

Public Engagement: When to Use a Professional Facilitator

December 14, 2017 | 10:00am – 11:00am



Today's Agenda

1. **Welcome and Agenda Review**
2. **About ILG and CBI**
3. **Instant Polling: Understanding your Use of Professional Facilitators**
4. **Overview & Context**
 - a. Short Video
 - b. Criteria for Deciding when to use a Professional Mediator
5. **Tips for Working with Public Engagement Consultants**
6. **Questions + Answers**
7. **Resources and Upcoming Events**

SPEAKERS

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**Senior Mediator
Consensus Building Institute**

MODERATOR

Madeline Henry

**Program Coordinator, Public Engagement
Institute for Local Government**

How to ask a question during the webinar

- Please **type** your **questions** into **question box** any time during webinar
- Moderator will read your question during the question period during webinar



The Institute for Local Government

**ILG is the non-profit
research and education
affiliate of**



**California Special
Districts Association**

Districts Stronger Together

ILG's Mission



Promoting good government at the local level

Practical, impartial and easy-to-use materials

ILG's Program Areas



- Public Engagement
- Sustainable Communities
- Ethics
- Collaborations & Partnerships
- Local Government Basics

ILG's Public Engagement Program



Tipsheets



Guidebooks



Case Stories



Webinars



Coaching, Training, Technical Assistance

www.ca-ilg.org/engagement

ILG has **interpretation** headsets we loan to local governments (no charge except shipping)



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Consensus Building Institute

Not-for-profit founded in 1993 by leading practitioners and theory builders in negotiation and dispute resolution

10 senior mediators / facilitators working internationally

Decades of experience brokering agreements and building collaboration in complex, high-stakes environments (governance, land use, organizations, corporate community engagement)

Partnership, research, and teaching at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, MIT, and other leading institutions



Consensus Building Institute

Instant Polling

Q1. How often do you or your agency use professional facilitators?

- **Often (more than 1x / project a year)**
- **Frequently (once a year)**
- **Sometimes (every couple of years)**
- **We do not (0)**
- **I don't know**

Q2. Do you have any in-house professional facilitators?

- **Yes, more than 2**
- **Yes, 2**
- **Yes, 1**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

Q3. Do any of your staff have facilitation training?

- **Yes, at least 1 person has significant, quality training**
- **Yes, at least 1 person has some quality training**
- **Yes, but the training was lame**
- **No**
- **Not sure**

Q4. What is the most likely reason that you do not use a professional facilitator (pick 2)?

- I don't know who to hire**
- I don't have a budget**
- It's too expensive**
- I don't know how to sell it to my boss**
- I don't think I need it / not a service I find valuable**

2015 ILG Survey

Survey Reach

264 Respondents

42 of 58 counties represented

48% of respondents were elected or local government staff



69% are concerned that local governments do not have sufficient staff, knowledge or financial resources for public engagement and that residents are not adequately informed.



83% worry that it is always the same people who participate and they tend to be extremists.



Populations not typically involved in local public meetings (top responses):

- Renters
- Low-income individuals
- Immigrants
- Latinos/Hispanics

To view full results:
www.ca-ilg.org/PE2015Evaluation



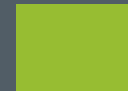
LOVE my Facilitator

- ✓ Keeps us focused
- ✓ Manages people and process
- ✓ Asks poignant questions
- ✓ Clarifies agreements
- ✓ Creates efficiencies
- ✓ Strategic: policy, politics, process





Facilitator! OH NO!



- ❖ **Doesn't "get it"**
- ❖ **Controlling & losing control**
- ❖ **In the way**
- ❖ **Talks too much**
- ❖ **Too much process**
- ❖ **Too many meetings**



Why are some facilitators better than others

- Actively manage the process
- Engage deeply in the substance
- Think strategically about negotiation
- Conduct policy analysis and synthesis
- Strengthen facilitative leadership and organizational capacity



Source: *Facilitation...or Something More?* Pat Field, CBI Reports, 2010



When to work with a facilitator



- ✓ Preserving relationships is critical
- ✓ Need to get a lot done
- ✓ Divisive, complicated issue
- ✓ Divergent perspectives, group is hard to manage
- ✓ Build trust

Tips for Working Successfully with Facilitators and Public Engagement Consultants

Or what to keep in mind when leading and facilitating at your city, county or special district

***See ILG's tip sheet on this topic**



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Do Your Homework

Clarify the **purpose(s)**
and desired **outcomes**
of your effort

Be **clear** about the
important participant
groups / categories for
the planned
engagement **activity**

ILG's TIERS "Community Landscape" Template can help you Identify Groups

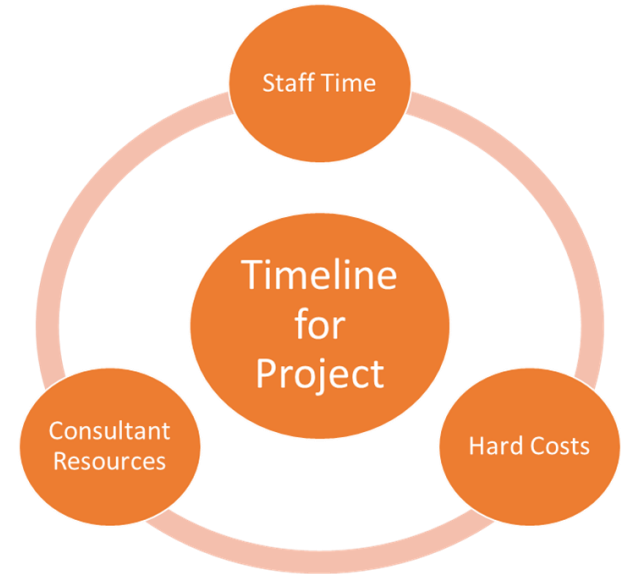
Visit: ca-ilg.org/TIERS

Do Your Homework: Resources

Be **realistic about the resources** your agency will have to commit to the engagement effort

Considerations

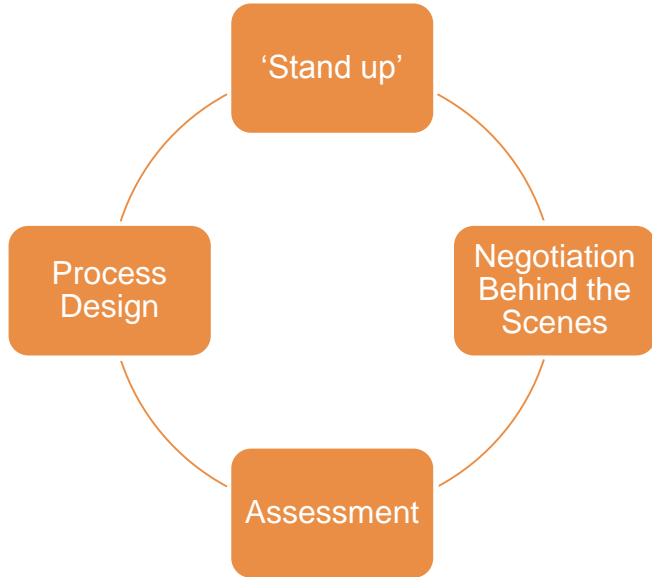
- Internal **staff time**: which departments and individuals
- **External consultants**: in-person assistance, digital engagement
- **Hard costs**: printing, food, supplies / posters, social media or other paid media, etc.



Consultants: Experience to Consider

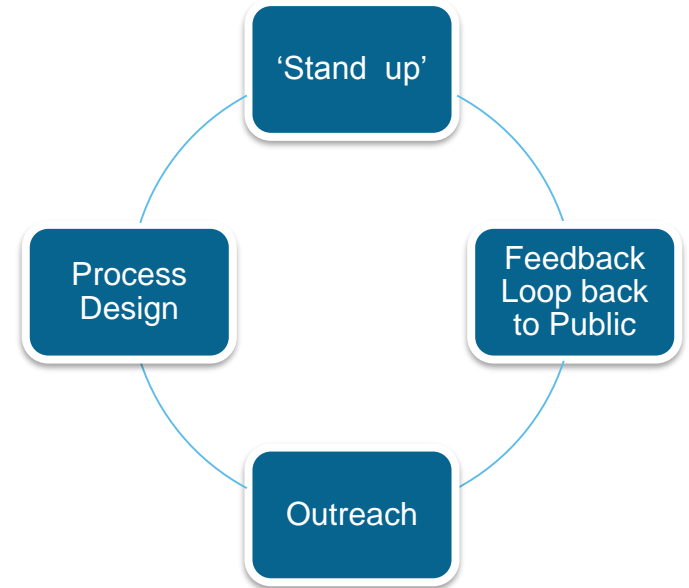
Stakeholder Process

(same folks over a set period of time)



Public Engagement Process

(residents likely with single engagement)



Sometimes
you are
doing both

Interviewing consultants. Ideas for questions to ask related to Process Design...

What types of related experience do you have (stakeholders or topic)

Please name various process techniques you use

Where have you received training or education

How do you keep up on the latest trends in the field

How do you bring more junior practitioners up?

Ideas for understanding in-person 'stand up' facilitation experience

- Please give examples of very **tough facilitation situations** you have encountered
- How do you handle **strong emotions**?
- What's your strategy when the **discussion goes off topic**?

What about when the person pushing off topic is a **VIP** type?
- What do you do when folks are **not negotiating or engaging in good faith**?

Ideas for understanding assessment experience

- What's **critical** for a successful stakeholder assessment?
- How do you decide on **assessment questions**?
- Have you had a situation where the **assessment did not provide** what you needed?
- How do you go about **analyzing and summarizing data gathered**?
- How do you think about reporting out **issues related to power and/or equity**?

Negotiation behind the Scenes

- What's your practice working **“behind the scenes”**?
- What ground rules / working agreements do you establish?

Feedback Loop to Public

- How do you **engage the broader public** in your facilitation work?
- What **“options”** do you build in for input from the public?
- How do you time or think about **public feedback loops**?

Other tips

Don't confuse consultant areas of expertise. (i.e. public relations or public affairs)

Consider the importance of impartiality

Keep internal colleagues and elected officials in the loop

Take advantage or build in time for consultants to train staff and build their capacity to do this work



Summary: How to Select a Facilitator



Assess Qualifications

- ✓ Training (via training they've attended, courses, certificate, degrees)
- ✓ Relevant project work and experience

Interviews / Meet in Person

- ✓ Interview candidates to learn about their expertise, process, personality, style
- ✓ Involve other members of group in selection.

References

- ✓ Check references of recent clients or participants

Questions?



Contract-Related Tips

- Ideally there will be some flexibility in the contract so the scope of work can be adjusted as you learn.
- If time allows, an initial contract for an assessment could be helpful as the larger scope of work could be driven by the results of the assessment
- Be clear about who is responsible for note taking and other logistics
- With digital engagement firms be clear on who owns new contact information of those engaged. Be sure your IT department is involved in requirement conversations from the beginning

Resources

- **Rosters**
- **<http://www.cbuiding.org/findafacilitator>**
- **U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (ecr.gov)**
- **Industry Groups**
- **NCDD**
- **IAP2**
- **Davenport Institute**

New Network for Public Engagement Practitioners in Local Government

In the post-webinar survey there will be a question asking if you would like to join this new group.

Upcoming Events

Institute for Local Government:

- January 6-7, 2018. TIERS Learning Lab (limited to San Mateo & Santa Clara County govts)
- March 13-14, 2018. TIERS Learning Lab (open to all local governments)

Facilitation Skills Training:

- IAP2's Annual Skills Symposium. February 26 – March 2, Austin TX.
<https://iap2usa.org/2018symposium>
- Community at Work (Sam Kaner). Various Dates
<http://www.communityatwork.com/scheduleB.html>
- ILG in partnership with Mary Galinas, author of *Talk Matters*. Fall 2018
<http://www.hafoundation.org/community-leadership/cascadia-center-for-leadership/cascadia-center-for-leadership/faculty>

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Thank You!

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Website :**

<http://www.ca-ilg.org/post/ilg-webinar-archives>

Public Engagement Resources

<http://www.ca-ilg.org/inclusive-public-engagement>