

What is Public Deliberation?

Deliberation is an approach to politics in which **citizens**, not just experts or politicians, are involved in community problem solving. Working with trained facilitators who utilize a variety of deliberative techniques, citizens **come together** and **consider relevant facts and values** from **multiple points of view**; listen to one another in order to think critically about the various options before them and consider the underlying tensions and **tough choices** inherent to most public issues; and ultimately seek to come to some conclusion for action in the form of a **reasoned public judgment**.

Not Politics as Usual

The practice of deliberation is the **cornerstone of democratic and community politics**. Deliberation connects people, even those with conflicting interests, in a way that allows them to **make decisions** and act in regard to problems or challenging circumstances. Deliberation can also reveal **new possibilities** for action that individuals alone did not see before.

Ways to Get Involved

- Attend CPD public forums and special events (see our website for schedule)
- Attend a CPD moderator workshop, and then plan and host your own public forums or participate in planning ours
- Work with the CPD to help develop materials for specific issues relevant to local citizens that you feel our community must confront
- Work with the CPD to help incorporate deliberation into your organization
- For CSU students, apply to serve as a “Student Associate” and earn class credit

For More Information

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Our partners:



National Issues Forum
www.nifi.org



National Coalition for Dialogue
and Deliberation
www.ncdd.org

Center for Public Deliberation



Act Speak
LISTEN

*Dedicated to enhancing local
democracy through improved public
communication and community
problem solving*

www.cpd.colostate.edu

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Center Basics

The **Center for Public Deliberation (CPD)** was founded in August of 2006 within the Speech Communication Department at Colorado State University, and serves as an affiliate of the National Issues Forum (NIF) network.

The CPD is *non-partisan*. Working from a communication perspective, CPD staff and students focus on the process of deliberation, not necessarily its product. Deliberation requires *safe places* for citizens to come together, *good and fair information* to help structure the conversation, and *skilled facilitators* to guide the deliberative process. The Center is dedicated to providing these three key ingredients to Northern Colorado.

The director of the CPD is Martin Carcasson, assistant professor in the CSU Department of Speech Communication. He is assisted by an advisory board consisting of community leaders, including representatives from the City of Fort Collins, Poudre School District, the *Coloradoan*, and various campus institutions such as the Student Leadership and Civic Engagement office and the Colorado Institute of Public Policy. The primary work of the CPD is completed by a core group of specially selected CSU undergraduates who commit to serve as “Student Associates” for two semesters, during which they receive class credit.

Mission Statement

To promote the development of a vibrant deliberative democracy in Northern Colorado

Our Three Goals

Enhance the Local Civic Culture

- Increase citizen participation in community problem solving
- Decrease the sense of polarization, cynicism, and frustration with politics
- Help develop a civic habit of relying on deliberation to address local concerns

Expand Collaborative Decision-Making

- Promote interconnections between local government and citizens
- Expand and improve the role of the public in decision-making processes
- Help incorporate deliberative techniques in local institutions

Improve Civic Pedagogy

- Study and improve methods of developing citizenship skills at all levels (K-12, higher education, citizen education)
- Promote the inclusion of deliberative concepts and activities in curricula

Center Activities

- **Moderate** National Issues Forum discussions for university and local community groups using nationally-tested material
- **Produce** summary material on local/state issues following the NIF model and moderate public forums on those issues
- **Host** workshops on moderator training, issue framing, and public deliberation
- **Develop** and host original workshops specifically tied to the needs of organizations and institutions in the Northern Colorado area
- **Work** with faculty at CSU and the Poudre School District to help them incorporate deliberative activities into their curricula and classrooms
- **Assist** with special projects for the University, the College of Liberal Arts, Larimer County, the City of Fort Collins, and the Poudre School District
- **Explore** other activities and projects tied to deliberative democracy and public participation such as deliberative polling, town hall meetings, citizen advisory committees, citizen juries, focus groups, community dialogues, public policy study circles, etc.