



FACILITATION GUIDE:

POLICY 101

PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM SUCCESSFUL POLICY ADVOCATES

What is a policy?

A policy is an action taken by government to achieve an objective for society. Policies affect all aspects of our lives: what kind of transportation we take, what foods we eat, and how we interact with our environments.

Activity Type: Knowledge sharing symposium

Participant Audience: Residents, Organizational Partners, Built Environment Professionals, Decision-Makers

Objectives

Policy 101 is a knowledge sharing symposium on how to successfully advocate for and make policy. This event brings together experienced policy advocates with those hoping to make policy changes in their field. The aim of the symposium is to learn from the experiences of others – how they became involved, the challenges they faced, and why they were successful.

This symposium provides the opportunity for citizens to contribute to deliberative dialogue:

Principles of Deliberative Dialogue:

- Find common ground through understanding and learning from one another. (You can not “win” a dialogue).
- Speak only for yourself, not as a representative of the interests of others.
- Everyone is treated as an equal: leave roles, status and stereotypes at the door
- Be open and listen to others, even (especially when) you disagree, and suspend judgement.
- Identify and test assumptions, (especially your own).
- Listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others: and acknowledge you have heard the other, especially when you disagree.
- Express disagreement with ideas, not with personalities or motives. (Disagree without being disagreeable).
- Dialogue and decision making are separate activities. (Dialogue should always come before decision making).

(From Sustainable Calgary's Citizens' Agenda)

Facilitation Process

Before the symposium begins:

- Reach out to people who have contributed to changing or implementing policy.
- Ask presenters to speak about their policy-influencing process with a 15 minute presentation. For example: at the original Policy 101 Symposium, a member of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), discussed the strategies they used to get a coal phase-out commitment.

Facilitation steps at the symposium:

- Introduce the process, context, and objectives of the symposium. Provide an agenda and a short overview of who the presenters are and their topics..
- Provide each individual with paper and pens for questions or comments they may have .
- Begin presentations, and allow about 15 minutes per presenter.
- Allow time for participants to ask questions in between presentations.

Discussion:

- After all presentations, invite attendees to ask questions of the presenters, their content, and engage in “deliberative dialogue” with one another.
- Keep track of these questions, comments, and answers. The information that comes from this dialogue can be very beneficial.

Tip: Promote the symposium: Select potential participants from the professional and nonprofit community based on their involvement or interest in policy change. Invitations should be sent to specific stakeholders.

Tip: Collect presentations beforehand. This ensures a smooth succession of presentations on the day of the symposium.



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