

STANDARD DECISION MAKING TYPES

SINGLE DECISION MAKER

Decision made by one individual or a small group (chair, administrator, executive committee, etc.)

Pro: Fast way to make decisions, all responsibility left to one/few individuals

Con: Decisions can be based on individual bias; may not consider other opinions, input, etc.

Note: This type of process can allow for public, staff or other input prior to decision-making, but does not guarantee recommendations will be solicited or followed. This process could also include hired/appointed decision makers: judges, arbitrators, evaluators, etc.

MAJORITY RULE

1. Robert's Rules of Order: a formal method of keeping order in a group. (ultimately involves voting)

Pro: Everyone knows the rules and there is a way to make sure there is an orderly process.

Con: Very cumbersome process which some subgroups can use for their benefit. Can prevent discussion of important issues.

2. Voting

Pro: A relatively fast way to put long involved discussions to rest.

Con: Is not responsive to minority opinion in the group, which can later undermine decisions that have been made.

Note: These methods allow discussion that provides information on opposing interests and needs.

COLLABORATION/CONSENSUS

1. Pure Consensus: Discussion continues until all involved can support the decision being made.

Pro: Is responsive to minority opinion; leads to the strongest support for the decisions made.

Con: Takes a long time; one person can block the decision.

2. Modified Consensus: Discussion goes on until a set percentage (decided by the group in its initial meeting) of people are in agreement. (Usually a super-majority)

Pro: Same as pure consensus, but reduces the chances of blocking.

Con: Small percentages of people are unhappy with the decision.

Note: This is the method often used in public policy facilitated settings.