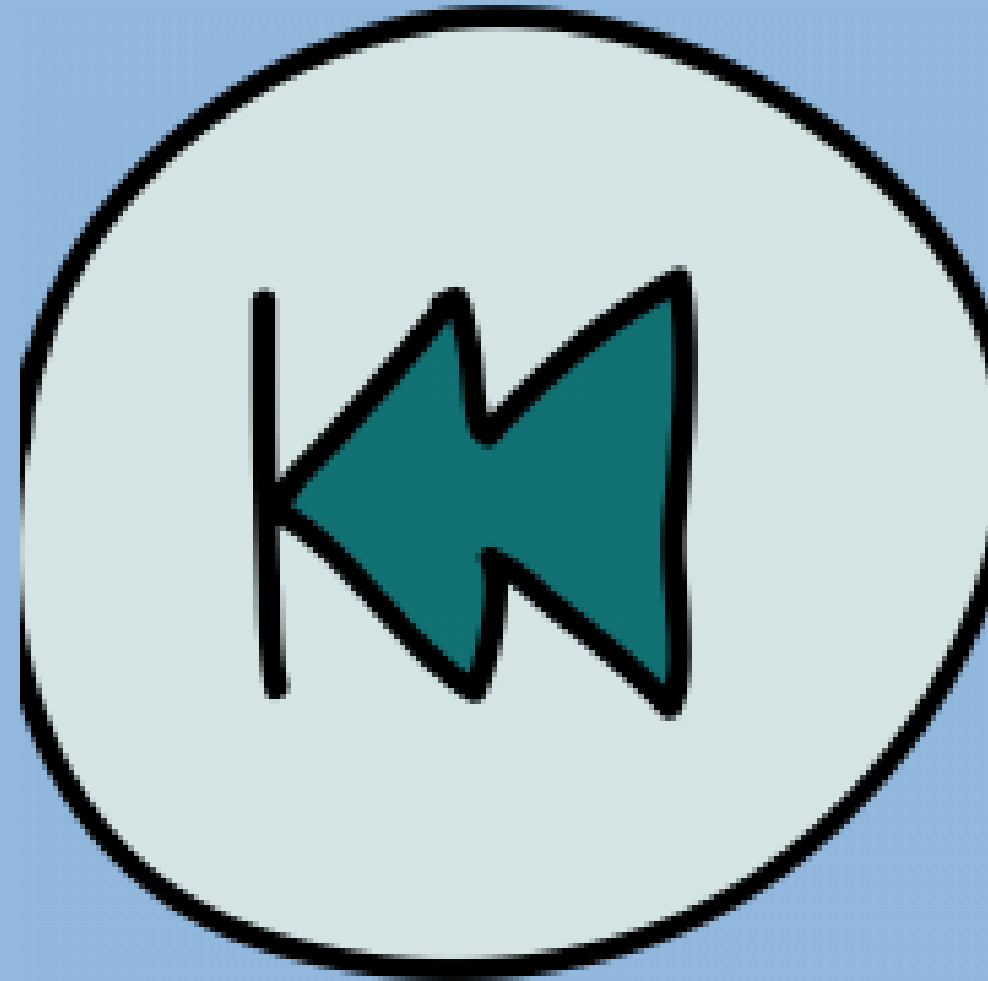


From Dry & Dirty to Engaging & Exciting

Community Engagement Best Practices



Rewind!

**What IS
Community Engagement?**

What is Community Engagement?

- A way to gather input and share information
- A way to work together
- It might be required, but it doesn't have to be boring!

At its best, it is...

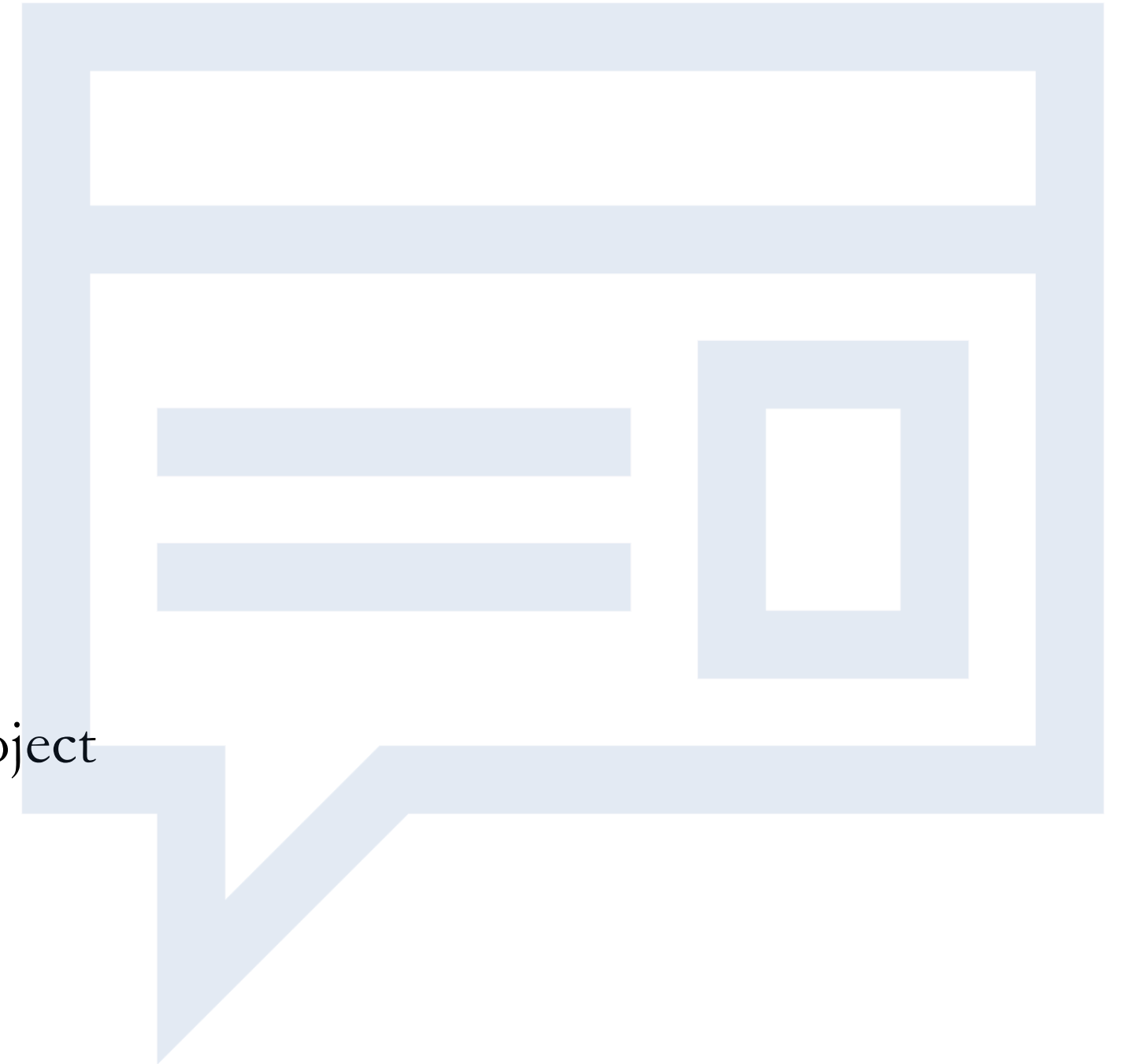
- Inclusive
- Genuine
- Collaborative
- Creative
- Fun





Benefits of community engagement (beside it's a requirement)

- Community buy-in and connection to the project
- Inside scoop
- Instant feedback
- Addressing rumors/hearsay head on.....



How to engage your community?

- Any and every that way that is feasible!
- Different people will want to engage in different ways

Presentations to city council/county commission

Public meetings

Community events

Reports

One on one meetings

Websites and social media

Surveys

...which is why your consultant can be beneficial in public engagement

- Hearing it from an “expert”
- Experience in communicating this type of information to the public
- Can bring the bells and whistles....or maps, diagrams, data tables....





GIG

Grafton Information Gathering

- Grafton First Friday...Harry Potter theme
- Grafton City Council
- Taylor County Commission
- *Growing Tourism in Grafton and Taylor County* report



Meeting Folks Where they Are

A Different Approach to Community Engagement



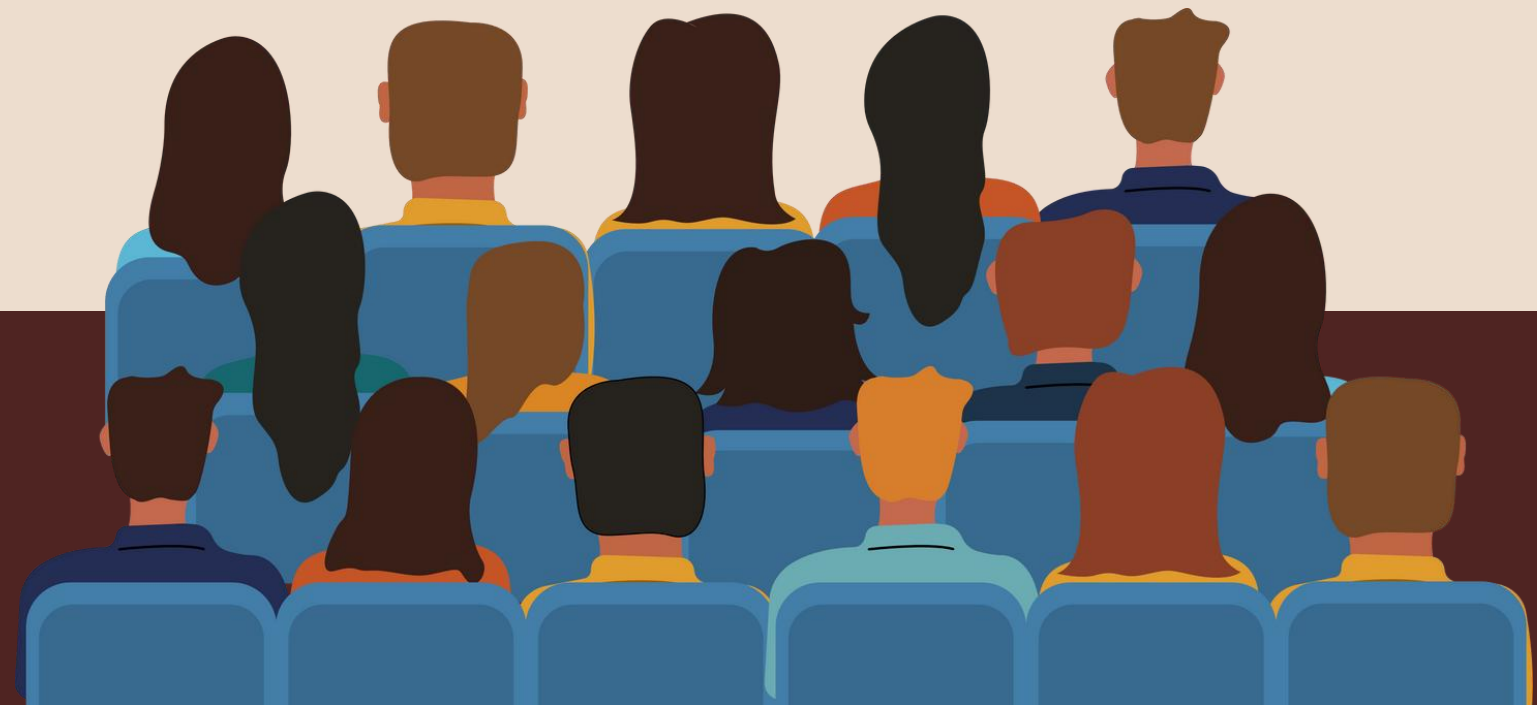
Community Engagement is Essential

- Required by EPA – affects scoring & eligibility
- Public Involvement – notice of plans, comment period, responses, accessible records
- Community Involvement Plan – outline strategy in grant application
- Equity Focus – engage underserved/overburdened groups meaningfully
- Best Practices – early outreach, multiple communication methods, document all engagement



Challenges to community engagement

- Low attendance at public meetings
- General disinterest/not understanding the project
- Requirement to target the specific community where project is located could mean under 50 homes in small cities/rural Appalachia, making targeting extremely difficult
- Official notice requirements in newspapers not read/ hard to get the word out to interested parties or the specific area that needs targeted



So, what can be done different?

COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY!

- Paid for by the Project Sponsor
- Features:
 - FREE FOOD
 - DJ
 - Bounce Houses/Blow Ups
 - Kid Friendly Activities
- Held in the community where the project is taking place



Why it worked

- Created a reason to come to get interested in the project:
 - Flipped the community outreach model on its head- aimed to make disinterested parties interested
- Aimed at families with kids - gave the kids something to do to give mom and dad a break
- Held on a weekend afternoon when families are often looking for things to do
- Had large maps and vision boards printed out so folks could see concepts to spark conversations and ideas



Tips to remember

- HAVE FOOD AND DRINKS!
- Provide a variety of ways that people can participate
- BUT, make sure that the opportunities can realistically be carried out (enough volunteers, funds, etc.)
- Share good news and “wins” whenever you can



Wrapping Up



MID - ATLANTIC
TAB
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO
BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITIES

Mid-Atlantic TAB is here to help with any questions you may have throughout your brownfield journey- And our services are FREE!

We have teams across Region 3 who offer their own services and specialties.

We're ready to assist you with your brownfield projects!

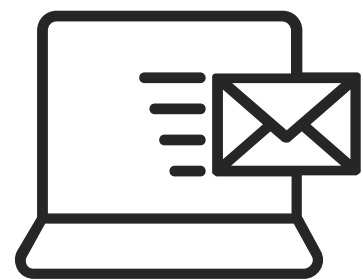


Thank You!



TAB Hotline: [\(304\) 293-7071](tel:(304)293-7071)

Direct Email: wwutab@mail.wvu.edu



Sign up for an [individual consultation](#)

Subscribe to the [TAB Newsletter](#)



Other Resources

[Brownfields Website](#) | [Brownfields Grants](#) | [Brownfields Solicitations](#) | [Brownfield FAQ](#) | [Brownfields & Infrastructure Law](#) | [Brownfields & EJ](#) | [Mid-Atlantic TAB Website](#)

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement 41-95332501 to WVU Research Corporation. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the EPA endorse trade names or recommend the use of commercial products mentioned in this document.

