

Spectrum of Collaborative Processes

The “Spectrum” displayed here was created by the Collaborative and Facilitative Processes Committee, established by the Interagency ADR Working Group to meet the growing needs of federal agencies that are exploring and implementing new collaborative dispute prevention and resolution processes. This chart identifies a wide variety of collaborative techniques that agencies are using, or considering, to address a range of issues, internal and external, regulatory and non-regulatory. The common characteristic is the involvement of stakeholders or other affected persons in an agency’s approach to one or more issues. This project was greatly influenced by prior work of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center, published as: [“Better Decisions through Consultation and Collaboration,” by Deborah Dalton and Philip Harter \(2008\).](#)

In the chart, each column corresponds to a general approach or desired result. The rows identify agency objectives, sample processes and available ADR tools, and the role of the neutral. The processes included in the chart go well beyond the more commonly understood ADR procedures. Few, if any, of these processes have universally accepted definitions, and several of them are intentionally flexible in nature. Agencies, in general, would have to define, interpret, and apply them within their own statutory, regulatory, and practice contexts. As an aid to forming its own operational definition, an agency may find further information about the individual processes and how they have been used through a careful Internet search and consulting reliable sources resulting from that search. Agencies should also consider the extent to which any of the following statutes may bear upon the suitability of the various processes in the Spectrum:

Administrative Dispute Resolution Act, 5 U.S.C. § 571 et seq. (including Negotiated Rulemaking Act)

Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 et seq.

Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a.

Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. §§ 1-16.

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	Outreach	Inquiry	Information Exchange	Recommendations	Agreements	Stakeholder Action
Agency Goal or Objective	Agency providing information to stakeholders or inviting input or comment	Obtaining information to enhance organizational decision-making or effectiveness	Providing and exchanging data, opinions, or options with stakeholders	Formulating or obtaining recommendations or proposals for agreement from influential or interested group, for agency and/or stakeholder action	Finalizing disposition of recommendations or otherwise reaching settlement or resolution of ongoing issue(s) or dispute	Empowering or encouraging stakeholders to take action on an agreed upon recommendation or settlement
Sample Processes	Conferences Fact sheets Federal Register Open houses Press releases Websites	Formal/informal inquiry Formal/informal investigation Fact-Finding Upward feedback	Charrettes Focus Groups Forums Individual meetings Listening sessions Public hearings Public meetings Phone hotline Roundtables Scoping meeting Town hall Workshops	Advisory Board Advisory Committee Fact-Finding Policy dialogue Scoping meeting Taskforce Visioning process Workgroup	Negotiated rulemaking Negotiation	Collaborative Planning Community Action Implementation Committee(s) Industry Initiative Voluntary Program Partnerships Strategic Planning Committees
Role of the Neutral	Dissemination of information to stakeholders	Works with individuals or multiple stakeholders to obtain information and feedback to report back to agency	Works with individuals to frame information sharing and receiving; Facilitates discussion among stakeholders and/or agency officials to obtain and disseminate information, ideas, and concepts; Reports information to agency or stakeholders as appropriate	Facilitates discussions between agency offices or units, stakeholders, and/or the agency for the purpose of generating, crafting, framing recommendations for agency and/or stakeholder action; Resolves disputes between competing stakeholders to assist with formulation of recommendations; Assists individuals or groups of stakeholders with framing and formulating concepts and ideas for recommendations; Provides feedback and sets the stage for presentation of recommendations to the agency or stakeholder groups	Facilitates negotiated rulemaking committee meetings and committee negotiations; Facilitates negotiations between the agency and stakeholders; Works with individuals to frame and communicate recommendations and related concerns to better accomplish party goals and objectives; Resolves disputes between agency and stakeholders or among stakeholders	Facilitates discussion between the agency and stakeholders or among stakeholders to advance stakeholder action; Helps resolves disputes between the agency and stakeholders to advance stakeholder action
Applicable Negotiation/ADR Tools	N/A	Coaching Facilitation Upward feedback	Coaching Facilitation	Coaching Conciliation Facilitation Upward feedback Mediation	Coaching Conciliation Facilitation Mediation	Conciliation Facilitation Mediation