



International Association
for Public Participation

The IAP2 Certificate Program in Public Participation

For more than a decade, IAP2 has offered diverse, high quality training for public participation practitioners in conjunction with its annual conference. In response to a growing demand from the public participation community, IAP2 developed an official IAP2 Certificate Program In Public Participation to provide beginning through advanced intermediate practitioners a broad-based learning experience covering all of the foundations of public participation. IAP2 training provides useful and effective tools for communicating public participation concepts. Each course is designed to provide the fundamentals of public participation that practitioners from around the world can use to implement customized and effective programs.

IAP2 Training is delivered in two Tiers. Tier I constitutes the IAP2 Certificate Program. Professional Development Program courses address the skills and techniques that are most desired by more advanced practitioners.

Tier I Courses Lead to a Certificate in Public Participation

Tier I consists of a series of three modules which are presented at IAP2 conferences and other venues throughout the year. Tier I modules are aimed at beginning to intermediate level professionals who wish to master the basics of how to design and deliver a public participation program.

Upon the completion of each Tier I module, students will receive credit from IAP2 recognizing their successful completion of that module. Upon completion of all three modules, students will be awarded a Certificate in Public Participation from IAP2.

Tier I modules include:

1. Planning for Effective Public Participation (two-day course)
2. Effective Communications for Public Participation (one-day course)
3. Techniques for Effective Public Participation (two-day course)

You may take these modules at any IAP2 conference or visit IAP2's Web site for additional locations in your area. Contact IAP2 Headquarters to explore direct training for groups of 15 or more.

Note: Planning for Effective Public Participation is a prerequisite for other IAP2 courses.

Professional Development Program Courses to Address Advanced Topics

Individuals who wish to continue their learning beyond the certificate program and advanced practitioners have the opportunity to take additional IAP2-approved Professional Development Program courses. IAP2 is currently working with senior trainers to identify courses that meet our quality standards and provide practitioners with the depth and breadth of knowledge needed to develop effective public participation programs.



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Planning for Effective Public Participation

This two-day module of the IAP2 Certificate Program provides an introduction to the foundations of effective public participation programs. IAP2 has worked with practitioners from around the world to develop foundational tools that transcend national and cultural boundaries. Even advanced practitioners will find useful tools and techniques to assist in working with the public and clients to establish effective public participation. These tools are presented in an interactive and experiential learning environment that provides students with the opportunity to explore their own public participation challenges with their instructor and peers.

Students use IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum to demonstrate the importance of setting clear objectives and a promise to the public and how to determine the appropriate level of public participation. Other important topics include the practical application of the IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation and using the IAP2 Code of Ethics as a guide to both practitioners and clients.

Students will apply the IAP2 Foundations of Public Participation to employ a step-wise program to planning and designing public participation programs. Course content includes detailed examples and practical hands-on exercises so participants leave with the tools needed to build realistic public participation programs. Course materials include exercises in using IAP2's five steps for planning effective public participation.

The Planning module focuses on defining the issues for which public participation is required, identifying stakeholders, and ensuring their involvement throughout the process. Using IAP2's Spectrum for Public Participation, course participants establish clear and achievable objectives for public participation and a promise to the public. Participants learn how to prepare an organization for conducting public participation and to plan for the timing, techniques, and resources needed to make public participation a success. Emphasis is placed on creating and using continuous feedback and evaluation.

At the conclusion of the Planning for Effective Public Participation module, students will have learned:

- The full scope of planning needed for effective participation, including information, timing, resources, techniques, and roles and responsibilities.
- A variety of ways to identify publics and understand potential impacts of actions.
- How to select the appropriate level of public participation.
- A variety of ways to identify publics and to understand potential impacts of actions.
- How to select the appropriate level of public participation.
- How to set clear, shared objectives for effective participation.
- How to develop a public participation plan.
- How to identify appropriate evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of public participation programs.

Note: Planning for Effective Public Participation is a prerequisite for all other IAP2 Public Participation Certificate training.



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Effective Communication for Public Participation

This one-day module in IAP2's Certificate Program in Public Participation offers an overview of the communication skills used by public participation practitioners. The course provides an introduction to communication skills and models. It introduces the Principles of Authentic Communications and focuses on tools used to prepare and present information materials in a variety of forms, small and large group interaction models and facilitation essentials.

The course is designed as a primer and is suitable for beginning to intermediate level practitioners and those who want a review of basic communication techniques. Interactive exercises and practical tips are used to enliven the basic theory and reference materials presented throughout the day and reinforce skills that participants can put to immediate use. Participants learn the elements needed to prepare communication plans and to practice active listening. They gain an understanding of the essentials of risk communication, making effective written and verbal presentations and working with mass media.

Students get practical experience in applying the skills they've learned in Planning for Effective Public Participation Programs.

At the conclusion of Effective Communications for Public Participation, students will have learned:

- An understanding of the communication skills needed to support effective public participation.
- An understanding of two-way communication models and how to share information and to elicit feedback.
- An understanding of learning styles and how to incorporate into public participation
- A variety of public participation communication skills and techniques including active listening and empathy, communicating technical information to non-technical people, managing hostile audiences, risk communication, cross-cultural communications and media relations.
- How to use appropriate communication skills, behaviors and tools to support effective public participation.

Note: The Planning for Effective Public Participation module is a prerequisite for this course

Techniques for Effective Public Participation

This two-day module in IAP2's Certificate Program in Public Participation provides an introduction to a range of practical tools and techniques used at all five levels of IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum. It gives course participants an opportunity to try out or observe a number of specific techniques including World Caf , Interviews, Revolving Conversation, Citizens Jury and Advisory Group.

It includes overviews of more than 20 tools and techniques tested and used by public participation practitioners around the globe. The course is designed as a primer and is suitable for beginning to intermediate level practitioners and those who want a review of basic group process techniques. Interactive exercises and practical tips are used to enliven the basic theory and reference materials presented throughout the two-day session and reinforce skills that participants can put to immediate use.

Students learn how to create effective forums for dialogue and how to avoid the many problems encountered in traditional public meetings. Students leave this module armed with a detailed student manual covering the course materials and a packet of IAP2 Tipsheets offering practical advice for selecting, using and evaluating a broad range of public participation activities.

At the conclusion of Techniques for Effective Public Participation, students will have learned:

- Tools and techniques that can be used at all levels of IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum
- How to use IAP2's Tools and Techniques Framework to assist in selecting tools appropriate for particular situations

How to use various techniques to:

- Promote awareness by sharing information
- Gather broad-based feedback
- Foster meaningful discussion
- Facilitate agreement
- Provide effective forums for public discussion

Note: The Planning for Effective Public Participation module is a prerequisite for this course

IAP2's Public Participation for Decision Makers

IAP2's Public Participation for Decision Makers helps decision makers get the best value from a public process. The session looks at the Foundations from a decision makers' point of view and offers a perspective on how public participation can be integrated into the overall project plan. It examines at the costs and benefits of public participation, discusses when and why to not involve the public in an organizational decision, and emphasizes the importance of both the decision being made and the promise to the public about their involvement in that decision process. Finally, the session provides an overview of what the decision maker should know about the public participation practitioner's role.

At the conclusion of this course, decision makers will have learned:

- How public participation ties into their decision-making processes
- When and why to have the public participate in their decisions
- The decision maker's unique role and commitment
- Key concepts that must be considered to be effective when involving others

What is public participation?

IAP2 views public participation as any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make better decisions. While there is an element of dispute resolution in public participation, the essence of public participation is to begin a participatory process before disputes arise.

Public participation uses tools and techniques that are common to a number of fields: communications, social science research, dispute resolution, facilitation, and more. In many ways, these fields are kindred spirits with similar goals of increasing clarity and openness, giving voice, making better decisions, and managing conflicting needs and values. Like other fields, public participation requires specialized skills, knowledge, and thought processes

What are the benefits of involving the public?

Believe it or not, public participation can make a job easier... as well as being the right thing to do ethically. Involving the public has several benefits, both practical and ideological.

- Democratic principles
- Improved process
- Better results and decisions
- Relationship building
- Regulations and requirements



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The decision-maker's unique role and commitment

Everyone involved in your process has a defined role. As the decision maker, your role is unique. Obviously, you are ultimately responsible for the final decision. But you also hold some responsibilities related to making that decision. These include:

- Carefully and thoughtfully consider the public's input when you make your decision. Respect the unique viewpoints and wisdom the public brings to the table.
- Be clear about the process you will use to make the decision and how people can participate in that process. Have an open and transparent process.
- Be clear on any "bottom lines" and non-negotiable items. Be clear if certain issues are "off the table." Do NOT ask for input if you are not going to consider it.
- Do NOT promise a level of involvement if you cannot commit to that level of involvement and the affiliated level of impact they would have.
- Keep your promises.
- Honor the core values of public participation.
- Provide the appropriate level of time and resources to support the process you have committed to. Be clear on resource limitations when the process is designed. Set reasonable timelines that are compatible with the scope of the project and the public participation objectives and levels of participation.
- Finally, you are likely to be overseeing and managing the public participation practitioner(s) for this effort, whether those practitioners are staff within your organization or outside consultants. If you do not manage them directly, they are probably within your chain of command and responsibility. Thus, you must ensure the integrity of the participation process. In addition, you need to understand some key components and considerations of public participation and the ethics that guide the work of public participation practitioners.

Critical components and considerations for effective public participation

To design and carry out effective public participation, certain components and considerations are critical. Your staff or contractors will hold primary responsibility for these features. As the decision maker, you need to be aware of and must understand these critical elements so you can be comfortable with the role of the public in the process of your decision. In addition, understanding these elements will help you to adequately manage those with primary responsibility for the public participation.

Some critical components and considerations:

- 1. Clarify the decision and decision-making process.** Get agreement on what is/are the issue(s) on the table.
- 2. Develop full understanding of who needs to be involved.** Be sure all the players and critical issues are considered.
- 3. Define the appropriate level of public participation.** Make appropriate promises and keep them.
- 4. Embrace the core values of public participation.** Make sure your approach and process meets the needs of the participants as well as those of your organization. Understand the ethics that guide the work of public participation practitioners.
- 5. Design your public participation process, reflecting values and resources.** Public participation must be planned and integrated with the decision-making process.
- 6. Evaluate and adapt, continuously.**