DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Sharon Hausam, Ph.D., AICP
Tribal Planner, Pueblo of Laguna

Why Involve the Community?

1. Give information, educate
2. Get information, ideas, input, feedback
   + Meet regulatory requirements
   • To build working relationships
   • To create a project or program that has more support, and that can be effectively implemented
Who is “the Community”?

- “Stakeholders”
- Anyone with an interest in or knowledge about the project or program
- Anyone who has some authority related to the project or program

**Stakeholders might include:**

- Environment/natural resource programs
- Cultural resource leaders and programs
- Traditional leaders and organizations
- Constitutional governments
- Multi-tribal organizations
- Neighboring communities
- Regional planning organizations
- State agencies
- Federal agencies
- Environmental organizations
- Housing authorities/TDHE’s
- Neighborhood watch groups
- Utility companies
- Transportation agencies
- Transit providers
- Health care providers
- Public safety
- Groups of employees
- Businesses and business groups
- Schools
- Children and youth groups
- Elders and elder associations
- Women
- Traditional and progressive factions
- Religious groups

... and many others

**Important Considerations**

- What will affect people’s desire to participate?
  - Are they interested in the topic? How interested?
  - Are they aware of the program or project?
  - Will someone else participate on their behalf?
  - Do they think their input will truly be incorporated into the final product?
  - Do they have other, possibly better, options, for getting their point across?

- Is it possible for people to participate?
  - Time of meetings
  - Length of meetings
  - Location of meetings, availability of transportation
  - Daycare
Important Considerations

- Is the information in the meetings presented appropriately for the audience?
  - Native language
  - Use of scientific jargon
  - Type of presentation: text, graphic, numerical, audio, video, experiential

- Is the forum appropriate?
  - Are individual meetings, small groups, or large groups best?
  - Is it important to have input be anonymous? To have people working together?

- Are there major conflicts that are going to affect the process? What are the histories between the people that are involved?

Opportunities for Community Involvement

- Coordinating and Supporting
  - Steering committee, advisory committee, coordinating committee, core team
  - Local people as employees for community involvement process

- Providing Information
  - Public hearing
  - Open house
  - Displays – ongoing or at events
  - Brochures, articles, posters, radio/TV
  - Websites and social media: blogs, Facebook, Twitter
Opportunities for Community Involvement

- Getting information
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Technical committees
  - Working meetings
  - Field tours
  - Public meetings
  - Booths at events
  - Other groups’ meetings and events — listening (participant observation)
  - Open houses
  - Contests
  - Comment cards
  - Surveys — do a test run
  - Websites and social media: blogs, Facebook
  - E-mail
  - Phone hotline
  - Comment periods

Community Input Techniques

- Facilitated discussion — *with documentation*
  - Brainstorming
  - Action planning
    - Goals, strategies, actions
  - “SWOT” analysis for organizational planning
    - Strengths and weaknesses: internal to organization
    - Opportunities and threats: external to organization
Community Input Techniques

- Formal interview questions
- Photo journaling
- Storytelling
- Audio and video
- “Visioning”
- Diagramming/Concept mapping
- Mapping

Community Input Techniques

- Design workshop – “charrettes”
- “Sticky-dot” voting – approval and ranking
- Audience response systems (clicker voting)
- Other approaches to discussion
Resources for Community Involvement

- Existing Networks
  - Traditional structure
  - Government structure
  - Schools
  - Sports teams and leagues
  - Churches

- Meeting Notification
  - Newspapers, newsletters
  - Bulletin boards (in and on buildings)
  - Local radio, TV
  - Door to door
  - Mailings (utility bills, checks)
  - Social media – list serves, Facebook, Twitter

- Incentives
  - Program/project funds
  - Local organizations
  - Local businesses
  - Community foundations
  - Philanthropic organizations

Community Involvement Plan

- What are you trying to achieve through community involvement?
- Who are your stakeholders, and what are their interests in this project/program?
- What are some special considerations when getting participation from these stakeholders?
- How will you address these considerations when trying to get stakeholders involved?
Community Involvement Plan

- What opportunities will you use for stakeholder involvement?
- What techniques will you use?
- What resources will you use to implement this approach?