Comparing Citizen Engagement across the Rural-Urban Spectrum

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What is Citizen Engagement?

• APA definition: “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern”

• Some examples might include:
  – Surveys
  – Open houses/brainstorming sessions
  – Participatory budget meetings
Might it be different between Urban/Rural Areas?
Methods Used:

• Analyzed data from the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS)—Fall 2012

• Chose select questions looking at:
  – Current state of citizen engagement
  – Approaches to citizen engagement
  – What is citizen engagement for?
Opportunities Aren’t Taken

We make opportunities for engagement available but citizens don't take advantage

Source: Michigan Public Policy Survey, Fall 2012
Who’s Showing Up?

Jurisdiction's Engagement Efforts Mostly Attract the Same People Over and over

- Strongly agree: 20.9%
- Somewhat agree: 51.7%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 15.9%
- Somewhat disagree: 13.8%
- Strongly disagree: 10.3%
- Don't know: 4.1%

Mostly Urban Percentages
- Strongly agree: 16.2%
- Somewhat agree: 51.0%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13.1%
- Somewhat disagree: 7.4%
- Strongly disagree: 4.5%

Mostly Rural Percentages
- Strongly agree: 19.5%
- Somewhat agree: 49.4%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20.3%
- Somewhat disagree: 7.6%
- Strongly disagree: 2.6%

Completely Urban Percentages
- Strongly agree: 21.5%
- Somewhat agree: 53.1%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13.8%
- Somewhat disagree: 4.1%
- Strongly disagree: 0.5%
- Don't know: 0.5%

Completely Rural Percentages
- Strongly agree: 16.2%
- Somewhat agree: 51.0%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13.1%
- Somewhat disagree: 7.4%
- Strongly disagree: 4.5%
- Don't know: 0.5%
Formal vs. Informal Approaches

We don't need formal engagement efforts because our local officials already know what the citizens want

Source: Michigan Public Policy Survey, Fall 2012
Formal vs. Informal Approaches

Some of the best engagement with citizens happens informally around the community.

Source: Michigan Public Policy Survey, Fall 2012
What is Citizen Engagement?

The Majority of the Jurisdiction Council/Board believe the role of citizen engagement is to:

- Keep citizens informed: 22.4%
- Have citizens provide input: 68.5%
- Have citizens identify specific policy: 21.2%
- Have citizens recommend decisions: 63.6%
- Have citizens make decisions: 62.7%
- Don't Know: 20.5%

Source: Michigan Public Policy Survey, Fall 2012
What is Citizen Engagement?

The Majority of the Jurisdiction Employees believe the role of citizen engagement is to:

- Keep citizens informed: 40.9% (Completely Urban), 33.5% (Mostly Urban), 21.2% (Mostly Rural), 28.3% (Completely Rural)
- Have citizens provide input: 42.7% (Completely Urban), 53.1% (Mostly Urban), 62.7% (Mostly Rural), 4.9% (Completely Rural)
- Have citizens identify specific policy: 4.2% (Completely Urban), 4.2% (Mostly Urban), 6.3% (Mostly Rural), 0% (Completely Rural)
- Have citizens recommend decisions: 2.2% (Completely Urban), 2.3% (Mostly Urban), 5.4% (Mostly Rural), 7.9% (Completely Rural)
- Have citizens make decisions: 1.3% (Completely Urban), 0.5% (Mostly Urban), 1.1% (Mostly Rural), 3.8% (Completely Rural)
- Don't Know: 7.7% (Completely Urban), 6.7% (Mostly Urban), 8.9% (Mostly Rural), 3.8% (Completely Rural)

Source: Michigan Public Policy Survey, Fall 2012
Are we Satisfied?

How satisfied are you with citizen engagement in jurisdiction?

Source: Michigan Public Policy Survey, Fall 2012