

Council of State Community Development Agencies Annual Conference

LIGHTNING ROUND: **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT**

PRESENTED BY

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Why is community engagement important to us?

- Critical to understand residents' needs, experiences, and preferences
- Tells the stories behind the data
- Critical to strategically and successfully target resources (and fix broken systems)
- Effective to move policy because elected officials care about what their constituents think
- It is also really fun and rewarding research!



If engagement is so important, why don't more residents participate?

- **Meetings are Boring** (especially if the world isn't ending)
- **Meetings are Scary**
 - Mistrust (we've been burned by you before, or you've already decided what you want to happen and are just here to check a box.)
 - It's not for me (I'm not...rich, white, a homeowner, an expert, educated, old, young, ...someone who matters to people like you)
- **Meetings are inaccessible** (date, time, location, and format are convenient for you, not me).
- **People are Busy** (You are; they are too)
- **We don't Invite them**



BRING THE
ENGAGEMENT TO
THE PEOPLE
(and make it interesting)



TYPES OF VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

- **Synchronous**—typical “Zoom” meeting; a scheduled meeting with virtual attendance
 - **Hybrid / multi-site**—centralized “broadcast” with local on-site support and virtual option
- **Asynchronous**—participants can engage on their own schedule (e.g., surveys, interactive websites, resident reporting, etc.)
- **Engagement in a box**—empower local partners with engagement tools




ASYNCHRONOUS: INTERACTIVE WEBSITE





Begin Here



About


A Quick Video


Your Thoughts

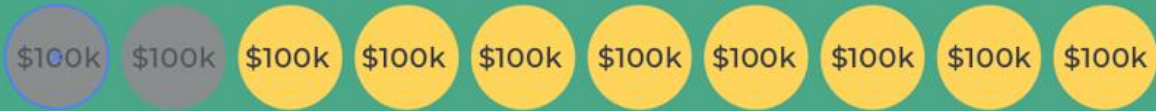

Activities


Privacy


Next Steps

Part 1: Spending Money

For this exercise, you assume the role of community leaders in your community. You have \$1 million to spend on housing and community development programs. What programs would you prioritize?



<p>Commercial Revitalization</p> <p>- \$100k +</p>	<p>Economic Development</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>Category Five</p> <p>- 0 +</p>
<p>Housing Rehabilitation</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>Neighborhood Revitalization</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>Category Six</p> <p>- \$100k +</p>

SUBMIT YOUR BUDGET



ASYNCHRONOUS: RESIDENT REPORTING



<https://candychang.com/work/i-wish-this-was/>

Community Engagement in a Box

Use to build capacity and ownership of engagement with partners:

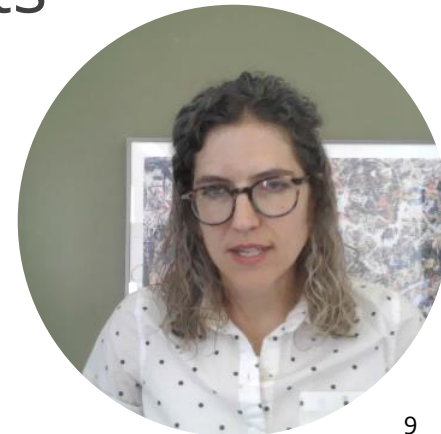
- Empowers partners to use the tools developed for community engagement
- Expands the reach of community engagement beyond your area of influence
- Consists of partner distribution of resident survey, hosting stakeholder and resident focus groups, facilitating “pop up” engagement, hosting community open houses



What's in the Box?

(We literally send a box)

- Resident surveys with postage-paid art embedded in the printed survey instrument (fold, staple/tape, drop in a mailbox)
- Resident survey promotional materials
- Community conversations guide—a moderator's discussion guide for facilitated conversations and tabling at events
- Background materials or resources
- Instructions (we usually also host a webinar to train partners)





KEYS

TO SUCCESS

Always be asking **"Who is missing?"**

Seek out **local trusted partners**.

Be **honest** about how the info will be used.

Engage with cultural sensitivity and elevate the **traditionally unheard voices** (to balance the squeaky wheels).

Compensate participants and partners.

Be **humble**...



...A few years ago, we brought a local artist, Molina Speaks, into meetings...to help facilitate. He is a poetic scribe. We stood up and talked in numbers...and he listened and turned our data into a poem.

We defined cost burden and then he said...

**Thirty percent is the magic number,
one third of my work
gone to rent
and that's if I'm lucky.
The programs to help are complicated.
The data speaks.
Splashed upon the big screen
in bullet points, the fine print
makes heads spin
and eyes glaze over
even when the details are explained
with care.**

And the titled this: **We the
People of Housing**

