

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

A facilitator shall be impartial and neutral. Impartiality refers to the attitude of the facilitator. It does not mean that a facilitator must be without opinions, for that would be impossible. However, the facilitator must be aware of their biases and put them aside so that bias does not influence the outcome of the discussion. It is a function of being self-aware and separating one's own opinions from the perspectives of the participants.

The facilitator has no authority to influence the recommendations decided upon by the participants of the City of Lincoln Drainage Criteria Manual revisions group. Instead, the facilitator helps participants to be exposed to, explore and understand various concerns, ideas, thoughts, and perspectives from a variety of viewpoints.

In The Mediation Center's facilitation of the City of Lincoln Drainage Criteria Manual revision meetings, the facilitator(s) are there to promote productive public discussion, information gathering and sharing, clarification, option generation, constructive problem solving, and reality testing. Other facilitator characteristics, goals, and tasks include:

- The facilitator assists parties to be more efficient, productive, and creative.
- The facilitator helps establish ground rules and opens channels of communication.
- The facilitator manages the process, not the content or outcome of the discussion.
- The facilitator is a legitimizer, assisting all in having a voice and being recognized.
- The facilitator is a conduit through which trust is fostered and through which communication can be channeled and reframed into more productive exchanges.
- The facilitator is a problem explorer who helps people look at the situation from many perspectives and assists them to identify creative options and possibilities.
- The facilitator creates an atmosphere for staying on task and problem solving.
- The facilitator is a reality tester who helps all the participants craft reasonable, workable recommendations that consider the interests of all the stakeholders.