

## AGENCY RECEIVES INFORMATION FROM CITIZENS

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	PURPOSE	PROMOTE AWARENESS OF PARTIES AFFECTED BY PROJECT/ISSUE	AGENCY LEARNS HOW AFFECTED PARTIES VIEW PROJECT/ISSUE	IDENTIFY PROBLEMS	GENERATE SOLUTIONS	ARTICULATE & CLARIFY MAIN IDEAS
<b>Interactive Public Meeting</b>	The agency conducts a presentation to educate the public on an issue, often using a.v. aides such as slide shows or overhead projectors, then encourages comments and questions.	The method can reach a large number of people and functions well when a wide range of interest groups are involved. Can be used if the issue is confined to a specific geographic area. If the issue of concern is spread throughout a large geographic area, the meetings should be repeated in several locations.	Agency has less control in a large meeting than in a small meeting. Participants may use this gathering as an opportunity to attack the agency or present their own agenda.	To reach a large group with information on a certain topic and to provide for questions, answers, and discussion.	Yes, this format provides an opportunity to find out how parties are affected by an issue. However, the agency should be sure to profile the issue before the meeting to determine who will be attending and what questions will be asked, as well as what information will be needed to respond to requests by the public.	Yes.	Yes.	This is not the best technique to use to generate solutions, although some suggestions may be offered by members of the public.	Yes.
<b>Availability/Drop In Session</b>	Agency member representing a specific aspect of the issue is present for 1/2 day or 1 day per week in a meeting room located in a neutral area, such as a library, in the community affected by the project. The representative answers questions from the public regarding his/her specific area of the project.	An opportunity for agency officials to discuss their role in a project in an informal atmosphere on a one-to-one basis with the public.	If not widely advertised, attendance may be low. If issues is controversial and no previous public participation or profiling of the issue have been conducted, it is possible that the participants may be hostile to agency representatives.	To respond to concerns of individuals in an informal atmosphere.	Yes, although some of this information should be researched prior to the session in order for agency to prepare and be able to respond to the public's request for information.	Yes, participants can be expected to discuss their concerns with agency representatives.	Some citizens may bring problems to the attention of agency representatives.	Although citizens may offer some solutions, this is not the best technique to use to obtain this information.	Yes.

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<b>Samoan Circle</b>	Option 1: Room is set up with a small inside circle of 5-6 chairs surrounded by an outside circle of chairs to accommodate all participants. Participants may only speak if they are seated in the inside circle. After speaking they return to the outside seats. The meeting is conducted with the premise that all participants are allowed to speak, although each must wait for a chair to become available. The inside circle participants are responsible for moderating the discussion. Option 2: A meeting facilitator sits in the inside circle to encourage and moderate discussion and ensure relevance of comments.	Option 1: The meeting is run by participants and may also be viewed as being "owned" by them. Option 2: Use of facilitator helps keep the discussions on track. With either option, it is a good method to use with a large number of participants and still maintain a fair level of interaction.	Option 1: Agency does not control the session. In either option, participants may not feel comfortable using this procedure, which may limit the results.	Agency can obtain views of participants on the issue. Techniques can also be used in developing consensus.	Yes, this is a good technique to use to get an idea of how parties are affected by a project.	Yes, this is a strong technique to use for this purpose.	Yes.	Perhaps some solutions may be offered by the public if the agency makes it known that this information is requested.	This technique is not recommended for this purpose.
<b>Advisory Model/ Science Court</b>	Scientists discuss their views on a subject before an impartial judge. The technique provides expert testimony by qualified individuals in the presence of policy makers.	Comments on the issue are from experts.	Limited amount of participants. Social issues require some mechanism to weigh concerns and integrate into decision making.	To provide expert testimony by qualified individuals to policy makers. The technique is expected to have enough authority to provide a basis for policy decisions.	This technique is not recommended.	This technique is not recommended.	Yes.	Possibly.	Yes.



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<b>Focus Group</b>	Meeting of approximately 10 participants from various backgrounds to discuss an issue. Open ended discussions led by a facilitator who encourages each participant to express their views and identify their areas of concern.	Gathers information on the views of the community. Obtains an idea of community's response to an issue. Helps establish early contact with a community. Can help agency prepare for a public hearing and increase public's trust in agency and agency credibility.	May be possible to unintentionally omit a group from participating in the process. Agency would have to acknowledge or correct this omission or a problem could develop. If agency does not respond to questions and concerns posed by the group, the level of participant outrage could increase.	Identifies stakeholders' concerns, lists the questions people will expect to have answered and then recommends how the agency should respond.	Yes.	Yes, this technique will provide a very good opportunity to enable the agency to learn how parties view the issue.	Yes, this is a strong technique for this purpose.	Possibly.	Yes.
<b>Interactive Public Hearing</b>	A large meeting, often required by law to accept public testimony regarding a permit, proposal or issue. Contains three parts: 1. overview presentation; 2. question and answer session; and 3. presentation of testimony. Incorporates public and department interaction in an effort to inform, and educate the public so they can provide pertinent testimony.	This format allows the agency an opportunity to present the issue, explain the agency process, correct misrepresentation of facts, respond to public questions and provide information that might not otherwise be available to the public.	Problems experienced in the traditional public hearing may still occur. Information may be presented in technical form which is unfamiliar to the lay person. Testimony presented by the public is often received too late in decision making process to be useful. The hearing could still be used as a vehicle for publicity stunts by activist groups.	Department receives from and presents information to public. Opportunity for dialogue exists.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. If the citizens have been educated about the issue, this format will provide the opportunity for them to talk about problems involved in a project or issue.	Some solutions may be offered, but this format may not be the most effective method.	Yes.

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<b>Nominal Group Process</b>	The technique is used to profile an issue. After an explanation of the process is presented, the group is divided into groups of approximately 6 people with one leader who acts as a recorder/facilitator. Brainstorming is conducted to generate ideas regarding the issue. After all ideas are offered, a discussion is conducted about the pros and cons of each idea. Favorite ideas are highlighted and ranked according to preference. Each idea receives a group score based on the tallied individual scores.	Gives an idea of the participants' views on the issue. Brings people with opposite opinions together to generate ideas and possible solutions to problems.	The information produced may not be in line with agency priorities. It may frustrate the participants if the ideas generated are not used by the agency.	Department can obtain an idea of the issues that the participants consider to be important.	Yes, this is a good technique to use to learn about groups affected by an issue.	Yes, this is a very good technique to use to obtain information on how affected parties see the issues.	Yes, this technique can assist in identifying problems related to issues.	Yes, this technique is recommended for this purpose.	Yes, this is a very good technique to use for ranking priorities and clarifying participants' ideas.
<b>Interactive Briefing</b>	A method used to encourage discussion between the agency and other groups involved in an issue. The format can consist of the following: 1. Overview of program and the process that was followed; 2. Question and answer session; and 3. Round table discussions in small groups with each table discussing a part of the issue. The briefing should be recorded so information will be available for future use.	It is a process that allows the citizens to obtain agency information (first hand) and to ask questions regarding this information in an informal atmosphere.	Reaches a limited amount of people. The format should be used in conjunction with other methods of contacting the public.	Interactive briefings are intended to provide the agency with an opportunity to answer questions regarding a proposed action. Assist participants in determining how to track issues and prepare comments.	Technique should not be the only opportunity for agency to discuss issues with the public.	Possibly, but should not be the only agency initiative for learning about stakeholders' views about the issues.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Yes. This technique is recommended for this purpose.



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Open House/ Information Exchange	An informal public meeting in which all groups (including the opposition) involved in the issue participate. Consists of overview of the issue. Tables are set up in meeting rooms; each room staffed by an agency representative responsible for answering questions from the public on a specific topic.	Allows for one-on-one interaction with the public. The session can help to reduce public outrage and posturing. It enables the agency to develop personal contacts as well as correct any misinformation.	Requires a lot of staff prep time for setting up, gathering information and scheduling.	Provides opportunity for all parties to share information. Agency can obtain some sense about the views of various groups affected.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Possibly, but this is not the best technique for this purpose.	Yes.

## SUMMARIZING

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<b>Interactive Public Meeting</b>	The agency conducts a presentation to educate the public on an issue, often using a.v. aides such as slide shows or overhead projectors, then encourages comments and questions.	The method can reach a large number of people and functions well when a wide range of interest groups are involved. Can be used if the issue is confined to a specific geographic area. If the issue of concern is spread throughout a geographic area, the meetings should be repeated in several locations.	Agency has less control in a large meeting than in a small meeting. Participants may use this gathering as an opportunity to attack the agency or present their own agenda.	To reach a large group with information on a certain topic and to provide for questions, answers, and discussion.	Yes, this format provides an opportunity to find out how parties are affected by an issue. However, the agency should be sure to profile the issue before the meeting to determine who will be attending and what questions will be asked, as well as what information will be needed to respond to requests by the public.	Yes, this technique will provide the opportunity for the above purpose.	Yes.	This is not the best technique to use to generate solutions, although some suggestions may be offered by members of the public.	Yes.
<b>Interactive Public Hearing</b>	A large meeting, often required by law to accept public testimony regarding a permit, proposal or issue. Consists of three parts: 1. overview presentation; 2. question and answer session; and 3. presentation of testimony. Incorporates public and department interaction in an effort to inform and educate the public so they can provide useful testimony.	This format allows the agency an opportunity to present the issue, explain agency process, correct any misrepresentation of facts, respond to public questions and provide information that might not otherwise be available to the public.	Problems experienced in the traditional public hearing may still occur. Information may be presented in technical form which is unfamiliar to the lay person. Testimony presented by public is often received too late in the decision making process to be useful. The hearing could still be used as a vehicle for publicity stunts by activist groups.	Agency receives from and presents information to the public. Opportunity for dialogue exists.	Yes. (see above)	Yes.	Yes, if the citizens have been educated about the issue, this format will provide the opportunity for them to talk about problems involved in a project or issue.	Some solutions may be offered, but this format may not be the most effective method.	Yes.



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<b>Briefing</b>	Session with key officials, interest groups or affected public to announce a plan, event, or results of a study before the public announcement. Conducted by agency in the community where the situation is occurring. Usually held in small rooms in a neutral location (ex. library). Begins with a prepared statement, followed by a brief explanation of the decision making process, what will be the next steps and closes with questions and answers.	Provides opportunity for informal discussion with agency staff on status of the issue. Stakeholders are able to learn first hand about the situation. Helps clear misrepresentation of facts. Briefings provide a way to measure public sentiment.	It is possible that an interested party may be unintentionally omitted from the briefing.	Briefings are held to inform stakeholders of the status of the project or a situation before the public announcement is made. The technique can be used to give periodic updates on the status of plans, activities, test results, etc. It also helps to build trust and credibility resulting from the attempts to conduct early and continual contact.	This technique should not be the only opportunity for the public to discuss the issue with the agency.	This technique should be used in conjunction with other techniques to learn how individuals and groups view the issue.	Possibly, but other techniques may be more appropriate.	Other techniques may be more appropriate for this purpose.	Yes, this technique is recommended for this purpose.



# CONSENSUS

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Small Group Meeting	Agency members gather to meet with approximately 5-10 individuals or representatives from interest groups. Meeting may take place in participants' homes or in small meeting areas often located in libraries or schools.	Participants offer information to the agency regarding a project to incorporate in the planning/development of a project. Technique works well when the issue is important to the groups.	Only a small number of people are involved. Small group meetings are resource intensive. Some groups may be upset if they were not invited to the meeting. Every attempt should be made to include representatives from several types of groups.	This technique is used to assist in promoting the sharing of ideas between agency representatives and concerned citizens to discuss issues, ask questions, and give updates on projects or studies.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Possibly.	Yes.
Conference	A meeting in which technical experts of varying opinion discuss an issue. Presentations are made by speakers or participants.	Conferences can be used to obtain information from experts. The format has the potential to reach a large audience. It is an effective method to educate the public.	Format is time consuming to plan and expensive to conduct. Attendance could be poor if the topic is not timely or of interest to the public or the session is not widely advertised.	To present information from different viewpoints in a nonhostile, educational atmosphere, where questions can be asked (usually to experts not affiliated with the agency).	This is not the best method to use.	A different technique should be used to solicit public views on an issue.	Yes.	Yes. Brainstorming sessions could be conducted.	Yes.
Workshop	A small working meeting attended by approximately 12-15 citizens. The meeting can be in the form of small informal discussions or training sessions. This format can be used to discuss the details of an issue, complete a task or develop a project.	Workshops are considered the best format for small group meetings. They provide the opportunity to educate participants in an informal setting. This technique is versatile, works well when there is a high level of interest in a subject, a small number of interested groups are involved or a wide range of groups are interested. This technique also works well when the issue's boundary is within a specific geographic area.	Workshops involve only a small number of individuals. If additional people need to be reached, additional resources would be needed to expand the workshops, either by increasing the size or the number of sessions.	A workshop provides the opportunity for citizens to learn and discuss the details of complex issues or the work on a specific assignment. The technique also works well for use in conflict resolution/consensus building.	Possibly, but other methods are recommended for this purpose.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.



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<b>Samoa Circle</b>	Option 1: Room is set up with a small inside circle of 5-6 seats surrounded by an outside circle of enough chairs to accommodate all participants. Participants may only speak if they are seated in the inside circle. After speaking they return to outside seats. The meeting is conducted with the premise that all participants are allowed to speak, although each must wait for a chair to become available. The inside circle participants are responsible for moderating the discussion. Option 2: A meeting facilitator sits on the inside circle to encourage and moderate discussion and ensure relevance of comments.	Option 1: The meeting is run by participants and may also be viewed as being "owned" by them. Option 2: Use of facilitator helps to keep the discussions on track. With either option, it is a good method to use with a large number of participants and still maintain a fair level of interaction.	Option 1: Agency does not control the session. In either option, participants may not feel comfortable using this procedure, which may limit the results.	Agency can obtain views of participants on the issue. Technique can also be used in developing consensus.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Possibly.	Not the best method to use.
<b>Charrette</b>	This is an intensive and interactive meeting conducted to develop ideas for planning or problem solving. Ideas are generated in brainstorming sessions in an atmosphere that encourages participation.	Participants can gain a better understanding of views of other participants. It may also decrease the time needed to make a decision on a project because all of the decision makers are in one location and the pertinent information needed to make the decision is available.	Technique is time consuming, requires detailed preparation, and may be expensive. The Charrette is effective only when the major decision makers are committed to solving the problem and the agency is willing to accept the group's decision.	This technique brings together various individuals needed to develop the plan or solution to a problem.	This technique is not the best method to use for this purpose. Information about parties affected by the issue should be provided to the participants prior to or during the Charrette.	Yes, this technique may be used to obtain some of this information, although other techniques may be more appropriate.	Yes.	Yes, this is strongly recommended for this purpose.	Yes.



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Interactive Public Meeting	The agency conducts a presentation to educate the public on an issue often using a.v. aides such as slide shows or overhead projectors, then encourages comments and questions.	The method can reach a large number of people. Functions well when a wide range of interest groups are involved. Can be used if the issue is confined to a specific geographic area. If the issue of concern is spread throughout a geographic area, the meetings should be repeated in several locations.	Agency has less control in a large meeting than in a small meeting. Participants may use this gathering as an opportunity to attack the agency or present their own agenda.	To reach a large group with information on a certain topic and to provide the opportunity for questions, answers and discussions.	Yes, this format provides an opportunity to find out how parties are affected by an issue. However, the agency should conduct phone calls before the meeting to determine who will be attending, what questions will be asked, as well as what information the agency will need to provide for the public.	Yes, this will provide the opportunity for the agency to learn how affected parties view the issue.	Yes, members of the public will bring problems to the attention of the agency.	This is not the best technique to generate solutions, although some suggestions may be offered by members of the public.	Yes.
Briefing	Sessions are conducted with key officials, interest groups, or affected public to announce a plan, event, results of a study before the public announcement. Conducted by agency in the community where the situation is occurring. Usually held in small rooms in a neutral location (ex. library). Begins with a prepared statement, followed by a brief explanation of the decision making process along with the next steps to be taken, and closes with questions and answers.	Provides opportunity for informal discussion with agency staff on status of issue. Stakeholders are able to learn first hand about the details of the situation. Helps clear any misrepresentation of facts. Technique may provide a measurement of public sentiment regarding the issue.	It is possible that an interested group may be unintentionally omitted from the briefing, resulting in the group claiming that the agency is unfair and secretive.	Briefings are held to inform stakeholders of the status of a project or a situation before the public announcement is made. The technique can be used to give periodic updates on the status of plans, activities, test results, etc. It also helps to build trust and credibility because of the attempt to conduct early and continual contact.	This technique should not be the only opportunity for the public to discuss the issue with the agency.	This technique should be used in conjunction with other techniques to learn how individuals and groups view the issue.	Possibly, but other techniques may be more appropriate.	Other techniques may be more appropriate for this purpose.	Yes, this technique is recommended for this purpose.



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Panel	This technique can have different forms: Panel members may represent varying points of view on an issue and discuss this among themselves and/or the audience; or members may represent different sections of an agency involved in the project. The panel members introduce themselves and describe the part of the issue in which they are involved. Then the discussion, including questions and answers begins.	An opportunity for expert discussion is provided for the agency and the public.	The panel format does not permit one-to-one interaction. The public may get the (wrong) impression that the experts are speaking on behalf of the agency. The level of panel interaction could depend upon the mix of personalities on the panel. If the subject is not of interest to the public, the attendance may be low.	The panel enables various points of view to be presented to the public. It also provides the opportunity for the public to question the agency and others involved with the issue.	This technique is not recommended solely for this purpose. However, depending upon the topics, some of this information may be discussed during the panel presentation or the question and answer session.	Although some of the views may be discussed during the session, other techniques should be used to accomplish this purpose.	Yes.	Yes.	This technique is not recommended for this purpose.
Interactive Briefing	A method used to encourage discussion between the agency and other groups involved in an issue. The format can consist of the following: 1. Overview of the program and the process that was followed; 2. Question and answer session; and 3. Small group round table discussions on a particular segment of the issue. The briefing should be recorded so the discussions could be available for future use.	The technique is a dynamic approach to presenting facts and information to citizens. It is a process that allows the citizens to ask questions in an informal atmosphere.	Reaches a limited amount of people. The format should be used in conjunction with additional methods of contacting the public.	Interactive briefings are intended to provide the agency with an opportunity to answer questions regarding a proposed action. The technique assists participants with determining how to track issues and prepare comments.	Technique should not be the only opportunity for the agency to discuss issues with the public.	Possibly, but agency should use additional efforts to learn how parties view the issue.	Possibly, but other techniques are recommended for this purpose.	Possibly, but other methods are recommended for this purpose.	Yes, this technique is recommended for this purpose.



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<b>Interactive Public Hearing</b>	A large meeting, often required by law, to accept public testimony regarding a permit, proposal or issue. Consists of three parts: 1. Overview presentation; 2. Question and answer session; and 3. Presentation of testimony. Incorporates public and department interaction and educate the public so they can provide pertinent testimony.	This format allows the agency the opportunity to present the issue, explain agency process, correct any misrepresentation of facts, respond to public questions and provide information that might not otherwise be available to the public.	Problems experienced in the traditional public hearing may still occur. Information may be presented in technical form unfamiliar to the lay person. Testimony presented by public is often received too late in the decision making process to be useful. The hearing could still be used as a vehicle for publicity stunts by activist groups.	Helps to reduce the hostility and polarization of issues often occurring in traditional hearings. Provides opportunity for formal comment and testimony on proposed actions. Also provides an opportunity for brief overview with questions/answers to educate and inform. Fulfills legal requirements for public testimony and establishes permanent record of hearing procedures.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, if citizens are educated about the issue this format will provide the opportunity for them to present their concerns regarding the issue or project.	Some solutions may be offered, but this may not be the most effective method.	Yes.
<b>Forum</b>	This method is a meeting conducted to present significant information about an issue or to discuss a project and be exposed to various points of view. It can be moderated by a neutral party.	Provides the opportunity for all groups involved to present their views.	Participants may mistake the purpose of the forum as a debate or decision-making session.	For informational purposes. It allows interest groups to exchange their views.	Yes, this is a good technique to use for this purpose.	This technique is recommended for learning how affected groups view the issue.	This technique can be used for this purpose.	Possibly, but other techniques are recommended for this purpose.	Yes, this technique is recommended for articulating and clarifying ideas.
<b>Conference</b>	A meeting in which technical experts of varying opinion discuss an issue. Presentations are made by speakers and participants.	Conferences can be used to obtain information from experts. The format is an educational forum which has the potential to reach a large audience. It is an effective means to educate the public.	Time consuming to plan and expensive to conduct. Attendance could be poor if the topic is not timely or of interest to the public or if the session is not widely advertised.	To present information from different view points in a nonhostile, educational atmosphere, where questions can be asked (usually to experts not affiliated with the agency). This technique can be conducted to present information or to reach consensus.	This method is not recommended to use to determine the groups affected by an issue.	A different technique should be used to solicit public views on an issue.	Yes, this technique can be used to identify problems.	Yes, brainstorming session could be conducted to achieve this goal.	Yes, this technique is highly recommended for this purpose.



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<b>Open House/ Information Exchange</b>	An informal public meeting in which all groups (including the opposition) involved in the issue participate. Consists of overview of the issue. Tables are set up in meeting room; each table is staffed by an agency representative responsible for answering questions from the public on a specific topic. Representatives from the opposing view also participate.	Allows for one-on-one interaction with the public. The session can help reduce public outrage and posturing. It enables the agency to develop personal contacts as well as correct misinformation.	Requires a lot of staff prep time for setting up, gathering information and scheduling personnel.	Provides opportunity for all parties to share information. Creates a more informed public so that testimony presented at a public hearing is useful to the agency decision making. The agency can obtain some sense about the views of various groups affected.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Possibly, but other techniques are recommended for this purpose.	Yes.
<b>Availability/ Drop-In Session</b>	Agency member representing a specific aspect of the issue is present for 1/2 or 1 day per week in a meeting room located in a "neutral" area, such as a library, in the community affected by the project. The representative answers questions from the public regarding his/her specific area of the project.	Provides an opportunity to discuss the issue or project in an informal atmosphere on a one-to-one basis with the public.	If not widely advertised, attendance may be low. If issue is controversial and no previous public participation or profiling of the issue have been conducted, it is possible the participants may be hostile to agency representatives.	Respond to concerns of community individuals on a one-to-one basis in an informal atmosphere.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, people affected by the issue will discuss their concerns with the representatives of the department.	Although solutions may be offered by members of the public, other techniques are suggested to reach this goal.	Yes.

# DIALOGUE

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	PURPOSE	PROMOTE AWARENESS OF PARTIES AFFECTED BY PROJECT/ISSUE	AGENCY LEARNS HOW AFFECTED PARTIES VIEW PROJECT/ISSUE	IDENTIFY PROBLEMS	GENERATE SOLUTIONS	ARTICULATE & CLARIFY MAIN IDEAS
Interactive Public Meeting	The agency conducts a presentation to educate the public on an issue often using a.v. aides such as slide shows or overhead projectors, then encourages comments and questions.	The method can reach a large number of people and functions well when a wide range of interest groups are involved. Can be used if the issue is confined to a specific geographic area. If the issue of concern is spread throughout a geographic area, the meetings should be repeated in several locations.	Agency has less control in a large meeting than in a small meeting. Participants may use this gathering as an opportunity to attack the agency or present their own agenda.	To reach a large group with information on a certain topic and to provide the opportunity for questions, answers and discussions.	Yes. However, the agency should be sure to profile the issue before the meeting to determine who may be attending and what questions may be asked, as well as what information may be requested by the public.	Yes.	Yes. There is a strong possibility that the public will inform the agency of any problems related (and unrelated) to the issue.	This is not the best technique to use to generate solutions, although some suggestions may be offered by the public.	Yes.
Briefing	Session with key officials, interest groups or affected public to announce a plan, event, or results of a study before the public announcement. Conducted by agency in the community where the situation is occurring. Usually held in small rooms in a neutral location (ex. library). Begins with a prepared statement, followed by a brief explanation of the decision making process, what will be the next steps and closes with questions and answers.	Provides opportunity for informal discussion with agency staff on status of issue. Stakeholders are able to learn first hand about the situation. Helps clear any misrepresentation of facts. Briefings provide a way to measure public sentiment.	It is possible that an interested party may be unintentionally omitted from the briefing. Every effort should be made to invite a representative from all of the interest groups affected by the issue.	Conducted to inform stakeholder of the status of a project or a situation prior to the broader public announcement. Can also be used to provide periodic updates on the status of plans, activities, test results, etc. Serve as a way to maintain periodic contact with key individuals as events take place. Briefings help to build trust and credibility.	Technique should not be the only opportunity for agency to discuss issues with the public.	Possibly, but should not be the only agency initiative for learning about views of the stakeholders.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Yes.



## DIALOGUE

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<b>Nominal Group Process</b>	This technique is used to profile an issue. After an explanation of the process is presented, the group is divided into groups of approximately 6 people with one leader who acts as a recorder/facilitator. Brainstorming is conducted to generate ideas regarding the issue. After all the ideas are offered, a discussion is conducted about the pros and cons of each idea. Favorite ideas are highlighted and ranked according to preference. Each idea receives a group score based on the tallied individual scores.	Gives an idea of the participants' views on the issue. Brings together people with opposite opinions to generate ideas and possible solutions to problems.	The information produced may not be in line with agency priorities. It may frustrate the participants if the ideas generated are not used by the agency.	Agency can obtain an idea of the issues that the participants consider to be important.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	This technique can be used to determine stakeholder priorities.
<b>Workshop</b>	A small working meeting attended by approximately 12-15 citizens. The meeting can be in the form of a small informal discussion or a training session. This format can be used to discuss details of an issue, complete a task or develop a project.	Workshops are considered the best format for small group meetings. They provide the opportunity to educate participants in an informal setting. This technique is versatile, works well when there is a high level of interest in a subject, a small number of interested groups, or a wide range of interested groups. Technique also works well when the issue's boundary lies within a specific geographic area.	Workshops involve only a small number of individuals. If additional people need to be reached, additional resources would be needed to expand the workshops, either by increasing the size or the number of sessions.	A workshop provides the opportunity for citizens to learn and discuss the details of complex issues or to work on a specific assignment. The technique also works well for use in conflict resolution/consensus building.	Possible.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

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Charrette	This is an intensive and interactive meeting conducted to develop ideas for planning and problem solving. Ideas are generated in brainstorming sessions conducted in an atmosphere that encourages participation by all individuals attending the session.	Participants can gain a better understanding of other participants' views. It may also decrease the time needed to make a decision in a project because all of the decision makers are in one location and the pertinent information needed to make a decision is available.	Technique is time consuming, requires detailed preparation, and may be expensive. The Charrette is effective only when the major decision makers are committed to solving the problem and the agency is willing to accept the group's decision.	This technique brings together various individuals needed to develop the plan or the solution to a problem.	This technique may be useful although other techniques may be more helpful.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Coffee Klatch	Information discussed with interested public about issue or community problem. Meeting is usually held in home of one of the residents in the town in which the problem occurs. Refreshments are served. Host/hostess explains reasons for the session and lets the agency representative provide an overview of issues and answers any questions.	Informal nature of session helps reduce outrage, speech making, etc. Agency representative can be viewed on a personal level.	Size of the audience is limited. Meeting is controlled by those attending, not by the agency.	This format enables the representative to present the agency's information and listen to citizen concerns in an informal, relaxed atmosphere. Helps to increase citizen trust and agency credibility by providing an agency contact for citizens and by establishing an informal dialogue with residents.	Yes.	Yes. The informality usually sets the atmosphere for a productive session.	Yes, citizens usually feel free to bring problems to the attention of the agency representative.	Possible.	Yes.



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<b>Interactive Public Hearing</b>	A large meeting, often required by law to accept public testimony regarding a permit, proposal or issue. Consists of three parts: 1. Overview presentation; 2. Question and answer session; and 3. Presentation of testimony. Incorporates public and department interaction in an effort to inform and educate the public so pertinent testimony may be provided.	This format allows the agency the opportunity to present the issue, explain agency process, correct misrepresentation of facts, respond to public questions and provide information that might not otherwise be available to the public.	Problems experienced in the traditional public hearing may still occur. Information may be presented in technical form which is unfamiliar to the lay person. Testimony presented by public is often received too late in the decision making process to be useful. The hearing could still be used as a vehicle for publicity stunts by activist groups.	Department receives from and presents information to public. Opportunity for dialogue exists.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, providing citizens have been educated about the issue.	Some solutions may be offered, but this format may not be the most effective method.	Yes.
<b>Open House/ Information Exchange</b>	An informal public meeting in which all groups (including the opposition) involved in the issue participate. Consists of an overview of the issue. Tables are set up in a meeting room; each one staffed by an agency representative responsible for answering questions from the public on a specific topic.	Allows one-on-one interaction with the public. The session can help reduce public outrage and posturing. It enables the agency to develop personal contacts as well as correct any misinformation about the project.	Requires a lot of staff prep time to set up, gather information and schedule.	Provides an opportunity for all parties to share information. Department can obtain some sense of the views of the various groups affected.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Possibly, but this is not the best technique for this purpose.	Yes.

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Availability/ Drop-In Session	Agency member representing a specific aspect of the issue is present for 1/2 day or 1 day per week in a meeting room located in a "neutral" area, such as a library, in the community affected by the project. The representative answers questions from the public regarding his/her specific area of the project.	Provides an opportunity to discuss the issue or project in an informal atmosphere on one-to-one basis with individual members of the public.	If not widely advertised, attendance may be low. If issue is controversial and no previous public participation or profiling of the issue have been conducted, then it is possible that participants may be hostile to agency representatives.	To respond to concerns of individuals in an informal atmosphere.	Yes, although some of this information should be researched prior to the session in order for the agency to prepare for the session and be able to respond to the public's request for information.	Yes, participants can be expected to discuss their concerns with agency representatives.	Some citizens may bring problems to the attention of agency representatives.	Although citizens may offer some solutions, this is not the best technique to use to obtain this information.	Yes.
Panel	This technique can have different forms. Panel members may represent varying points of view on an issue and discuss this among themselves and/or the audience; or members may represent different sections of an agency involved in the project. The panel members introduce themselves and describe the part of the issue in which they are involved, then the discussion, including questions and answers, begins.	An opportunity for experts to discuss their views is conducted in the presence of the agency and the public.	The panel format does not permit one-to-one interaction. The public may get the (wrong) impression that the experts are speaking on behalf of the agency. The level of panel interaction could depend upon the mix of personalities on the panel. If the subject is not of interest to the public, attendance could be low.	The panel enables various points of view to be presented to the public. If also provides the opportunity for the public to question the agency and others involved in the issue.	This technique should not be the only technique conducted for this purpose. However, depending on the topics, some of this information may be covered during the panel presentation or the question and answer period.	Although some of the views may be discussed during the session, other techniques should be used to accomplish this purpose.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.



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<b>Interactive Briefing</b>	A method used to encourage discussion between the agency and other groups involved in an issue. The format can consist of the following: 1. Overview of program and the process that was followed; 2. Question and answer session; and 3. Round table discussions in small groups with each table discussing a segment of the issue. The briefing should be recorded so the discussions are available for future use.	It is a process that allows citizens to ask questions regarding the information presented to them. The informal setting provides an atmosphere which encourages discussion.	Reaches a limited amount of people. The format must be used in conjunction with additional methods of contacting the public.	Interactive briefings are intended to provide the agency with an opportunity to answer questions regarding a proposed action. Assist participants in determining how to track issues and prepare comments.	Technique should not be the only opportunity for agency to discuss issues with the public.	Possibly, but should not be the only agency initiative for learning about stakeholders' views about the issues.	Possibly.	Possibly.	Yes.
<b>Small Group Meeting</b>	Agency members gather to meet with approximately 5-10 individuals or representatives from interest groups. Meeting may take place in participants' homes or in small meeting areas often located in libraries or schools.	Participants offer information for the agency regarding a project to incorporate in the planning/development of a project. Technique works well when the issue is important to the groups.	Can reach only a small number of people. Small group meetings are resource intensive. Some groups may be upset if they are not invited to the meeting. Every attempt should be made to include representatives from several types of groups.	The technique is used to assist in promoting the sharing of ideas between agency representatives and concerned citizens to discuss issues, ask questions, and give updates on projects or studies. Can work well for use as a format for conflict resolution.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Possibly.	Yes.