

**Friday December 4, 2015 11:00AM-12:00 Noon**  
**Engaging Citizen Participation within the**  
**Budget Process**

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1  **Citizen Engagement & the Budget Process**

WFGOA  
 LAURA LARSEN  
 CITY OF MADISON

2  **the traditional townhall**

Typical Setting

- Open mic setting
- Advocacy groups engage constituencies to lobby for funding

Drawbacks

- Typically focused on minimizing cuts
- Typically take place after budget has been finalized

3  **Tenets of Meaningful Engagement**

4  **Purpose**

- ▶What's the goal of your engagement effort?
  - ▶Knowing the goal will ensure the outreach is geared towards achieving this outcome
- ▶Communicating the Budget versus Seeking Feedback
- ▶Focus on value
  - ▶Magnitude of City budgets may be difficult to fully understand
  - ▶Shifting exercise to value allows for prioritization
    - ▶Example: Hampton VA-I Value Campaign

5  **Transparent**

- ▶Communicate how the information was utilized
  - ▶How will citizen feedback be communicated to policy makers
  - ▶How was this information incorporated (or not incorporated) into the budget
- ▶When seeking feedback, replicate the budgetary environment facing your jurisdiction
  - ▶Incorporate your jurisdiction's financial outlook in the budget exercise allowing citizens to be faced with same tradeoffs as policy makers

6  **Accessible**

- ▶Meet your community where they are
  - ▶Strike the right balance between in-person and online forums
  - ▶Invest time into outreach targeting non-traditional participants
- ▶Make exercise fresh to keep people coming back
- ▶Organize exercise to present the budget in the way citizens interact with services

7  **An Interactive Example**

CITY OF MADISON COMMUNITY BUDGET CONVERSATION

8  **Tools & Resources**

9  **Austin:**

**Budget in a Box**

- Presents citizens with budget by service area
- Each service area includes overview & current performance levels

- Participants are shown how much they are currently paying for service area & asked if they're willing to pay more or less
- Results are broken out by district and presented to City Manager

10  **Baltimore:**

**Citizen Results Teams**

- Exercise duplicates how budget decisions are made
- Citizen select one service area team to work on
- Receive one-pagers for individual services outlining scalability options & service implications or increasing/decreasing service budget
- Teams work to build budgets within allocation
- Mayor attends event & leads report out session
- Exercise duplicated online

11  **Seattle:**

**Budget Gapster**

- Online exercise
- Citizens select a priority and are faced with balancing the City's shortfall
- Can't make any reductions in services within their priority areas
- After preparing preliminary budget participants faced with change in budget assumptions & forced to revisit prelim budget
- After submitting budget receive overview of their budget & how that compares to the City's budget

12  **Suggested Calendar**

13  **Questions**