UF/IFAS Extension offers faculty trained in the science and art of public issues, meeting facilitation, and conflict management that can assist local governments to better engage their stakeholders in a more productive, efficient, and cost effective manner. This program can be implemented through direct facilitation services or through trainings designed to equip local government and partner agency staff with facilitation skills.

**Facilitation of Public Issues**

UF/IFAS Extension can enhance community civic engagement by designing processes and facilitating meetings that help diverse stakeholders reach common ground and find solutions to complex issues. Extension has worked with cities, counties, federal, state, regional and local agencies and citizen groups to help them deal with complex community issues. Please engage the UF/IFAS facilitation team early on to ensure a well thought out process that leads to inclusive decision making.

**Benefits of Using UF/IFAS Extension as Facilitators**

- Trained UF/IFAS facilitators can help where an un-biased broker is needed to conduct group business
- A UF/IFAS facilitator can foster inclusive solutions, encourage full participation, promote mutual understanding and cultivate shared responsibility between stakeholders
- A UF/IFAS facilitator helps the group focus on the problem at hand and avoid unproductive tangents
- UF/IFAS facilitators with process expertise help groups concentrate on intelligently solve problems

**Facilitation Training Skills**

UF/IFAS faculty can provide trainings for government staff on a variety of skill sets necessary to increase their ability to design, conduct, and manage meetings with employees, colleagues, and/or the community to ensure a cooperative and participatory outcome. Workshops typically last a day and a half and consist of a mixture of presentations, group brainstorming, case studies, and small and large group exercises to give participants the experience of using the tools provided. Extension faculty can work with county staff to tailor trainings to meet the specific needs of participants. By participating in these trainings, staff will gain a better understanding of the collaborative process, reaching consensus, and developing the skill sets, knowledge, and competencies needed to plan and conduct effective meetings.

**Examples of Training Topics**

- Core principles of facilitation and facilitation skills
- Group decision making dynamics
- Creating a process that encourages full participation in decision making
- Convening stakeholders
- Summarize and framing issues
- Facilitative or active listening skills
- Addressing feelings, values, interests and positions
- Dealing with difficult dynamics