



[Perspectives on Public Engagement and Local Government](#)

Issue 4, November 2012

Greetings and Happy Holidays!

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Institute for Local Government's *Perspectives on Public Engagement and Local Government*. We hope this occasional e-newsletter continues to be of interest to local officials as well as to other individuals and organizations concerned with the capacity of city, county, schools and other local agencies to pursue the effective and inclusive engagement of their residents in local planning and decision-making.

The Institute's Public Engagement program, author of this e-newsletter, provides information and resources to encourage and support the public engagement efforts of local officials and their communities in California.

This issue of *Perspectives on Public Engagement and Local Government* contains information about the Institute's activities and new publications, stories of local public engagement throughout California, and information and resources from other public sector, practitioner and academic organizations involved with deliberative practice and theory.

We continue to document local public engagement activities around the state and have included below a story of participatory budgeting in the City of Vallejo. We also have a new tip sheet on *Dealing with Strongly Held Concerns and Challenges to Public Engagement Processes*.

We hope you enjoy this issue. We welcome your comments and extend our appreciation to our funders, especially The James Irvine Foundation, for their support.



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New Public Engagement Publications and Resources from ILG

Dealing with Deeply Held Concerns and Other Challenges to Public Engagement Processes

Public engagement processes are often forums for a broad spectrum of input. In some cases, public engagement participants will have very strongly held views about topics to be discussed; the local (or regional) agency and officials involved; and/or the public engagement process itself. ILG has created a free, downloadable tip sheet which includes ideas for planning and executing public engagement activities when participants are likely to have such deeply held concerns.



New to Public Service?

The Institute's Local Government 101 program has helpful resources for local officials, staff and media that include information about 1) the types of local agencies in California and their functions; 2) how local agencies make decisions on behalf of the communities they serve; 3) information about specific kinds of decisions, including decisions relating to finances and land use; and 4) other resources targeted to those new to public service.



"Shout Out" to Youth about Local Civics and Careers in City Government

As the large number of Baby Boomers working for local government near retirement, the need for bright and talented young people to enter public service becomes more important. This article describes ways local officials and staff can reach out to youth and give them a better understanding of local government and the career opportunities in local public service. Authored by the Institute for Local Government, this article appeared in the November 2012 issue of *Western City*

magazine.

Legal Issues Associated with Social Media

This newly updated Institute publication points out social media-related legal issues faced by local public agencies and offers advice for reaping the benefits of social media while minimizing the pitfalls.

Local Officials and Community-Based Organizations Learn About Public Engagement in the San Joaquin Valley

In September 2012, the Institute for Local Government and the Local Government Commission jointly organized two public engagement workshops in the San Joaquin Valley for local officials and representatives of community organizations in the region. Held in both Visalia and Modesto, these workshops focused on public engagement opportunities and challenges, and how effective partnerships and communication strategies can enhance success in local efforts to involve the public.

[Read more](#)

Local Officials Discuss Sustainability Messaging with ILG

About 50 local officials attended a meeting hosted by the Institute's [Beacon Award program](#) which featured a brief video of local officials describing sustainability in their community and small group discussions identifying successful local sustainability projects and key themes in communicating the projects to community members.



Sustainable Communities Learning Network (SCLN)

The Sustainable Communities Learning Network (SCLN) is a service for local officials offered by the Institute for Local Government in partnership with the Information Center for the Environment at the University of California, Davis, with support from the Strategic Growth Council and The California Endowment. The SCLN encourages local governments to adopt sustainable practices through peer-to-peer learning and facilitates communication on ways that local governments can meet the social, economic, environmental and fiscal needs of the present without jeopardizing future needs. The SCLN invites all local officials to participate in the stimulating idea exchanges occurring within the Sustainable Communities Learning Network LinkedIn group. Join the discussion at www.ca-ilg.org/SCLNlinkedin.



Upcoming Events

Transparency, Sunshine and Public Engagement: Best Practices and the Roles of City Clerk

This session at the League of California Cities' City Clerks New Law and Elections Seminar will discuss open government and transparency policies and best practices. The focus will be to help local officials understand the principles of effective transparency, distinctions in transparency strategies, the benefits and challenges to successful implementation, and the important role of city clerks in efforts to inform and involve residents in public life. The session was planned with the Institute for Local Government's Public Engagement program. For Institute resources on open government and transparency, see www.ca-ilg.org/transparency-strategies. For Institute resources on public engagement "basics," go to www.ca-ilg.org/public-engagement-basics.

Engaging the Public in Making Difficult Decisions

The Institute for Local Government's Public Engagement program is organizing a session for the upcoming California School Boards Association's Annual Education Conference. This interactive session will feature school district leaders and public engagement experts presenting stories, strategies and best practices to help districts increase the success of their engagement efforts. The conference will be held in San Francisco from November 29th through December 1, 2012.

Designing Effective Public Engagement Processes When Values and Beliefs Collide

The Institute for Local Government's Public Engagement program is organizing a session for the upcoming League of California Cities City Manager Department Annual Meeting. This session will provide an opportunity to learn from the experience of others, hear best practices and receive tips for designing processes that are effective, responsive, factual and civil. This conference will be held in San Francisco from January 30, 2013 – February 1, 2013. Click here to access the Institute's "[Deeply Held Concerns and Other Challenges to Public Engagement Processes.](#)"

Public Engagement in California Communities

Vallejo Initiates Participatory Budgeting Approach for Tax Measure Funds

The City of Vallejo, CA has initiated a participatory budgeting process to engage the public in determining the use of approximately 3.2 million dollars in new tax revenues.



Immigrant Engagement/Integration Resources

California Cities Continue Innovative Immigrant Welcoming Programs

Two California communities, Oakley and Redwood City, are continuing their efforts to build understanding and relationships among recent immigrants and longer-term residents.

Public Engagement and New Citizens

With private foundation support, the Institute for Local Government is developing informational resources for local officials about the naturalization and citizenship of legal permanent residents and the public engagement of new citizens.



Local Official's Video Corner on Public Engagement

Reflections on Public Engagement by Debbie Whitmore, City of Turlock

The video presents take-aways from the workshop, "Achieving Broad Public Engagement in the San Joaquin Valley" by Debbie Whitmore, Deputy Director of Development Services, City of Turlock, California. This September 2012 workshop was sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and Local Government Commission.

Dialogue and Deliberation News from Around the United States

NCDD Launches Catalyst Awards Program

National Coalition of Dialogue & Deliberation

At their recent Seattle Conference in October, NCDD launched its Catalyst Awards to “encourage leaders and innovators in the fields of public engagement, conflict resolution and community problem solving” to work together to address challenges that are too complex to solve on their own.”

Model Ordinance for Public Participation

Deliberative Democracy Consortium

Currently, most of the legal and policy framework for public participation comes by way of legal mandates defining public hearings, open comment periods and formulaic participation processes. The Deliberative Democracy Consortium has come up with the first draft of a tool that will help local leaders begin to update and strengthen this legal framework for public participation.

Deliberation by the Numbers – A Sampling of Statistics from Large-Scale Projects

Deliberative Democracy Consortium

Who says you can't quantify public deliberation? It is true that quantitative measurement hasn't been a strong suit of the field. It is also true that some of the most significant impacts, such as policy changes, are inherently difficult to quantify. But at this point, enough scholarly research and evaluative work has been done that it is possible to pull together a concise statistical glimpse of the kinds of things these

projects accomplish.

A SeeClickFix for Public Participation?

The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Tools like SeeClickFix tap into the capacity of citizens to be ‘intelligent sensors’ of their environment, allowing them to report problems like potholes and graffiti. Can this same thinking, and some of the same technology, allow citizens to gather, track, and analyze data on public participation? A team of MPA students from the Maxwell School at Syracuse conducted exploratory research on this question, interviewing a variety of participation and evaluation experts, ranging from practitioners to evaluators and technologists. The team was supervised by Dr. Tina Nabatchi of the Maxwell School.

Frontiers of Democracy 2012: Innovations in Civic Practice, Theory and Education

Deliberative Democracy Consortium

This year’s July conference included a variety of great talks from presenters that included Martha McCoy, Brad Lander, Luz Santana, Valerie Lemmie, Archon Fung, Jamila Raqib, Lew Friedland, Eric Gordon, Kristen Cambell, Amii Omara Otunnu, Meira Levinson, Peter Kiang, Cecelia Orphan and Eric Liu. To hear a series of ten-minute videos from these presenters you can go to <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/frontiers-of-democracy-ii/>.

Measuring Community Engagement from ICMA

International City/County Management Association

The International City/County Management Association’s (ICMA) capstone team was asked to evaluate the citizen engagement programs for the city of Montgomery, Ohio. ICMA has prepared a report, *Measuring Community Engagement*, which offers a guide to define success, measure efforts and share stories. This report describes in details the measurers developed by the city’s citizens’ academy and

volunteer program and explores how a community can determine the outcomes of all its engagement efforts.

Davenport Institute 2012 Grant Program Participants

Davenport Institute of Public Engagement

The Davenport Institute of Public Engagement recently announced their 2012 Grant Program recipients.

Focus on Public Engagement Research and Commentary

Trust in Government: Findings from Public Budgeting Consultations

This paper examines support for city government before and after public engagement on city budgeting issues. The results suggest that public participation in governance in general, and in budgeting in particular, have a positive impact on certain critical aspects of public trust and confidence.

Deliberative Democracy and the Neglected Dimension of Leadership

Journal of Public Deliberation

This paper, from the current issue of the Journal of Public Deliberation, explores the relationship between deliberative democracy and the concept of leadership, a particularly important aspect of those public engagement activities sponsored by local governments.

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