

CRITERIA FOR WHEN TO UNDERTAKE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The starting place to determine the need for public engagement (PE) is with the potential decision under consideration. It is important to fully document the nature of the issues under consideration in order to determine if community engagement is appropriate and necessary.

To help with the assessment, the following tool compares and contrasts the environment, context, and situations of when community engagement should be determined as necessary.

<div>?</div> <div>THINK THIS THROUGH</div>			
To do or not do public engagement?			
<p>Answer yes or no to each of these statements. If you answer YES to any of the statements in the left hand column you SHOULD NOT embark on developing a PE process (NO GO). If you answer YES to any of the statements in the right-hand column you SHOULD continue your preparations for PE (GO!).</p>			
Factors to NOT undertake PE	Y or N	Factors encouraging the use of PE	Y or N
Is the organization in a crisis or emergency situation?		Will the public and stakeholders be impacted or concerned by the potential effects of the proposed project or decision?	
Do immediate actions and decisions need to be made in order to maintain the safety of the public?		Is additional information or input from stakeholders and the public to improve the quality of results or information presented to decision-makers?	
Is this a low impact situation where a low number of people will be impacted?		Is there an opportunity to learn from communities or share knowledge?	
Would the resulting decision have inconsequential or negligible impacts on patients and families and you have confirmed there is no interest in the issue?		Has there been a history or pattern of engagement on similar topics or projects that would indicate a comparable interest?	
Has the decision already been made and there is no opportunity for reconsideration or change of direction?		Is there uncertainty over the direct impacts the project or change will impose?	
Does the organization want to share information and educate		Are there no certain answers and a number of possible paths or options open	

stakeholders about their programs and services?		to the organization?	
Is the organization seeking buy-in or support for a new initiative, program or service?		Is there an opportunity to align public and community values with this initiative?	
		Will stakeholders understanding of the issues increase through participation?	
		Will the public and stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved early in the process?	

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DEFINED

Public engagement is a multi-way process that involves the public (anyone who is interested in or affected by the issue under discussion) in problem solving or discussion, and links public input to the decision. It is not a single engagement event, but rather a journey with an opportunity to build relationships and trust.

Public engagement is...	Public engagement is NOT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating understanding on issues and projects • Providing a forum for sharing ideas and concerns • Seeking out and understanding ideas, concerns, thoughts, advice or recommendations • Recording input received and doing something with it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending community or special events • Selling a project or initiative • Seeking buy-in or support • Marketing • Education (in isolation) • One-way communication • Talking and listening to people (without doing something with it) • Volunteering