

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

TOOLS & SERVICES FOR COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

EPA will continue to compile and update this list of existing tools and services to support increased capacity for collaboration within the agency. This document is a draft that will be expanded over time.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, MANUALS

EPA's Public Involvement Policy and Guidelines

<http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/policy2003>

The Policy, issued in June 2003:

- Provides clear guidance to EPA staff and managers on effective ways to involve the public in EPA's environmental rulemaking and program decisions
- Applies to all EPA programs and activities
- Is a model for the Federal government, setting a higher standard for public involvement practices

The Policy's purposes include:

- Improve the acceptability, efficiency, feasibility and durability of the Agency's decisions
- Reaffirm EPA's commitment to early and meaningful public involvement
- Ensure that EPA makes its decisions with an understanding of the interests and concerns of affected people and entities
- Promote the use of a wide variety of involvement/collaboration techniques

Implementing the Policy should lead to higher quality and more consistent public involvement processes across EPA and increase the use of collaborative problem solving with the Agency's partners, stakeholders and the public.

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Handbook: Better Decisions Through Collaboration & Consultation (to be issued in Spring 2005 - coming soon to www.epa.gov/adr)

The Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center developed this manual to assist EPA managers and staff who are developing or managing environmental policies, plans, regulations or programs at the national, regional or local levels achieve EPA's Public Involvement Policy goals. While not specifically aimed at facility-level permitting, enforcement or remediation, many lessons are transferable to these situations.

The handbook focuses on:

- Selecting the appropriate level and type of stakeholder involvement process after defining the desired, substantive and procedural goals and outcomes;
- implementing the appropriate stakeholder involvement process as well and completely as possible,
- incorporating the results into EPA environmental decisions

The manual points out the "Stakeholder involvement is a process, not an event" and assists EPA employees to plan and design stakeholder involvement processes that "match the forum to the fuss."

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Toolkit for Obtaining Feedback on Public Involvement Activities and Processes

<http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/feedback>

The Toolkit contains twenty-three feedback questionnaires focused on frequently used involvement

activities/processes (meetings, hearings, FACA groups, listening sessions, stakeholder negotiations, Community Advisory Groups, small group discussions). There are Users Guides and Check Lists for administering and using results from each questionnaires. An OMB-approved Information Collection Request (ICR) is in place to support gathering public involvement feedback using the questionnaires.

The Toolkit is designed to:

- encourage a sustained agency-wide effort to determine and improve the extent/quality/ effectiveness of public involvement processes/activities
- identify participants' perceptions of their treatment during the activity, as well as the quality of pre-activity information, the activity and follow-up
- obtain participants' suggestions on how to improve public involvement
- enable EPA staff who use the questionnaires to apply the resulting data to improve the way the Agency conducts its public involvement processes
- promote use and expansion of a set of commonly held performance measures

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EPA Public Involvement Brochures

<http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/brochures>

The brochures are based on EPA's Seven Steps for Effective Public Involvement. These practical tools were designed to:

- help readers understand elements that support effective collaboration
- supplement existing training
- complement other public involvement tools: Public Involvement Resources and Training Database (PIRT), pop-up exhibit, Public Involvement web site and feedback questionnaires

The brochure series includes:

- How to Plan & Budget
- How to Identify People to Involve
- How to Provide Technical and Financial Assistance
- How to Provide Information and Conduct Outreach
- How to Consult with and Involve the Public
- How to Review and Use Public Input and Provide Feedback
- How to Evaluate Public Involvement
- How to Improve Public Meetings and Hearings
- How to Involve Environmental Justice Communities
- How to Overcome Barriers

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Evaluation Resources Toolbox for Stakeholder Involvement

<http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/toolbox/index.htm>

The Toolbox can enable EPA staff and regulatory partners to quickly:

- Learn about public involvement/collaboration evaluations EPA has produced since the 1990s
- Learn about other recent evaluations or studies relevant to EPA and its partners produced by other agencies or researchers
- Enhance public involvement/collaboration practice by enabling easy review of key evaluation findings and recommendations
- Improve agency evaluation practice by clarifying the different types of methodologies used to develop the evaluations

The Toolbox contains summaries:

- of nearly forty evaluations and reports focused on the public involvement/collaboration activities of EPA and other agencies
- searchable by environmental topic, and describes the focus of the evaluation, data collection methods, and key findings and recommendations

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Innovation Toolkit for EPA Rule Writers

- Guides EPA rule writers to consider innovative approaches in regulation development
- Builds on existing innovative work underway in EPA, states, and regulated community
- Provides a problem-solving framework for addressing environmental challenges
- Encourages use of assessment tools to evaluate effectiveness of rules
- Expands environmental protection tools and approaches
- Provides reference information
- Describes four broad categories of innovative approaches:
 - Performance-based: establishes a standard and offers a regulated entity the opportunity to choose among different options to achieve it
 - Tailored regulation: adapts an applicable rule to the particular characteristics of the environmental problem or regulated community
 - Market-based: harnesses existing market-place forces to motivate entities to achieve more cost-effective approaches to reduce risks and reach environmental goals (even beyond compliance)
 - Other incentives: a combination of innovative approaches that motivate entities toward superior environmental performance

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EPA Federal Advisory Committee Handbook

This ten-chapter manual covers most topics associated with Federal Advisory Committees FACAs) including:

- Deciding whether a proposed committee is subject to FACA
- How to establish a committee
- Designated Federal Officers' roles and responsibilities
- Recruiting and appointing members
- Meetings
- Charter renewals
- Record keeping
- Terminating a committee when its work is finished

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Green Communities Toolkit [www.epa.gov/greenkit]

- Online tools to help communities become designated as EPA Green Communities
- Includes training on how to use the online tool kit
 - What are the Benefits of being a Green Community?
 - Where Are We Now?
 - Where Are We Going?
 - Where Do We Want to Be?
 - How Do We Get There?
 - Let's Go!

- Communities benefit from joint community-EPA public announcement, related publicity and recognition
- Green Community Status can leverage additional support and resources

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RCRA Public Participation Manual

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/pubpart/manual.htm>

This document is a "user's manual" for regulators, the public and the regulated community . It explains how public participation works in the RCRA permitting process (including corrective action), and how citizens, regulators, and industry can collaborate to make it work better. It provides detailed descriptions for dozens of public participation techniques -- required and optional, formal and informal.

This 1996 document also contains a wide variety of resources and examples of public notices and press releases. Chapters 2 and five may be especially helpful to public involvement practitioners. A Spanish version of the RCRA Public Participation Manual is available at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/general/espanol/rcraspma.pdf>

Public Involvement in Environmental Permits: A Reference Guide

<http://www.epa.gov/permits/publicguide.htm>

The Reference Guide was developed to be a resource for state program staff to use in enhancing their public participation efforts. In addition, the Reference Guide the public can use it as a resource for learning about permits and their opportunities to engage in the process.

The Reference Guide summarizes the major permitting programs under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. It also gives an overview of the core requirements for public involvement activities in these permitting programs. The Reference Guide also provides best practices and a model plan for implementing effective public participation activities under these programs, and provides a compendium of additional resources and contacts for use in implementation.

SERVICES

U.S. EPA Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center [www.epa.gov/adr]

CPRC offers a full range of collaborative problem solving, conflict prevention, and dispute resolution services to all EPA Headquarters and Regional field offices including:

- Consultation and advice on whether and how to proceed with collaborative problem solving and dispute resolution activities from the CPRC's experienced full-time staff
- Situation assessments to identify issues, determine process options, and design a customized collaboration or conflict resolution approach
- Access to professional neutral third party services
- Evaluation of collaborative problem solving and dispute resolution programs and projects
- Fundamentals and skills training for Agency staff and managers to build EPA capacity for participating effectively in collaboration and conflict resolution

Some recent situations in which CPRC provided consultation and assistance on design and conduct of collaborative or dispute resolution processes to EPA clients include:

- Endangered Species Act consultation regarding Agency approval of state water quality standards
- Allocation of liability for Superfund site cleanups among potentially responsible parties
- Community-based collaboration to identify and address sources of urban air toxics
- Disputes concerning National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits
- Negotiated rule making regarding the definition of All Appropriate Inquiry in the Brownfields program

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Smart Growth SWAT Teams

- Designed to deliver targeted, well-defined assistance to communities.
- Helps communities realize the economic, community, and environmental benefits of smart growth and sustainable design through provision of information, model programs, and analytic tools to inform communities about growth and development
- Assists with the facilitation of community and private meetings
- Illustrates successful application of smart growth principles, transport solutions, sustainable technologies from other parts of the country and how they might apply in a local context

The initial projects included a report on how smart growth can help meet the requirements of storm water Phase II. Ongoing work with the SWAT project includes smart growth designs for a decommissioned naval base in Massachusetts and a new project to redevelop an industrial area outside of Honolulu as the main island's second city to complement the award-winning transit system and recent expansion of the University of Hawaii.

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DATABASES & WEB SITES

Public Involvement Resources and Training (PIRT) Database

<http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/PIRTdatabase>

- Designed to help public involvement and collaboration practitioners design, plan, deliver, evaluate and improve public involvement efforts
- Contains descriptions of and links to:
 - over 500 public involvement resources materials: toolkits, manuals, administrative or legal requirements, reports, articles, web sites, examples of outreach materials and case studies
 - over 100 workshops, courses and seminars that can help improve performance and enhance public involvement
 - over 40 conferences to enable skills enhancement and networking with practitioners
- Supports Individual Development Plan and performance process

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General Services Administration "Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Database

www.fido.gov/facadatabase

This is a database used primarily by federal agencies to manage an average of 1,000 advisory committees government-wide. It includes information by agency and committee on:

- Members' names
- Cost of operations
- Committee reports

Congress uses the database to conduct oversight of executive branch programs. News media, state/tribal and local governments and non-governmental groups use it to stay abreast of FACA activities.

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Public Involvement Web site [<http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement>]

This website is intended to:

- Share information about public involvement/collaboration activities across EPA, with partners, stakeholders and the public
- Help users understand how different types of public involvement relate to EPA programs and how public input can be used in EPA decision-making processes
- Be a gateway to public involvement/collaboration information resources, tools and techniques

It provides:

- An introduction to EPA's public involvement activities
- Guides and manuals, tools and links to related programs across the Agency
- Case Studies
- EPA's Policy and related public participation regulation
- The PIRT database
- Public Involvement Feedback Toolkit

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Office of Cooperative Environmental Management Web site

www.epa.gov/ocem/committees.htm

The Committee and Policy Oversight section of this site contains laws and regulations that apply to Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) activities. It also contains a calendar of FACA meetings and links to the committees' web sites.

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TRAINING
Trainex [<http://www.trainex.org/>]

- Partnership with the Interstate Technology Regulatory Council, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Community Involvement University, Environmental Response Training Program, National Enforcement Training Institute and CERCLA Education Center)
- Provides
 - range of training information to EPA, other federal agency, state, tribal, and local staff involved in hazardous waste management and remediation
 - course descriptions, schedules and online registration links
 - training schedules for deliveries of many courses - both classroom and Internet-based
 - links to training courses offered EPA wide

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Environmental Justice Training

- Developed by EPA, State, Tribal and local governments, business and industry, academia, environmental groups and communities to increase capacity of all to
 - identify and address environmental justice issues
 - communicate effectively and engage in productive dialogue
 - promote constructive and collaborative problem solving
 - achieve environmental justice goals.
- Explores the origins of the Environmental Justice movement, perceptions and definitions of

- environmental justice, laws pertaining to environmental justice, controversies and issues surrounding environmental justice, success stories to show collaborative problem-solving
- Provides an overview of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other analytical tools to help participants understand, integrate and address environmental justice issues
- Uses case studies as well as internal and external experts

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CONFERENCES

Annual EPA Community Involvement Conference [<http://www.epancic.org>]

- Designed to bring together EPA, federal/state/local and tribal partners, practitioners from the private sector and academia who plan and implement community involvement public participation, partnership, outreach and education programs
- Enables participants to share their work and discuss how it contributes to more sustainable environmental decisions
- Provides a diverse and unique educational program, one in which presenters and participants freely exchange information and learn from each other gain skills for crafting effective involvement processes and activities that meet public and agency needs
- Showcases public participation and community involvement by focusing on techniques and approaches -- the successes and failures
- Provides eight hours of training, poster sessions, exhibits, open discussions and educational field trips in addition to the 2.5 day conference

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New Partners for Smart Growth Annual Conference

[<http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/SmartGrowth/about.html>]

- Facilitates exploring smart growth interests as well as understanding common goals and objectives.
- Uses keynotes, interactive breakout sessions, and "hands-on" implementation workshops to share with participants practical approaches for how to create safer, healthier, and more livable places for all.
- Fosters opportunities to engage practitioners as well as opportunities for establishing new collaborations.
- Features cutting-edge smart growth issues, research, implementation tools and strategies, successful case studies, as well as new projects and policies for achieving smart growth objectives
- Draws a multi-disciplinary audience of local elected officials, city and county staff, developers/builders/planners, transportation/recreation/housing/crime prevention/public health professionals, architects, landscape architects, bankers, social equity advocates, realtors, urban designers, labor/older adults/youth/bicycle and pedestrian advocates and others committed to building safer, healthier, and more livable communities

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