

Learning Exchange: Deliberative Democracy in Federal Agencies

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What's At Stake?

- Public trust in the government is at stake. If the Obama administration fails to enfranchise citizens, we will never achieve these very important goals
- Life on the planet
- Civic energy and community knowledge needs to be brought into government more effectively
- Opportunity to infuse public input into policy decision-making
- Capacity of citizens and government (and other institutions) to collaborate successfully to optimize whatever chances we have to
 - a) Save ourselves as a species and living planet
 - b) Make the most of this crisis/breakdown of activity to actually improve our world/society
- Federal government can't be as effective as it needs to be unless it increasingly embeds collaboration and participation into its work
- American democracy cannot be actualized unless federal agencies hear this
- Need trust in government to be present for program/decisions to be made effective
- Because the federal government has enormous import and influences – could help us realize democratic potential and be a model
- Because there are so many urgent , serious social, environmental, foreign policy issues to address - we need federal government to adjust and align its practices and use available knowledge
- Making the best policy decisions possible, ensuring that American democracy endures, deepens, expands

What's At Stake? (continued)

Standard Terminology
enables

Standard Practices
enables

Quality Engagement
enables

Quality Government
Enables

Quality of Life

- ‘A perpetuation of apathy’ . . .or feeding into the potential of citizens disengaged from government
- Continued community disengagement from government decision-making may lead to an increasingly adversarial relationship between the two
- Unless we can make and employ a comprehensive strategy for transparency in conjunction with radically increased public engagement across agencies, we won’t be able to argue that public engagement adds democratic value to our system and is more than perfunctory
- Open government questions are too important to be left to either experts alone or an under-informed, non-deliberating public
- Legitimacy of major policy changes, sustainability of major policy changes

What Do You Want Your Favorite Fed to Do?

- I want my favorite fed to answer the phone when a community calls and to provide at least some information assistance
- Identify opportunities to do more public engagement on difficult policy decisions
- I care about environmental impacts: change the public hearing model so that citizens engage with regulating officials in non-confrontational settings
- Obama needs to articulate vision, consistent strategy of collaborative governance beyond the service rhetoric and engage [public involvement] professionals as well
- I want Beth Noveck (White House Office of Science and Technology Policy) to begin discussion on drafting Standard Terminology
- Issue the Open Government Directive – NOW
- Hold conversation where the public can provide feedback on each other’s ideas (not just two-way with agency)
- Strategic involvement of the participants at this conference in important decision-making that includes involvement of the public
- Deepen their connection to help educate the American public about the issues they see and the obstacles for achieving better results
- CDC can utilize existing health metrics at local and regional hospitals
- Find, determine a pilot project to engage the public on
- Be clear what you want to learn from the public
- Use what software companies call an *application programming interface*, a menu of diverse ways to provide input and help
- Governor Baucus – restart health care forum and include single payer from outset – and let this be the model for engaging the public (in Congress, hearings and forums)

What Will I Do the Next 45 Days?

- I will lobby and advocate for Standard Terminology
- Write Critical Job Elements (CJEs) for federal public involvement staff

- Do what's asked within my domain of expertise
- I can contact my regional hospital for community engagement efforts
- Successfully execute a sound public engagement process
- Deepen my understanding of issues important to me, my community and the nation
- Call up local US Department of Energy office and invite representative to community information meetings
- Help design and facilitate sessions – multiple stakeholders and/or citizen engagement
- Develop training for federal officials on how to do civic engagement
- Work for free to help design a project
- Write op-ed letters to the editor
- Knock on doors
- Travel to Washington, arrange meetings with my federal/state/local representatives
- Convene a meeting
- Release our findings on public views/values on health care reform
- Provide training and examples in use of scenario technology for public involvement
- Am willing to meet with federal and administration officials/White House staff on developing a more coherent strategy
- I'd help conceptualize the what, who, how of such a shared strategy system
- Help define key terms

Leanne Nurse US EPA 10 July 2009