

**ACHIEVING HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION THROUGH
EPA'S MEANINGFUL
INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

**Updating EPA's
2003 Public
Involvement Policy**

UPDATING EPA'S 2003 MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT POLICY

WORKGROUP

- **38 members representing all national program offices at HQ and all ten regions**
- **Bi-weekly meetings since January 2023**
- **Members collaboratively revised policy sections in sub-groups, solicited input from management and across programs and regions, and ensured office and regional priorities were reflected**

OF NOTE

- The policy's primary audience are EPA Teams (e.g., staff, managers, fellows, interns, appointees, senior executive service, contractors, and senior environmental enrollees)
- The purpose of revising the policy now is to promote a consistent EPA-wide approach to conducting meaningful involvement and support EPA employees in doing this work effectively
- The policy is in line with and responsive to Administration priorities, EO 14096, the Equity Action Plan, and OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) guidance on broadening public engagement



3 MAIN REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS

**1. EPA-WIDE
APPROACH**

**2. EPA'S PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION MODEL**

3. CAPABILITIES

3 MAIN REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS

1. EPA-WIDE APPROACH

- Identify the decisions in an EPA action that may be influenced by public input
- Use the Public Participation Spectrum
- Use the Public Participation Model

Table 1.1. EPA's Public Participation Spectrum.

Goal	Inform/ Outreach	Consult/ Info Exchange	Involve/ Recommendations	Collaborate/ Agreements	Empower
Purpose	Provide information to external partners and clearly communicate that this is not an opportunity for involvement.	Provide and exchange data, opinions, and options during one or two instances.	Obtain advice or comments over an extended period of time.	Reach workable agreement, settlement, or decision together.	Empower the public to take action.
Promise to the Public	"We will keep you informed."	"We will listen, acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on your input at the appropriate time."	"We will take your advice or comments into account when making a decision and we will inform you how your advice or comments influenced our decision."	"We will work together in good faith to reach an understanding that we can all support and implement as agreed."	"We will support your decision and assist in your implementation."
Examples¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • Fact sheets • News releases • Federal Register notices • Public notices • Infographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with individuals • Official public meetings or hearings • Workshops • Public information sessions or community meetings • Listening sessions • Phone hotlines • Regulatory notice and comment period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) • Policy dialogues • Small Business Advocacy Review (SBAR) panels • Request for public comment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superfund Jobs Training Initiative (SuperJTI); or SuperJTI fact sheet • Access agreements • Institutional controls • Settlement agreements • Negotiated rulemaking • Consensus permit • Statement of principles • Federal Advisory Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary programs • Good Samaritan Initiative • Redevelopment plans • Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grants • Community Action for Renewed Environment • Sustainability Forum • Participatory science

3 MAIN REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS

2. EPA'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MODEL

- Updated the 7 stages to reflect current outreach practices and technological advances
- Made the model iterative vs. step by step

- **Plan: Identify the EPA Action, Select a Level of Participation, and Secure Resources**
- **Identify the Public and Segments of the Public**
- **Provide Technical or Financial Assistance**
- **Provide Information and Outreach**
- **Conduct Public Consultation and Participation Activities**
- **Review, Use Input, and Provide Feedback**
- **Evaluate Public Participation Activities**

3 MAIN REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS

3. CAPABILITIES

The policy reaffirms the importance of building EPA's Team capabilities for effectively conducting meaningful involvement and includes 9 capabilities:

- Use the principles of integrity, inclusiveness, dialogue, influence, and accountability
- Use or consider data and information collected via participatory science and Indigenous Knowledge
- Use EPA's annual budget process to secure resources and EPA resources to plan for and conduct meaningful involvement
- When providing responses to solicited public input, do so in a timely manner, in plain writing and accessible in languages used by the public
- Address solicited public input using oversight authorities, legal directives, and EPA's tools and resources for researching alternatives and calculating risk to meet public concerns
- Use risk communication as a two-way approach to provide the public with information they need to make informed, independent judgements about risks to safety and health and to provide EPA with appropriate information to assess risk
- Use the alternate dispute resolution process as needed, including mediation, arbitration, and neutral facilitation
- Demonstrate cultural competence and humility when engaging with the public
- Demonstrate transparency, sincerity, and a willingness to learn when engaging with the public

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Seeking public input on but not limited to:

- Meaningful involvement approach
- Public Participation Spectrum
- The Public Participation Model

Each National Program and Region implements a community involvement approach as appropriate

CURRENT STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

1. Solicit EPA-wide feedback
2. Solicit public feedback
3. Engage the workgroup to review and respond to internal and public comments
4. Incorporate input
5. Finalize the policy

HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENTS

DUE: January 16, 2024

Comments can be submitted via:

- MeaningfulInvolvementPolicy@epa.gov
- [Submit the contact us form on the website](#)
- The draft policy docket [EPA-HQ-OEJECR-2023-0326](#) at www.regulations.gov

THANK YOU

For any questions, please email us at MeaningfulInvolvementPolicy@epa.gov

www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/epas-meaningful-involvement-policy