews		■				One-on-one conversations with stakeholders that gather information for developing or refining public involvement.
Focus Groups		■				A forum that allows a message to be tested from a randomly selected group of participants that are members of the target audience. They may also gather feedback on planning decisions.
Tours & Field Trips		■	■	■		These may be guided or self-guided and involve key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group member, etc. They allow for demonstrations, observations and the opportunity to ask questions and develop rapport.
Online Engagement Tools		■	■	■		Web based tools that engage stakeholders in discussions where they may provide their feedback and opinions.
Social Media	■	■	■	■		Mobile and web-based technologies that provide interactive forums where users can create, share and comment on various topics and agendas.
Techniques to bring people together						
Revolving Conversation		■	■	■		Leaderless meetings that stimulate active participation.
Card Storming		■	■	■		A multi-step, team facilitation method for problem solving and consensus building. Participants put their ideas on cards simultaneously and small groups gather to discuss. A consensus is

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						reached within the smaller groups and information is passed forward to the larger group.
Nominal Group technique		■	■	■		A structured method for group brainstorming that encourages contributions from everyone. It encourages quick agreement on the relative importance of issues, problems and solutions. Participants write down their ideas, select the one they feel is best and then present them to the group. The group then discusses and prioritizes the ideas together.
Study Circles		■	■	■		Numerous small groups of people gather for highly participatory events focused on making a difference in their communities.
Deliberative Forum		■	■	■		A systematic dialogue on a difficult topic where there is uncertainty about solutions and a high likelihood of polarizing people. People come together as a group to make choices where the goal is to deliberate and find the common ground for action.
Advisory Groups		■	■	■		A group of representative stakeholders that gather to provide input into the planning process or actions of a project. Members may include the public, members from the project team and experts. Meetings may be ongoing.
Charrettes			■	■		Intensive planning sessions where participants from various stakeholder perspectives design project features, attempt to resolve conflict and map solutions.
Focused Conversations			■	■		A structured approach that investigates a challenging issue. Questions are organized around four stages: 1. Objective (review



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						facts). 2. Reflective (review emotional response). 3. Interpretive (review meaning). 4. Decision (consider future action).
Future Search Conference			■	■	■	A planning meeting that focuses on the future of an organization/group. It is task focused and brings relevant stakeholders, including the public, into the same conversation. Discussions may occur over three days where stories are shared to discover common ground and make concrete action plans.
Focused Conversations			■	■		A structured approach that investigates a challenging issue. Questions are organized around four stages: 1. Objective (review facts). 2. Reflective (review emotional response). 3. Interpretive (review meaning). 4. Decision (consider future action).
World Cafe			■	■	■	A meeting that features a series of simultaneous conversations that respond to prepared questions. Participants change tables throughout the event and identify the common ground they find in response to each question.
Open Space Meeting			■	■		Participants speak to various topics and others participate according to what interests them.
Appreciative Inquiry				■		A systematic process that seeks to engage stakeholders in change that is self-determined. A strength-based approach that asks questions in order to imagine what could be. Instead of asking what is wrong, questions focus on what works and what people care about.

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Citizen Jury				■	■	Small groups of people from the public gather to learn about an issue, cross-examine witnesses, and make a recommendation.

Source: IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox: https://icma.org/sites/default/files/305431_IAP2%20Public%20Participation%20Toolbox.pdf