

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



What's New?

Executive Order on Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-signs-an-Executive-Order-Focused-on-Federal-Leadership-in-Environmental-Energy-and-Economic-Performance

On October 5, 2009, President Obama issued the new Executive Order "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance", which sets sustainability goals for Federal agencies and focuses on making improvements in their environmental, energy and economic performance. The Executive Order requires Federal agencies to set a 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target within 90 days; increase energy efficiency; reduce fleet petroleum consumption; conserve water; reduce waste; support sustainable communities; and leverage Federal purchasing power to promote environmentally-responsible products and technologies.

Comment on How to Improve Implementation of the Paperwork Reduction Act

OMB is seeking public comments on possible initiatives to improve the implementation of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA)--and in particular, to reduce the paperwork burden on the public, especially on small entities; to maximize the utility of the information collected; to ensure accurate burden estimates; to improve the process of OMB review;

and to prevent unintended adverse consequences. OMB plans to use the comments it receives in response to this notice to inform its preparation of the 2010 Information Collection Budget (ICB), which is a report that will be provided to Congress on the Federal Government's effectiveness in implementing the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. OMB

will also use these comments to inform its practices for evaluating information collections submitted to OMB by agencies.

Find the October 27, 2009 Federal Register Notice @ <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-25757.htm> . Responses must be written and received by December 28, 2009. Submit comments by one of the following methods:

Web site: www.regulations.gov.

E-mail: oira_submission@omb.eop.gov.

Fax: (202) 395-7245.

Environmental Justice Small Grants Solicitation

On October 28, 2009 [the Request For Applications \(RFA\)](#) was released announcing the availability of funds and solicitation of applications from eligible entities interested in participating in the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program. The Environmental Justice Small Grants Program (EJSG), supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues.

This year the program is emphasizing the need to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change in communities with environmental justice concerns. There is a well-established scientific consensus that climate change will cause disproportionate impacts upon vulnerable populations. As stated in the Technical Support Document for the Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act (April 2009), "Within settlements experiencing climate change, certain parts of the population may be especially vulnerable; these include the poor, the elderly, those already in poor health, the disabled, those living alone, those with limited rights and power (such as recent immigrants with limited English skills), and/or indigenous populations dependent on one or a few resources. Thus, the potential impacts of climate change raise environmental justice issues." The goals of this focus on climate change are to recognize the critical role of grassroots efforts in helping shape strategies to avoid, lessen, or delay the risks and impacts associated with climate change; to decrease the number of under represented communities; and, to ensure equitable green economic development in ways that build healthy sustainable communities.

The EJSG continues to assist recipients in building collaborative partnerships to help them understand and address environmental and public health issues in their communities. Successful collaborative partnerships involve not only well-designed strategic plans to build, maintain and sustain the partnerships, but also to work towards addressing the local environmental and public health issues.

For the guidance document go to <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/grants/rfa-state-grant-2-12-09.pdf>

For questions, contact Sheila Lewis: lewis.sheila@epa.gov

Pesticides Public Participation Processes

As part of EPA's ongoing commitment to transparency in its pesticide regulatory decisions, the Agency has developed and begun implementing a new [process for public participation for potential new pesticide active ingredients and certain new pesticide uses](#). Beginning October 1, 2009, the public can review and comment on the risk assessments and proposed registration decisions for certain pesticide registration actions. This public process, which expands the transparency of the Agency's pesticide registration decisions, applies to new pesticide active ingredients, and the first food use, first outdoor use, and first residential use for currently registered active ingredients.

The process works like this: Upon receiving a complete application for registration for a new pesticide active ingredient or a new use of an already registered active ingredient, EPA publishes a Federal Register Notice of Receipt, establishes a case docket in

[Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov), and opens an initial 30-day public comment. Once the Agency's risk assessments and proposed decision for the registration application are added to the docket, EPA opens another 30-day public comment period. After the final comment period closes, EPA publishes its decision and response-to-comment document.

When new active ingredients or first new use registration applications that meet the criteria for the new public process become available, they will be posted on the Pesticides Web site. Once available, EPA will post links to the risk assessments, proposed registration decisions, and the Dockets where the public can submit comments.

Another way the public can engage in pesticide decisions is through the [process for public involvement in the review of already registered pesticides](#). Differences between it and the new process reflect the particular regulatory requirements of initial [registration](#) as compared to [registration review](#).

Intergovernmental Solutions Newsletter

The U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA's) Office of Citizen Services & Communications just released its Intergovernmental Solutions Newsletter, which is organized around the theme of "Engaging Citizens in Government." The 43-page PDF document includes articles written by public and private sector leaders in the field.



Here is the table of contents:

- Increasing Citizen Engagement in Government
- By the People, For the People
- Citizen Engagement
- National Dialogues Build Communities
- Believable Change: A Reality Check on Online Participation?
- Reinventing We the People
- Data is Not Democracy
- Could Citizens Run the White House Online?
- E-Petitions Preserves an Old British Tradition
- My better Estonia
- Participatory Lawmaking in Brazil
- Brazil and Argentina: From Participatory Budgeting to e-Participatory Budgeting

- Pew: Well-off and Well-educated Are More Likely to Engage
- Public Engagement on Fairfax County's Budget
- Citizen Engagement in Oakland County
- Washington Goes to Mr. Smith: The Changing Role of Citizens in Policy Development
- Ohio Redistricting Competition
- Planning for Citizen Engagement
- Potholes and PDAs
- New Media Makers Pioneer Novel Forms of News
- Putting Your Audience to Work: EPA's Radon Video Contest
- A Millennial Model of Civic Engagement
- Emerging Themes for Effective Online Citizen Engagement
- The Importance of Open Web Standards in the Move to Open and Transparent Government

Download the newsletter at www.usaservices.gov/pdf_docs/EngagingCitizensII.pdf

National Center of Citizenship Releases Civic Health Index Reports in Six States

Following the media flurry surrounding the release of the 2009 *America's Civic Health Index*, NCoC in October announced the release of six state-specific reports measuring the civic health of communities across the country.

These reports expand the reach and impact of *America's Civic Health Index* by helping communities better understand how to harness the power of their citizens. The localized data tells a compelling story in light of the economic downturn that has forced Americans to focus their engagement inward to more personal forms of giving and service.

In coordination with local partners, NCoC is releasing the state Civic Health Index reports according to the following schedule:

- **Florida:** October 14 and 15 in Miami in partnership with the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship with support from the Knight Foundation
- **California:** October 26 in Los Angeles in partnership with California Forward and Common Sense California
- **Minnesota:** November 2 in Minneapolis in partnership with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship with support from Target
- **New Hampshire:** Early November in Durham in partnership with the Carsey Institute at UNH
- **Ohio:** November 10 in Columbus in partnership with Miami University-Hamilton
- **Illinois:** November 18 in Chicago in partnership with the McCormick Freedom Project with support from the McCormick Foundation

NCoC will feature each report on its website as reports are released. You can read the Florida report @ <http://www.ncoc.net>. The 2009 America's Civic Health Index and media coverage of it @ http://ncoc.net/index.php?tray=content_blog&tid=top5&cid=2gp115

Saving Our Nation's Democracy Conference Report

On August 2 – 4, 2009, Everyday Democracy, AmericaSpeaks, Demos and Harvard University's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation brought together

more than 100 individuals for the second Strengthening our Nation's Democracy conference. Participants came from various parts of the democracy reform and civic engagement' community: deliberative democracy practitioners, community problem solvers and organizers, election reformers, transparency advocates, e-democracy practitioners, national service advocates, media reformers, educators, federal public engagement practitioners/managers and others.

The "Working Together to Build a Stronger Democracy" <http://forums.e-democracy.org/r/file/1107-2009-10-05T195159Z> full conference report provides detailed recommendations for both the Administration and the democracy reform movement itself. The priorities are as follows:

1. Involve the American public in meaningful deliberations about important policy questions
2. Support and promote an electoral reform agenda
3. Improve federal public participation and collaboration
4. Explore lessons from the Open Government Dialogue
5. Recognize and support engagement carried out by traditionally disenfranchised communities
6. Create a report on the health of our democracy
7. Build skills and capacity for public engagement
8. Increase the availability of federal funding for democratic participation
9. Convene an international democracy conference
10. Create an ongoing mechanism for sustaining leadership

Deliberative Techniques for Engagement – Mini-Poll Report

In August, PublicDecisions [<http://www.PublicDecisions.com>] issued a Mini-Poll on the subject of deliberative techniques for engagement. The purpose of the poll was to discern how broadly understood deliberation is as an engagement technique; to identify the degree to which it is used formally, informally or both; and to learn why (or why not) it is employed.

The data in this 14-page report led to four key findings:

1. A large majority of respondents are familiar with deliberation as an engagement technique. There is also interest in learning more about the technique, among those familiar with it and those to whom it is new.
2. The most common reason for using deliberation is to create a safe place to express varying opinions. This reason is cited equally by those who formally convene deliberative events and those who use deliberation informally.

3. The convening of formal deliberations by organizations is about as common as the use of informal deliberation. Moreover, an equal number of respondents report employing *both* formal and informal deliberation in their engagement work.
4. Deliberation is understood and used as a practical technique in support of engagement goals.

Download your copy today at [this link](#)

Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments

The U.S. Department of Energy developed this comprehensive resource to assist local governments and stakeholders in building sustainable local solar markets. The guide introduces a range of policy and program options that have been successfully field tested in localities around the country. It describes each policy or program, explains the benefits, provides implementation tips and options, and includes short examples from local governments across the United States.

“Why we need to ‘sell ‘ environmentalism,” EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson’s complete August 28 article in the Huffington Post can be found @, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lisa-p-jackson/why-we-need-to-sell-the-e_b_271650.html

Here are excerpts from the last paragraphs:

“We have a chance to expand the conversation on environmentalism, and welcome new voices and new ideas to the environmental movement. ...People are seeing more and more that environmentalism doesn't come in one shape, size, color, or income bracket. “

“Those of us who identify as environmentalists today must make room in this movement for the environmentalists of tomorrow..... To confront the urgent environmental challenges of the 21st century, we need to make sure that every community sees their stake in this movement.”

EPA just launched Data Finder (www.epa.gov/datafinder), a single place to find EPA's data sources so people can access and understand environmental information. We encourage people to suggest new content and comment on its functionality. Comments will be displayed in a forum so people can build on each others' ideas and EPA can describe future directions for Data Finder.

EPA also will use Data Finder to discover raw data that can be accessed via Data.gov, a federal site that helps people find, download, and use datasets that are generated and held by the Federal Government.

Feel free to get the word out about Data Finder so others can use it.

You can also use **MyEnvironment** to find data online. Search for maps, alerts, and environmental data and information based on ZIP code or place name. Check it out at: www.epa.gov/myenvironment/

Comment on regulation development: <http://www.regulations.gov>

New Interactive Map from UK's Meteorological Office

The new map shows the impacts of a 4 degree temperature rise world wide. Have a look @ <http://www.actoncopenhagen.decc.gov.uk/en/ambition/evidence/4-degrees-map/>.

NCDD's Engagement Streams Framework

<http://www.thataway.org/exchange/files/docs/ddStreams1-08.pdf>

The framework is depicted on two charts and is designed to help people decide which dialogue and deliberation [D&D] methods are the best fit for their circumstances. No method works in all situations, yet too often people become overly attached to the first D&D process they learn about -and end up with less-than-satisfying results.

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) developed this framework in 2004 to introduce people to the range of possibilities available to them and to send them in a better direction than they may have otherwise gone. The first chart of the Engagement Streams Framework categorizes the D&D field into four streams based on the organizer's primary intention or purpose - Exploration, Conflict Transformation, Decision Making and Collaborative Action. It shows which of the most well-known and well-tested methods have proven themselves effective in each stream. The second chart outlines 19 of the most well-known and well-tested dialogue and deliberation methods and, first, identifies which of the 4 streams the method focuses significantly on (some models can be used in more than one stream with little adaptation). It also provides additional details such as size of group and how participants are selected. The Framework is and always will be a work in progress, and NCDD welcomes suggestions for changes and additions! As the field continues learning and growing, so will this framework. Please email your feedback to Sandy Hierbacher at sandy@thataway.org. Check www.thataway.org/streams anytime to see the latest iterations of the charts.

The framework is most similar to and borrows most heavily from the four "social technologies for civic engagement" identified by Patricia Wilson in the article "Deep Democracy: The Inner Practice of Civic Engagement" (Fieldnotes: A Newsletter of the Shambhala Institute, Issue No. 2, February 2004). Download Wilson's article here. http://www.thataway.org/main/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/wilson-deep_democracy.pdf

National Issues Forums Launches Coping with the Cost of Health Care Dialogue

Considering the shouting matches that have erupted at many town hall meetings, and the necessarily adversarial nature of debates, many people who are interested in the future of health care are left wondering: How can I join a constructive conversation about this issue?

In response to this need, the Kettering Foundation and the National Issues Forum Institute (NIFI) just launched a new online choicebook, modeled after the highly successful Coping with the Cost of Health Care issue book. This is an online opportunity for citizens to wrestle with the tensions underlying the health care debate and to share

their experiences and opinions. Instead of having to travel to a town hall meeting and deal with angry crowds, interested citizens can log on and complete an online workbook that helps them weigh the advantages, disadvantages, and tradeoffs of several approaches to solving the health care problem, and add their stories to a broad spectrum of other voices.

Web site: <http://nifi-healthcare.dialoguecircles.com/Default.aspx?DN=719,745,Documents>

U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution's Survey of Citizen Groups

Federal agencies often turn to the U.S. Institute for advice on how to engage the public for input on federal environmental programs and how to collaborate with citizens groups to manage or resolve conflict over environmental issues. Prompted by a request for suggestions from a stakeholder group considering how to engage citizens, the U.S. Institute reviewed a variety of citizens groups to learn more about how they function, what conditions favor their success, and any major insights or lessons learned from their experiences. This information may be helpful to agencies and environmental conflict resolution practitioners interested in convening similar citizens groups.

To read a description of the groups reviewed, the review process, findings, lessons learned and conclusions, go to:

<http://www.ecr.gov/AnnouncementsEvents/Announcements/USIECRCitizensGroupsSurvey.aspx> The table below outlines the types of groups involved in the survey process.

FACA-chartered	Federally Convened (non-FACA)	Federal-State Convened	State Convened	Other
1. Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Work Group 2. Pinedale Anticline Working Group 3. Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Advisory Committee 4. Steens Mountain Advisory Council 5. Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee	1. Grizzly Bear Introduction Citizen Management Committee	1. Chesapeake Bay Program Citizens Advisory Committee 2. Susquehanna River Basin Compact Water Quality Advisory Group	1. Utah Wildlife Management Plans Advisory Committees 2. Colorado Wolf Management Working Group 3. Puget Sound Partnership	1. Madison Valley Ranchlands Group 2. Malpai Borderlands Group 3. Blackfoot Challenge 4. Quincy Library Group 5. Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan 6. Klamath Settlement Group (not the actual title of the group because they do not have one)

"FACA-chartered" refers to advisory groups convened by a federal agency under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, having a formal charter and membership approved by the convening agency.

New Pew Report finds the well-off and well-educated are more likely to engage

The Pew Internet and American Life Project conducted a study in August 2008 and published its findings in September 2009. Pew's report, [The Internet and Civic Engagement](http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/15--The-Internet-and-Civic-Engagement.aspx) [http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/15--The-Internet-and-Civic-Engagement.aspx] concluded:

- Whether it takes place on the internet or off, traditional political activities remain the domain of those with high levels of income and education.
- There are hints that forms of civic engagement anchored in blogs and social networking sites could alter long-standing patterns that are based on socioeconomic status.
- Those who use blogs and social networking sites as an outlet for civic engagement are far more active in traditional realms of political and nonpolitical participation than are other internet users. In addition, they are even more active than those who do not use the internet at all.
- The internet is now part of the fabric of everyday civic life. Half of those who are involved in a political or community group communicate with other group members using digital tools such as email or group websites.

Respondents report that public officials are no less responsive to email than to snail mail. Online communications to government officials are just as likely to draw a response as contacts in person, over the phone, or by letter.

Report on Online Town Hall Meetings



Online Town Hall Meetings: Exploring Democracy in the 21st Century (2009, Congressional Management Foundation) tackles the lack of information about how the internet might facilitate and enable conversations between citizens and Members of Congress. The report is based on 20 online town hall meetings facilitated in 2006 with U.S. Representatives and one event in 2008 with a U.S. Senator, with a total number of participants in excess of 600.

The “online town halls” used a simple process. The Member of Congress and moderator spoke over VOIP (internet phone) and constituents typed in questions and comments online. Researchers found that:

The online town halls increased constituents’ approval of and trust in the Member of Congress.

The online town halls increased constituents’ approval of the Member’s position on the issue discussed (in this case, immigration was the most popular issue discussed).

- The town halls attracted a diverse array of constituents—including those not traditionally engaged in politics and people frustrated with the political system.

- The town halls increased engagement in politics (voting, following elections, persuading others to vote).
- The town halls increased the probability of voting for the Member.
- The discussions in the town halls were of high quality (quality of information, use of accurate facts, respect for different points of view, etc.).
- The sessions were highly rated by constituents; participants wanted to see more of these types of sessions.

Shanxi Province [North Central China] Gives Public Access To Environmental Data on Businesses

Citizens in Shanxi Province can better participate in environmental legislation, supervision, and management. A new law, issued September 9, requires businesses to report “all information that is relevant to the environment” to the public, other than information that falls under state or business secret stipulations. The law also gives the public access to hearings regarding environmental impact assessments and will allow public comments on already completed projects. Citizens can request seven types of pollution information:

- 1) businesses' environmental impact assessments
- 2) annual environmental protection targets and total discharge amounts broken down by pollutant
- 3) information about whether the businesses have included equipment to enhance environmental protection (and if so, its current operating condition)
- 4) the environmental impact from their discharges
- 5) their pollution treatment plans (and annual report on these plans),
- 6) what responses the businesses have made to prevent pollution or clean up pollution that has already occurred.

Excerpted from a story by Michael Standaert, a free lance journalist in Beijing, China.

How Some Communities Make Public Engagement Stick



When sufficiently agitated, Americans can, and often do, mobilize—at least on a one-time basis—to find solutions for critical community problems. A new research report, issued October 20, 2009, by Everyday Democracy and the Kettering Foundation, provides insights into how public engagement initiatives can grow into a regular practice, used to address a variety of community issues.

The report, entitled [Sustaining Public Engagement: Embedded Deliberation in Local](#)

[Communities \[http://www.everyday-democracy.org/en/Article.1060.aspx\]](http://www.everyday-democracy.org/en/Article.1060.aspx) was written by Harvard University researchers Archon Fung and Elena Fagotto. In the report, they argue that the most successful civic engagement efforts not only address particular public issues such as school redistricting, domestic violence, or racism, but also improve the quality of local democratic governance. "Those who build institutions and practices of public engagement often work at two levels," according to the authors. "Not only do they address urgently felt needs in their communities, but, although they may not have intended it, they also improve the machinery of democratic self-government."

Introducing the GreenGov Challenge – A Bottom-Up Approach to Greening Government

On October 19, 2009, the White House launched today a new online participatory program that challenges federal and military personnel to take part in implementing the requirements of the new Executive Order 13514 "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance" issued October 5, 2009. Within the GreenGov Challenge initiative, federal and military personnel will have an opportunity to submit their own clean energy ideas and suggestions while voting on others. The participatory program will run from October 19 - October 31, 2009. Read more from CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley's White House blog at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Introducing-the-GreenGov-Challenge-A-Bottom-Up-Approach-to-Greening-Government/>.

If Citizens Have a Voice, Who's Listening? Lessons from Recent Citizen Consultation Experiments for the European Union – new paper by Stephen Boucher

Are European Union institutions, as they claim, really listening to citizens thanks to more 'deliberative' consultation tools? The European Commission and the European Parliament in particular have committed themselves to engaging in a dialogue with citizens in recent years. But to what effect? This paper notes how official policies have adopted language borrowed from the deliberative democracy school of thinking, but denounces the lack of clarity in the role assigned to deliberation with citizens in EU policy-making processes. It also invites EU policy-makers to think more critically about recent and future experiments that present themselves as 'deliberative'. It does so by highlighting areas for improvement in recent initiatives. Finally, it makes a number of recommendations for the future of dialogue with citizens, suggesting in particular the creation of a European Observatory for Democracy and Opinion, as well as a list of criteria to assess the design and role of such activities, and the concentration of efforts on one high-quality, high-impact initiative per year. [Stephen Boucher is the Program Director at the European Climate Foundation.]

["The Corps Environment" Newsletter - October 2009 \(10/23/2009\)](#)

Quarterly publication of "The Corps Environment" newsletter by the USACE Environmental Community of Practice, covering recent environmental activities conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their partners. Three articles cover: [Project works to save migrating salmon](#), [EnviroPoints: New chief shares thoughts](#), and [District project protects against stream bank erosion](#) .

Kodak American Greenways Program

Kodak's program is the nation's longest running community-based grants program preserving open space, trails and greenways. The program marked its 20th anniversary by honoring three individuals and funding 28 local nonprofits and public agencies that are making great strides with greenways on October 19, 2009..

Since the program's inception in 1989, more than \$800,000 has been granted to nearly 700 organizations in all 50 states. The program is a partnership between Eastman Kodak Company, National Geographic Society and The Conservation Fund.

This year's individual award recipients are:



Alexie Torres-Fleming, who led the removal of tons of trash from the Bronx River in New York City, including 40 cars and 10,000 tires, creating a healthy waterway and river corridor that inspired youth in the community to connect with nature and take pride in their South Bronx neighborhood.



Rosie Zamora, the driving force behind Houston Wilderness and its effort to bridge the vibrant, lively city with the wetlands, forests and rivers and educate Houston residents on the spectacular environment in their backyards.



Rick Wagner, a 26-year veteran of the National Park Service with 43 years of federal conservation work who preserved key pieces of the American cultural and natural heritage by spearheading the creation of the State of Idaho Castle Rock State Park and the expansion of the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the California Trail in the City of Rocks National Reserve.

This year, 28 nonprofits and public agencies received grants.