



## The Legal Infrastructure for Civic Engagement

Reconsidering Public Participation Ordinances *with*

**Maryam Judar**, Community Lawyer, [Citizen Advocacy Center](#)  
**Matt Leighninger**, Executive Director, [Deliberative Democracy Consortium](#)  
**Pete Peterson**, Executive Director, [Davenport Institute](#)

**Monday, May 6, 2013, 9:30 AM – Noon**  
**CMAP, 233 S. Wacker Dr, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606 (Willis Tower)**  
9:30 AM to 10:00 AM: coffee and networking  
10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon: presentations and discussion

**RSVP required by 5-1-13 to [cac@citizenadvocacycenter.org](mailto:cac@citizenadvocacycenter.org) or 630-833-4080.**  
*You will need a photo ID to enter the Willis Tower. This event is free.*

Public participation laws, such as the Open Meetings Act (OMA), are an important element of the civic infrastructure for [dialogue and deliberation for civic engagement](#). In Illinois, as elsewhere, they do not match the expectations and capacities of modern citizens to influence public policy. They also do not reflect lessons learned on how to engage residents productively, including online. They mandate public hearings, open comment periods, and other passive, formulaic processes rated poorly by both residents and public servants; and often seem to have a negative impact on policymaking and trust in government.

Join us to discuss the current state and potential future of Illinois public participation law. Maryam Judar will outline Illinois laws, such as the Open Meeting Act. Matt Leighninger will share learning from a recent DDC project, involving representatives from the ABA, NLC, ICMA, IMLA, and other organizations, to develop [model 21<sup>st</sup> century state and local public participation ordinances](#). Pete Peterson will speak to how public sector officials view public engagement and how typical “public comment” can often be an obstacle to real public participation. We will then together discuss what all this might suggest for the future of public participation law in Illinois.

***Maryam Judar** is a community lawyer with the Citizen Advocacy Center. She speaks out against policies that deteriorate the fabric of our democracy and has been active in reforming the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA). Ms. Judar graduated from the UCLA School of Law with certificates in public interest law and policy and critical race studies. For more information see [www.citizenadvocacycenter.org](http://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org).*

***Matt Leighninger** is the executive director of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium, an umbrella group that includes the major organizations in the field of deliberation and citizen involvement. He is also a Senior Associate of Everyday Democracy and the author of [The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule is Giving Way to Shared Governance – and Why Politics Will Never Be the Same](#).*

***Pete Peterson** is the executive director of the Davenport Institute at Pepperdine University. He consults with and trains municipal officials in how to conduct better public processes. He was also the first executive director of Common Sense California which supports citizen engagement to produce more creative policy decisions and better citizens.*