Clark County Town Advisory Boards and Citizens Advisory Councils: Participation Rates

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Thank you, Clark County, for your support!

- Department of Administrative Services
- Darryl Martin, Assistant County Manager
- Jennifer Hale, Management Analyst
- All Clark County TAB and CAC liaisons
- Erik Pappa, Director of Public Communications
Background

- Citizens Advisory Councils (CACs) and Town Advisory Boards (TABs)
  - Solicit citizen input for forwarding to the BCC
  - Act as a community forum

- The County is seeking to maximize citizen participation
Research Questions

- How can we increase rates of citizen participation in citizen advisory bodies within Clark County?
- What e-government initiatives could the County use to increase citizen involvement in local government?
Methodology

- Attendance surveys handed out at meetings:
  1. Is this the first public meeting you have attended?
  2. How often have you attended this board/council’s public meetings?
  3. How did you hear about this meeting?
  4. What prompted you to attend this meeting?
  5. Are you representing an organized interest group or advocacy group at this meeting?
  6. Are you likely to return to a board/council meeting?
  7. Have you visited the Clark County website to search for information on public meeting dates/times?
  8. If you answered **YES** to Question 7, did you find the information easy to locate on the Clark County website?

Demographic Questions: Gender, Age, Ethnicity
Methodology, Cont.

- Personally attended meetings to gather first-hand demographics and other observations
- Conducted brief interviews with liaisons
  - How long have you been a liaison for CACs/TABs?
  - How well would you say you know the citizens that live in the area represented by this CAC/TAB?
  - How much interaction do you have with CAC/TAB board members?
  - Is this normal attendance for this meeting?
  - How did public comments at this meeting compare to public comments at other meetings?
Methodology, Cont.

- Conducted interview with Erik Pappa with Clark County
  1. What changes are anticipated for the website?
  2. How did the County determine what changes were necessary?
  3. Was any citizen feedback solicited or used in this process?
  4. Are any blogs or other user-generated content features being added to the website?
Analysis

- 216 survey results examined (quantitative)
  - SPSS used to codify and analyze survey data

- Compiled and evaluated findings from our interviews and observations (qualitative)
Key Findings: Demographics - Ethnicity

Clark County 2008 Demographics

CAC and TAB Demographics based on survey

Data obtained from www.accessclarkcounty.com
Key Findings: Demographics - Age Groups

Age Breakdown of Survey Respondents

- **47%** Under 18
- **25%** 18-25
- **17%** 26-35
- **7%** 36-45
- **1%** 46-55
- **3%** 56 and older
Key Findings: Meeting Notification

How did you hear about this meeting?

- Previous meeting attendance
- Email
- Text Message
- Newspaper
- Posted Notice
- Received mailer/announcement
- Internet
- Word of mouth
- Other
- Combination responses

Percent of Respondents
Key Findings: Website Usage

- 43% have not visited website
- Website difficult to navigate
  - Better search functions needed
  - Current agendas and minutes difficult to find
  - Previous meeting information not easily accessible
Key Findings: Observations and Interviews

- Rural vs. urban differences
- Attendance tracking at meetings was not consistent
- No systematic feedback given: are citizens’ voices being heard?
What Does This All Mean?

- Missing a segment of the demographic
  - Minorities
  - Younger citizens (Generation X and Y)
- Communication between citizens and government is inconsistent
- Website underutilized
- Citizens not being engaged
Recommendations

1. How can we increase rates of citizen participation in citizen advisory bodies within Clark County?
   - Track attendance at TAB and CAC meetings
   - Reach a more representative demographic (younger people, minorities)
   - Strengthen two-way communication between citizens and government
Recommendations, Cont.

2. What e-government initiatives could the County use to increase citizen involvement in local government?
   - Make e-government enhancements on website
     - Promote website usage for CACs and TABs
     - Improve site architecture and navigation
     - Solicit citizen feedback
THANK YOU!

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