

**COLLECTIVE  
IMPACT FORUM**



# **Organizing Responsibility and Using Consensus Building for Inclusive Decision-Making**

**September 17, 2019**

**National Veterans Intermediary**

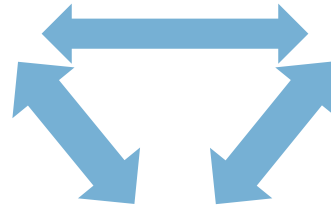
***Thank you for joining today's webinar. Your line will be  
unmuted unless you mute yourself. We will start at 1pm EST.***



# The Collective Impact Forum Is a Field-Building Partnership between FSG and the Aspen Institute

## HANDS ON SUPPORT

- ✓ Juvenile justice in NY State
- ✓ Childhood obesity in Dallas
- ✓ Substance abuse on Staten Island
- ✓ Cradle to career in King County
- ✓ Pre-term birth in Fresno
- ✓ Health in the Rio Grande Valley
- ✓ Diabetes in Minnesota



## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



## LEARNING COMMUNITY



[www.collectiveimpactforum.org](http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org)

The **Collective Impact Forum** is a community of practice designed to help curate and disseminate knowledge, tools, and best practices that support effective collective impact



# Please Introduce Yourself: We'll Start on the East Coast and Then Move to the West

- Your name
- Your organization
- Your city/state
- Your level of familiarity with collective impact:
  - Not at all familiar with collective impact
  - I have heard the term “collective impact” but am not really sure how it differs from other forms of partnership
  - I know about the collective impact approach but am not currently involved in a collective impact collaboration
  - I am involved in a collective impact collaboration

# SESSION OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTIONS/OVERVIEW
2. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR CI DECISION MAKING
3. TYPES OF DECISIONS AND POTENTIAL DECISION MAKERS
4. PRINCIPLES FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT DECISION MAKING
5. DECISION RULES
6. CONSENSUS VS. CONSENSUS BUILDING PROCESS
7. GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT TOOL
8. PRACTICE WITH TOOL
9. DISCUSSION/CLOSING

# DECISION MAKING IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

## Challenges for CI Decision-Making

- People from different organizations with different decision-making rules
- Power imbalances
- Initial risk aversion & fear of failure with new group

## Opportunities for CI Decision-Making

- Create a culture for the initiative which shares/re-distributes power/decision-making and is inclusive
- Devolve decision-making to those closest to the problem and solutions

# What is Inclusive Decision-Making? Why?

## **INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING:**

- Strives to gather and understand the inputs of all participants, or at least a representative sample, in order to: 1) generate the best ideas for action; and 2) build support for implementation.
- Attempts to distribute decision-making responsibility throughout the collaborative structure of the collective impact initiative in order to: 1) build the leadership capacity of the organization; and 2) build ownership and commitment.

## **WHY? TO PRODUCE BETTER OUTCOMES**



# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the most challenging issues/problems you encounter related to collaborative decision-making?
2. What are some successes and lessons from your efforts to address decision-making in your collaboratives?





# TYPES OF DECISIONS

PROCESS	PEOPLE
Approach to collaboration	Staffing
Meeting and Group Process	Leadership for Steering and Work Groups
RULES	Collaborative Participants
Decision Making Rules	Community Engagement
STRATEGIES/ACTION	RESOURCES
Strategy	Budget
Programs/Services	Funding Raising
System/Policy Change Agenda	Fund Allocation
CONTENT	CONDITIONS/ELEMENTS
Focal Problem & Analysis	Common Agenda
EQUITY	Shared Measurement
Identify populations experiencing disparities	Mutually Reinforcing Activities
Select targeted actions to eliminate disparities	Continuous Communications
Measure progress on eliminating disparities	Backbone



# POTENTIAL DECISION MAKER(S) IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES

POTENTIAL DECISION MAKERS	RELATED GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS
<b>CI BODIES</b>	
Steering/Executive Committee	Chair(s)
Work Groups	Chair(s)
Backbone Organization	Executive; Project Lead
<b>PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS</b>	
Public Agencies	Electeds/Leadership
Non-Profit Organizations	Board/Leadership
Foundations/Funders	Board/Leadership
Businesses & Business Organizations	Board/Leadership

# POTENTIAL DECISION MAKER(S) IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES (continued)

POTENTIAL DECISION MAKERS	RELATED GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS
<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>	
Influencers and Power Brokers	
CI Members w/o Orgs	
Affected/Impacted Parties	
Intended Beneficiaries	
Community	
Residents	
Youth	
Others	



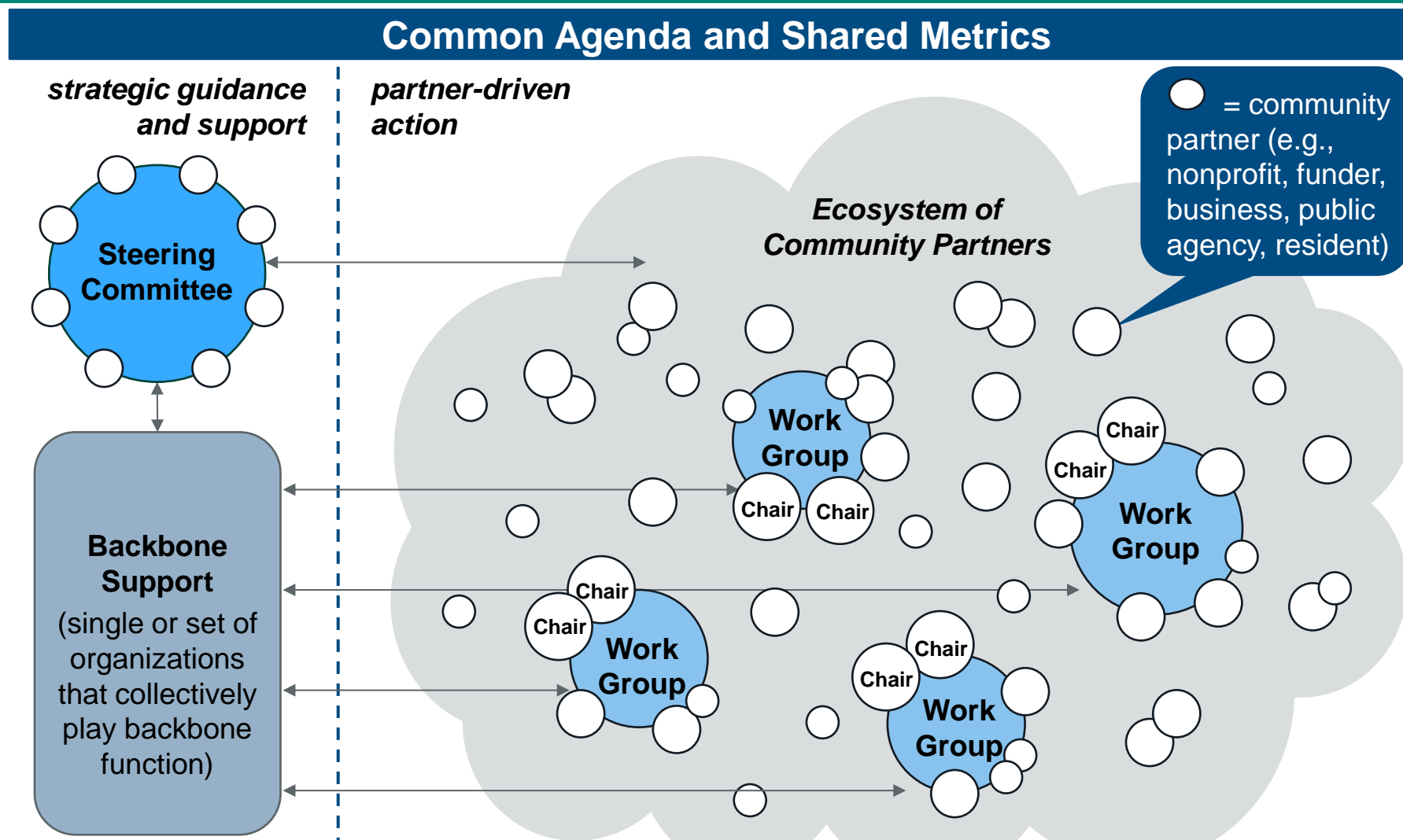
# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What questions do you have about what types of decisions that need to be made and who are the potential decision-makers?





# Collective Impact Infrastructure: Structuring for Intentionality and Uncertainty



\* Adapted from [Listening to the Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change](#), by Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, 2008.

# DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES

1

Build leadership and buy-in by distributing decision-making authority throughout the collaborative and delegating decision-making authority to working groups

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2

Adopt a “no-substitution of judgment” rule for the steering/executive committee, limiting their “veto power” to legal, ethical and contractual conflicts

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3

Incorporate consensus decision-making process into major decisions

4

Develop written decision-making rules which specify who makes what decisions and how; ***modify them when needed***

# ABOUT DECISION- MAKING RULES



Always important to have decision making rules. But especially important in CI when people from different sectors and experiences come together.



Decision making rules help people to move from the realm of ideas to the realm of action (can reduce suspicion among actors)



Answer the question: when do we know we have made a decision?



Decision making rules adopted should strike a balance between the group's values and efficiency



# EXAMPLES OF DECISION-MAKING RULES

What are some of the common decision-making rules you have seen used?

**Flip a Coin**

**Person in charge decides  
without a discussion**

**Person in charge decides  
after discussion\***

**Delegation**

**Majority vote\***

**Consensus\***

**Unanimous agreement\***

\*encourage group discussion



# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What questions do you have about the core decision-making structure of a collaborative, decision-making principles or decision-making rules?



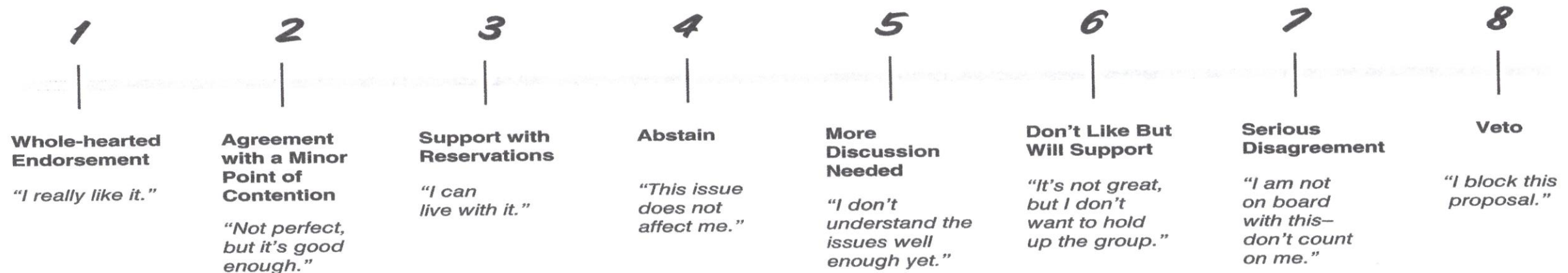
# CONSENSUS

**Consensus** means an agreement in the judgment or opinion reached by a group as a whole

**Consensus building process** is a participatory process by which a group thinks about & discusses an issue, explores options &, then, decides on action

## GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT

BETTER  
VOCABULARY



This is the *Gradients of Agreement Scale*. It eliminates the arbitrary confinement of "yes" and "no." Instead, it allows for many possible nuances of meaning, enabling individuals to express support for a proposal in degrees, along a continuum – in line with the way many people actually think.

The *Gradients of Agreement Scale* was developed in 1987 by Sam Kaner, Duane Berger, and the staff of *Community At Work*. With the passing of time this tool has been translated into numerous languages, and it has been adapted for use in organizations large and small throughout the world.

# 5-POINT SCALE GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT\*

1

2

3

4

5

**STRONGLY  
SUPPORT**

**SUPPORT WITH  
RESERVATION/S**

**ABSTAIN**  
  
**(CAN'T DECIDE;  
DON'T CARE; CAN'T  
COMMIT RIGHT  
NOW)**

**DO NOT SUPPORT,  
BUT WILL GO ALONG  
WITH THE GROUP**

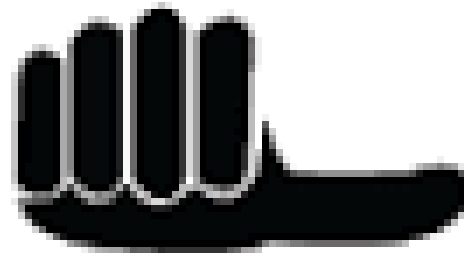
**DO NOT SUPPORT, NOT  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
IMPLEMENTATION**

\*Adapted from Sam Kaner (1996) *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*

# “THUMBS-UP” GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT



**I support the  
proposal**



**I support the  
proposal with  
reservations**



**I oppose the  
proposal**

# POLLING AND THE META- DECISION MAKER

## POLLING

Process of asking participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a proposal and why

## META- DECISION MAKER

Person with responsibility for determining the level of support for a proposal and whether to continue to discuss and refine the proposal or move to a final decision

# ***META-DECISION MAKING EXAMPLE***

## URBAN STRATEGIES COUNCIL LEADERSHIP TECHNICAL TEAM

1. *Call for closure*, to end discussion (anyone call make call)
2. Clarify the proposal (in writing)
3. Check for consensus by polling
4. The meta-decision maker (a role that rotates for each meeting) decides:

There is enough agreement to formalize the decision.

There is not enough agreement to make a decision. Re-open the discussion.



# DECISION MAKING PROCESS USING GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT\*

(COMBINED CONSENSUS BUILDING AND VOTING MODEL)

1. WRITE PROPOSAL
2. BUILD CONSENSUS BY CLARIFYING, DISCUSSING AND IMPROVING THE PROPOSAL
3. CALL THE QUESTION (Polling)
4. POLL THE GROUP (All present are polled); record all poll responses and anyone polling below 1 (or other than “Thumbs-Up”) briefly states why and the reason is recorded
5. ASSESS WHETHER CONSENSUS ACHIEVED (Meta-decision maker decides if consensus achieved)

\*Adapted from Sam Kaner et al, *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* (1996, 2014)

# DECISION MAKING PROCESS USING GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT\*

(COMBINED CONSENSUS AND VOTING MODEL)

6. MODIFY THE PROPOSAL TO BUILD CONSENSUS
7. POLL THE GROUP A 2<sup>nd</sup> TIME (All present are polled); record all poll responses and anyone polling below 1 briefly states why and the reason is recorded
8. ASSESS WHETHER CONSENSUS ACHIEVED (Meta-Decision Maker determines if consensus achieved and, if so, declares consensus decision)
9. IF NO CONSENSUS, VOTE (Voting members only)
10. DECLARE THE OUTCOME OF THE VOTE

\*Adapted from Sam Kaner et al, *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* (1996, 2014)

# LARGE GROUP PRACTICE EXAMPLE #1: *WHEN'S THE COLLABORATIVE MEETING?*

## CONTEXT AND ROLES

### Issue:

- The **Veterans Services Collaborative** is concerned about the low level of member participation in the Collaborative meetings and activities over the past couple of years. Various changes to the day and time of the meeting during business hours has not resulted in increased attendance.

### Actors:

- The **Executive Committee** of the Collaborative (Steering Committee Chair, a Backbone Leader and a Working Group Chair) has met and decided that at the next Steering Committee meeting, they will propose a change the scheduling of the meetings from the second Wednesday of each month from 2:00-4:00 pm to the first Saturday of each month from 12:00-2:00 pm.
- The **Steering Committee** includes the chairs of all working groups, two representatives from the Veteran's Administration, and representatives from each service provider area including health services, housing, education and employment. They have authority to decide when meetings occur.

### Setting:

- The Chair of the Steering Committee, who is also the Meta-Decision Maker for the meeting, presents the proposal of the executive committee and begins the consensus building process.

# **LARGE GROUP PRACTICE EXAMPLE #1: WHEN'S THE COLLABORATIVE MEETING?**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PROPOSAL**

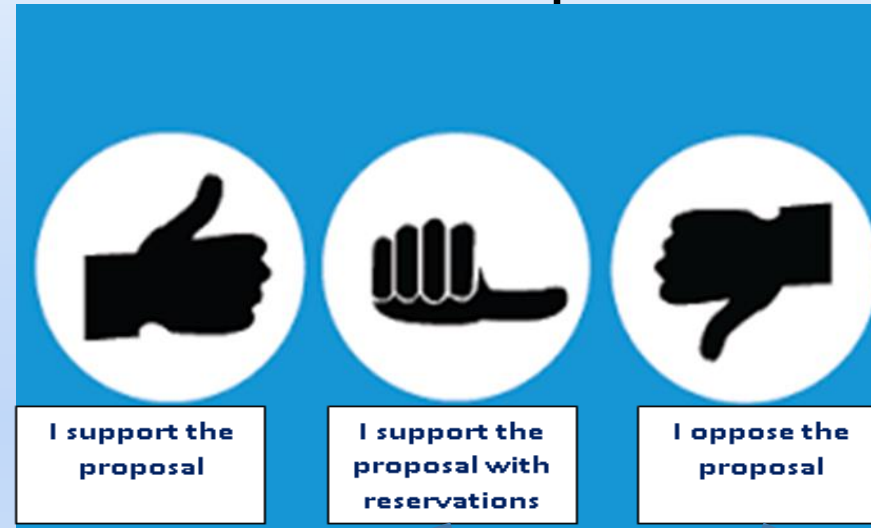
To increase member participation, all future Collaborative meetings will be held from 12:00--2:00 pm on the first Saturday of every month.

# PRACTICE EXAMPLE #1: WHEN'S THE COLLABORATIVE MEETING?

PROPOSAL 1: To increase member participation, all future Collaborative meetings will be held from 12:00--2:00 pm on the first Saturday of every month.

## POLLING STRIPS

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## POLLING RESULTS

### RESERVATION REASONS

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- 
- 

### OPPOSE REASONS

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# LARGE GROUP PRACTICE EXAMPLE #2: *WHEN'S THE COLLABORATIVE MEETING?*

## CONTEXT AND ROLES

### Issue:

- The **Veterans Services Collaborative** spends several thousands of dollars each year for food and beverages for meetings and events. Some veterans have complained about the type and quality of food and believe that a vendor who is a veteran could do a better job on menus and it would be good to give the business to a vet.

### Actors:

- The **Executive Committee** of the Collaborative (Steering Committee Chair, a Backbone Leader and a Working Group Chair) has met and decided that at the next Steering Committee meeting they will propose policy requiring that all catering contracts go to veteran-owned businesses.
- The **Steering Committee** includes the chairs of all working groups, two representatives from the Veteran's Administration, and representatives from each service provider area including health services, housing, education and employment. They have authority to decide when meetings occur.

### Setting:

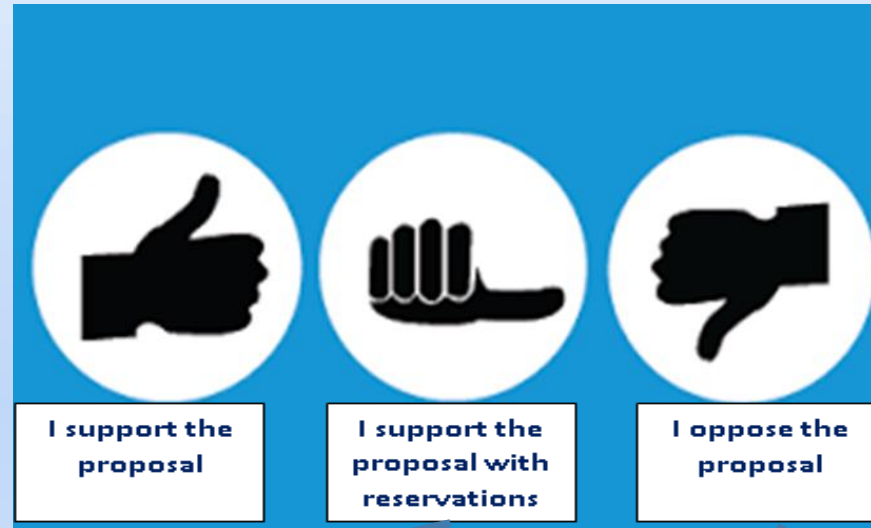
- The **Chair of the Steering Committee**, who is also the **Meta-Decision Maker** for the meeting, presents the proposal of the **Executive Committee** and begins the consensus building process.

# PRACTICE EXAMPLE #2: WHO DO WE BUY FOOD FROM?

PROPOSAL 1: All catering for meetings and events must be purchased from a vendor owned by a veteran.

## POLLING STRIPS

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## POLLING RESULTS

### RESERVATION REASONS

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### OPPOSE REASONS

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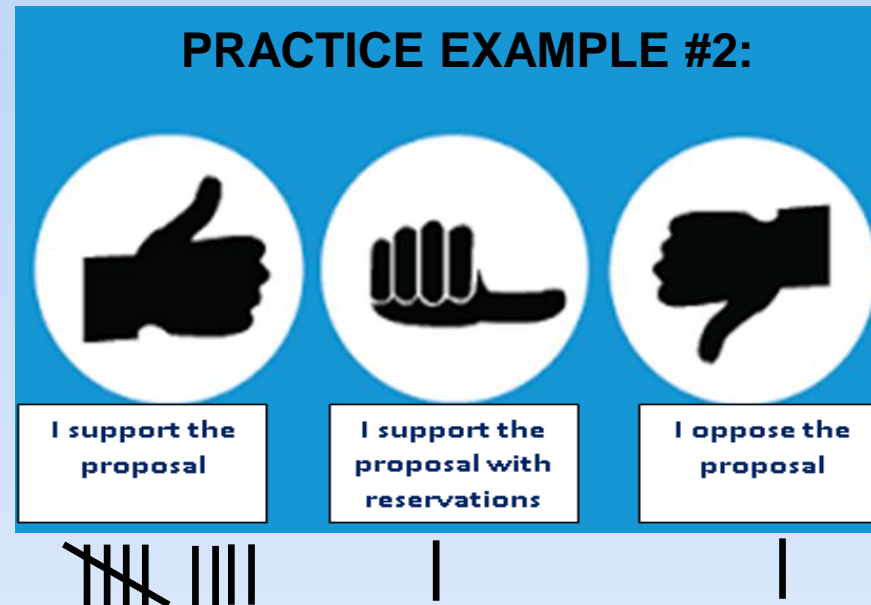
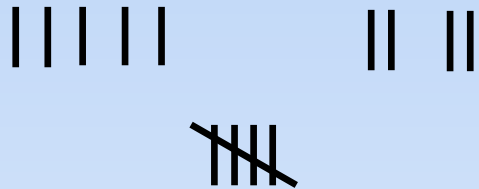


# PRACTICE EXAMPLE #2: WHO DO WE BUY FOOD FROM?

## PROPOSAL 2

All catering for meetings and events must be purchased from a vendor owned by a veteran (or a spouse) and/or has veterans as employees and whose bid is 10% or less than the lowest non-veteran bid. Vendors will be asked to verify veteran/spouse status when submitting bids.

### POLLING STRIPS



• It doesn't matter, we don't spend much

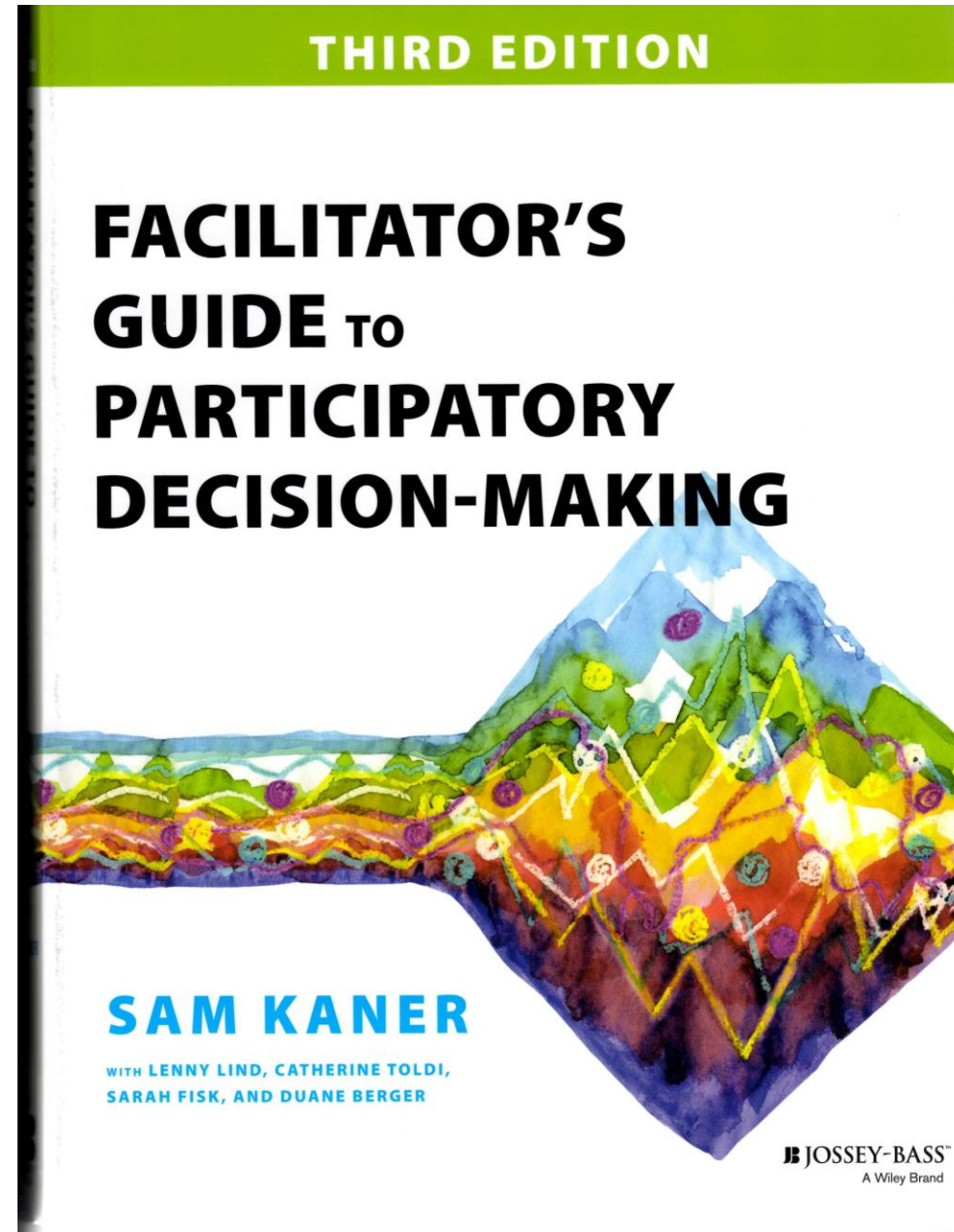
• It's discriminatory

# GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What questions do you have about consensus decision making or the gradients of agreement model for building consensus?



# SOURCE FOR GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT



# RESOURCES

- Community at Work <http://www.communityatwork.com/>
- Seeds for Change <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/consensus>
- Consensus Home <https://www.consensusdecisionmaking.org/>
- Cultivate.Coop [http://cultivate.coop/wiki/Consensus\\_decision\\_making](http://cultivate.coop/wiki/Consensus_decision_making)
- Tim Hartnett <https://www.toolshero.com/decision-making/consensus-oriented-decision-making-model/>



# Presenter

**Junious Williams, J.D.**

Senior Advisor

Collective Impact Forum

Principal, Junious Williams Consulting, Inc.

[www.Juniouswilliams.com](http://www.Juniouswilliams.com)

[juniouswilliamsjr@gmail.com](mailto:juniouswilliamsjr@gmail.com)

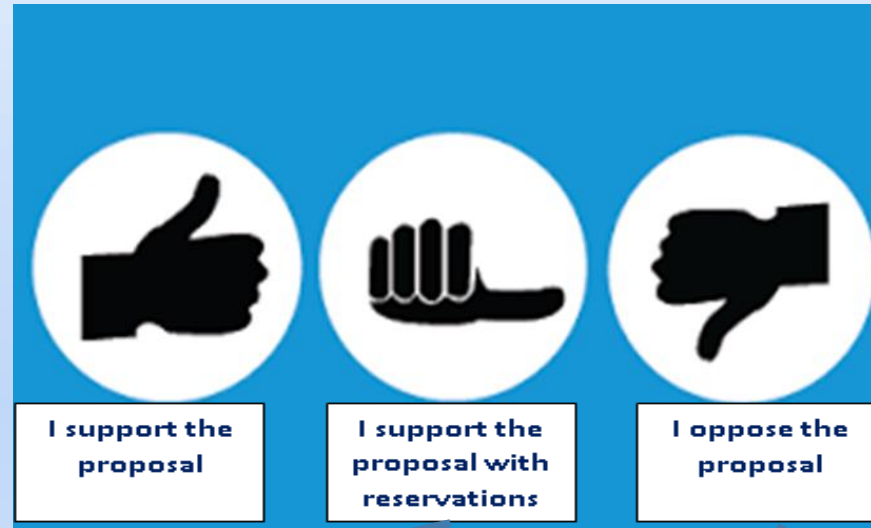
# PRACTICE EXAMPLE #2: SLIDES FOR SHOWING POLLING SPREADS AND REVISING PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS CONCERNS

# PRACTICE EXAMPLE #2: WHO DO WE BUY FOOD FROM?

PROPOSAL 1: All catering for meetings and events must be purchased from a vendor owned by a veteran.

## POLLING STRIPS

|||||      || ||  
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## POLLING RESULTS

|||      ||||      ||||

### RESERVATION REASONS

- Not many veterans who own catering companies
- It will cost too much
- Can't tell who is a veteran vendor
- I don't care
- 

### OPPOSE REASONS

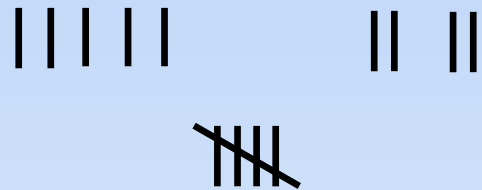
- Discriminatory
- It will take too much time
- We don't spend enough to make it worthwhile
- It's about jobs and not ownership
-



# PRACTICE EXAMPLE #2: WHO DO WE BUY FOOD FROM?

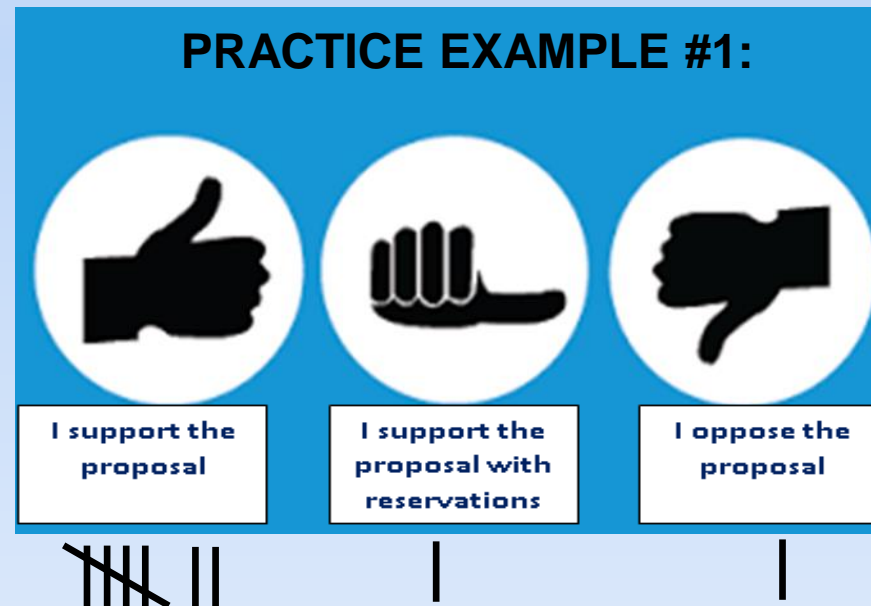
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## POLLING STRIPS



## POLLING RESULTS

- It doesn't matter, we don't spend much



- It's discriminatory



# Mark Your Calendar for Other Upcoming Collective Impact Learning Opportunities for the NVI Community

## Collective Impact Webinars for NVI Partners

- **Tuesday, Oct. 29: 1-2:30pm EST:**  
*Using Appreciative Inquiry to Set a Collaborative Vision*
- **Monday, Nov. 18: 1-2:30pm EST:**  
*Creating a Culture of Learning and Continuous Improvement in Your Collaborative*

## Collective Impact Office Hours with Robert Albright and Jennifer Juster

- **Thursday, Sept. 26: 4-5pm EST**
- **Tuesday, Oct. 22: 2-3pm EST**
- **Thursday, Nov. 21: 4-5pm EST**
- **Thursday, Dec. 19: 4-5pm EST**
- **Tuesday, Jan. 21: 4-5pm EST**

***We will record all webinars for you to access afterward,  
if you are not able to join real-time***