

The Seven Core Principles

In practice, people emphasize or apply these principles in many different ways, and often embrace additional principles. These seven principles reflect the *common* beliefs and understandings of those working in the fields of public engagement, conflict resolution, and collaboration.

1. Careful Planning and Preparation

Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.

2. Inclusion and Demographic Diversity

Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

3. Collaboration and Shared Purpose

Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.¹

4. Openness and Learning

Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously evaluate public engagement activities for effectiveness.

5. Transparency and Trust

Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.

6. Impact and Action

Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.

7. Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture

Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality public engagement.

¹ In addition to reflecting the democratic ideals of liberty, justice, and freedom for all, the term “common good” refers to things that optimize the well-being of all (like a traffic light in a dangerous intersection) or conditions that serve to benefit all involved (as in a consensus agreement focused on cleaning up the water supply).