

**Notes from the session on
Embedding Deliberative Practices in National Democracy
Facilitated by Carolyn Lukensmeyer and Peter Peterson**

Themes and action items

Themes:

- Generating robust demand for public deliberation through actions at the federal/national level.
- Framing and communicating the results of our public deliberation work to be most useful to policy makers.
- Reframing the laws to support public deliberation, i.e., developing legal frameworks for deliberation at federal, state and local levels.
- There is greater consensus in the country for reform and change than in Washington, DC.
- We need to be strategic and work simultaneously to embed at “governance” level and at “grassroots” level.
- Holding a national discussion collaboratively among all our organizations building on the local work (e.g. immigration issues).
- We must tie deliberation to real decision making processes – need formal mechanisms.
- Progress is going to take time – need to build on step by step, incrementally – look at elements (framing of issues, opening of options) of success even if the overall initiative fails (e.g. California Speaks on Health Care).
- Policy-makers need the push to come from the outside; need the public will to make big systemic changes.
- Need mechanism to connect elected officials with the public once campaign is over (Action – use AmericaSpeaks town meetings to do this at National and state level, as well as local).
- Do public deliberation on large enough scale that media pays attention, as well as decision-makers (understand value of the spectacle of public deliberation).
- Diverse demographic representation is essential for scaling-up projects.
- Embed deliberation so it becomes the way government does business.

- Best hope for working at scale is at regional level (vs. national, state) – easier to create mechanisms where they don't exist.
- Work toward building a track record.

Action Themes:

1. Focus on connecting with federal agencies already doing citizen engagement in policy discussions (e.g. EPA, CDC, Interior) to launch pilots and capture successes (don't bite off too much at one time – don't go too broad to start). (Re: section of Champions of Participation on pilots).
2. Build on federal grants that communities are already receiving (e.g. Weed & Seed) and write public deliberation into RFP responses.
3. When engaging in national discussions, add in a set of questions about what action can we take at the local level.
4. Launch a National discussion on “Immigration” and implement (and frame) locally through all the public deliberation efforts already on the ground (too late for healthcare).
5. Public deliberation field should continue to provide the same depth of input to the Obama Administration Open Government Directive on “participation” and “collaboration” as has been done for “transparency”. Best hope for that sits in federal agencies (see action item #1).
6. Use Deliberative Forum Town meetings to link local people with elected representatives.
7. Structurally connect national conversation to local conversations.