CIVIC PARTICIPATION

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What is Civic Participation?

- Voting
- Writing/calling local officials
- Participating in committees or town/city/county activities
- Speaking out
- Writing letters to the newspaper
- Working on a campaign
Voting

• To register to vote you must be
  – 18 years old or older
  – A U.S. Citizen
  – Not in prison or on parole for a felony
  – Not on a conservatorship that took away your right to vote

• Get a form from
  – Library, Regional Center, Post Office, PAI
Voting (Cont.)

• When do I sign up?
  - At least 15 days before an election
  - You need to sign up again if you move, change your name or change your party

• Do I have to join a political party?
  - There are seven parties in California
  - You can pick one or “decline to state”, which means “Independent”
What Types of Things Do We Vote On?

- **People**
  - Candidates who are running for elected office

- **Plans**
  - Ballot measures (propositions) that make or change state or local laws

Some tools available to help decide how to vote

- Nonpartisan - just gives the facts and does not take sides
- Partisan - tries convince you how to vote
Go Vote!

Two ways to vote

1. At polling place
2. At home with an “absentee ballot”
What Happens When I Go Vote?

• What happens at the polling place?
  - You will be asked to state your name and sign a book
  - You will get a ballot to mark in private or a card to put into a voting computer

• What if I want to vote at home?
  - You have to apply for an absentee ballot in writing at least 1 week before the election
  - Mail in the ballot before election day or take it to any polling place in the county where you are registered to vote
People with Disabilities Have a Right to Vote!

• You have a right to vote unless a court has said you cannot!
• If you use a wheelchair or have other mobility disabilities, the voting place must be accessible to you.
• If you cannot read the ballot, you can have someone help you read the ballot.
  - Remember though, they cannot decide how to vote for you! You must decide yourself!
Small Groups

• Break into small groups and discuss the questions on the next slide.
• There will be 15 minutes to do this.
• Pick someone to record the information.
• Pick someone to facilitate the discussion.
• Pick someone to report back when we become a large group again.
Local Government Experience

• What city do you live in?
• If you do not live in a city, what county do you live in?
• Do you vote?
• Have you been to your city hall? County building?
• Do you know who your mayor is?
• Did you ever call a city/county official? Why?
• Did you ever work on a political campaign?
• Have you had experience working with your local government?
• What do you want to learn today?
• Why did you decide to come to this workshop?
Civic Participation Tool

• To help identify public policy issues to work on
• Develop a plan to work on the public policy issues
• What is a public policy issue?
Public Policy

• Something handled by a government branch or department
• This workshop will focus on local government issues
• Examples of Public Policy Issues are ....
Public Policy Issues

• Housing
• Transportation
• Accessibility
• Health Care
• Safety
• Education
• Parks and Recreation
• Recycling
Vote on Issues

• Pass out ballots
• Everyone votes
• Issue with most votes is one to work on for remainder of the session
San Diego City Structure

- Mayor, City Council, City Attorney, City Manager, City Clerk
- Boards and Commissions, City Task Forces
- City Agencies
San Diego County
Government Structure

- Board of Supervisors
- Chief Administrative
- Finance/General Government
- Community Services Group
- Health and Human Services Agency
- Land Use and Environment Group
- Public Safety Group
Strategies for Action

- Who can address this issue?
- What do we want changed or addressed?
- Where does this action or change need to take place?
- When is the best time to address the issue?
- Why is the issue important to address?
- How will we address it?
Strategies to Use

- Attending a committee (or other meeting)
- Calling, visiting or writing an official
- Contacting other groups/organizations that might have an interest
- Participate in a forum or activity related to the issue
- Write a letter to the editor or other media action
Small Groups Again

• Decide what issue you want to work on from the list
• Get into a small group to discuss questions on the next slide and
• Fill out the Civic Participation Tool
Next Steps

• What is your issue?
• What steps will you take to resolve your issue?
• Who will help you?
• When will you report back to your self help group?
Large Group/Wrap-Up

• Meet again to discuss what you have done on your issue?
• When?
• Who will facilitate the next meeting?
• Do you have everything you need?
• Does everyone have a mentor/facilitator that needs one?
• Thank you
The End!