Step 5: Match Public Participation Tools to Program Objectives

When do I select public participation tools?

- Map out the decision making process and clarify where the public will be engaged. (Steps 1-3)

- At each point that the public is to be informed or provide input, identify a clear objective for that interaction. (Step 4)

- Once clear goals and objectives are established, appropriate tools can be selected and customized to the circumstances and audience. (Step 5)

Three Types of Public Participation Tools

- Tools to Inform

- Tools for Generating Input

- Tools for Consensus Building and Agreement Seeking

Tools to Inform the Public: Considerations

- Applicable to all levels of public participation

- Consider the target audience, existing networks, and scope of communications

- Trust levels will influence which tool you use

Tools to Inform the Public: Examples

- In-person (e.g. public meetings, telephone contacts)

- Remote (e.g. printed info, websites, hotlines, kiosks)

- Non-traditional (e.g. performance, messaging)

Tools to Generate and Obtain Public Input: Considerations

- Applicable to all levels of public participation except "Inform"

- Focus on the goal, not just on what's been done before

- Consider size of the group, trust level, time available, and resources

- In-person vs. Remote

Tools to Generate and Obtain Public Input: Examples

- In-person (e.g. interviews, study groups, focus circles, public meetings, world café,)

- Remote (e.g. surveys, web-based tools)

Tools for Consensus Building and Agreement Seeking: Considerations

- Only applicable to "Collaborate" and "Empower" levels of public participation

- Requires time investment (process)

- Requires meeting face to face

- Other two types of tools can be components of the consensus building process

- Carefully consider who needs to be involved and precisely what decisions need to be made

Tools for Consensus Building and Agreement: Examples

- Advisory boards

- Focus groups

- World Café

Table 7

Where to look on the Guide

- Public Participation Tools

- Public participation process planning, Step 5- Match Public Participation Tools to Objectives Throughout the Process