

# Making Better Decisions Through Community Engagement



NACO Annual Conference  
Thursday, December 9, 2021

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Rural Prosperity Nebraska-Nebraska Extension



# Overview

- What is community engagement?
- Why is community engagement important?
- The community engagement spectrum
- Activity: Reflections on engagement in your county
- Call to action
- Questions

## What is engagement?

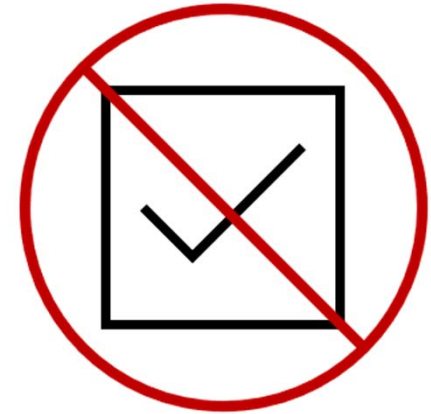
“Any **process** that involves the community in problem-solving or decision making and uses community input to make better **decisions.**”

*Beyond Public Meetings: Connecting Community Engagement with Decision-Making*



## What engagement is not?

Simply obtaining agreement on a predetermined outcome.



***It is about allowing better decisions to be made.***

*Beyond Public Meetings: Connecting Community Engagement with Decision-Making*

## Engagement in your county

What engagement techniques has your county government used to engage the community?

[go.unl.edu/NACO2021](https://go.unl.edu/NACO2021)



## Why community engagement?

### Community engagement

- facilitates understanding,
- creates more sustainable decisions,
- and identifies critical issues early.

*It acknowledges the human desire to have a say on those issues that affect us.*

# Engagement spectrum

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and solution.	To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision from development to solution.	Shared leadership of community-led projects with final decision-making at the community level.
Style	Here's what's happening.	Here are some options, what do you think?	Here's a problem, what ideas do you have?	Let's work together to solve this problem.	You care about this issue and are leading an initiative, how can we support you?



Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum and Tamarack Institute of Community Engagement Techniques

# Engagement spectrum

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Web sites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Tours</li> <li>• Infographics</li> <li>• Media Coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public Meetings</li> <li>• Door to Door</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberate polling</li> <li>• Community Meetings</li> <li>• Visioning</li> <li>• Digital Story Telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Advisory Committees</li> <li>• Consensus-building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> <li>• Working groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> <li>• Asset-based community Development Processes</li> </ul>



## Three considerations

1. Clarifying **the problem** to be solved or opportunity to be grasped.
1. Defining the **decision-maker** and clarifying this with participants.
1. Defining the **objectives** of the community engagement process.

*Trust is a critical objective.*

## Engagement in your county

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yURQ-PbXeyncOPkxE0oeMVwiR\\_xl2MEF1AJXA5h0pvM/edit#responses](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yURQ-PbXeyncOPkxE0oeMVwiR_xl2MEF1AJXA5h0pvM/edit#responses)

Let's learn—*reflect*



**1. Reflect** on a time when you have seen community engagement occur in your county.

*A. What worked well?*

*B. Who was involved?*

*C. Where did it fall on the engagement spectrum?*

*Take 3 minutes to reflect or make notes on your own.*

**N** EXTENSION

Let's learn—*share*



**2.** With a partner at your table, **share** the engagement experience in your county.

- A. Briefly describe the engagement.*
- B. What worked well?*
- C. Where did it fall on the engagement spectrum?*

*Take 2 minutes each to share.*

Let's learn—*share*



**3.** Quickly appoint a notetaker/reporter. Around the table, **share** the engagement experience in your county.

- A. Briefly describe the engagement.*
- B. What worked well?*
- C. Where did it fall on the engagement spectrum?*

*Take 12 minutes to share—  
be ready to share an example with the room.*

**N** EXTENSION

Let's learn—*report*



**4. Report**—Let's hear from counties of varying sizes and different categories on the engagement spectrum.

- A. Briefly describe the community engagement.*
- B. What worked well?*
- C. Where did it fall on the engagement spectrum?*

**N** EXTENSION

# 4 Ds of Appreciative Inquiry



1. Discover



2. Dream



3. Design



4. Deliver



## Call to action

What is an **outstanding decision** in your county where community engagement techniques could be applied?

What step will you take to draw community engagement into that decision?

Write it on your notecard.

**N** EXTENSION



*I will...*



## Takeaways



- For **community engagement** to occur, there must be a decision yet to be made.
- Community engagement allows **better decisions** to be made.
- Community engagement takes on increasing levels of community **impact**.

Questions?



**N** EXTENSION

# We are here to help!

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# Thank you!



in partnership with



IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Twyford, V., Waters, S., Hardy, M., & Dengate, J. (2006). Chapter 9: Foundation 3: Community Engagement is Goal-Driven. In *Beyond public meetings: Connecting Community Engagement with decision-making* (pp. 133) Vivien Twyford Communications.