

Phases of Public Dialogue

Phase I Assess the Situation

- Is there a compelling issue that needs to be addressed?
- If the situation continues on its present course, how acceptable is the most likely outcome?
- Do all affected people believe they may get more from a collaborative process than from another method for addressing the situation?
- Are the decision makers committed to implementing any agreements that may emerge?

Phase II Design the Forum

Develop a Work Plan

- Define purpose.
- Clarify objectives, tasks, and products.
- Specify timelines and deadlines.

Define Ground Rules

- Identify participants.
- Define agreement.
- Clarify responsibilities to each other.
- Clarify responsibilities to constituents.
- Agree on meeting procedures and process coordination.
- Define procedures for communicating with the media and others.

Phase III Deliberate and Decide

- Clarify people's interests.
- Build a common understanding of the situation.
- Generate options to accommodate all interests.
- Recognize the need for discussion away from the table.
- Avoid closure on single-issue agreements; focus on the total package.
- Agree to disagree when necessary.
- Ensure constituents are kept informed.
- Confirm agreements in writing.
- Ratify agreements with constituents.

Phase IV Implement the Outcome

- Link informal agreements to a formal decision-making process.
- Clarify who is responsible for each implementation task.
- Develop a schedule for implementation.
- Jointly monitor implementation.
- Create a context for renegotiation.