

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Introduction to Public Participation for RCRA Corrective Actions: Tools and Techniques

Developed by
Office of Solid Waste
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Workshop Goal and Objectives

Goal

- Provide practical advice and hands-on tools to help RCRA Corrective Action Project Managers conduct meaningful public participation during cleanups.

Objectives

- Clarify EPA public participation expectations
- Describe techniques and activities and how to use them
- Prepare effective communication strategies
- Develop a Public Participation Plan



Ice-breaker



Workshop Content and Sample Agenda

- **Module 1: Welcome and Introduction**
- **Module 2: Principles and Expectations for Public Participation During Corrective Actions**
- **Module 3: Public Participation Tools and Techniques**
- **Module 4: Communication Strategies for Conducting Public Participation/Outreach Projects**
- **Module 5: Public Participation Plans**
- **Module 6: Problem-Solving/Conclusion**



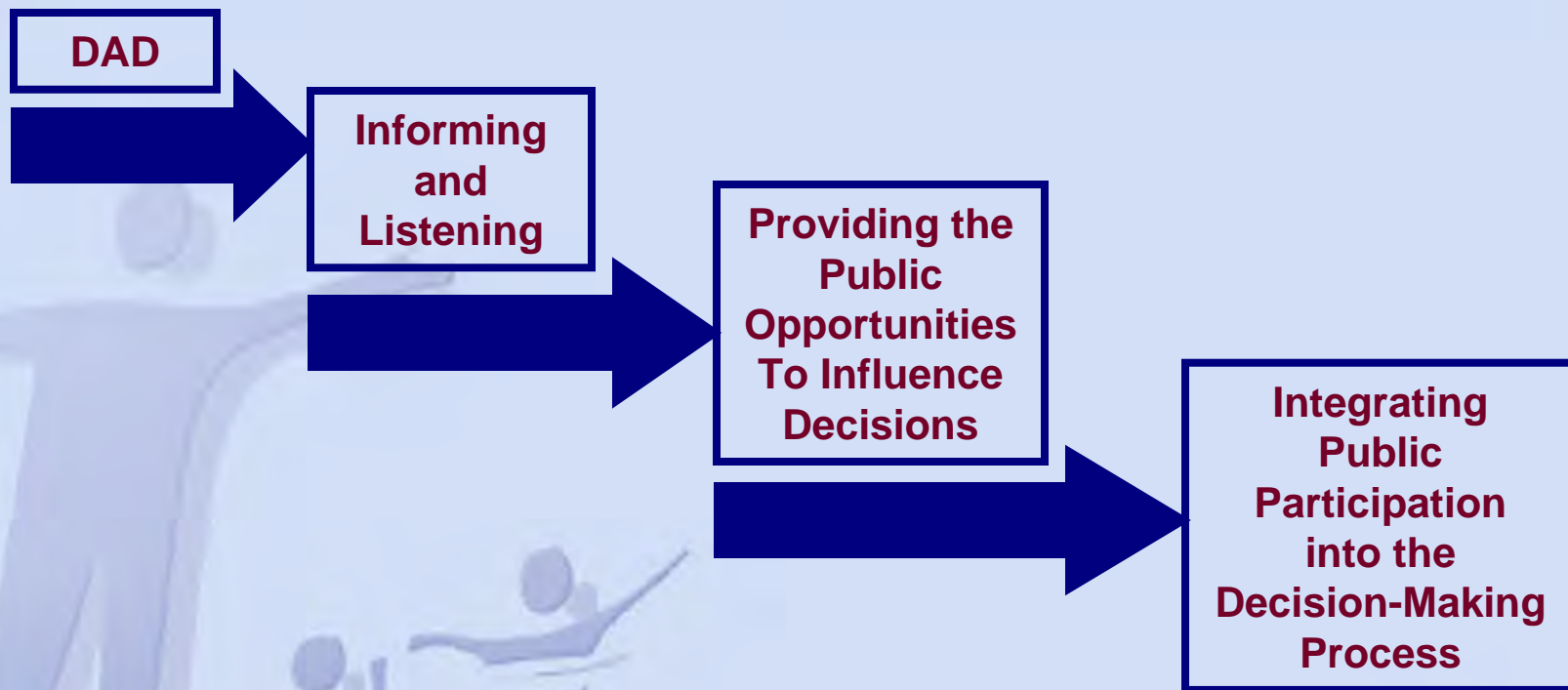
Principles and Expectations: Module Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Explain how public participation has evolved
- Understand public participation principles, expectations for RCRA corrective actions
- Understand how public participation contributes to a successful Corrective Action



Trends in Public Participation



Public Participation Programs Are Moving From:

- Including everybody to targeting the most interested
- Large public meetings/events to smaller activities and more innovative communication techniques
- Involving the public at the end to involving them at the beginning and throughout the process
- “Being heard” to collaborative decision-making



EPA Public Participation Principles

- **Begin public involvement early in the decision-making process**
- **Identify, communicate with, and listen to all affected sectors of the public**
- **Involve members of the public in developing options/alternatives when possible**
- **Develop options to address issues underlying public disagreement**
- **Design public involvement programs to meet the specific needs at each site**

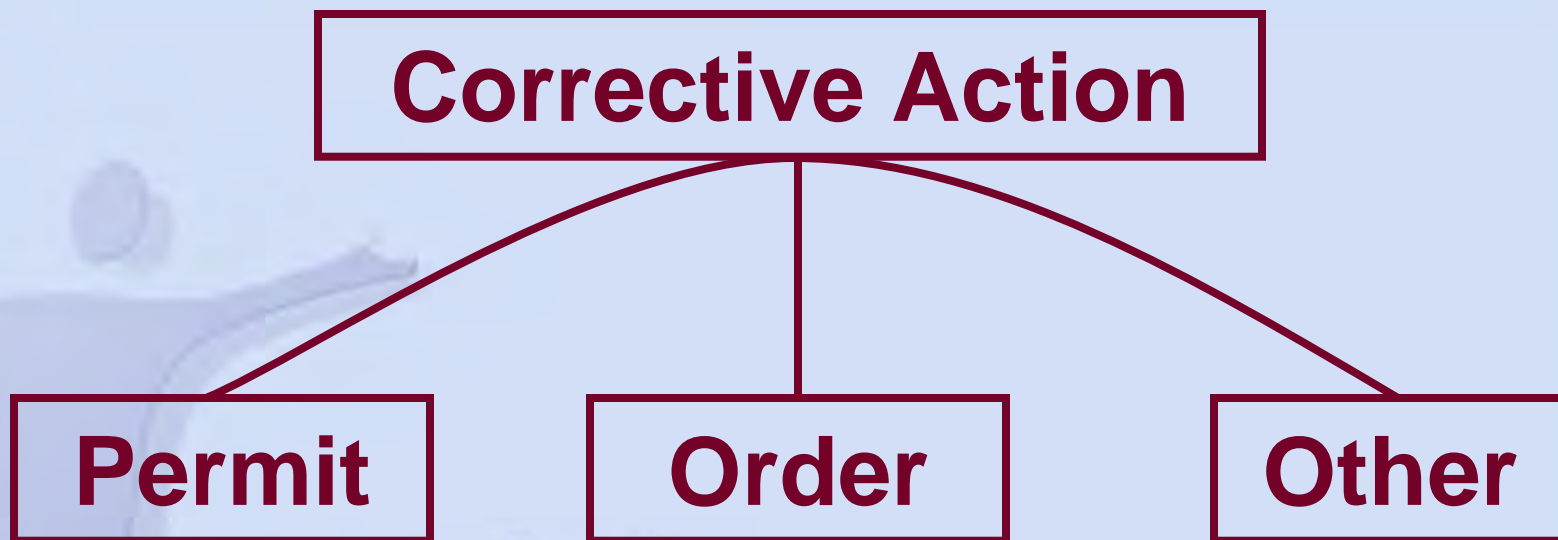


Public Participation Principles and Expectations for RCRA Corrective Actions

- Enhance public access to RCRA Corrective Action cleanup information
- Increase public interest in and awareness of cleanup activities
- Improve opportunity for public involvement in the cleanup process



Corrective Action Mechanisms



RCRA Permit Public Participation Requirements

- Pre-permit application meeting
- Public notice for receipt of permit application
- Public notice of draft permitting decision
- Public comment for permit decision
- Response to comments on permit decision
- Notice of final decision for permit and opportunity to appeal decision
- Information Repository for permitting documents



Requirements for RCRA Orders

- No regulatory requirements
- However, expectations are for public participation activities to equal those for RCRA permitting actions

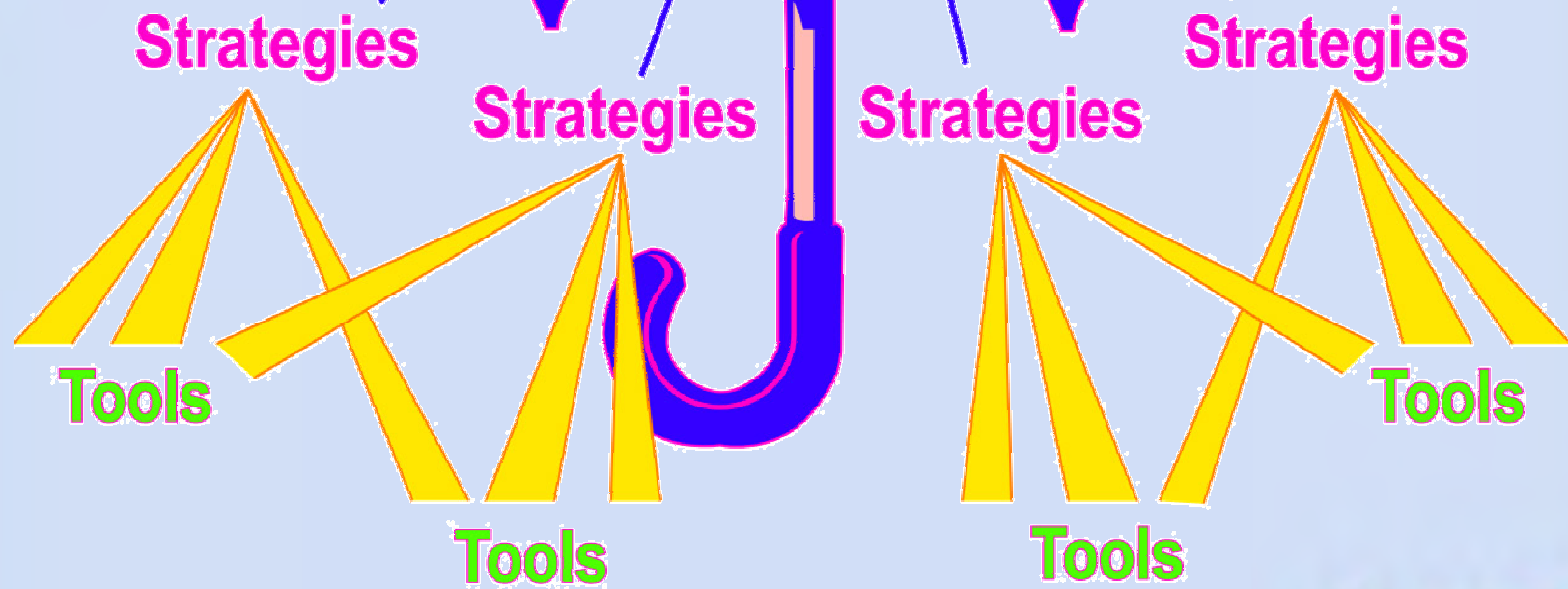


Requirements for Alternate Authorities to RCRA

- **Corrective action at RCRA facilities can be conducted through alternate authorities, such as voluntary corrective action**
- **When conducted under alternate authorities in lieu of post-closure permit, public participation required at 3 key stages:**
 - When Agency first becomes involved;
 - During remedy selection;
 - Prior to making the decision that corrective action is complete.



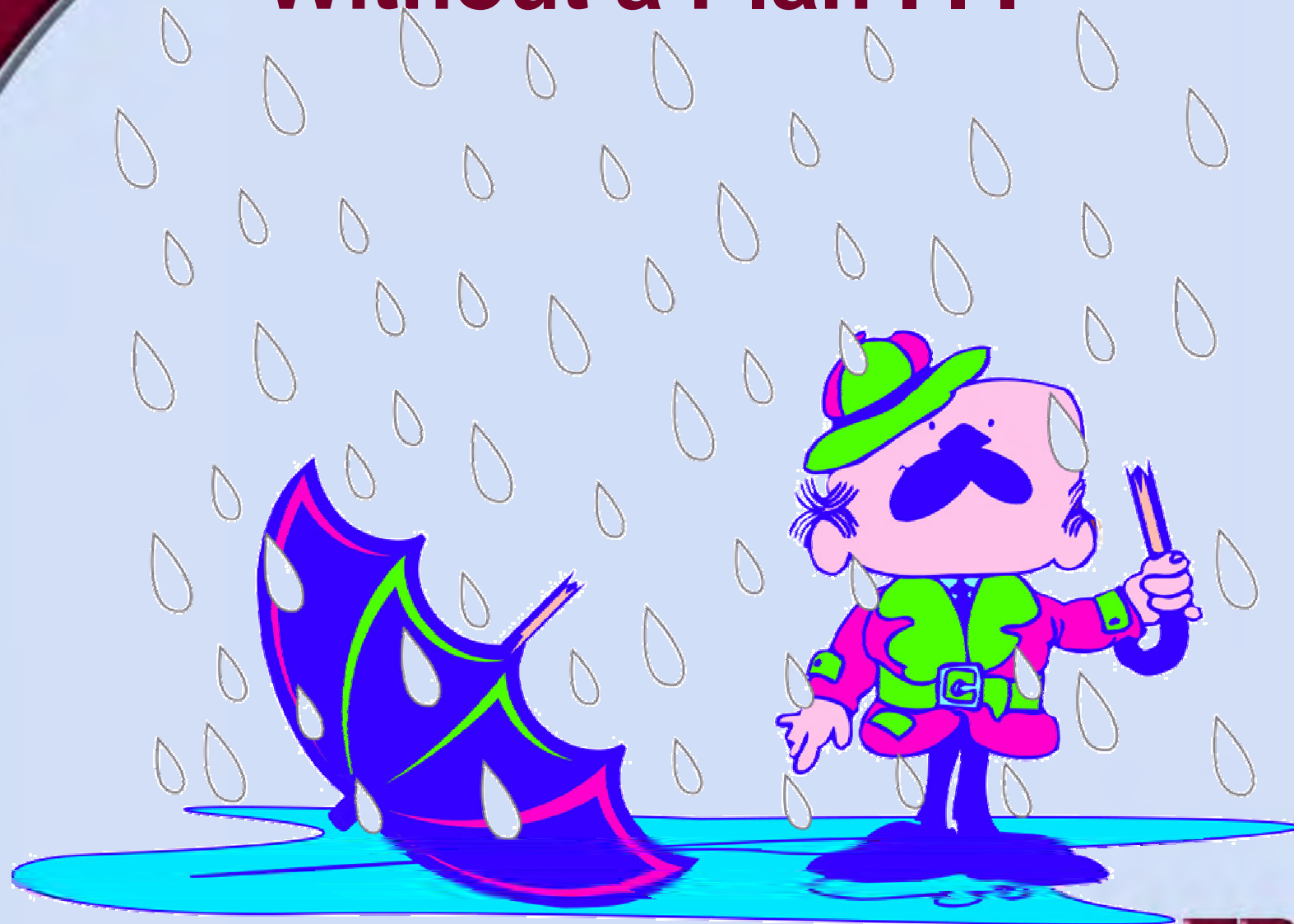
Public Participation Plan



Your Plan Protects You



Without a Plan . . .





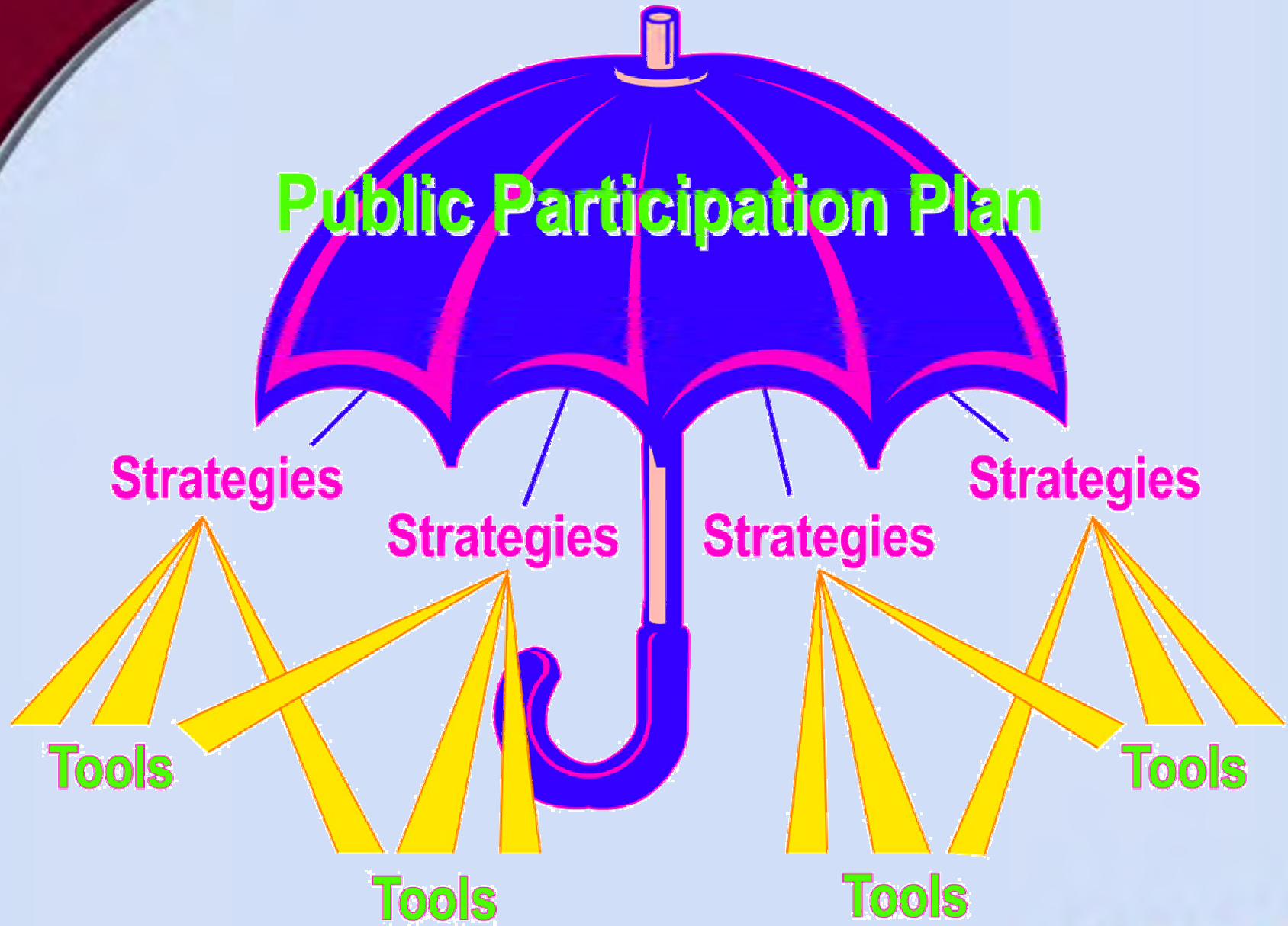
Public Participation Tools: Module Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify techniques that can be used in a public participation/outreach program
- Explain the advantages and limitations of these techniques



Public Participation Plan



Public Participation Tools

- **Serve as techniques, or delivery methods, for outreach and community involvement**
- **Include numerous techniques and approaches**
- **Use tools to tailor outreach**



Commonly Used Tools

- Public notice/spokesperson
- Public comment period/response to comments
- Fact sheet
- Information repository
- Public meetings/hearings



Tools of the Trade



Public Meetings: What, Why, When, and How

- Formal forums open to public
- Opportunity to present information to and get comments back from citizens
- Required by most regulatory programs
- Useful before a major investigation and to highlight actions or accomplishments
- Can be more effective if community already involved at site

Public Meetings: Advantages and Limitations

Advantages

- Delivers same information to everyone
- Enables community to voice concerns publicly
- Effective way for citizens with differing opinions to be involved in process

Limitations

- One-way communication possible
- Can create “us versus them” impression
- Creates forum for grandstanding/promoting alternate agendas



Tips . . .

- **Choose location for the public's convenience**
- **Know your audience**
- **Be prepared to listen and respond as well as to present information**
- **Avoid "us versus them" barriers**
- **Insist on a dry-run with all agency/facility speakers**

Fact Sheets: What, Why, When, and How

- **Brief summary of principal facts/key messages**
- **Explain proposed actions, technical details**
- **Required in new permit or permit modification process; recommended in all Corrective Actions**



Fact Sheets: Advantages and Limitations

- **Advantages**
 - Help people understand what's going on
 - Can provide general information or focus on a specific issue/problem
 - Reaches large audience
- **Limitations**
 - Sometimes substituted for face-to-face contact
 - Often not read

Tips . . .

- **Must be easy to read**
- **Limit messages to 3 key ones**
- **Don't get bogged down in technical detail or legalese**
- **Write objectively**
- **Make it attractive**



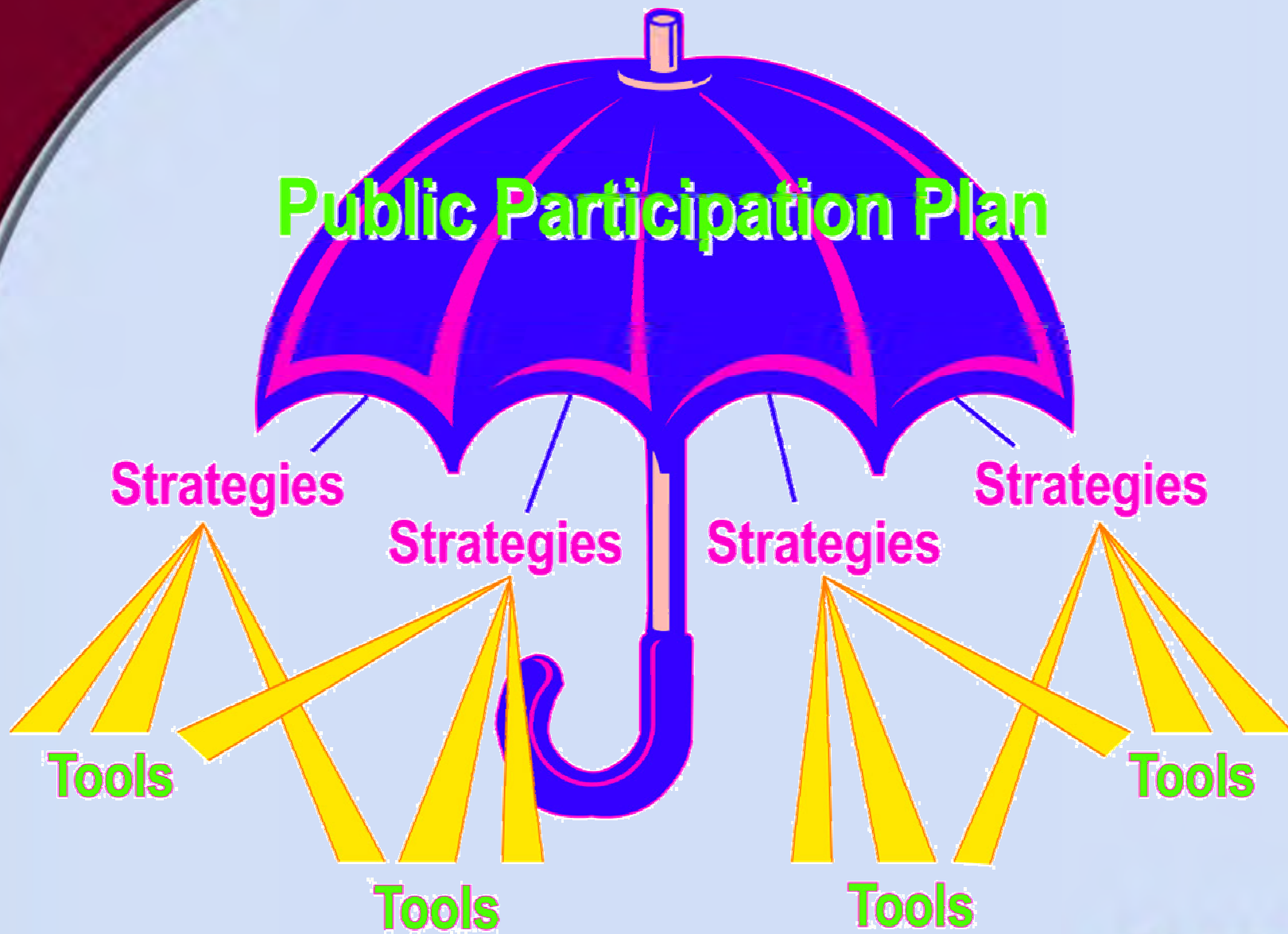
Communication Strategies: Module Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and function of a communication strategy
- Design and prepare a communication strategy for a public participation activity



Public Participation Plan



Communication Strategies

- **Blueprint for communicating with the public, stakeholders, and colleagues**
- **Framework for identifying situations that require outreach or public participation**
- **Consider potential messages and audiences**
- **Identify approaches to deliver the message**

Elements (Questions) of a Communication Strategy

- Why?
- What?
- Who?
- When?
- Where?
- How?



WHY?

- Define problem(s) that need attention
- Determine communication goal

WHAT?

- **Decide what information to communicate**
- **Identify and define all messages, then focus on two or three key messages**

WHO?

- Identify all potential audiences
- Reach out to traditionally under-represented groups



WHEN?

- Determine when the message is most effectively communicated
- Avoid religious/cultural holidays

WHERE?

- **Determine where the message can be delivered most effectively**
- **All public meetings must meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

HOW?

- **Select tools and approaches**
- **Identify resource needs and availability**
- **Select best person to deliver message**
- **Determine how to measure success.**
 - **Quantitatively? Qualitatively ?**

Tips. . .

- **ALWAYS** prepare a strategy
- Design strategy to be **THOROUGH, FLEXIBLE, and FOCUSED** on most important ideas
- Collaborate with team members, support staff in developing/implementing
- Modify strategy to keep pace with changing conditions and attitudes
- Keep your ultimate goal in mind



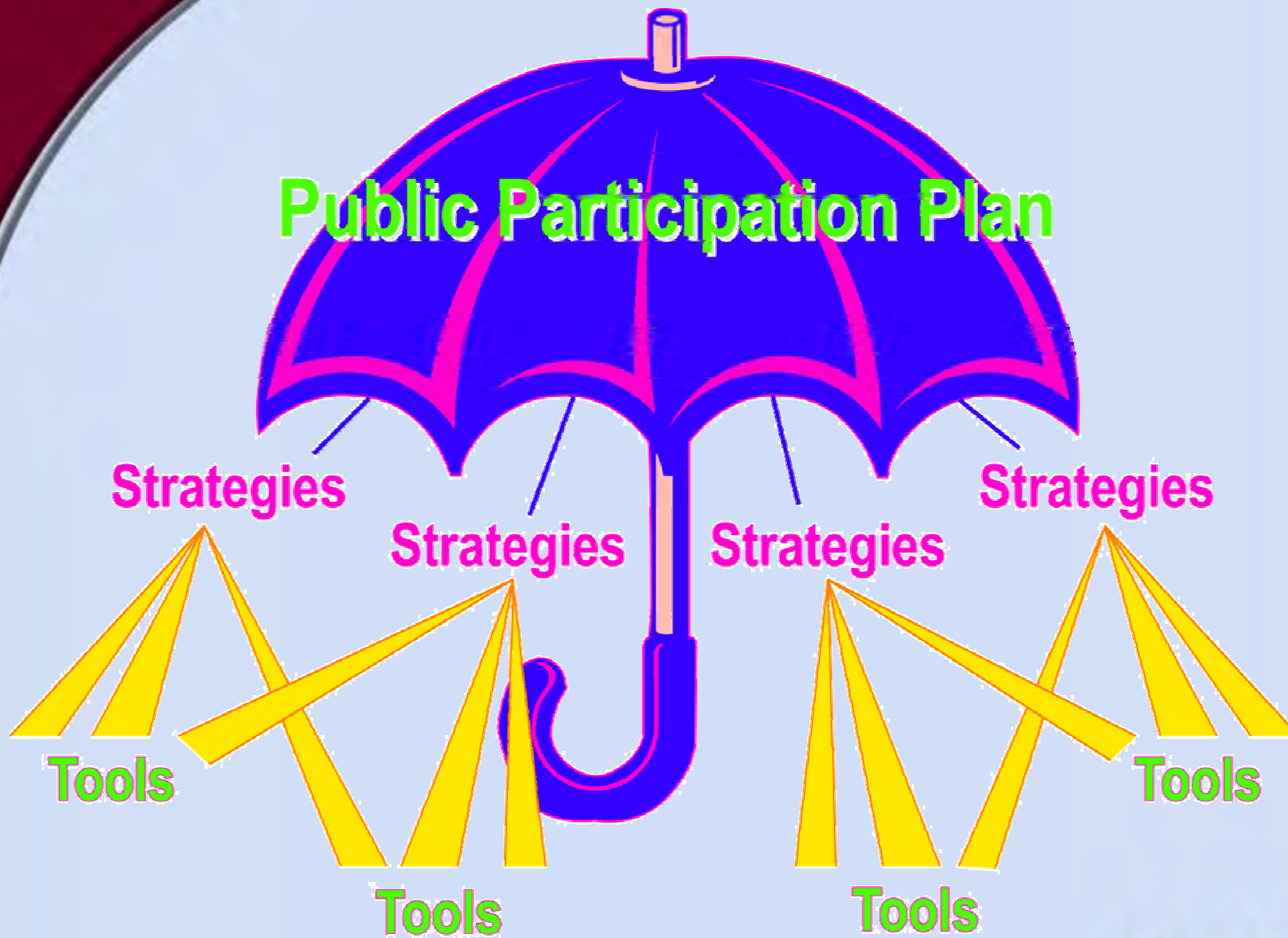
Public Participation Plan: Module Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- State the purpose and function of a Public Participation Plan
- Develop a Public Participation Plan



Public Participation Plan



Public Participation Plan

- **Defines goal and purpose of public participation effort**
- **Presents formal plan for communications, with flexibility to adapt as conditions change**
- **Identifies main issues, milestones, and community outreach activities that may require communications strategies**

Major Components of the Public Participation Plan

- Background
- “Guts” of the Plan
- Appendices



Background

- **Description and map of affected area**
- **History of situation**
- **Description of community**
- **History of community attitudes and actions to date**

“Guts” of the Plan

- **Defines key issues**
 - Derived from community interviews or other sources
- **Identifies potential outreach/public participation activities for addressing these issues**
 - Must be updated as conditions change

Appendices

- **Locations available for events (public meetings)**
- **Sources and location of information for the public**
- **Contacts**

Tips . . .

- **Use your plan!**
- **A good plan is a living document; revise it to reflect changing conditions or attitudes**
- **Build relationships and work as a team**
- **Public Participation Plans are available through FOIA**



Problem Solving/Conclusion: Module Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify the key concepts from this workshop
- Use concepts and techniques from the course to solve real-life problems



Public Participation Plan

