

NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement

January 2025

Supported by the U.S. Department of Energy



**NATIONAL COUNCIL
ON ELECTRICITY POLICY**



Executive Summary

The **NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement** outlines engagement stages, captures shared principles, presents replicable approaches, and identifies cross-agency benefits shared by NCEP members and experts at the Fall 2024 Annual Meeting.

Purpose:

Guide state agencies and partners in building authentic and effective community relationships to support energy projects and implement state policies.

Key Elements:

Six Engagement Stages: 1-Planning, 2-Communication, 3-Process Design, 4-Setting Expectations, 5-Enabling Participation, and 6-Decision-Making.

Core Principles: Transparency, Accountability, Accessibility, Authenticity, Fairness, and Reasonableness.

Cross-Agency Benefits: Builds trust, aligns messaging, reduces community fatigue, and strengthens decision outcomes.

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NCEP and Stakeholder Engagement



NCEP and Stakeholder Engagement



Who is the National Council on Electricity Policy?

The National Council on Electricity Policy (NCEP) is a **collaborative** and **member-driven** forum for state-level electricity decision-makers to share perspectives and learn from one another.

NCEP focuses on the impact of pressing energy system issues on electricity policy and electricity customers, how different state decision-makers' roles influence their approaches, and how federal policies, regulations, and priorities affect state actions.

All state officials and staff with roles that impact the energy system are considered members of NCEP, including representatives from state utility commissions, state energy offices, consumer advocate offices, state legislatures, governors' offices, air quality agencies, and others. NCEP is led by an executive committee of these members.

<https://www.naruc.org/ncep/>

Current NCEP Member Organizations

National Association of Clean Air Agencies (**NACAA**)

National Governors Association (**NGA**)

National Association of State Energy Officials (**NASEO**)

National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (**NASUCA**)

National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (**NARUC**)

National Conference of State Legislatures (**NCSL**)

NCEP and Stakeholder Engagement



What is stakeholder engagement?

Stakeholder and community engagement is an essential part of any type of successful energy development. Meaningful engagement can help build support for electricity system projects, unlock energy and community benefits, and mitigate foreseeable or unexpected problems. To develop community partnerships on energy-related projects, state agencies, utilities, developers, and other electricity policy stakeholders collaborate with local individuals and groups as partners on the changes happening in their communities.

**In this framework,
the term stakeholder
engagement
includes
community
engagement.**

NCEP and Stakeholder Engagement: Framework Development



The **Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement** connects replicable approaches shared by NCEP members and experts with common principles or goals that may apply to multiple agencies and states.

At the Fall 2024 annual meeting, ***Engaging with Communities to Support their Energy Future***, held in Phoenix, Arizona, NCEP members and experts engaged in group discussions to:

- Share 12 specific examples of community engagement
- Explore common principles for success
- Identify replicable approaches
- Document benefits of cross-agency engagement

Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



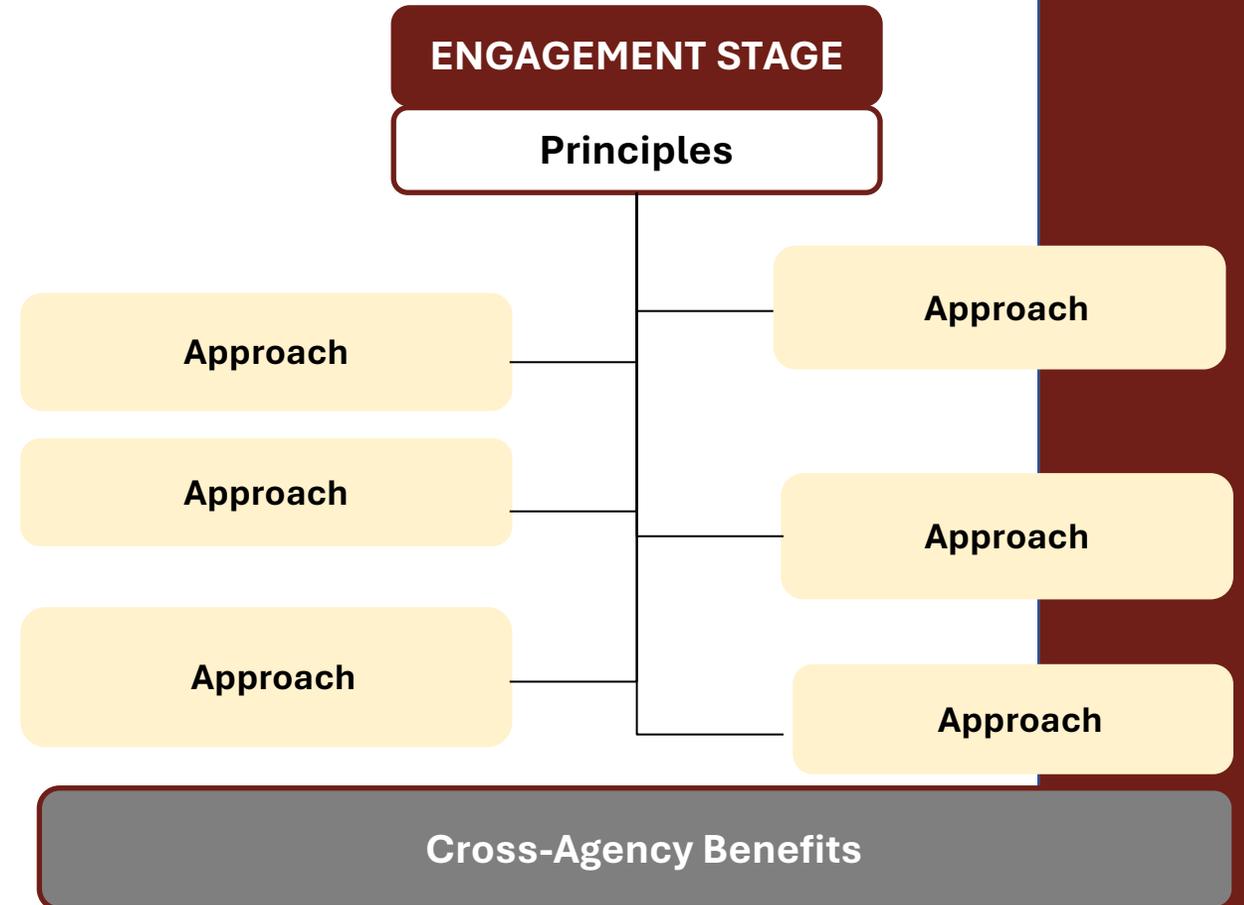
How to read the Framework – on each slide you will find:

A specific **stage** of community engagement:
1-planning, 2-communication, 3-processes, 4-setting
expectations, 5-enabling participation, 6-making
decisions

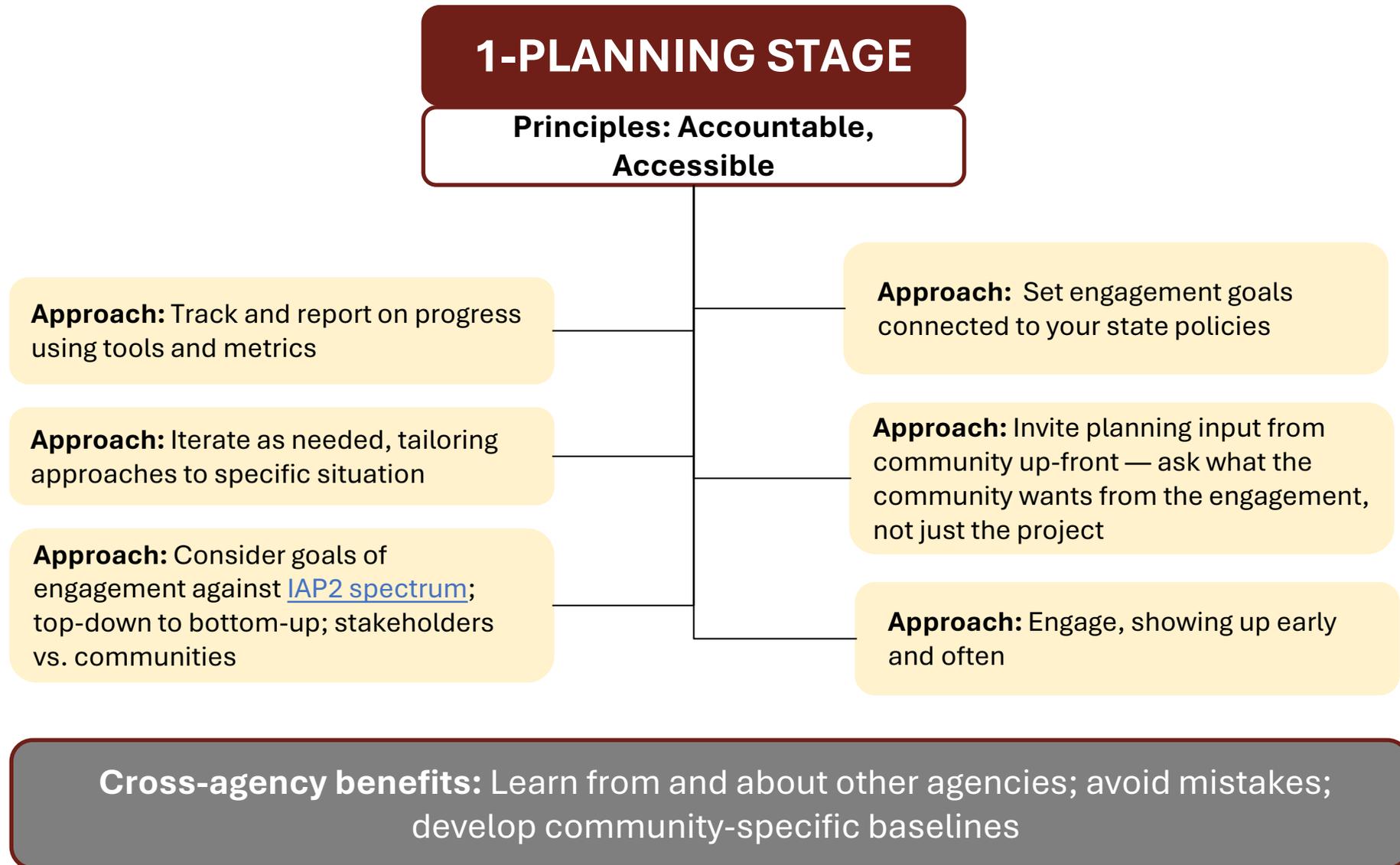
Common **principles** or goals that apply to each stage,
which include transparency, authenticity, accessibility,
accountability, fairness, reasonableness

Replicable **approaches** that may work at each stage

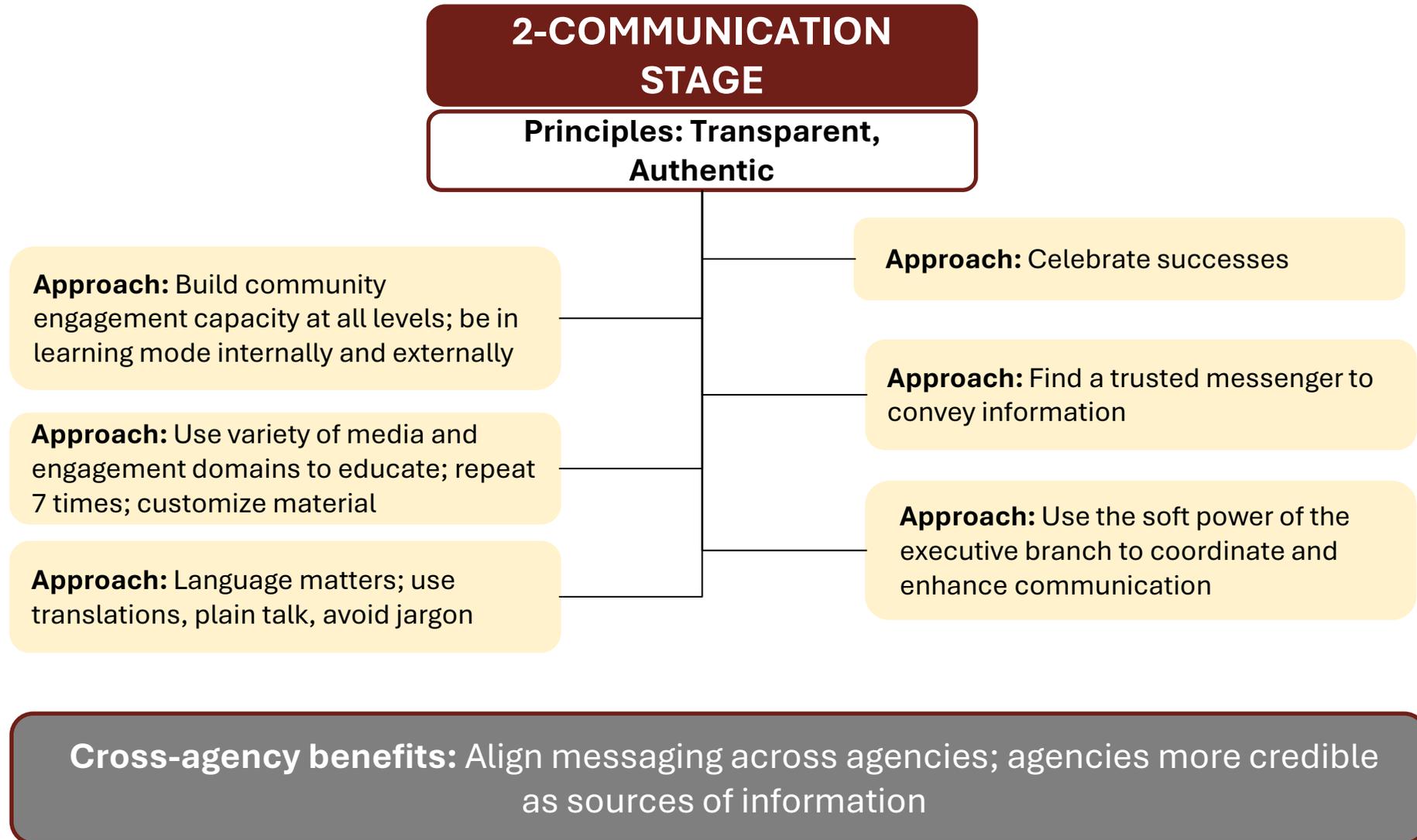
Benefits of cross-agency collaboration for each stage



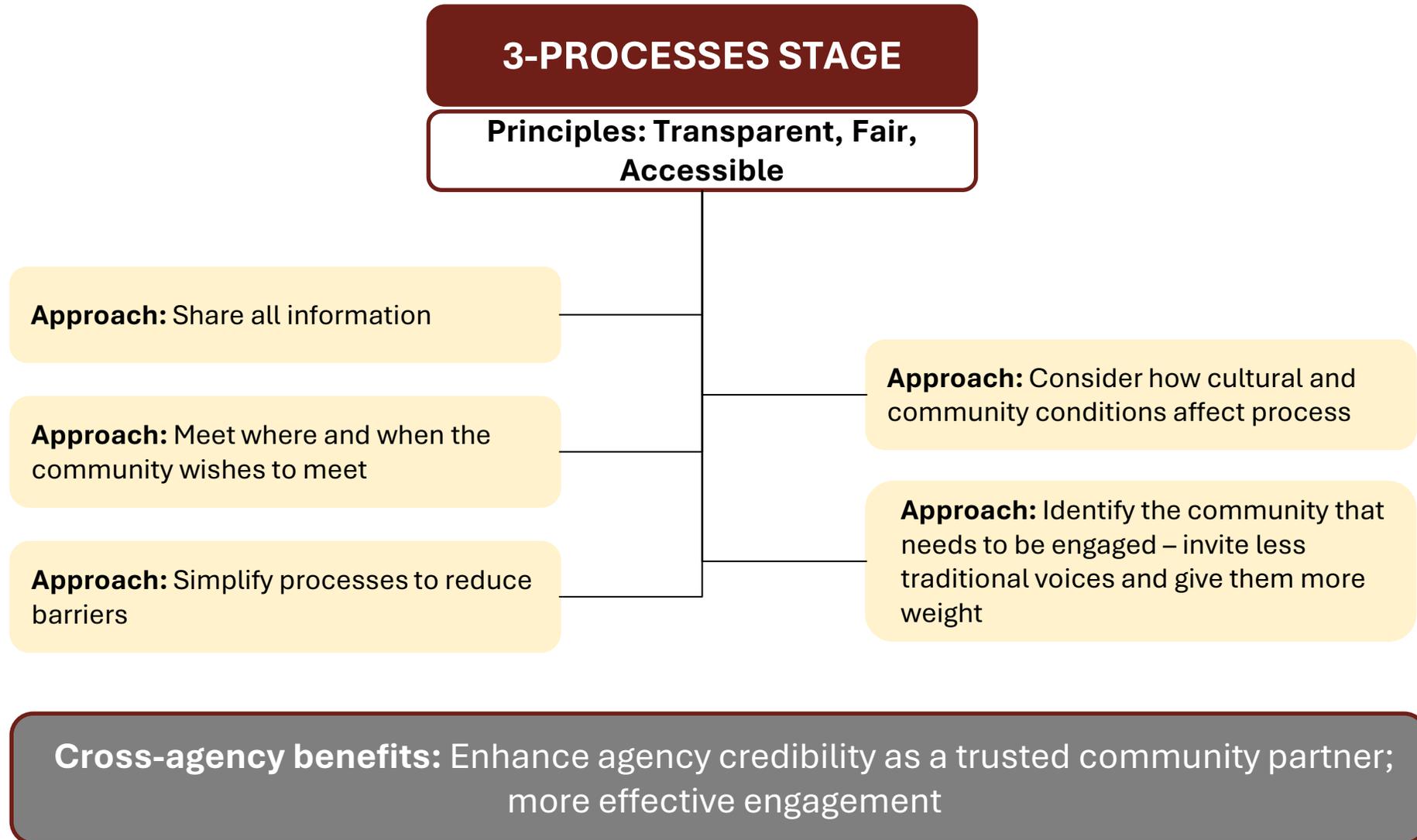
NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



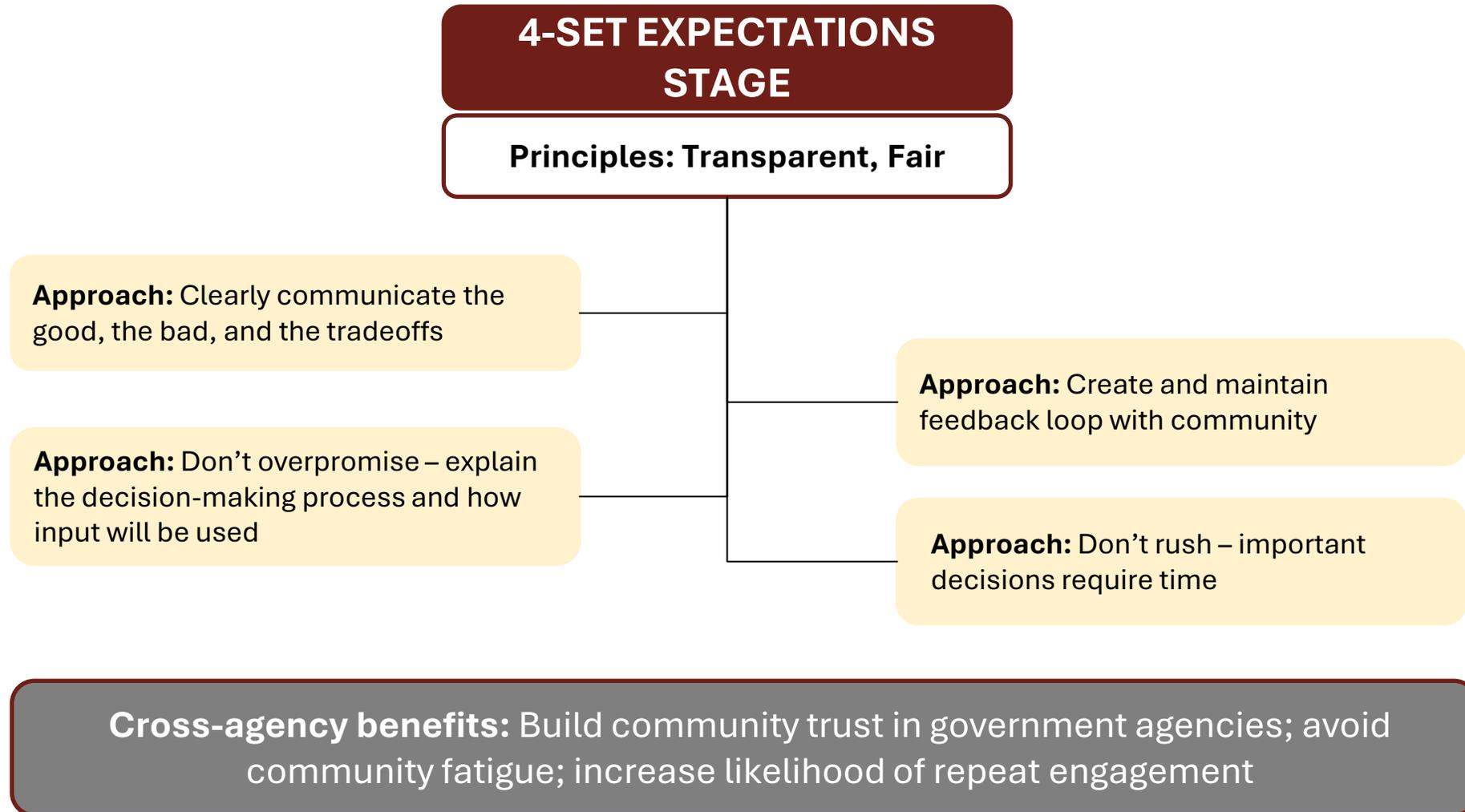
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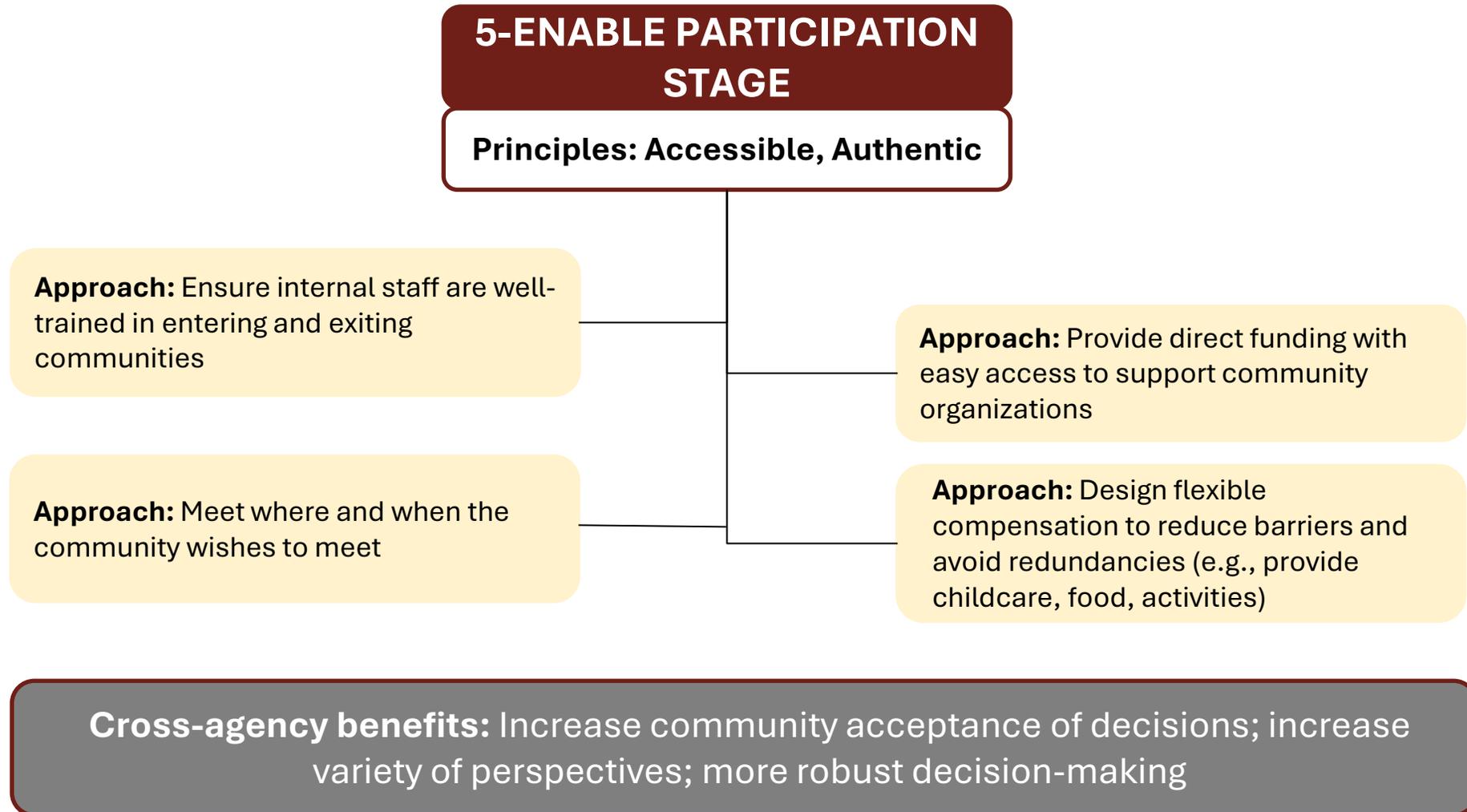
NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



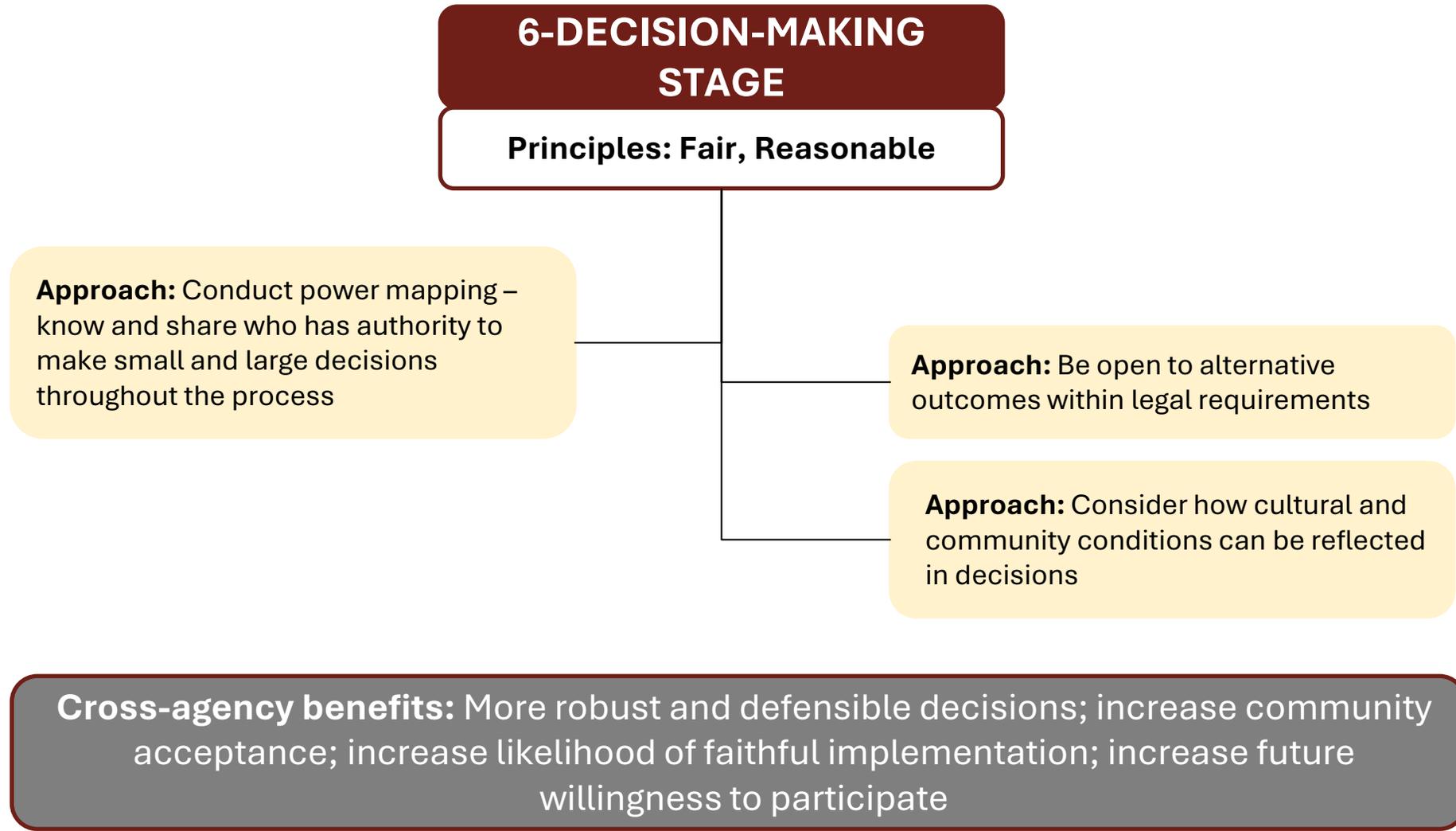
NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



NCEP State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement



Implementing Agency Collaboration



Implementing Agency Collaboration: Mutual Benefits



**Question posed to Annual Meeting attendees:
What do agencies gain from collaboration on community
engagement with one another?**

**In summary, participants suggested collaborative community
engagement is more:**

- *Accessible* – it builds community trust in government across a range of agencies
- *Efficient* – it reduces community fatigue; aligns messaging; avoids silos; avoids duplication of efforts and resources
- *Fair and reasonable* – it increases community acceptance of decisions; yields more robust and defensible decisions

Implementing Agency Collaboration: Effective Examples



Establish a comprehensive understanding of the expertise and responsibilities covered by other agencies in your state. To support this objective, agencies can share their onboarding materials with other agencies to create a baseline understanding.

When a new employee is hired, set up coffee chats or introductory meetings for them with their cross-agency counterparts or key subject matter experts—anyone with whom they may be expected to interface.

When a new commissioner or agency director comes on board, establish a personal relationship early and discuss norms for interagency outreach and coordination.

Schedule regular meetings (e.g., once a month, quarterly) between the leadership of each organization to inform each other of priorities and staffing needs and identify areas for potential coordination. Staff may also be included.

Hold planning meetings and workshops outside of formal proceedings to share ongoing agency work and provide an opportunity for the other agencies to ask questions.

Implementing Agency Collaboration: Potential Areas for Engagement



Agency Type	Scope of Responsibilities (energy-related)	Implementation Processes (generally)	Scale of Decision-making
Governor (NGA)	State policy, leadership, coordination, oversight, appointments	Executive orders, negotiate laws, approvals	State-wide
State Legislature (NCSL)	State policy, funding, appropriations, oversight	Pass laws, oversight	State-wide, constituency-based
Consumer Advocate (NASUCA)	Represent utility customers	Rate cases, rulemakings, open meetings	Utility service areas
Public Utility Commission (NARUC)	Regulate utilities	Rate cases, rulemakings, open meetings	Utility service areas; state-wide
Clean Air Agency (NACAA)	Permitting, air quality standards, planning	Rulemakings, permitting, planning	State-wide, site-specific
State Energy Office (NASEO)	Energy policy, funding, planning, implementation	Rulemakings, program design, implementation, energy education and outreach	State-wide, programmatic, project-specific

NCEP 2024 Annual Meeting Recap



2024 Annual Meeting Recap: Overview

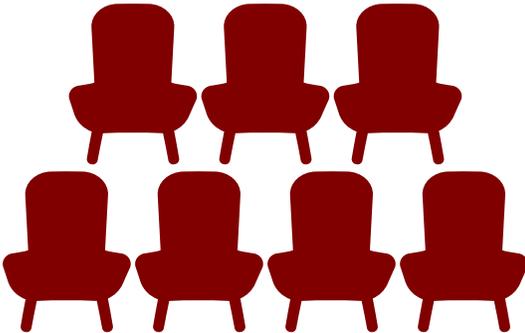


October 29-30, 2024, Phoenix, AZ

Who was there:

35

State-level representatives from public utility commissions, air and environmental regulatory agencies, governors' offices, state energy offices, legislatures, and consumer advocates (NCEP members)

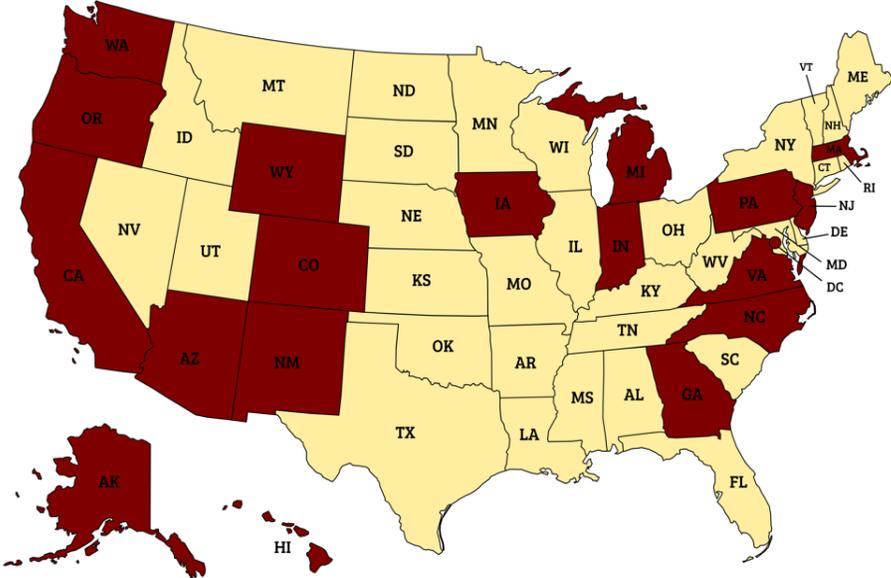


15

Experts and representatives from other organizations, including utilities and nongovernmental organizations

19

NCEP member states represented



2024 Annual Meeting Recap: Workshop Process



NCEP used a workshop format at the 2024 Annual Meeting to develop the *Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement*. The workshop included:

- 12 panels with specific examples of community engagement from state agencies (see proceedings below for details and presentations)
- Extended time for small-group engagement based on workshop discussion prompts (see slide 23)
- Collection of resources from attendees (see slides 24-27)

The panel presentations and small group discussions are directly reflected in the NCEP *State Framework for Successful Stakeholder Engagement* and *Recommendations for Implementing Agency Collaboration* (see slides 8-19).

Proceedings are publicly available: www.naruc.org/ncep/annual-meetings/2024-ncep-annual-meeting-engaging-communities/

2024 Annual Meeting Recap: Workshop Discussion Prompts



Individually, write down on sticky notes or worksheets (4 minutes):

- What was the goal of the community engagement?
- How do you think the communities benefited from these examples of community engagement?
- Was the community involved in designing the process? Did the community engagement originate from the community or from the agency?
- What were some of the most valuable tools/techniques used that helped enable the engagement identified in the sessions?

With your table, discuss:

1. Share what you wrote down (2 minutes)
2. What principles of community engagement stood out to you from the case studies shared? (for example: accessibility, transparency, education, etc.)
3. Do you see places where cross-agency collaboration could have reduced the effort required by communities to engage?
4. What would genuine (incremental) progress look like related to this topic? (Seeking 1-2 markers of progress per group.)

Recommended Resources From NCEP Workshop Attendees



Recommended Resources From NCEP Workshop Attendees



Energy Research & Social Science

Volume 108, February 2024, 103375



Original research article

Good fences make good neighbors: Stakeholder perspectives on the local benefits and burdens of large-scale solar energy development in the United States

Douglas L. Bessette ^a, Ben Hoen ^b, Joseph Rand ^b, Karl Hoesch ^c, Jacob White ^a,
Sarah B. Mills ^d, Robi Nilson ^b

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ELECTRICITY MARKETS & POLICY

Community Centered Solar Development (CCSD) Case Study Interviews

Doug Bessette, Joseph Rand, Ben Hoen, Karl
Hoesch, Jake White, Sarah Mills, Robi Nilson

June 2023



This work was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, under Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231.
ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES AREA | ENERGY ANALYSIS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS DIVISION | ELECTRICITY MARKETS & POLICY



Energy Research & Social Science

Volume 120, February 2025, 103893



Original research article

What to expect when you're expecting engagement: Delivering procedural justice in large-scale solar energy deployment

Karl W. Hoesch ^{a,1}, Sarah B. Mills ^b, Joseph Rand ^c, Robi Nilson ^c, Douglas L. Bessette ^d,
Jacob White ^d, Ben Hoen ^c

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ENERGY MARKETS & POLICY

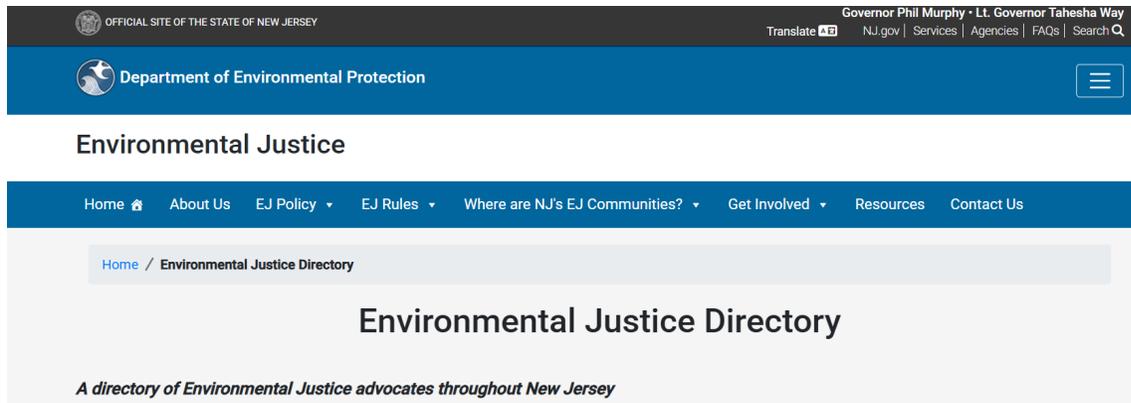
Perceptions of Large-Scale Solar Project Neighbors: Results From a National Survey

Joseph Rand¹, Karl Hoesch², Sarah Mills²,
Ben Hoen¹, Robi Nilson¹, Doug Bessette³,
& Jake White³

(1) Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
(2) University of Michigan
(3) Michigan State University

This work was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, under Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231.
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Recommended Resources From NCEP Workshop Attendees



Energy Research & Social Science
Volume 117, November 2024, 103706



Original research article

Halfway up the ladder: Developer practices and perspectives on community engagement for utility-scale renewable energy in the United States

Robi Nilson, Joseph Rand, Ben Hoen, Salma Elmallah

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2024.103706>

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Survey of Utility-Scale Wind and Solar Developers Report

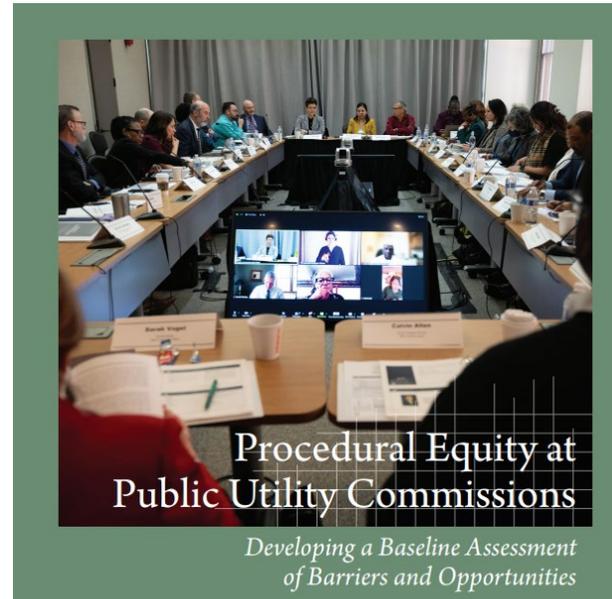
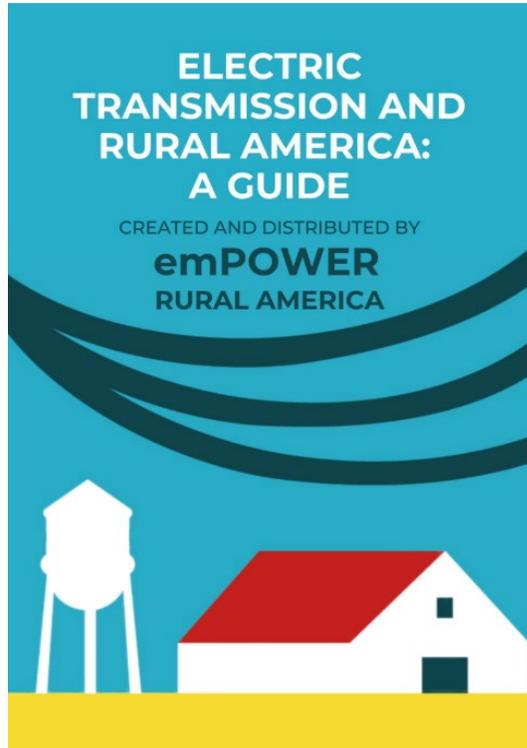
Robi Nilson, Ben Hoen and Joe Rand

The work described in this report was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Wind Energy Technologies Office (WETO) under Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Department of Energy or the United States Government.

Click on a resource, the link is live!

Recommended Resources From NCEP Workshop Attendees



January 2024
Dena Adler
Angela Parnay
Elizabeth B. Stein
Burçin Ünöl, Ph.D.



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