COMMUNITY FORUM GUIDEBOOK

AMERICASPEAKS
Engaging Citizens in Governance

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This training program is based on the ground breaking work of AmericaSpeaks, a recognized world and national leader that engages citizens in the most important public decisions of our time. More than 145,000 people have had an impact on their communities through 21st Century Town Meetings and AmericaSpeaks' other citizen engagement methods. AmericaSpeaks is excited to offer to local leaders the opportunity to learn how to bring to their communities the tools and techniques of successful citizen engagement. Since 1997,AmericaSpeaks has conducted 21st Century Town Meetings® across the America and around the world on:

- Redeveloping the World Trade Center after 9/11
- Statewide health care plans in California and Maine
- Regional economic development in Ohio
- Rebuilding New Orleans after Katrina
- Washington D.C. municipal budget

And on the local levels in:
- Owensboro-Daviess County, KY
- Lancaster County, PA
- Calvert County, MD
- Port Philip, Victoria Australia

www.americaspeaks.org

Community*Forum* Guidebook

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Introduction to Community*Forums*

With increasing expectations from today's citizens and increasingly complex policy challenges, it is critical for local elected and community leaders to have a clear sense of the needs and priorities of the people they serve. America*Speaks* has helped leaders around the country to engage over 145,000 people in developing shared priorities on national, regional and local policies.

America*Speaks* is a world leader in public participation. One of our best known methods is the 21st Century Town Meeting®, a large-scale town meeting model that has been used at every level of governance. Community*Forums* take the best features of this method and tailor them to smaller-scale, lower cost meetings at a community level. This guidebook on Community*Forums* – and the training that accompanies it – will help you run a successful and highly participatory meeting in your community.

Community Forums provide local leaders with an affordable and effective way to tap into the collective wisdom of their community, identify shared concerns, set priorities and develop action initiatives.

Unlike traditional public meetings, which are often designed to disseminate information, Community*Forums* identify shared community priorities. Community*Forums*' participants talk to each other in small groups, learn about issues, and deliberate before voting. During the forums, decision-makers listen to citizens' table conversations about important issues they need input on. Over the course of the meeting, recommendations and priorities emerge through electronic voting that instantaneously compiles participants' votes. By the end of the meeting, community leaders receive meaningful guidance regarding the ideas, views, and priorities of a broad cross-section of their community.

Resources Available to Community*Forum* Trainees

America*Speaks* trains associates to work with local groups or governmental entities to conduct highly successful Community*Forums*. Everyone who is trained by America*Speaks* receives:

1. Training modules to support participants in learning each component of the Community*Forums* method.

2. Marketing materials to help associates sell the concept of Community*Forums* to interested clients.

3. A Community*Forums* Guidebook to help organize and conduct a forum step by step.

4. Samples of materials from past forums to get you started.

5. Copies of the PowerPoint slides used during the training workshop.

6. Low cost rental of key pads and technical support that can be used for interactive polling at meetings.

7. Upon request technical assistance to guide you in the designing and delivery of your first Community*Forum*.

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Commitment of Community*Forum* Trainees

To honor the years and resources that went into developing this method, we request that you credit America*Speaks* in the business development and program materials of all Community*Forums*.

Please acknowledge the source of your work in your materials (agenda; discussion guide; a PowerPoint slide) by stating that the meeting model you are using is based on or is a modified version of the America*Speaks*' 21st Century Town Meeting®, first developed in 1998.

What's Inside This Guidebook?

The Guidebook is composed of five sections:

- **Section 1** describes how to plan and implement a Community*Forum*

- **Section 2** features sample documents from a Community*Forum*

- **Section 3** provides PowerPoint slides from the workshop

- **Section 4** provides Worksheets that will guide you in creating a plan

- **Section 5** provides background materials and case studies

In each section, there are six corresponding chapters:

- **Chapter 1** explores the basics of how a forum works, the elements of work to be done, a proposed committee structure, and planning from day one for implementation and impact.

- **Chapter 2** focuses on the content of your meeting: how to frame the issue and research and write a neutral discussion guide. This chapter also addresses how to design the meeting agenda to maximize the amount of discussion and deliberation, and minimize speakers and presenters.

- **Chapter 3** focuses on strategies to recruit demographically representative participants and ensure that they register, attend, and actively participate in the forum.

- **Chapter 4** addresses all the logistics required to rent the venue, order the food, arrange technology, make the copies and interface with all the other parts of the program.

- **Chapter 5** provides information on recruiting and orienting a table facilitator for every table of participants. In addition, these pages focus on volunteers that are recruited to cover positions that range from registration to greeters to runners.

- **Chapter 6** focuses on the strategies that will ensure that the meeting has an impact. Implementation activities begin during the planning stage and continue well after the forum is complete.

Management Nuts & Bolts

About Community*Forums*

Community*Forums* Format

Community*Forums* are for local governments, institutions, and organizations to engage and empower citizens and residents as partners in planning for the future, making an important decision, or developing and implementing a project.

These forums use tested, lively, interactive methods to involve diverse citizens and stakeholders in developing shared priorities and joint strategies for action. America*Speaks*' Community*Forums* model combines facilitated small group dialogue with technology. This approach enables groups to deliberate options, make critical tradeoffs and deepen their commitment to next steps.

Key Forum Features

The America*Speaks* model is designed to surface critical questions and gather exceptionally valuable information. A Community*Forum* features:

- **Facilitated table discussions** that give everyone equal and adequate time to be heard

- **Fast feedback** to participants on major themes and priorities that emerge from their collective ideas

- **Interactive processes** which accelerate mutual understanding and efficiently measure support for new proposals

- **Background materials** that are clear and balanced, providing citizens with the information they need to participate effectively in the discussions and polling exercises

- **Shared next steps** for the initiative that includes encouraging participants to commit to following through on the priorities identified

Types of Community*Forums*

- **Community Summit:** Bring together people from different agencies and/or organizations to launch an effort that empowers multiple stakeholders to collaborate on a common initiative.

- **Planning & Budgeting:** Involve constituents in planning and budgeting efforts to increase the likelihood of "getting it right" and increase the likelihood of support for the decisions that are made.

- **Complex Policy or Contentious Issue:** Engage citizens in addressing difficult, divisive issues and build public will for government or community policy change.

- **Employee Meetings:** Convene employees of a government agency or a corporation to improve communication, set goals and enhance cooperative action.

- **Annual Meetings:** Provide an opportunity for members of one or more organizations or associations to meet for an update, for example an annual economic or educational summit.

Meeting Size and Schedule

Community*Forums* often range in size from 50-200 participants and are often held in the evening or on Saturdays as this allows most working people to attend the meeting. See Chapter 3 for additional ways to support workers, adults with small children, people with disabilities, etc. to attend.

Larger meetings (greater than 200) have the advantage of drawing greater attention from the media, community leaders and lawmakers because of their uniqueness and media-worthiness. Additionally, decision-makers take the result of larger meetings more seriously as the outcomes represent a larger number of constituents. Larger meetings invariably cost more than smaller meetings.

Successful smaller meetings often create the groundwork for larger meetings in the future. In some cases a meeting of 100 leaders and/or stakeholders will expose key people to the effective format of Community*Forums* and build the political and funding support needed for a larger meeting.

Planning for Impact

The impact of a Community*Forum* is dependent on its leadership:

- **Project Sponsors** are the individuals and/or organizations which take ownership for identifying funding and additional partners for planning and implementing the Community*Forum*.

- The **Project Lead** is an individual experienced in convening large groups. This person has overall responsibility for guiding all aspects of planning and implementing the Community*Forum*.

Both the Project Sponsors and the Project Lead help identify, convene and work closely with the Steering Committee to ensure a successful forum.

Choosing Project Focus

The need to address an important public or community issue is often the reason behind convening a Community*Forum*. If the Project Sponsors have not yet determined the issue, the Project Lead must work with the Steering Committee to select and refine a suitable issue.

To evaluate the issue's suitability for a Community*Forum*, or if the issue is not yet agreed on, the Steering Committee might consider the following questions:

- Has the issue gained visibility and widespread interest among a broad cross-section of the community/population?

- Will citizen deliberation add value? Is a decision-making process "stuck" or at a turning point in which citizen input would give the process new focus and momentum? Is the issue "new" and public dialogue could be used to identify new options or ideas to pursue?

- Is there enough information to build an informed dialogue? Most importantly, are there clear options to choose from?

- Is there a minimum level of trust among the stakeholder groups to ensure they will cooperate with each other in developing background materials, sharing platforms, etc.?

- Are key decision-makers (those responsible for acting on the outcomes of the Commuity*Forum*) willing to listen and respond to the priorities of the forum?

- Are there likely public, private, individual or corporate entities that will financially support a project on this issue?

Developing Project Goals and Maximizing Impact

To define the goals of the Community*Forum*, the Steering Committee should begin by identifying the desired outcomes and number and type of participants of the forum.

To maximize impact, carefully consider the timing, positioning and sponsorship of the Community*Forum*. Outcomes will vary depending upon the forum's role in the decision-making process but can include changing the terms of the debate, identifying key options, setting the content or priorities in strategic plans or allocating budgetary resources.
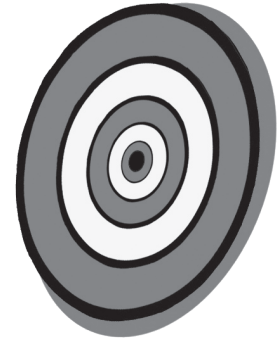
Audience

- » Who are the primary target audiences for the outcomes of the Community*Forum*?
- » What will establish credibility with each of the critical audiences?
- » What type of information will each audience require, and at what stage?

Political Context

- » What is the process and timeline for decision-making?
- » Who are the advocates?
- » What interests are at stake?
- » Who has influence with the decision-makers who make the decisions?

Historical Context

- » What is the history of this issue and related decision-making processes?

Communications Context

- » How has the issue been framed by the media?
- » What will it take to get the attention of decision-makers?
- » What will it take to get the attention of the public?

Issue/Decision-Making Environment

- » What questions or sub-issues are most pressing?
- » What special interest positions need to be reflected?
- » What facts and figures will best educate the public and impact public policy being addressed?
- » How can the outcomes of the forum be used for best impact?
- » How should the outcome of the Community*Forum* be integrated into other planning or decision making processes?
- » Will the Community*Forum* build on previous public processes or programs? Will it be used by future public processes or programs? If so, how?

Ownership

- » Who will be the likely leaders in implementing the forum outcomes?
- » What is the history of community involvement in this or other issues?
- » What resources are available to support continued involvement on the issue?

Link to Decision-Makers

Early in the planning process, develop strategies to involve decision-makers before, during and after the forum. Participants need to know upfront how their input will be used and the ultimate impact of their participation in the forum. To involve decision-makers consider one or more of the following:

- Identify the decision-makers who should be involved in order for the forum to have the greatest impact.

- Develop plans for involving them in one or more ways:

  - Serving as a member of the Steering Committee

  - Speaking during the forum

  - Leading the follow through on priorities identified during the forum

  - Greeting citizens at the entrance to the forum

  - During the forum we encourage decision-makers to sit at tables to observe the conversation and to periodically float to other tables. Listening to the table conversation is a good way for them to understand the issue from the vantage point of the participant.

- Approach the decision-maker with a clear description of the opportunity to engage with large numbers of unaffiliated citizens.

- Convey the Steering Committee's commitment to securing a demographically representative and diverse group of participants.

- Secure and publicize "unlikely partnerships" among stakeholders from all perspectives to demonstrate the balanced nature of the process.

- Identify other decision-makers who have committed to considering the outcomes of the forum.

- Ask committed decision-makers to recruit their colleagues.

Funding Strategies
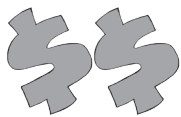
Although the budget for a Community*Forum* is moderate in expense, it is still more expensive than most communities are accustomed to spending for local public meetings. A successful fundraising effort will depend on the salience of the chosen issue(s). It will be easier to engage local funders and secure resources if the issue(s) and/or focus of the forum is compelling and the need for the public to participate is vital.

The ideal funding composition for a Community*Forum* is an equal balance of public, private and corporate funds.

Funding Sources

General guidelines include the following:

- *Public* – Investigate whether local or state agencies with objectives connected to the issue can provide partial funding within their current program guidelines or special program budgets. This is particularly likely when a government agency or body has a mandate to conduct public participation.

- *Private* – Local or regional foundations are likely supporters of Community*Forums*. National foundations concerned with the issue(s) under consideration as well as those that support deliberative democracy are also good candidates.

- *Corporate* – In addition to unrestricted cash contributions, corporate supporters may provide in-kind goods and/or services or choose to sponsor specific elements of the forum.

In some cases where an organization is convening its employees, fundraising may not be needed. Annual meetings of professionals or stakeholders may charge a fee to cover forum costs. In other cases, a coalition of local organizations may be needed to fund the event.

Summary of Project Committees and Tasks

Below is a summary of committees and tasks that need to be completed for a successful Community*Forum*. Tasks are accomplished in a manner collaboratively agreed to by the Project Lead, Project Sponsor(s) and the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is a group of people who agree to take responsibility for the forum's success. This group is responsible for the overall organization and management of the Community*Forum*. The Steering Committee is the first committee to be formed. Often, members of the Steering Committee are active members of at least one Project Committee.

Composed of 6-10 people, the Steering Committee is representative of the forum sponsors and participants. Members may come from several different groups, agencies and community groups or, in some instances, may all be representatives of the group that is sponsoring the forum.

The Steering Committee should be composed of some or all of the following types of people:

- Representatives of the sponsoring organizations and/or agencies

- Individuals from organizations that work on the issue(s) to be discussed

- Elected officials

- Community leaders and stakeholders

- Members of groups and organizations involved in community affairs
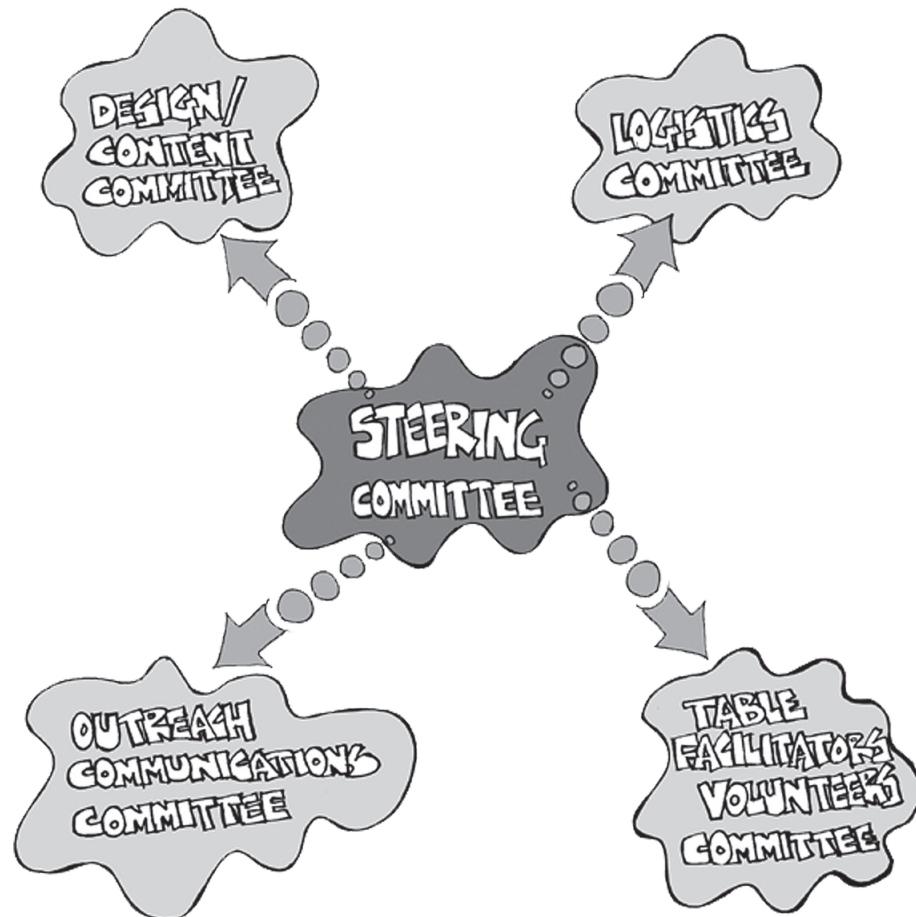
The key responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to:

- Determine Community*Forum* size and choose a date
- Outline program goals and desired outcomes
- Approve goals for participant numbers and demographics
- Participate in Steering Committee meetings
- Participate in Community*Forum*
- Develop and oversee project budget
- Given budget constraints, approve or reject any additional services such as, child care, transportation, translations, etc.
- Develop and revise strategies for VIP recruitment/engagement
- Request and conduct briefings with VIPs as needed

Project Committees

To do the vast majority of the work, the most efficient and effective plan is to create a series of committees. These committees can be staffed by members of the steering committee but also cast the net wider to build on the strengths and talents of those better suited for more targeted areas of work.

Program Content & Design Committee

The role of this committee is to manage the writing of the participant guide and development of the design of the program for the forum. This committee is comprised of 2-4 people including the Project Lead who often serves as the Designer. Its key tasks are to:

- Hold program design meetings
- Develop drafts of program design and agenda
- Develop Discussion Guide text and participant materials
- Oversee material production process
- Develop Preliminary Report
- Draft talking points and power point slides for meeting
- Assist in securing topic experts
- Develop Final Report

Outreach & Communications Committee and Tasks

The role of this committee is to recruit demographically representative participants, develop logos, write the outreach materials and ensure good press coverage. This committee is comprised of 2-4 people committed to recruiting participants to achieve the outreach targets and/ or readjust targets. In some cases they may contract with others to help in recruitment. Its key tasks are to:

- Develop outreach and media strategy
- Develop overall web strategy and plan
- Monitor outreach targets vs. registrations
- Develop outreach materials and documents
- Coordinate and integrate media strategy with outreach efforts
- Manage reminder phones calls to all registered participants
- Write press releases, op-eds, and letters to the editor, and pitch stories
- Present Community*Forum* briefings at local community events
- Design and place paid advertisements, PSAs as needed
- Conduct follow-up publicity for the report of proceedings

> ## Project Workplan
>
> A project workplan is a tool to guide you to a successful Community*Forum*. At the end of each of the following chapters is a workplan template that identifies the tasks to be accomplished, key milestones and deadlines for the following sub-committees:
>
> - Content/Design
> - Outreach/Communications
> - Table Facilitator/Volunteer recruitment
> - Logistics
> - And more

Logistics Committee and Tasks

The role of this committee is to oversee decisions on venue, food, printing, etc. and coordinate with the other committees to ensure their logistical needs are met. This committee is comprised of 2-4 people and handles all logistics and venue tasks leading up to and on the day of the Community*Forum*. Key tasks include:

- Select venue and catering vendors
- Track production schedule and delivery as needed
- Ensure all materials are printed prior to meeting
- Coordinate material translation
- Manage production schedule, including set-up
- Manage post-meeting tear down
- Develop additional service plans and logistics
- Assist in recruiting event staff, table facilitators, theme team, volunteers and participants

Table Facilitator & Volunteer Committee

The role of this committee is to tap local talent to volunteer to be a table facilitator or staff other critical roles like registration and ushers. This committee is comprised of at least two individuals to recruit Table Facilitators and Volunteers for the Community*Forum*. Key tasks include:

- Recruit and maintain contact with volunteer table facilitators
- Develop orientation and training program
- Develop training materials and conducts training program
- Identify volunteer sources and recruit volunteers
- Develop volunteer plan (pre-meeting and meeting)
- Develop and conduct volunteer orientation and training program
- Manage volunteers during meeting

Roles at the Community*Forum* Event

A key task in the planning of a Community*Forum* is identifying all of the people that will play key roles during the forum. Below are different roles which contribute to the success of a forum.

Lead Facilitator

The Lead Facilitator introduces program speakers, performers and presenters; leads voting exercises; introduces and describes table discussion tasks; reports back voting and discussion results and closes the forum. Behind the scenes, the Lead Facilitator adjusts the forum and program timing as necessary, shortening or lengthening tasks based on participant feedback and response. The Lead Facilitator is often the same person as the Project Lead.

Producer/Technical Director

The Producer's primary tasks are to assist the Lead Facilitator in "behind-the-scenes" management of the program, PowerPoint slides and keypads (if used). The Producer keeps track of time, suggests program design changes, advances PowerPoint slides, runs the keypad system, finds and prepares speakers at the appropriate time, and serves as a liaison to the Theme Team. When the program is complex and/or the Producer inexperienced this role may best be filled by two people, one the Producer and one the Technical Director.

Theme Team Captain

The Theme Team Captain is responsible for ensuring the Theme Team (see below) meets its deadlines and produces high quality materials. The Captain is responsible for combining or eliminating themes as necessary or giving the "final call" on any group decisions. The Captain also serves as the liaison to the Producer.

Required skills and experience include:

- Capacity to work quickly and well under pressure
- Quick editing skills
- Capacity to lead teams
- Comfort with PowerPoint
- All skills of Theme Team members

Theme Team Members
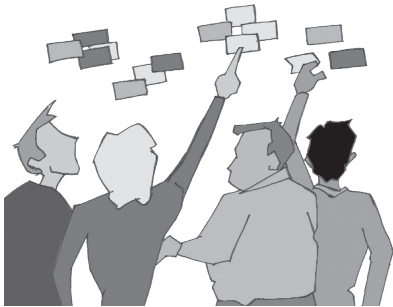
The Theme Team serves the Community*Forum* by reading and synthesizing participant discussion ideas. The team receives post-it notes from each discussion table in real time. They then quickly distill the comments into a few main themes or key messages. At the end of the discussion, these themes are then presented back to the whole room. Sometimes keypad polling is conducted to determine top priorities from this list of themes. Budget permitting you may choose to use laptops and a groupware system called WebCouncil®. We cover this in greater detail later in this Guidebook.

Required skills and experience include:

- Working well in an intensive, interactive team setting
- Digesting a large quantity of ideas and information in fairly short periods of time
- Synthesizing a wide range of ideas into clear, coherent, participant-friendly language
- Staying neutral about the content being reviewed; not making judgments about whether the ideas are "right"
- Operating under the 80% rule – that you can't read and digest every single idea in each time period, but will review most of it in the time allotted to ascertain the key ideas and the common threads
- Staying flexible as the schedule may change significantly during the agenda

Logistics Coordinator/Floor Manager

The Floor Manager is responsible for preparing and managing all aspects of the forum other than the program itself. The Floor Manager is often the person who has been the lead person on the Logistics Committee. The Floor Manager is responsible for making decisions regarding logistics, materials, seating of participants, AV, catering, set up and tear down.

Registration Volunteers

The registration volunteers set up and staff the registration area, making sure that all required materials are available (badges, participant folders, registration lists, etc.). Registration volunteers are responsible for greeting participants as they arrive and processing their registration according to the system.
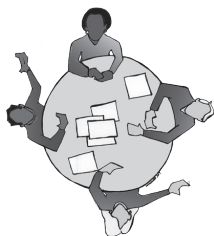
Table Facilitators

Table Facilitators are responsible for managing the table discussions. Table Facilitators follow, and sometimes supplement, the instructions given by the Lead Facilitator. Table Facilitators are given background material and attend a 90-minute orientation session to introduce them to the program design and agenda. They are expected to have prior experience facilitating small discussions.

Issue Experts

Issue Experts are sometimes used for highly complex issues, such as healthcare or economic recovery. Invite one or two Issue Experts to be available during the forum to answer substantive questions about the content and materials. Their primary duty is to circulate the room during specific parts of the agenda in which substantive questions are expected or anticipated.

Media Coordinator

One coordinator from the Outreach/Communications team is the likely candidate to manage the on-site press during the forum. Prior to the forum, the Media Coordinator establishes a media registration check-in process and oversees the set-up of the media area. During the forum, the Media Coordinator manages the media check-in process and monitors press according to the media policies, answers questions, arranges interviews with spokespersons, drafts a press release announcing the meeting outcomes, and troubleshoots as necessary.

Additional Services Volunteer

A volunteer who has been on the Logistics Committee oversees the additional services that may be included such as transportation, childcare, and translation. For some topics, Community Services tables are set up to provide participants with information and immediate assistance for issues related to the program content.

Program Content & Design

Program content and design are at the heart of planning the Community*Forum*. The creation of the program design leads to a forum agenda that aligns with desired outcomes, sequences the discussion topics in an appropriate way, allows topic areas to build upon one another, and leads toward the desired results typically recommendations and proposed actions. The creation of a Participant Guide – and supplementary materials – sets the context for the forum and the issue(s) being addressed. The Guide also provides key background data and information that enhances each of the discussion topics.

Program Content & Design Committee Responsibilities

The core Design Committee includes: Designer, Experts, Writer and often a couple of representatives of the Steering Committee. Sometimes it may be necessary for other team members to sit in on the design meetings in order to understand how the program design will impact other areas of the project.

Design Committee

The Design Committee is responsible for the following:

- Identify key program goals and outcomes
- Work with the Designer to develop the general program design
- Review program design drafts and provide detailed feedback
- Make decisions on use of keypads and/or theming technologies
- Review Participant Guide drafts
- Identify appropriate speakers
- Identify Theme Team and Issue Experts

Program Designer

The duties include:

- Draft and finalize program design
- Facilitate Design Committee meetings
- Draft program script/talking points
- Draft program slides, worksheets and materials
- Draft speaker talking points and brief speakers
- Work with Logistics Coordinator to develop technical & room specifications
- Design Theme Team orientation and materials
- Design Table Facilitator orientation and materials
- Work with writer/graphic designer in developing content for Participant Guide

Issue Expert(s)

Issue Experts should be extremely knowledgeable in the topic area(s) and serve on the Design Committee with others. You will find that you don't always need to provide these experts at a forum.

Writer and Graphic Designer

Writes and designs the Participant Guide. The Writer is a member of the Design Committee and ensures that the Participant Guide reflects the program design. The Designer in some cases may also serve as the Writer. In addition, the Steering Committee is closely involved with the Design Committee in reviewing program design drafts, participant materials, and assisting in securing Issue Experts and Theme Team members.

Content Development

Identify Research & Data Needs

To ensure the CommunityForum builds upon existing data and resources, the Participant Guide writer must conduct thorough research and analysis of the relevant issue areas in the region

Research may include:

- Recent reports, analyses and data on key issues
- Relevant laws and policies
- Relevant decision-making processes; who makes the decision and how
- History of related issues and remedies in the region
- Related responses/policy decisions made by other regions/counties

Develop Participant Guide

The Participant Guide is designed to provide participants with the context and background they need to have informed discussions during the forum. Generally, the Participant Guide is a booklet ranging from 8-16 pages in length. The writing and graphics are specifically designed to make the booklet engaging and interesting to read.

These four steps outline the process for developing a Participant Guide:

1. *Research* the issue context and background. For example, examine historical influences, regional trends, etc. The content of the Guide should closely follow the program design. As such, it is crucial that the Participant Guide and program design are synchronized.

2. An initial *outline* of the Participant Guide is developed by the Program Designer, Writer, and Issue Experts. As much as possible, the outline should specify graphic elements and data charts. This will give the Experts and Writer sufficient time to gather the required data and translate it into graphics.

3. The Writer and Program Designer develop the first *draft* of the Participant Guide. The Program Designer ensures the guide follows the program design closely.

4. The Design Committee, Steering Committee, and Project Sponsors *review* the Guide.
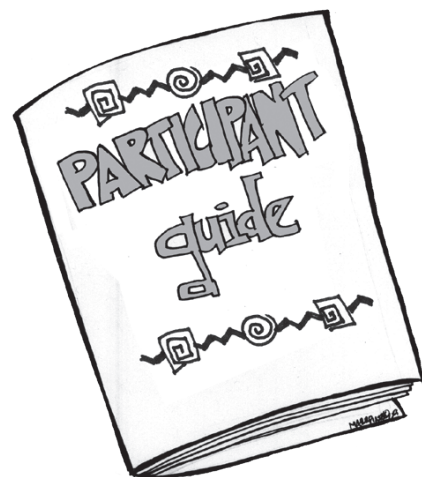
Develop Supporting Table Materials

Although the Participant Guide outlines the basic information and context for each major discussion question, some discussion questions may be particularly complex and require additional background information or tools.

- Worksheet packets are often used to help participants focus on a discussion question and to jot down thoughts before discussion begins.

- Each participant receives all materials. However, a limited number of lengthy documents may only be provided on Resource Tables located around the periphery of the room.

- Additional participant table materials may include: large maps, relevant background reports, and full copies of strategic or urban plans.

Develop Program Design

The Program Designer builds a draft of the program based on the outcomes defined by the Steering Committee. The program design goes beyond developing an 'agenda' – which you'll see below – by incorporating programmatic elements that ensure high participation and shared priorities.

A typical agenda for a forum might be:

- Opening
- Forum Agenda
- Table Introductions
- Demographic Polling (optional)
- Values or Vision Discussion
- Discussion on Topic # 1
- Discussion on Topic # 2
- Closing and Next Steps

For longer meetings, you may be able to have a discussion on a third topic.

The Program Design should be developed in parallel with the Participant Guide. Both the design and Participant Guide should be subject to multiple reviews by the entire membership of both the Content & Design Committee and the Steering Committee.

An initial design will only be a page or two, but after a half dozen iterations will grow to a 5-10 page document with far more detail outlined. In each version, committees will make choices about what is most important to cover in the limited time of a forum.

At some point, several weeks before the forum, the design is finalized so that other committees can take the design and finalize their own plans and responsibilities. No later than one week before the CommunityForum, the design is frozen so the following tasks can be completed:

- Participant material development and production
- Table facilitator material development and orientation
- Theme Team material development and orientation
- PowerPoint slides development
- Talking points for Lead Facilitator and guest speakers

Design Components

Certain program elements are common in most designs:

- Table introductions allowing people to introduce themselves to their table mates and give a quick answer to a short question such as "What motivated you to be here today?"
- A value-based discussion to help participants identify and understand their common values before they begin discussions on difficult issues
- Discussion questions to explore the core issues and find ideas with general support among participants
- Theme Team reports on the themes from table discussions
- Opportunities to identify personal preferences through paper or electronic polling
- Participant commitments for helping with implementation and follow through on actions
- Welcome from Project Sponsor(s) introducing the day and closing remarks at the end of the forum including a summary of what they heard and what their commitments are going forward

Discussion Questions

Sponsors may want specific policy options to be considered by participants. To discuss a specific proposal, a discussion question might be, "Under what conditions would you support this proposal?" In another setting, there may be numerous options but not all options can be supported because of limited resources. Discussion questions for this scenario might include, "What do you like and what concerns do you have about each option presented?"

No matter how the questions are phrased, the participants must have the freedom to add to the list of pre-developed choices. In general, participants in this setting prefer to be empowered to develop additional options as necessary.

Detailed Program Design with Talking Points

Ensure you have a detailed program design to support each person who will be addressing attendees during the forum. For a small forum, a 10-page design document with talking points may be sufficient, especially if the Lead Facilitator does not require a Producer, keypads are not being used, and a paper theming process is being used. With a larger forum and/or highly complex design with more people playing key roles, a more detailed script must be developed that includes extensive talking points, the tracking of PowerPoint slides, logistical cues, etc.

Write a Script (optional)

The program script is a much more detailed version of the program design with talking points. It includes every aspect of the program including speakers' talking points, the contents of PowerPoint slides, and technical cues. The Lead Facilitator uses the script throughout the program to ensure the program stays on schedule and on message. Speakers also use their talking points for this purpose.

In developing the script, consider the following:

- The talking points should be drafted primarily by the Designer and the Lead Facilitator.

- The script often refers to key data points and details (titles, agency names, etc.), discussion questions, polling questions, instructions for using the technologies, etc. Therefore it is advisable that someone other than the script writer assist in tracking down last-minute data and fact-checking as needed.

- To ensure that the speaker's comments are appropriate in tone, length and fit with the rest of the program, it is recommended the Program Designer draft talking points at least a week before the meeting. Although most speakers – and the Lead Facilitator - will revise these talking points to fit their own speaking style, providing a starting point can greatly assist the speaker and their staff.

Speakers

Forums do not include long speeches by lawmakers or leaders. The bulk of the program is dedicated to small group discussions among participants. However, each program usually includes several short speaking opportunities reserved for welcoming and closing announcements.

- Choose speakers carefully to represent the decision-makers that will consider the program's outcomes; this demonstrates that the outcomes of the meeting will be heard and used.

- Ensure speakers represent a balance of perspectives.

Brief the Speakers: The briefing session or rehearsal for each speaker is an opportunity to review the purpose, structure and tone of the meeting as well as the speaker's role. Before the rehearsal, prepare a briefing packet that includes:

- Name, time, date of the rehearsal and the Community*Forum*

- Meeting site address, directions and parking information

- What time the speakers should arrive at the meeting site and report to the stage

- Whom they should contact when they arrive at the meeting site and how

- Whom they should contact in case of emergency, delay, etc. (day, evening, cell phones)

- Confirmation of their set-up needs

- Options for participating after speaking (sitting at table, observation area, etc.)

- Participant Guide

- One-page program agenda

Issue Experts

Depending upon the subject matter and scope of the forum, it can be advisable to arrange for experts to be on hand during the program.

Types of experts can include:

- Issue Experts – Representatives who can answer questions about the specific topic(s) being discussed. The issue experts are dispatched to tables that request assistance, ensuring table discussions do not get "bogged down" in technical information.

- Emotional Support Counselors – For forums on difficult issues like disaster recovery, trained professionals can assist participants experiencing grief.

- Case Workers – Representatives from agencies who provide detailed information regarding services.

Once the type of expert(s) needed has been identified, the Logistics Coordinator works with the Outreach Committee in recruiting and orienting qualified experts.

Coordination with other Committees

Communication with other committees should be ongoing. Plan to distribute a "working draft" of the program design to Steering Committee, Outreach Committee, Table Facilitator Recruiters, and Logistics Coordinator as soon as the key elements of the program have been decided – number of discussion questions, issues involved in discussion questions, number and approximate timing of speakers, etc.

The working draft will provide important information for project staff to begin the following tasks:

- Identifying Theme Team requirements and members
- Recruiting Table Facilitators
- Finalizing Participant Guide
- Deciding participant folder contents
- Recruiting speakers (if any)
- Reviewing technical plan

The technical plan includes a number of elements that are addressed in the Logistics chapter. The elements that are dependent on the program design are:

- Floor plan
- Audio system and microphones
- Projector, screen size and location
- Stage size/type (you may not need a stage unless your forum is for 200 or more people)
- Decorative theme and elements
- Use of keypads and theming technologies

Conduct Program Simulation

The purpose of conducting a simulation is to test key elements of the program design with a small, representative group in advance of the Community*Forum*. Simulations allow the Prorgam Designer to test discussion questions, simulate fruitful conversations, gauge whether group tasks are clear, and determine whether tasks can be completed in the allotted time. The program design is always changed in response to simulation observations; sometimes these changes are radical.

In planning the program design simulation, consider the following:

- The simulation is held no later than 2 weeks before the forum to allow enough time for the program to be redesigned if needed.

- Allot 1-2 hours for the simulation, depending upon the program elements to be tested.

- Invite 5 to 7 demographically diverse participants. In order to get useful feedback, it is essential that the group represent a microcosm of the Community*Forum* participants.

- Simulation participants can be recruited by calling registered participants or by working through organizations involved in planning the forum.

- In recruiting simulation participants, emphasize that this will be an opportunity to get a "sneak peak" at the program design and help refine it. Generally participants are excited to have an opportunity to participate.

- The Program Designer can plan and run the simulation. However, if another facilitator is available to run the process, it is helpful to let the Program Designer observe the group's table discussion and focus on observing how participants are responding to the program.

Theme Team
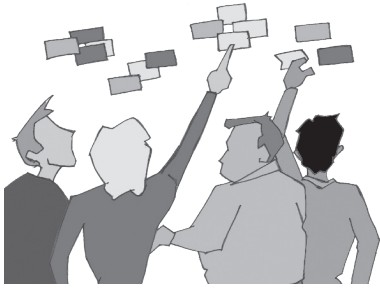
Recruitment of Theme Team

The Theme Team is a group of volunteers who reads, identifies and distills the key messages and themes sent to them by each participant table. The Theme Team synthesizes the raw data into themes. Themes of what the entire group has been discussing are reported back via large projection screens making them visible to everyone in the room.

General guidelines regarding Theme Team recruitment include the following:

- Theme team recruitment does not begin until the key elements of the program design have been determined. The program's character – number of discussion questions, type of questions, format, etc. – will influence the size, skills and working structure of the Theme Team.

- Most Theme Teams have between 5 and 10 members, with one Theme Team Captain.

- The Theme Team must be credible. In general, the Theme Team's credibility is established by creating diversity, issue expertise, and neutrality. Although most Theme Team members will have affiliations (government, advocacy, academic), they must be committed to remaining neutral and accurately communicating participants' comments as presented. Perhaps most importantly, members must be perceived as neutral by the majority of the public.

- Theme Team members are able to synthesize large amounts of ideas, work quickly and efficiently, and collaborate in a team environment.

- In order to participate, Theme Team members must:

    – Attend an orientation session the week prior to the Community*Forum*

    – Review orientation materials prior to the forum

    – Arrive early and work throughout the forum

- Theme Team recruitment includes recruiting a Theme Team Captain. The Captain is responsible for compiling input from Theme Team members and crafting a concise theme team statement. The Theme Team Captain is also the team's point person with the Logistics Coordinator. The Captain must be an excellent, quick and concise writer; an expert at synthesizing data; calm under pressure, and superior at working with teams.

Each member of the Theme Team receives a packet of background materials prior to the Community*Forum*. These may include:

- Participant Guide

- Worksheets

- Theme Team Guide summarizing the program and the tasks for the Theme Team

Theming Process

The Theme Team serves the forum by reading statements from all of the tables as participants are writing them (or entering them into laptop computers, if using groupware). Comments are quickly distilled into a few primary themes or key messages and then presented to the whole room. Themes are used to kick off a new conversation, convey to participants that leaders are listening, or to validate what has been said which might ultimately lead to a vote.

The Theme Team makes this process work through periods of intense activity during and immediately after each discussion period. The themes they develop are typed into PowerPoint slides and presented by the Lead Facilitator throughout the forum.

Paper Theming: Every discussion table is given a pad of sticky notes. Once the table has identified an idea it wants submitted to the Theme Team, the Table Facilitator raises the sticky(s) in the air and a volunteer runner picks up the sticky(s) and delivers it to the Theme Team Captain. Depending on the discussion question, each table will submit four to six ideas in total. Not all ideas are submitted by the Table Facilitator, only important table agreements. To support the theming process, only one idea is written on each sticky note – no doubling up!

The Theme Team receives sticky notes throughout the conversation. They are organizing the random sticky notes on a large piece of paper on a side wall, clustering them into themes. Theme team members identify a sticky that effectively summarizes all of the sticky notes in each cluster, or summarizes those ideas into a succinct representation of those ideas. This is a "theme." Once a summary theme is decided, it is typed into a PowerPoint slide to be presented back to the room. The theming process can be noisy since theme team members must discuss how best to organize the information they are receiving. It is often wise to provide a workspace very close to but slightly outside of the meeting room.

Groupware Theming: In this scenario, every table receives a laptop computer that has "groupware" software to connect the participant tables with the Theme Team. Participants submit their table's agreed upon ideas via their laptop computer. The Theme Team works in pairs, reviewing the ideas coming in electronically from all tables, and identifies the strongest and most recurring themes. Once the team synthesizes a theme they write it on a sticky note, and pass it to the Theme Team Captain, who enters it into a PowerPoint slide.

Determine Contents of Participant Folders

In addition to the Participant Guide and discussion question worksheets, you may wish to provide additional materials. The Steering Committee makes the final decision about which materials should be included in participant folders. Project Sponsors may also want to include brochures or other information in the participant folder.

Participant folders often include the following:

- Participant Guide and Worksheets

- List of Steering Committee

- Lists of funding sources and thank you

- Flyers for upcoming events

- "Get Involved" sheet that lists opportunities to remain involved

- Project newsletters

- Background reports

Committee Members' Event Day Assignments

The Design Coordinator should work with the Project Lead to assign Content/Design Committee members to appropriate positions for the day of the forum. The jobs best-suited for Content/Design Committee members include the following: Producer, Assistant Producer, Technical Director, Table Facilitator Orientation, Theme Team Captain or Theme Team member.

Final Walkthrough/Rehearsal

To ensure a successful event, it's important to hold a final walkthrough the day before the forum, at a time after the sound, stage and lights are set up. Include at least the following people in the rehearsal:

- Lead Facilitator
- Speakers
- Theme Team Captain
- Logistics Coordinator
- Technical Director

Final Walkthrough includes:

- Reviewing entire script with staging elements (PowerPoint, video, audio)
- Testing the stage, sound and lighting
- Practicing key segments of the program from the podium
- Reviewing everyone's responsibilities and answering all questions or concerns
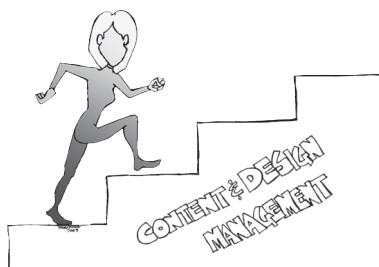
Program Content & Design Workplan

The Content & Design Committee works to design a meeting that will achieve the outcome statements developed by the Steering Committee. This committee follows a workplan similar to the one below.

Week 9 or earlier (if possible)
- Conduct 1st Design Committee Meeting
- Review outcomes developed by Steering Committee
- Develop a framework for the content
- Develop a workplan for content & design

Week 8
- Draft Program Design Version 1 (V1) and review with Design Committee
- Begin research on issues to be included in Participant Guide
- Finalize framework

Week 7
- Present Program Design V2 and review with Design Committee
- Develop an outline for the Participant Guide
- Make decisions on use of keypad and groupware technology

Week 6
- Present Program Design V3 and review with Steering Committee
- Complete 1st draft of Participant Guide and submit for edits

Week 5
- Present Program Design V4 and review with Steering Committee
- Complete 2nd draft of Participant Guide and submit for edits

Week 4
- Present Program Design V5 and review with Steering Committee
- Complete 3rd draft of Participant Guide and submit for edits

Week 3
- Freeze Program Design
- Begin drafting talking points
- Send Participant Guide to graphic artist

Week 2
- Freeze Program Design
- Continue developing on Talking Points/Script
- Send Participant Guide to printer

Week 1
- Develop PowerPoint slides
- Write Table Facilitator Guide and orientation materials
- Write Theme Team Guide and orientation materials

Event Week
- Finish all talking points/script
- Conduct rehearsals
- Conduct Table Facilitator and Theme Team Training

Event +1 Week
- Debrief activities
- Thank yous

Outreach & Communications

A targeted outreach and communications strategy will ensure the right people are at the Community*Forum* and increase your presence in the community and with key decision-makers. Communications and public relations team members craft the messages that will be used in outreach materials, radio announcements, on the website, press releases, etc.

To attract a demographically representative group of participants, a central activity is to build partnerships with local organizations and community organizers. Extra effort is needed to register segments of the groups that are typically under-represented at public meetings, such as young people, people of color, and lower income people.

Outreach & Communications Committee Responsibilities

The Outreach/Communications Committee includes: Outreach Coordinator, Communications Coordinator, Website Coordinator, and representatives of the Steering Committee. Each member plays an important role in getting people in the room for the forum, and in building community awareness about the project.

Outreach & Communications Committee

- Develop a communications strategy that is targeted to the community including potential reasons for participating in the Community*Forum*

- Develop outreach materials

- Meet with local targeted organizations to secure their help in recruiting participants

- Send out invitations (mail and/or email)

- Make follow-up calls to invitees

- Coordinate efforts with the Steering Committee, Table Facilitator, and Logistics Committees as needed to support outreach efforts

- Identify additional services needed (transportation, wheelchair access, etc.) and any corresponding materials (Braille, large print, etc.)

- Track and report outreach efforts and outcomes

- Ensure website reflects outreach message and registration information

- Develop communications plan to involve media

Outreach Coordinator

- Manages Outreach Committee

- Develops outreach strategy

- Monitors outreach goals and progress

- Drafts outreach materials

- Develops relationships with community organizations

- Manages database for mailings and emailings

- Manages ordering and distribution of outreach materials

Communications Coordinator

A person with public relations experience who volunteers to spearhead the media strategy. The Coordinator also oversees the development of the logo, letterhead and brand.

Website Coordinator

A person with website experience who will develop a new website or add pages to an existing website to advertise the forum and register participants.

Demographic Targets

A very early task of the Steering Committee is to identify who should participate in the forum. Consider important demographics such as age, race, ethnicity, employment status, community affiliation, etc. The subject of the forum will determine the demographic categories. For instance, if a gathering is for non-profit organizations you may want to target a diverse mixture of organizations with different missions. In order to be successful, some forums will want to have a representative sample of the general population present and others will focus more on recruiting a particular segment of the community.
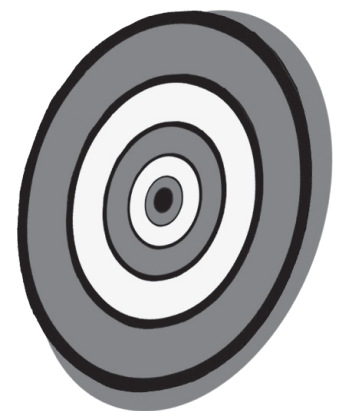
> **In setting your outreach strategy, the best question to ask is, *"Who needs to be in the room, and in what proportion, to ensure this process will be credible?"***

To determine your demographic targets for participant outreach, research the demographics of the defined community. The Census is a good resource for this data (www.census.gov). Based on the goal for number of participants, use the community's demographic data to allocate recruitment targets based on percentages. For example, if the forum's numerical goal is 150 people, and 20% of community members are Latino, then the target is 20% of 150 people, or 30 Latinos. One important note is that you should always recruit more people than you hope to attend, because approximately 30-40% of registrants to a free community event may not show up.

The Outreach Committee ensures the participant registration materials are set up to help track recruitment goals. Registration forms will also ask about additional services needs, such as dietary, wheelchair, sign language, etc.

Participant Outreach Strategies

The purpose of the outreach strategy is to develop ways to reach and recruit targeted populations. The strategy will drive a detailed assessment of the resources needed to recruit participants to meet the demographic targets. The strategy and subsequent workplan serve as the outreach "blueprint" for action and resource allocation. Common elements within each section of a strategy are:

Outreach Goals

- Recruit "x number" of participants
- Attract demographically representative participation from the community by "ethnicity, age, gender, income level, and geography" (use your important categories)
- Attract participants from those communities most impacted by the decision(s)
- Attract participants who are traditionally under-represented in civic engagement/planning processes (a.k.a. Voices Less Heard)
- Attract both unaffiliated citizens and those that belong to special interest organizations
- Raise awareness about the project among a diverse range of communities and leaders

Hold Regular Meetings

- Review progress on number of registrations and demographic targets
- Review all organizational commitments and corresponding registrations
- Identify concerns and gaps
- Develop strategies to respond to current registrations
- Convey new information

Suggested Strategies & Tactics

- Tap existing community networks
  - Make presentations or announcements at community and neighborhood meetings
  - Partner with local businesses and employers
  - Partner with community organizations
  - Recruit undergraduate/graduates students in related courses and student organizations
  - Develop program for public school teachers to bring students
  - Work with groups providing training and assistance
  - Post materials at libraries, on community websites, blogs and listservs
- Develop sector and organizational partnerships (issue, ethnicity, age, geography)
  - Secure organizational endorsements
  - Identify and recruit sector/issue leaders and organizational leaders
  - Make organizational presentations
  - Partner with organizations and businesses to send an email or mailing to their constituent lists

- Develop diversity committees

  - Host community-specific (ethnicity, issue, geography) meetings to introduce the project/forum and find out what issues are important to them

  - Get commitments from community leaders to make personal invitations to their networks

  - Develop translated materials and/or tailored materials (particularly PSAs)

- Develop media partnerships (broadcast and print)

- Build an online presence

  - Website (new or add to existing) that has all the information about the event and how to help recruit participants

  - Ask community organizations and businesses to post a link to the forum on their website

  - Post information about the forum on community listservs, social networking sites, etc.

- Raise project visibility

  - Place posters in storefronts and other public places

  - Place ads in community newspapers

  - Place announcements in utility bills – phone, water, cable

  - Distribute flyers through grocery and department stores

  - Setup a table at community fairs, meetings and events

  - Place Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on TV and/or radio

  - Place ads, op-eds, letters to the editor, calendar and full program in newspapers

  - Recruit "celebrity" spokesperson

  - Engage Steering Committee

  - Hand out flyers in high-traffic areas attracting diverse populations

- Work collaboratively with lawmakers and policymakers

  - Mail invitation letters to constituent databases

  - Place story in newsletters

  - Develop media opportunities with cross-section of lawmakers and decision-makers

- Engage previous participants in citizen engagement activities

  - Send tailored email and mailed invitations

  - Engage leaders of previous citizen engagement activities to recruit participants

- Engage staff and volunteers

  - Develop recruitment program for volunteer table facilitators and general volunteers

Tactics and Tools

- Database of key organizations by sector (non-profit, business, government, etc.)
- List of key community meetings/gatherings, websites, listservs, mailing lists and phone lists
- Flyers, both general and community-specific/translated flyers
- "On-the-spot" registration forms for registering people at an event or on the street
- Save-the-date postcards
- Public Service Announcement (PSA)
- Website materials
- Invitations to specific organizations to support recruitment
- Email and listserv announcements
- Personal invitations
- Calendar listings
- Project banners, posters and signs (with project name, logo, meeting date, registration info)

Workplan

- Create the outreach/communications workplan *after* the outreach strategy has been developed. The process of developing the workplan will help you assess whether or not the outreach strategy is feasible given staff and budget restrictions.

- By outlining the tasks to be accomplished and who will be responsible you will see if the outreach strategy is achievable with volunteer efforts. If committee members can only commit to 2-3 hours a week on outreach perhaps a paid organizer will need to be hired.

Key Outreach Strategies

Working with Community Organizations

Organizational networks have the capacity to reach thousands of individuals, drawing their members'/supporters' attention to the project and validating its importance. Working through organizations can be a valuable way to directly reach your target communities.

For forums that are open to the public, the following is a general guide to conducting outreach through community organizations:

- Develop a list of organizations to reach out to including those that: have links to target demographic groups, are active in the issue under consideration, have an engaged membership with established communications mechanisms, hold regular gatherings and are active in community life, etc.

- Outreach Committee members should call board members and/or Chief Executive Officers or Executive Directors of target organizations. When possible, make an appointment to personally deliver an information packet and make a very specific ASK. When meeting with organizational leaders, describe the forum project, ASK for their help in outreach, sponsorship and personal attendance.

- Committee members call organization board members and/or Chief Executive Officers or Executive Directors. When possible, they make appointments when they can hand deliver a package and make their ASK. In the meeting they will describe the project, ASK for their help in outreach, sponsorship and personal attendance

- Get commitments from organizations about how many participants they will invite and how many they hope to register. If they are unwilling to make commitments then have a second ASK in your pocket, such as attending the forum or putting an article in their newsletter.

- Follow up with organizations. Outreach Committee members should be prepared to make the follow-up calls.

- Track commitments of each organization and assist them in meeting their goals.

- At Outreach Committee meetings have each member report on the commitments they have secured.

Last Minute Adjustments to Reach Targets

Keep in mind that in most cases, participants do not register until the final weeks before the forum. The Outreach Committee reviews the registration update constantly but three weeks before the event they decide whether or not the outreach strategy or staffing should be adjusted in order to reach demographic targets. Options for increasing registration in specific areas include the following:

- Increase outreach staffing to focus on groups where registration is low

- Work with media person to increase media coverage in this area/community

- Identify and call 25-50 individuals from the target group(s) with direct invitations to register

- Ask Steering Committee to review ways organizational resources and contacts can be deployed

- Increase street outreach and on-the-spot registrations

Work with Decision-Makers and Community Leaders

If the forum is to influence decisions, then there must be links to decision-makers and the decision-making process. One of the most common questions potential participants ask is, *"Who will respond to the results?"* A powerful outreach message is to demonstrate that key decision-makers are linked to the process and will consider or use the input generated from the forum.

- Communicate clearly that decision-makers support the forum but are not controlling (a.k.a. "rigging") the process or outcomes.

- Be sure to maintain a bi-partisan balance in outreach efforts.

- Many community members look to community leaders for guidance about the projects and activities in which to become involved. Demonstrating the widespread support from a diverse group of community leaders will catch the attention of even the most cynical citizens and signal the project's true community-based, grassroots nature.

- Community leaders should be actively recruited to serve on the Steering Committee, attend the forum and commit to being involved in the implementation.

- Identify unique opportunities to work with community leaders in the media where they actively support the forum.

- Remember that community leaders will always, first and foremost, be identified with their cause, issue, or community, rather than the forum.

Coach Outreach Committee Members

Outreach Committee members do the hands-on, time-intensive work to recruit individuals to attend the forum and develop the supporting materials, website and media support. Thus, it is important to coordinate introductions among the team members and hold regular meetings to guide and/or coach members.

At the initial meeting, reach agreement on demographic targets, a strategy for recruitment and the outreach messages and materials. Hold regular meetings to review progress, identify concerns, report on organization commitments, develop strategies to respond to current registrations, and convey new information.

Communications

Develop Outreach Materials

Use the participant demographic targets and outreach strategy as a guide to determine the type and quantity of materials to produce. Translate outreach materials into all the languages you will offer at the forum. Ensure that the materials have a consistent look and feel, using the same colors, logo and design elements.

The following are suggested outreach materials:

- Flyers and Brochures: One-page flyers are the cheapest, easiest outreach materials to distribute in mass quantities. Flyers are the most commonly used outreach materials and ordered in the largest quantities. Brochures can provide additional information in a concise attractive format; they are ideal to send in organizational mailings. Include a registration form in the brochure.

- Email invitations, save-the-date announcements and update to save money and spread the word about the Community*Forum*.

- Posters are very visible, making them an effective way to increase public awareness of the project (if you are targeting a community in general).

- Save-the-Date postcards may be used to alert organizations and individuals about the project and forum date. Adding the forum on organizational calendars early can avoid unnecessary scheduling conflicts. Be sure to include the website address and general telephone number on the postcard.

- Other outreach tools might include promotional materials such as banners, signs and t-shirts.

Develop Website

If you're building a new website, use a design that visually reflects and is oriented towards engaging the community you're trying to attract. Basic website elements include an easy to use navigation bar and one or more of the following pages:

- Home: What it is and why community members should attend; links to online registration and social networking site profiles

- About: sponsors, organizational partners, etc.

- Issue Background: Context for the CommunityForum presented in various media (text, video, and/or graphics)

- Get Involved: Participant and volunteer registration including fields for demographics, additional services and inviting a friend.
 Also, consider including these options as checkboxes:
  - ❏ Keep me updated on this issue after the forum.
  - ❏ Keep me updated on other related community initiatives.
  - ❏ Remind me via SMS text message 1 day before the meeting.

- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

- Contact: general telephone, fax, and email information (could also include contact information for specific individuals as needed)

Identify Community Press Targets

Community, local and ethnic press outlets (radio, TV, cable) can be an effective way to reach targeted groups, especially underrepresented populations. Note that this is a good way to support organizational and person-to-person outreach activities, but can not replace these more personal efforts.

Earned media

- » Earned media (or free media) refers to favorable publicity gained through promotional efforts rather than paid advertising.
- » Identify highest priority community media outlets and specific reporters/editors relevant to your issue.
- » Early on, meet with local media outlets to discuss the role they could play in advancing the community's discussion on this topic. (Running a series of articles on the issue, collaborating with other outlets on investigative reporting, etc.).
- » Develop a media plan, including stories and announcements to release at strategic times during the weeks before the event.
- » Write and distribute press releases.
- » Consider hosting press conferences or staging a promotional event that will draw media coverage.
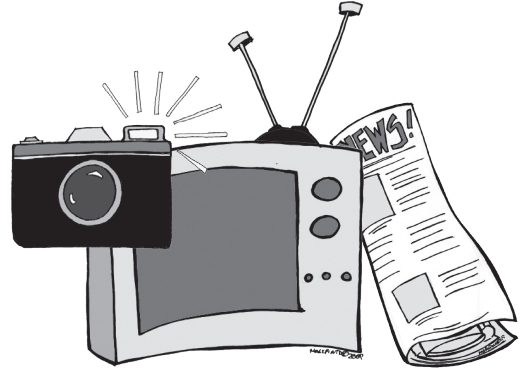
Paid Media

- » Research media that offer free Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Write and produce PSAs.
- » Buy print or radio ads.
- » Buy online ads: blog ads, search engine ads, social networking ads.

At the day of the event, press are usually welcome to sit at discussion tables, however they must identify themselves as members of the media. If they wish to quote the table discussion, the media representative must get explicit agreement from the person being quoted.

Additional Services for Participants

The Outreach Committee is responsible for identifying which additional services are needed for all types of people to be able to attend. However, the Steering Committee will make decisions about balancing the budget with the need for additional services. The registration form should capture requests for this additional support.

Your committee may choose to offer one or more of the following additional services:

Transportation: Free rides to the forum can be accomplished through stipends for public transportation, car pooling or by hiring vans. This can be an important tool to recruit participants who lack access to transportation. This may include those living a far distance from the meeting site, people in low income communities, youth, and the elderly.

Childcare: In some cases, a room in the meeting facility is used to provide onsite care for children of participants. Many parents will be unable to attend and participate in the forum without this service. Be sure to hire reputable, licensed if possible, child care workers who can offer age appropriate programming and adequate numbers of trained workers.

Services for People with Disabilities: Work with the Project Lead to ensure that people with disabilities, such as impaired vision or hearing, wheelchair bound, etc., have the support needed to participate fully. Do not cluster people with disabilities but disperse them at tables throughout the meeting room.

Translation: In many communities there are people who do not speak or read English. The final week before the forum, the Project Lead must make final decisions about how many translators to hire and how many tables to reserve for translation. It is crucial that the Outreach Coordinator verify these estimates and share this information with the Logistics Coordinator.

Committee Members' Event Day Assignments

The Outreach Coordinator should work with the Project Lead to assign Outreach Committee members to appropriate positions for the day of the forum. The jobs best suited for Outreach Committee members include the following: Greeters, Floor Monitors, Transportation Coordinator and Translation Services. The Communications Coordinator is usually greeting the press, distributing press kits and ensuring the press observes the established media/observer guidelines.
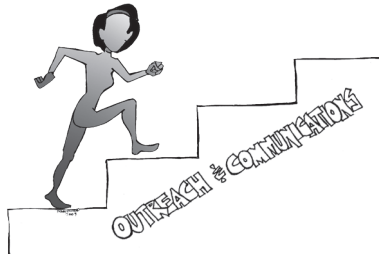
Outreach & Communications Workplan

The Outreach & Communications Committee works to recruit participants that are demographically representative (or other recruitment goals) and implements supporting communication strategies to build project awareness with participants and decision-makers. This committee should be following a workplan similar to the one below.

Week 14
– Begin development of new website (if needed)

Week 10
– Hold 1st weekly meeting of Outreach Committee
– Designate a person to take the lead on communications/media
– Add new pages to existing website or complete a new website
– Review outreach targets from Steering Committee
– Develop outreach strategies and workplan
– Develop short and long recruitment messages

Week 9
– Identify community meetings and events at which to present
– Identify organizations that can help recruit participants
– Coach committee on outreach strategies especially for under-represented people
– Finalize outreach materials and graphic design
– Coordinate outreach data requirements with registration
– Send materials for translation (if needed)

Week 8
– Draft newsletter article/ announcement
– Launch outreach strategies
– Registration operational (website, fax and phone)
– Send outreach material packet to organizational contacts
– Send emails and snail mails to targeted people
– Send out invitations to key decision-makers

Week 7
– Follow-up phone calls to key decision-makers and community leaders
– Work on publicity; place columns, op-eds, and pitch stories
– Continue to present at community meetings/events

Week 6
– Draft email recruitment messages for circulation
– Communicate translation/ disabled access needs to Logistics Coordinator
– Monitor registration data and patterns

Week 5
– Monitor registration data and patterns; revise strategies as necessary
– Continue to issue invitations and attend community meetings/ events

Week 4
– Send email updates to early registrants, include an ASK for recruiting friends, neighbors and colleagues
– Intensify outreach to under-represented segments of community
– Follow-up with press and media targets

Week 3
– Monitor registration data and patterns; revise strategies as necessary
– Make recruitment calls to key people in underrepresented groups

Week 2
– Finalize additional services with Logistics Coordinator
– Begin final recruitment push with calls and emails
– Send reminder emails and calls

Event Week
– Final outreach and media efforts

Event +1 Week
– Update website with Preliminary Report, summary of event, photos
– Hold a debriefing of the Outreach Committee to learn and celebrate

Logistics, Venue, Technology, Materials

The Logistics Committee oversees the effective implementation of all event logistics including venue selection, registration, site set-up, audio-visual equipment (AV), catering and material production. Also, the Logistics Committee is responsible for groupware and keypad technology (if used). The Logistics Committee is led by a Logistics Coordinator. For complex forums or those larger than 100 people an assistant may be helpful for the Logistics Coordinator.

The Logistics Coordinator becomes the hub of activities because the work of other committees often requires logistical support such as materials, technology, last minute additions to the program, etc. In particular, since many participants tend to register at the last minute there will be a flurry of activity to either recruit more people or to worry about having so many people that more tables must be added, food orders changed, more copies made, etc.

Logistics Committee Responsibilities

The logistics committee may only be 3-4 people who have experience with planning events. Their role is to select the venue, manage the production of materials, the registration process and a myriad of other details.

Logistics Committee

- Develops logistics workplan

- Approves venue location

- Approves final room layout and set-up

- Ensures logistics are synchronized with program design

- Develops and maintains logistics budget

- Develops registration plans and trains registration volunteers to manageparticipant registration during the Community*Forum*

- Coordinates with Outreach & Communications Committee to determine additional services needs

Logistics Coordinator
- Coordinates with outreach, content/design and steering committees to determine specific material production needs, including language and sign language translations

- Hires and manages appropriate vendors

- Coordinates multi-media production

- Negotiates contracts with venue, AV, catering, keypads, and groupware providers

- Develops material production timeline

- Manages material production, delivery, and storage

- Manages forum load in/tear down schedule and shipments

- Manages on-site production crew and floor management

Venue: The Meeting Place and Room

Identify & Reserve Meeting Venue

The meeting site impacts many critical elements of the project's planning and budget parameters including labor and set-up, catering, transportation, registration, and outreach. Careful selection of a venue can help make many of these project components simpler and less costly. Ideally, the meeting venue will not only be highly functional but also enhance the event. Meeting sites that have historical value or community importance lend the meeting additional appeal and value.

If at all possible, meeting sites should have or be:

- Centrally located
- Easily accessible using multi-modal forms of public transportation
- Accessible to the people with disabilities and the elderly
- Accessible, free parking on-site or close by
- Experienced in holding large, public events
- Column-free meeting space in the appropriate size
- Provide a range of services and amenities
- Well known by a large cross-section of the community
- Warm, inviting environment with built-in décor
- Appropriate dedicated space for on-site registration, volunteer check-in, and other services
- Smaller meeting areas within the same facility: Additional meeting space within the site is critical for hosting facilitator and volunteer orientation sessions
- Adequate numbers of restrooms close to the meeting room
- Environmental controls: It is critical that there are appropriate heating and air conditioning systems
- Available and experienced staff, who are easily accessible and knowledgeable
- Additional services such as photocopying are helpful

Meeting Room Requirement
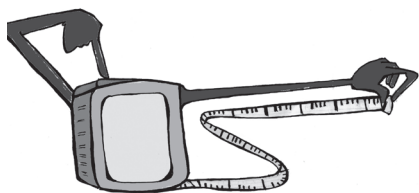
The room must be large enough to seat the targeted number of participants at six foot round tables with 11 people per table (10 participants and 1 table facilitator) or five foot round tables which can accommodate a maximum of 9 people per table (8 participants and 1 table facilitator). Tables must have at least 6 feet between table edges so that people can easily pass in between the tables when everyone is seated. (This is further apart than traditional hotel setups for round tables.)

Approximately 1400 square feet for a 100 person meeting will provide enough room for participants, staging, and audio visual tables. Consider a larger room if you want to include food services, resource tables, etc. When choosing a meeting room, also consider AV requirements (pillars, ceiling height, front or rear screen projection, etc.).

Consider the following requirements when negotiating with a possible venue provider:

- Ability to develop a floor plan
- Size and type of stage
- Room décor
- Availability of meeting equipment, tables, chairs, staging
- Access to sufficient power source for AV and optional laptops
- Configuration of tables with table stands and numbers on each
- Media set-up on risers
- Theme team size and set-up
- Participant seating requirements
- Room orientation

Participatory Technology and Audio Visual

At your forum, technology can play a small or large role, depending on the level of interactivity and 'production value' needed for your Community*Forum*. Consider the number of people attending, the goals of the forum and the available resources. Make these decisions in collaboration with your Steering Committee and the Project Sponsor(s).

Decide on Participatory Technology and AV

Projector, screen and computer: Every Community*Forum* will have one computer connected to an LCD to project PowerPoint slides for the main program. A second computer is needed at the Theme Team area in order to display final themes—even if you are paper theming. LCD, screens and computers can be provided by one of the sponsoring organizations

Switcher: If the PowerPoint slides for the main program are on one laptop and the themes on another, then you will need a switcher to quickly move the display from computer one to the second laptop.

Keypads: Keypads are used to quantify the results of polling questions. Each participant has an individual keypad to use for anonymous "voting." The results of polling are immediately displayed on the screen for everyone to see. The display of the results allows individuals to see how their opinion is positioned relative to the rest of the room. Keypads enable fast feedback and a transparent process. Both elements build trust among citizens, leaders and elected officials.

Groupware: The groupware laptop software allows the quick assimilation of qualitative data from each table. When participants see their words on the screen they are validated and have faith in the results of the meeting. If groupware is used then a laptop is needed for each participant table and an additional 3-4 laptop computers will be needed for the Theme Team. The room must have wireless internet access and electrical power must be provided to every participant table and the Theme Team.

Renting keypads and/or Groupware: If the Steering Committee decides that keypads and/or groupware will increase the impact of the forum, then contact America*Speaks* to arrange for these technologies. If no local capacity exists to run the keypads or groupware, America*Speaks* can provide technical support for the selected technologies.

Sound: All forums require a sound system for the Lead Facilitator and other speakers. Sometimes wireless microphones are used to allow participants to "call out" the results of their table discussions. A cable connecting the laptop computer to the soundboard enables music to be played at appropriate times during the meeting.

Video: A cable connecting the laptop to the LCD is needed to display PowerPoint slides and perhaps play a video. Be sure the number of lumens (brightness) of the LCD is adequate for your meeting room.

Conduct Technology Meetings

Once the specific technologies to be used during the forum have been determined, convene at least three technology meetings to coordinate program design, participatory technologies, venue staff and AV providers on the following issues:

- Space requirements (square footage and configuration)
- Power requirements
- Configuration requirements
- Review of the floor plan drafts
- Review of vendor equipment lists (who is bringing what)
- Check for compatibility across vendors' equipment
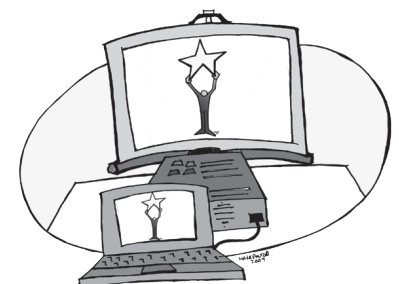
- Staffing plans for each technology
- Onsite communications plan
- Delivery, move-in, set-up, and move-out schedule for venue staff and vendors

Registration
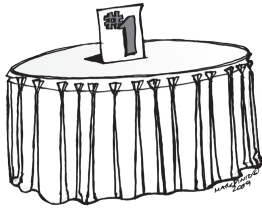
Develop Registration Plan

The process for participant check-in and registration at the forum significantly impacts the participants' first perceptions of the Community*Forum*. Plan carefully for a smooth registration and seating process, and avoid line ups or confusion.

Advance registration should be strongly encouraged for the forum although on-site registration is often permitted and should be planned for. The day-of registration system should plan for both participant check-in and on-site registration.

Key Components of Registration

Component	Questions	Registration Options
Participant Check-In	How will participants who have registered be processed at the Community*Forum*?	Recruit a Lead Registration Volunteer to oversee this process and report to the Logistics Coordinator. Advance registrants must check-in at the participant check-in desk when they arrive. Attendees give their name and receive their table assignment and packet. Consider dividing registration check-in tables alphabetically by last name if you will speak to each registrant in person, or lay out the name badges in alphabetical order with supporting volunteers behind the table. This process should be as quick as possible; it's best to have 3-5 volunteers checking in participants.
Table Assignments	Are participants given a specific table assignment or will they be seated randomly?	All tables should be assigned a number that is easily visible to participants as they enter the room. Participant table assignments can be designated before the forum in order to ensure diversity at each table, like wedding seating plans. Table numbers can be randomly assigned by attaching them to name badges, index card or participant materials. With this method there is no need to check in. Volunteers should give out information packets at the doors. Table Sign in sheets can capture an accurate attendance.
On-Site Registration	Will on-site registration be offered?	Designate a table for walk-in participants who haven't pre-registered. Have attendees complete the registration form. If all seats for the forum have been reserved on the morning of the meeting, interested individuals will have to wait for seats to become available. Seats should be given out on a first-come, first-serve basis.
Identifying Open Seats	How will the registration staff identify and assign open seats?	The most efficient way to identify available seats is to instruct Floor Managers to identify seats in their areas and report these to the Registration Coordinator in charge of seating on-site registrants.
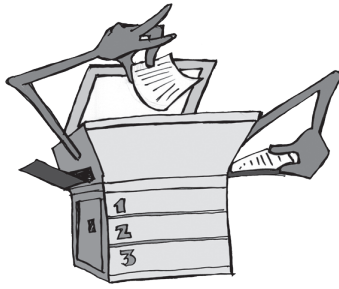
Material Production

The majority of materials are produced for participants. However, project staff may also need documents copied at various times during the project. Some materials, such as participant worksheets, are developed on computers and reproduced on a copier. Others, such as the Participant Guide, may go to a graphic artist for lay out and then to a professional printing vendor.

## Develop List of Materials for Production

For most projects, materials to be produced include the following (listed by area):

Outreach

- Flyer – English and translated versions
- Posters
- Registration form

Program Content & Design

- Participant Guide – English and translated
- Participant materials and worksheets (program agenda, discussion question worksheets, evaluation form)
- Participant background materials (community plans, maps, related articles/ studies, etc.)
- Participant folders (2-pocket folders)
- Preliminary Report to be handed out at the end of the forum
- Final Report
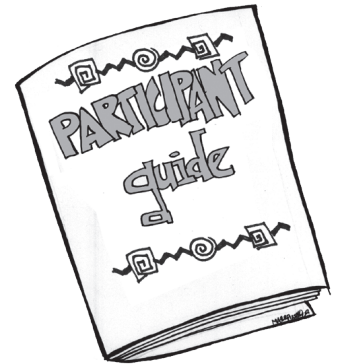
Material Production Cycle

Developing and using a material production schedule will help ensure that materials are produced on-time. Work with your team and vendors to approximate the length of time for each step in the production process. These steps vary depending upon the item but can include the following:

- Drafting
- Approval by Lead Committee or Project Lead
- Graphic design
- Final edits/changes to blue lines (camera ready layout)
- Translation
- Stuffing and mailing
- Delivery
- Distribution

Identify Printer

Printing vendors or a consumer print shop like Kinko's will be needed for producing materials. Early on in the project, identify a list of local printing and production vendors with which to work.

- It is ideal to talk with printing vendors once the list of materials that require production has been developed. This will make it easier to identify whether or not a vendor can perform a specific or all the production jobs.

Coordinate Production of Each Publication

Logistics Coordinator is responsible for:

- Coordinating hand-off of publication between graphic designers, translators and printer
- Confirming price, specifications and schedule with vendors
- Following production progress, including delivery
- Payment

Catering, Staffing, Floor, Materials and other Plans

Catering Plan

Develop a catering plan depending on the time of day the Community*Forum* begins and how long the forum lasts:

Breakfast

- Healthy snacks available as people enter the room
- Include fruit, breakfast bars or muffins and fruit juices

Lunch

- Healthy boxed lunch with sandwich, pretzels, fruit, desert, and water bottle
- 10-15% of sandwiches should be vegetarian
- Kosher, Halal or other special meals provided if demand is significant in the region
- If working during lunch, lunch must be delivered to all participant tables in a total of 10-15 minutes
- Best delivery mechanism is to have the catering staffing place the individual boxed lunches into large shopping bags; one bag for each table
- Large lunch bags can be delivered to each table by volunteers and catering staff
- Catering staff or volunteers pick up lunch trash approximately 20 minutes after lunch is delivered

Snacks and Drinks

- Snack: Fruit, trail mix or cookies available at different tables set up around the perimeter of the room (or delivered to participant tables at an appropriate time)
- Continuous beverage service (coffee and water) available throughout the meeting at different food tables set-up around the perimeter of the room
    - Refilled regularly - catering staff assigned to monitor supply throughout the meeting
    - Provide water tanks on the side of the room so water bottles or glasses can be refilled

Develop Staffing Plan for the Day of the Community*Forum*

The staffing needs for several of the areas – volunteers, registration, additional services, etc. – are outlined in the following table. Develop plans on which positions can be filled by staff of the sponsoring organization(s) and which require recruitment of volunteers. About 3-5 volunteers will be needed for registration at the beginning of the forum. Other tasks at other times of the day include hanging signs, greeting participants, lunch distribution, trash pickup and other tasks. Share this plan with the Table Facilitator & Volunteer Committee so they can recruit an adequate number of volunteers.

Position	Brief Description
Logistics Coordinator	Responsible for managing all aspects of event management including volunteers, floor management, and registration.
Meeting Site Contact	Representative from the meeting venue who can respond to facilities issues – heat, air conditioning, parking, etc. – usually a convention services manager.
Catering Contact	Representative from the catering vendor who is on-site to manage catering issues – lunch delivery, additional food/beverage needs, etc.
Registration Lead	Manages the registration area, functions, and other registration volunteers.
Area Facilitators	One or two volunteers roam a section of participant tables to answer questions, deliver food, and assist table facilitators as needed, etc.
Performing Arts Contact	Live bands may be used in the beginning as people enter the meeting. Artists (sometimes volunteers) create artistic interpretations of the meeting (painters, poets, hip hop artists).

Small forums may consider offering additional services in order to attract people who are not traditionally involved in public meetings. If so the following positions need to be considered. Details on these services are at the end of this chapter.

| Position	Brief Description
Additional Services Volunteer	Manages language and sign language translation, transportation arrival and departure, childcare, resource tables and all additional services.
Childcare	Responsible volunteers with a history of childcare.
Transportation	Responsible volunteers with good driving records may be needed to drive shuttles or provide car pool options.
Translators	If you have bilingual volunteers ask them to sit at a table to translate live at the Community*Forum*.

Develop Floor Plan

The floor plan is the primary tool through which the Logistics Coordinator plans and captures the set-up and technical design and lay-out. The floor plan takes into account the technical needs, program design elements, and logistical requirements.

- *Tables with numbers:* Leave six feet between table edges to allow room for people to move easily throughout the day.
- *Stage:* In rectangle-shaped rooms, a 4' x 8' stage is generally placed in the center on the back of the length-wise wall; generally includes a podium (with internal shelf), decorative plants, flags, and chairs as necessary.
- *Production Area:* A rectangular table that can support 1-2 people with computers.
- *Screens:* One large screen is adequate for meetings of less than 200 people.
- *Theme Team Area:* The Theme Team area is a table or tables placed near the stage but as far away from participant tables as possible. If paper theming is used then make sure the Theme Team is near a flat wall for organizing sticky notes.
- Media Tables: Set aside a rectangular table in the back of the room for media to sit.
- *Resource Tables:* Resource tables are posted on each side of the room and contain additional items and materials which may be needed throughout the meeting.
- *Artwork:* If an artist is included then the completed artwork should be placed in the lobby outside of the meeting room or, if the room is large, in a corner of the room.
- *Food and Water/Coffee Stations:* Food and water/coffee stations should be placed in each quadrant of the room.
- *Registration and Check-in areas*: Allow room for participants, Table Facilitators, and volunteers to check-in without creating a bottle-neck.

Photography Plan

Secure a talented volunteer to take professional quality photos during the Community*Forum*.   General guidelines for securing photographers include the following:
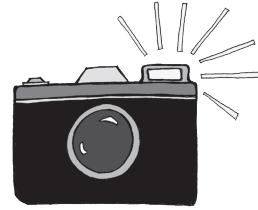
- If a staff member or volunteer is secured to take photos, make sure he or she is comfortable as a photographer.
- Be prepared to begin taking photos before the program officially begins and stay throughout the program. Photos may include set-up activities, individual participants, volunteers, speakers, etc.
- Instruct the photographer to capture participants in dialogue and try to get diverse groups if possible. Head and shoulder shots of 2 or 3 people work very well.

Signs and Banners Plan

The Logistics Coordinator is responsible for ordering or producing the signs and banners needed. The following signs and banners are generally needed:

- Forum logo signs in all entrances with directions to the registration area
- Participant registration signs
- Participant check-in signs
- Language and Sign Translation services sign
- Volunteer check-in sign
- Table Facilitator and Theme Team Check-in

Materials for Participant Tables

The Logistics Coordinator with the Content & Design Committee determines and orders the materials to be placed on each participant table. Participant tables generally include the following:
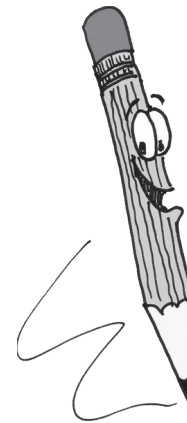
- Table Sign in Sheet (If no check-in at registration)
- Scratch paper or pads of paper (If no worksheets)
- Pens – 1 for each participant
- Participant packets (unless provided at registration)
  - Participant Guides (If not pre-mailed)
  - Worksheets
- For the Table Facilitator
  - Half page of bright red paper with QUESTIONS printed on it
  - Half page of green paper with TECHNOLOGY printed on it (if you use keypads or groupware)
  - Half page of bright yellow paper with ISSUE EXPERT printed on it
- Background materials or resource guides (not included in the participant folder)

Office Supplies Plan

Area	Materials	Approximate Quantity
Registration	Nametags with project logo	One for each participant plus anticipated walk-ins
	Nametag markers	3 for each registration "station"
	Clipboards	2 for each registration "station"
	Duct and masking tape	
Participant & Table Facilitator Materials	Two-pocket folders	- Expected participants - Expected Table Facilitators - Extras for Special Guests, media, etc.
Resource Tables	Tissues	Several for each resource table
	Basic First Aid Kits	One for each resource table
Translation	Nametags with project logo	Estimate based on anticipated number of participants requiring language and sign translation
	Nametag markers	3 for each registration "station"
Media Registration	Nametags or special MEDIA nametags	Based on estimate provided by the Communications Coordinator
	Nametag markers	3-5
Theme Team	Sticky Note Tablets	Based on estimate provided by the Project Lead
	Large Paper for compilation of sticky notes	Based on estimate provided by Project Lead
	Nametags	10-12
	Large Markers	10-12

Resource Table List

The resource tables serve as the repository for all extra copies of materials and equipment. The Logistics Coordinator develops the resource table checklist. Generally, resource tables include the following:

- Full participant folders
- Individual participant worksheets
- Individual publications
- Issue expert resources
- Extra participant sign-in sheets
- Nametags
- Pens and nametag markers
- Scratch paper
- Tissues
- Translated material
- Stapler

Logistics Overview Materials

At the start of the "Countdown Week" (week leading up to the Community*Forum*), it is useful to distribute a full packet of materials that provide crucial information regarding logistics and staffing to the entire project staff. Materials include the following:

- Full staff list identified by role with cell phone, office number, and email address. This will help all staff members contact each other with little hassle.
- Overview of critical information regarding the meeting site – location, hours, etc.
- Overview of set-up schedule
- "Countdown Week" Calendar (created by the Logistics Coordinator) including key meetings, deliverables, rehearsal, etc.

Greening Your Forum

Minimizing the resources consumed for your event models responsible environmental stewardship. Green events incorporate environmental considerations throughout all stages of the event in order to minimize the negative impact on the environment. There are numerous tools and on-line resources available to help you get started.

Venue Selection and Management
- Identify locations that are close to public transportation.
- Seek naturally lighted meeting spaces.
- Select a venue where you can elect to keep the room(s) cooler in the winter or warmer in the summer to minimize the energy used for heating and cooling.
- If using decorations, considering using live plants for decorations that can be given to attendees or staff after the event.
- Select the most energy-efficient projectors based on the event needs.
- Consider a venue which has an established in-house recycling program.

Preventing and Reducing Waste

The best way to deal with waste is not to create it in the first place. Consider ways to reduce the amount of materials used. Collect and recycle what you do use. Supply an appropriate number of clearly marked containers to be strategically placed throughout the site for recycling.

- When possible use e-communications (emails, e-newsletters, websites) to publicize the event.
- Use double-sided printing for promotional materials and handouts.
- Reduce the amount of paper you distribute by purging duplicate addresses from mailing lists.
- Use an electronic registration system and post the program agenda and Participant Guide online.
- Provide reusable name badges.
- Donate leftover supplies to a local school or day care.
- Collect paper and recyclable beverage containers in meeting areas.
- Collect cardboard, metal, glass, and plastic containers in food vending areas.
- If reusable containers are not used, encourage use of recyclable beverage containers.

Conserving Fuel and Reducing Traffic

Take measures to minimize the negative impact of transportation to and from the event.

- Publicize mass transportation options.
- Provide shuttle service from mass transit stops to the event site, and research hybrid or alternative fuel shuttle options.
- Educate attendees and provide resources (i.e. carpooling system) so they can make environmentally responsible travel decisions.

Arranging for Food Service

- Make environmentally conscious menu choices, such as choosing food that is in season, organic and local; seafood from sustainable fisheries; or food based on the history of attendees' preferences and attrition.
- Instead of individual bottles of water, use pitchers of water or water stations.
- Use biodegradable or recyclable flatware and cups instead of disposable utensils.
- Plan food service needs carefully to avoid the preparation of unnecessary meals.
- Donate excess food to charitable organizations or allow attendees to take extra servings home with them.
- Compost food and food-contaminated paper waste.

Educating Participants and Exhibitors

Take the opportunity to exhibit your leadership and share your environmental commitment with others by making sure that forum attendees are aware of the environmental factors that you considered in the event planning. In addition to the educational components mentioned above, consider the following:

- Include signs or announcements at the end of the forum explaining how forum materials will be reused or recycled.
- Encourage participants to follow the green event example at other events and in their daily lives.
- Communicate resource savings achieved as follow-up to the forum.

Final Tasks

Finalize Set-up & Rehearsal Schedule

In order to finalize the set-up and rehearsal schedule, review it one final time during a combined meeting with the AV vendors and the venue representatives. Any questions or concerns about timing or sequence must be raised now! All key staff should attend the rehearsal which is led by the Project Lead.

Finalize Registration Plan

No later than one week before the Community*Forum*, the Logistics Coordinator, and Lead Registration Volunteer review the participant registration plan in detail. In particular, the plan is revised to take the latest registration numbers into account. If registration is full or nearly full, make sure the contingency plans for registration are solid and clear to all.

Finalize Media Plan

No later than one week before the Community*Forum*, the Logistics Coordinator and Communications Coordinator review the media plan in regards to logistics. In particular, the Communications Coordinator provides the Logistics Coordinator with specific estimates about the number of media outlets expected to come and what set-up will be needed. If these are significantly different than the original plan, coordinate changes as necessary.

Finalize Volunteer Plan

In order to finalize the volunteer plan, the Logistics Coordinator reviews the volunteer requirements for each area before, during and after the forum. It is critically important that the Logistics Coordinator identify any program changes that will require a change in the required volunteer assistance. Additionally, the Logistics Coordinator reviews the assignments with regards to the number of volunteers recruited so far.

Finalize Additional Services Plan

In order to finalize the Additional Services plan, the Logistics Coordinator works with the Outreach Committee. The Outreach Coordinator relays how many participants have signed up for each service. The plan should also anticipate how many additional participants may need these services in response to outreach efforts occurring very close to the event.

Create Seating Assignments
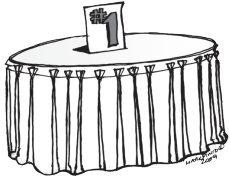
If using a random seating process, place the assigned table number either on name badges, on participant folders or on index cards. If seating assignments are to be used, the assignment process must be developed and factored into the countdown schedule. The Logistics Coordinator works with Outreach Committee to determine a recommended seating assignment process. Some general guidelines regarding creating seating assignments include the following:

- The seating criteria should detail which demographic characteristics will be used to determine seat assignments in order of importance (first assignment criteria, secondary assignment criteria, etc.) The seating assignment criteria will vary from forum to forum, depending upon the issues. For a regional planning initiative, it is most important to ensure diversity of geographic distribution at tables over other characteristics such as age or ethnicity. If the primary issue to be discussed is ethnic violence, however, ethnicity would be the key characteristic upon which to assign tables.
- Some registered participants should not be included in the general seating assignment pool. These assignments should be made first, before the general seating assignments are made. Special seating assignments should be made for participants with the following characteristics:

Participants who need...	Should be ...
Translation Assistance	Assigned to appropriate, designated translation table.
Added Accessibility (wheelchair, physically challenged)	Placed at perimeter, not interior, tables. Scatter people with disabilities across many tables.
Sign Language Assistance	Assigned to designated sign language table next to the stage.
Translators	If you have bilingual volunteers ask them to sit at a table to translate live at the Community*Forum*.

- If possible, reserve extra seats for participants who may need "Added Accessibility" so that you can re-seat participants as needed without hassle. Do not isolate individuals with physical challenges to one table or one section of the room.
- Work with the Communications Coordinator to assign any media professionals who wish to be assigned to specific tables.
- Then, assign the remaining participants using the approved seat assignment criteria. For smaller meetings, it is relatively easy to assign participants by hand.

Conduct Technical and Speaking Rehearsal

The technical rehearsal is conducted the afternoon or evening before the Community*Forum* once all AV equipment is fully set-up. The technical rehearsal should include a full, quick run through of the program from a technical stand point. Following the technical rehearsal, the Lead Facilitator and speakers must have an opportunity to get on stage and become familiar with the podium and microphone set-up.

Additional Services

Develop an additional services plan that it is designed to address the specific services for language/sign language translation, childcare, transportation, the elderly and people with disabilities. Possible services you may want to consider are listed below.

Language Translation

Work with the Outreach Coordinator to determine the number of potential participants who might need language translation and which languages. Locate a firm to come and provide simultaneous translation. Provide all materials in the identified languages including the Participant Guide, signage, and other materials. Work with the Table Facilitator Coordinator to recruit the necessary number of bi-lingual Table Facilitators.

Sign Language Translation

Locate a firm who is able to come in and translate during the forum. Two or more translators will be needed to sign from the stage and then at the table during the discussion periods. Work with the Outreach Coordinator to determine how many tables will be needed. Also provide materials in Braille.

Childcare

Locate a childcare provider that is able to come into the meeting location and care for the children of the participants during the forum. General guidelines for a childcare plan include the following:

- Review the childcare plan including the firm's on-site needs and setup schedule.
- Once the plan has been finalized, alert the Outreach Coordinator to any instructions or details that should be changed or further explained (minimum age, drop-in policy, etc.) on the registration form. The Outreach Committee and/or other volunteers call all people who have requested childcare to review these details.
- The childcare plan should include arrangements to find parents in the meeting room if necessary – including tracking the table number where parents are seated.
- No later than two weeks before the Community*Forum*, the Logistics Coordinator reviews the childcare requirements in detail with the childcare providers.

Transportation

Providing transportation to and from the forum can boost participation among citizens who need extra encouragement and assistance to attend. Because providing transportation is a key outreach tool, the Outreach Coordinator and Logistics Coordinator will work together in developing a transportation plan. The transportation plan should include the following elements:

- Buses generally pick up participants from areas far from the meeting site, elderly participants living in retirement communities, organizations recruiting many participants, or public transportation stations near the meeting site.
- Give each bus a number. When boarding the bus in the morning, participants are given a token with their bus number.
- Shuttle buses from public transportation stations run short, frequent trips.
- If buses are picking up from an organization or retirement home that is organizing participant recruitment, ask the organizational staff to keep a list of the number of participants taking the bus.
- For other buses coming from strategic pickup points, weigh the outreach benefit (not requiring bus reservation) against the possible high-demand (requiring reservation). Organizers gauge how many participants are planning to use the buses and let the Logistics Coordinator know.
- Another alternative is to develop a car pooling method in order to help people reach the meeting with minimum effort.
- Volunteers – Greet the buses as they arrive in the morning and help participants find their bus number as they leave the meeting site.

Assisted Listening Devices

Assisted listening devices increase the volume of the table discussions and stage presentations. Assisted listening devices should be placed at each resource table in the meeting room.

Wheelchairs

If the meeting site covers a great deal of space, it is advisable to have several wheelchairs available to assist elderly participants. The wheelchairs should be positioned at the entrance area and returned to this area when participants are delivered to their seats. The meeting venue may have wheelchairs on site.
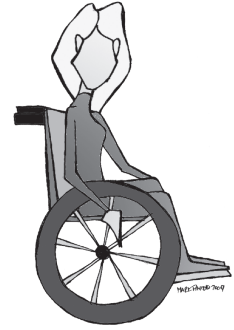
Large-print Materials

Work with the Logistics Coordinator to develop a large print version of materials. Refer to the demographic targets for 65 and better category as a guide to determine how many copies will be needed. Copies should be placed at each resource table in the meeting room.

Logistics Workplan

The Logistics Committee works to organize all the event details of the Community*Forum*. The Coordinator works with all other committees to understand their needs and address those needs in the Logistics Plan. This committee should be following a workplan similar to the one below.

Week 9 (or earlier if possible)
- Form Logistics Team
- Develop event requirements for venue selection, AV, registration, volunteers, catering, community services, etc.
- Conduct venue site visit(s), negotiate and execute venue contract
- Collaborate on registration plan with outreach committee
- Reserve keypads (optional)

Week 8
- Begin biweekly meetings
- Select vendors for catering, AV, printing, security, childcare, parking, etc.
- Develop onsite registration process

Week 7
- Determine production workplan for each publication (delivery to/ from printer; specs, etc.)
- Develop process for staff communications during the event and equipment needs

Week 6
- Finalize floor plan
- Determine participant materials and table materials
- Finalize all event staffing requirements (volunteers, table facilitators, etc.)
- Review 1st draft of program design, discuss implications for logistics with Project Lead/ Designer
- Monitor registrations and develop additional services such as child care, transportation, translation, sign language, etc. as needed

Week 5
- Confirm keypads if needed
- Signs (banner and directional): design, order and develop placement plan
- Order participant folders and other supplies

Week 4
- Place catering order
- Develop list of materials for the resource table
- Confirm speaker and entertainer requirements
- Verify shipping requirements

Week 3
- Confirm all vendor contracts
- Create countdown calendar for final activities of all committees
- Conduct final site visit at venue
- Hold meeting with Logistics Committee and volunteers

Week 2
- Send materials to printer
- Confirm all catering orders (final guarantee due 72 hours prior to event)
- Arrange for delivery of all office supplies and materials to meeting site
- Finalize on-site registration plan including seating
- Finalize event staffing plan
- Finalize collation of all materials

Week 1
- Finalize table assignments for participants
- Distribute all printed materials
- Final set-up
- Conduct technical rehearsal

Forum + 1 Week
- Send thank you notes
- Conduct debrief calls with Logistics Committee
- Review invoices

Table Facilitators & Volunteers

Table Facilitators create a safe space for participants to deliberate. They are recruited locally from a skilled pool of teachers, therapists, human resource professionals and consultants. Their role is to keep the table on task during table discussions. They guide the conversation ensuring that everyone participates equally. They help the group come to agreement on the statements to be sent to the Theme Team.

Volunteers staff registration, greet people, deliver lunches to tables and serve as runners to help the Table Facilitators. They are recruited locally from organizations such as retired person organizations, faith based or service organizations.

Table Facilitator & Volunteer Committee Responsibilities

The Table Facilitator & Volunteer Committee includes: Table Facilitator Recruiter, Volunteer Recruiter, and representatives of the Steering Committee. Sometimes one member from the Steering Committee can work alone to recruit table facilitators and volunteers.

Recruiter of Table Facilitators
- Develops and implements strategies to recruit skilled volunteer facilitators

- Reviews and accepts facilitator applications

- Coordinates orientation location and schedule

- Tracks overall progress in recruiting Table Facilitators

- Conducts Table Facilitator orientation sessions (with the Designer or Lead Facilitator)

- Checks in and manages Table Facilitators during Community*Forum*

- Debriefs Table Facilitators

- Conducts follow-up activities (thank you notes, debrief interviews, etc.)

Recruiter of Volunteers
- Assesses overall volunteer requirements

- Develops and implements recruitment strategies

- Tracks the project's overall volunteer needs, securing volunteers as requested and securing appropriate space for volunteer work

- Conducts orientation and manages volunteers during the Community*Forum*

- Conducts follow-up activities (thank you notes, debrief interviews, etc.)

Table Facilitator Recruitment Goals, Strategies and Materials

Table Facilitator Recruitment Goals

The number of Table Facilitators is based on ensuring there is at least one facilitator for each participant table (8-10 participants per table) in the meeting space. Check in frequently with the Project Lead to get an accurate count of number of anticipated participant tables.

- Develop recruitment goals for ethnicity and geographical representation. Just as with participants, the ethnicity of the Table Facilitators should match the demographic diversity of the region.

- Work with the Logistics Coordinator to identify the need (if any) for bi-lingual Table Facilitators.
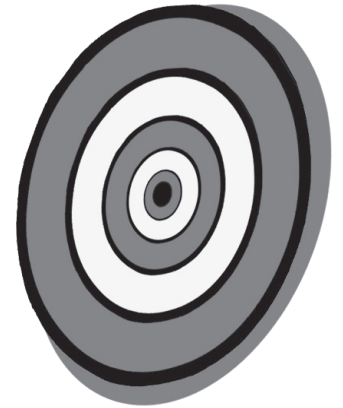
Table Facilitator Skills and Qualities

Table Facilitators are considered the "glue" that binds the entire Community*Forum* meeting together. Participants routinely say that the quality of the facilitation at their table is one of the most important factors impacting their experience. The following skills and qualities help create a positive experience for participants:

- Capacity to effectively facilitate group dialogue, elicit discussion within a diverse group, and build consensus as necessary, all within the time available.

- Ability to simultaneously manage discussion facilitation and note taking sometimes via laptop.

- Deep listening skills and the capacity to remain neutral supporting the expression of many different points of view.

Strategies for Recruiting Table Facilitators

Given the importance of their role, it is important to invest the time necessary to recruit the most qualified and diverse Table Facilitators possible.

- Effective recruitment methods include listservs, organizational presentations, newsletters, media coverage and website notices.

- Identify a well respected community leader and ask him or her to prepare an introductory message to accompany an outreach email.

- Recruit at least 10% more facilitators than needed to account for those who drop out or don't show.

Materials for Recruiting Table Facilitators

To efficiently recruit qualified Table Facilitators, develop a concise but comprehensive recruitment message for use in many different formats.   The message is an invitation and an announcement of the unique opportunity to help their community using their special talents.

- Recruitment materials are only sent once the registration, confirmation, records management and communications systems are in place.

- Develop a one-page recruitment message that can be easily included within or attached to an email or sent via fax from various sources. Key elements of the core recruitment message include:

  – Description of the project and Community*Forum* schedule (date, time)

  – Description of required skills and criteria for selection

- Outline of required commitment (training session timing and length, day of event schedule, and follow-up commitments)

- Time and location of orientation sessions

- Description of facilitator's role during the forum

- Application instructions and timeframe for notification

- The basic announcement is modified in length and content for the following formats, and should point the reader to a website with full information:

  - Email posting

  - Newsletter story

  - Newsletter announcement

  - Calendar announcement (newspaper and/or online)

- Tailor messages to specific audiences as needed (possibly other languages).

Table Facilitator Orientation

Facilitators should bring experience in managing small group conversations. The orientation session is intended to introduce the program and the tasks facilitators will be asked to manage. It is not intended to build facilitation skills.

The Recruiter works with the Logistics Coordinator to find adequate space to host Facilitator and Volunteer orientations. This same space is often used on the day of the forum to check in facilitators and volunteers and provide last minute updates.

- The orientation space should include movable chairs at round tables, a flip chart, a television and DVD player, snacks and drinks.

- The Table Facilitator and Volunteer check-in area on the day of the forum should be separate from but close to the forum meeting space. Early access to this area is required as Table Facilitators will arrive well before participants.

Ideally, the dates, times and locations of the orientation sessions are established four to six weeks before the Community*Forum* so that this information can be included in the recruitment message.

Orientation Schedule

- All Table Facilitators must participate in a Table Facilitator orientation session lasting approximately 2 hours.

- Schedule one or two orientation sessions, starting approximately one week before the Community*Forum*. Each facilitator need attend only one orientation session.

- When the orientation schedule has been set, or preferably upon registration, ask each confirmed facilitator to sign up for one of the sessions. Send emails or place reminder calls to facilitators two days before their chosen orientation session to increase attendance.

Table Facilitator Orientation Agenda and Materials

The Table Facilitator orientation session provides an essential opportunity to introduce the Table Facilitators to the Community*Forum* model and the program content. The Program Designer designs the table facilitator orientation agenda and materials. The Designer and Recruiter usually co-facilitate the orientation session. The key goals of the orientation session include the following:

- Describe the program agenda in detail using the Facilitator Guide
- Convey the philosophy and purpose of the Community*Forum* model
- Outline Table Facilitator's responsibilities in detail
- Create community and connection among Table Facilitators
- Explain the logistical arrangements
- Describe how the technology will work and demonstrate if possible
- Answer any questions or concerns

Table Facilitator orientation materials, assembled into a packet or folder, include the following:

- Table Facilitator Guide: The Table Facilitator Guide is a step-by-step task guide for each stage of the forum and is the most important part of the material packet.
- Logistical Overview
- Meeting room floor plan
- Tips for Table Facilitators
- Instructions on using the technology (if keypads will be used)
- Full copy of the participant materials: Discussion Guide, worksheets and agenda
- Table assignment

Table Facilitator Debrief Sessions

- At the end of the forum the Logistics Coordinator and Recruiter conduct debrief sessions for the Table Facilitators.

- Standard debrief questions include the following:
  – What was the highlight of the day?
  – What specifically worked well?
  – What can we do better/differently next time?

- Assign one person to take notes during the debrief session. The notes from the debrief session are given to the Table Facilitator Recruiter for review and summarizing. The Table Facilitator Coordinator gives a summary to the Project Lead.

Volunteer Recruitment Goals, Strategies and Materials

Community*Forums* require volunteers to perform numerous tasks including stuffing envelopes, staffing on-site registration, greeting participants at the beginning of the forum, etc. Volunteers can also support participant outreach efforts by distributing flyers at community events, conducting online research, providing rides to the forum and assisting with street outreach, if this is one of your strategies. Work with the Project Lead to determine how many volunteers are needed for the day of the forum and other tasks.

Volunteer Recruitment Goals

The Recruiter develops a comprehensive list of volunteer needs throughout the project and develops goals for the number and types of volunteers needed.

- Identify the types and numbers of volunteers required for each project area by talking to the Logistics Coordinator and Designer to identify specific needs.

- Recruit at least 10% more volunteers than needed to account for those who drop out or don't show.

- Common types of volunteer needs are:

  – *Office Assistance* - work in the project office in the days and hours prior to the Community*Forum*. Office volunteers prepare mailings and participant folders. They also call registered participants the week prior to the Community*Forum* to confirm their participation, and respond to telephone inquiries coming into the office.

  – *General Event Assistance* (coat check, lunch delivery, etc.)

  – *Special Needs/Translation Assistants* - Usher participants requiring translation to their assigned table.

  – *Registration* - Greet participants as they arrive and process their registration according to the system.

  – *Greeters/Ushers* - Meet and greet incoming participants and help them get oriented to the meeting room, and at times actually usher them to their tables. Ushers provide extra assistance to the elderly and participants with disabilities. They answer general questions (i.e. "Where is the bathroom?") and help troubleshoot as necessary.

  – *Floor Assistants/Floor Runner* - Floor Assistants generally work with the Floor Manager to deliver materials and supplies to tables as needed.

Strategies for Recruiting Volunteers

Rather than recruiting and scheduling one volunteer at a time, identify organizations or networks that can organize and coordinate small groups of volunteers independently.

- Recruit volunteers from groups that attract skilled volunteers who will require minimal supervision.

- Sources for volunteers may include the following: Hands-On, United Way, youth volunteer groups, college/ university volunteer groups, faith-based groups, AmeriCorps, and professional development organizations and associations.

- Registered participants can be a good source of volunteers for preparatory tasks. Many people want to help in the weeks before the meeting. Take them up on it!

Volunteer Recruitment Materials

Make sure the volunteer recruitment notices describe the project and emphasize how they can contribute. Many volunteers are motivated to contribute because they will have an opportunity to see the project from a unique vantage point. Develop standard volunteer recruitment language that includes the following information:

- Brief description of the project and expected outcomes
- Volunteer dates and times
- List of volunteer jobs available
- Minimum commitment required (# of hours, days, etc.)
- Whether or not food will be provided
- Contact information

Day of the Forum

If possible, all volunteers should arrive at one designated time to participate in a brief orientation on site. The orientation is a briefing that reviews the purpose of the Community*Forum* and outlines the tasks related to the different volunteer positions. It is also the time when volunteers receive their specific assignments for the day.

The Volunteer Recruiter or their designee is responsible for the following tasks:

- Tracking arrival of volunteers and communicating assignments
- Observing volunteer operations and making adjustments as needed
- Circulating within the meeting space and checking in with the Floor Manager

Committee Members' Event Day Assignments

The Table Facilitator Recruiter usually has his/her hands full checking in table facilitators, handing out table assignments and participating in a last meeting briefing. The Volunteer Recruiter is equally busy on checking in volunteers, reshuffling people and ensuring all positions are covered.

Send Thank You Notes and Final Report

Send a thank you note to all Table Facilitators and volunteers immediately after the Community*Forum*. Express appreciation for his/her support and commitment and provide a summary of the forum outcomes.

As soon as the final report is available, send each Table Facilitator and Volunteer a copy. If possible, include a brief project update, including actions that have taken place since the forum as well as plans for the future.

Table Facilitator & Volunteer Workplan

The Table Facilitator & Volunteer Committee works to recruit skilled facilitators to create a safe place for all participants to discuss their views in a productive manner. Volunteers create the glue that holds the meeting together as they register, greet, feed and answer questions of the participants.

Week 10
- Develop facilitator and volunteer targets
- Develop descriptions of facilitator and volunteer roles
- Develop facilitator application/ registration form and/or system
- Identify potential sources and plan recruitment strategies
- Develop orientation schedule and secure meeting spaces

Week 9
- Order T-shirts for facilitators and volunteers (optional)
- Work with outreach team to identify sources for ethnically diverse facilitators

Week 8
- Make contacts and pursue leads for recruitment
- Begin contact with registered facilitators

Week 7
- Make contacts and pursue leads for recruitment
- Continue contact with registered facilitators
- Monitor volunteer numbers and adjust outreach accordingly

Week 6
- Make contacts and pursue leads
- Send update to registered facilitators and volunteers

Week 5
- Make contacts and pursue leads

Week 4
- Identify materials for orientation session
- Develop facilitator orientation agenda

Week 3
- Make contacts and pursue leads
- Send updates to facilitators

Week 2
- Revise facilitator materials as needed with correct logistical/ staffing details
- Work with Program Designer regarding final script production timeline
- Write Facilitator Guide and other materials
- Send reminder note/make reminder calls about orientation sessions
- Finalize volunteers for the meeting
- Develop volunteer orientation session

Event Week
- Deliver facilitator orientation materials to orientation site
- Conduct facilitator and volunteer orientation sessions
- Communicate plan for on-site check-in on meeting day

Event +1 Week
- Conduct debrief meetings
- Send thank you notes

Making an Impact

Over the years, America*Speaks* has tested with many different strategies and tactics for fostering action and change. The following strategies and tactics have been employed by America*Speaks* or have been discussed as possible options that could be employed to increase the impact of our work. A Community*Forum* may benefit from considering some of these strategies.

Individual Action

Provide Individuals with Tools to Contact Decision-Makers and the Media

Make tools available to help participants take action at the Community*Forum* or after the Community*Forum* including: sample letters to the editor, sample letters to decision-makers, letter writing kits, postcards to write to send decision-makers, contact information for decision-makers, online tools to support letter writing and examples of individual actions that people can take in their communities to act on an issue.

Help People Join Advocacy Groups that Share Priorities

At the forum or on a web site, provide people with information about groups they can join that represent different policy and advocacy positions.

Foster Personal Commitments to Action

Include discussions at the forum on personal commitments to action that may include brainstorming of ideas, sharing of commitments with the group, and postcards that people fill out with their commitments that get mailed back to them a month later.

Table Captains

Each table identifies someone who will be in charge of contacting the others with updates on the issue and opportunities to take action. America*Speaks* employs a phone tree or email list to reach out to table captains.

Celebration of Individual Actions

Recognize individuals who have taken individual action through newsletters, spotlights on a website, awards and other mediums.

Collective Action

Encourage Tables to Take Action Together

Include discussions during the Community*Forum* of how table groups can work together. Help them exchange contact information and ask them to make commitments to act.

Working Groups and Implementation

Pre-determine topics or identify community priorities around which committees or task forces can be formed to create action plans. Identify staff to support action teams and create processes by which action teams report back on their progress.

Each Working Group is responsible for: 1) benchmarking its work against other communities, 2) researching best practices, 3) identifying potential obstacles and enablers for implementation, and 4) identifying possible ways to address obstacles.

Action Summit and Follow-up Meetings

Announce the date of a follow-up meeting at which point people will reconvene to either report on actions they have taken or to develop plans for action. Convene annual or bi-annual summits to highlight progress and set new priorities for action.
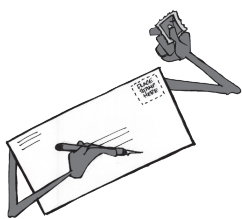
Dissemination of Information

Keep Participants Feeling Connected

Use thank you letters, the distribution of preliminary and final reports, scorecards about progress on implementation to keep people feeling connected to the topic. Use websites, blogs, email lists, mailing lists, the media and partner organizations to distribute information.

Create a directory of participants with table captains for networking, advocacy and mobilizing. Cross reference with working groups participation/areas of interest.

Ways to Stay Involved

Send out action alerts via an email list or phone tree and post opportunities on the web site.

Stakeholder Action

### Involve Stakeholders on Steering Committee

Engage key stakeholders and leaders on committees to help organize the forum or shape the content of the forum, so they will have buy-in and will be more likely to remain involved with implementation. After the forum is an ideal time to reformulate the composition of the Steering Committee and overall governance of implementation.

Conduct Follow-up Meetings

After the Community*Forum*, the project's leaders should meet in person with key decision-makers to discuss the forum outcomes and next steps. The meetings are scheduled to take place within 10 days after the forum to capitalize on the meeting's momentum and interest, and project leaders should bring detailed data summaries and information to the briefing meeting. As soon as the forum's Final Report is ready, it is also distributed to decision-makers.

Convene Leadership Workshops and Briefings

Incorporate regular leadership workshops or briefings into the process, so that large numbers of leaders are a part of the process.
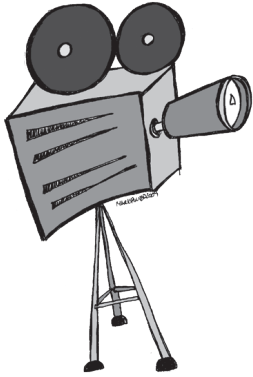
Media

Launch Media Campaign to Increase Power of Recommendations

Develop media strategy to create momentum leading up to the meeting. Be sure to include tactics which broadcast public priorities, thus making it difficult for the public's voice to be ignored.

Form Media Partnerships to Keep Spotlight on Actions and Build Accountability

Promote post-meeting activities through media partnerships to hold decision-makers accountable for action.

Briefings and Relationships with Decision-Makers

Involve Decision-Makers in Shaping Agenda and Content

Closely involve decision-makers in shaping the content, agenda and demographic targets for the forum to ensure their buy-in into the process. To the extent possible, also involve them in outreach, etc.

Conduct Briefings on the Results of the Forum

Conduct briefings with decision-makers and their staffs on the results of the forum. Break out data that is most relevant to decision-makers. Involve citizens or stakeholders in briefings when relevant.

Write Recommendations for How Results May be Incorporated

Write a memo with specific recommendations for individual elected officials, agency directors, etc. about how the results are relevant to them.

Accountability Measures

- Create public scorecards to hold leaders accountable
- Create performance contracts for agency directors to hold them accountable
- Create media partnerships to hold decision-makers accountable

Before the Community*Forum*

- Involve a diverse community Steering Committee to guide the development of the strategy, content and design of the forum to ensure that it is credible, fair and embedded in the community.
- Ensure that the strategic options in the Participant Guide have been extensively vetted with elected officials, stakeholders and the public.
- Create a strong connection to local elected officials to increase their sense of ownership of the program and to ensure that they believe the inputs to the forum are fair and credible. Meet with City and County leaders to discuss how the results of the forum can be best used within city and county planning processes, as well as how leaders will be involved in the forum.
- Develop a special guest program for community leaders to observe firsthand the table discussions and the priorities that emerge from the day.

During the Community*Forum*

- Format discussion questions so that deliberations foster impact and action.
- Invite local leaders to welcome the participants to the forum and close the day by talking about what they heard at the event and next steps for action.
- Encourage leaders to sit at tables and participate. Or allow them to observe the deliberations at several of the tables during the forum.
- Make announcements from the stage on how the results of the forum will be folded into existing planning processes.
- During the last hour of the forum focus on next steps and implementation. Ask participants to volunteer to join working groups to develop plans to implement the priorities from the forum.
- Announce Working Groups' meeting times and locations.
- Announce from the stage the availability of small grants to assist Working Groups in their implementation efforts.

After the Community*Forum*

- Hold an implementation meeting of leaders at a pre-defined time and place. At this meeting encourage leaders to take a leadership role in the Working Groups and in an overarching steering committee.
- Guide Working Groups so they incorporate community organizations that are already working on specific topics.
- Arrange for small grants to help working groups move forward.