

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN

CHOOSING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Increase effectiveness, equity and internal efficiency by making a smart investment in public engagement software.



WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE?

Public engagement software is no longer a supplemental tool in a community's larger communication and engagement strategy. It has evolved to become the foundational operating system that enables local governments to actively reach residents, create meaningful engagements, analyze input and deliver comprehensive reports for decision makers.

The ideal public engagement software should leverage the full spectrum of engagement formats, ensure equity in access to the process and save local government practitioners time and effort.

WHY IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE NO LONGER A 'NICE TO HAVE'?

Community members expect access to government to feel like that of their engagements with consumer brands like Apple, Amazon and Google. They expect

to communicate through the channels they're most comfortable with — online, email, text and social — in a consistent, accessible and predictable way.

For public organizations, meeting and exceeding these expectations takes an increasing investment in staff, effort and data management. Just as the private sector has embraced technology to streamline and simplify the work of customer engagement, so too are savvy public organizations.

HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC SHIFTED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE ADOPTION?

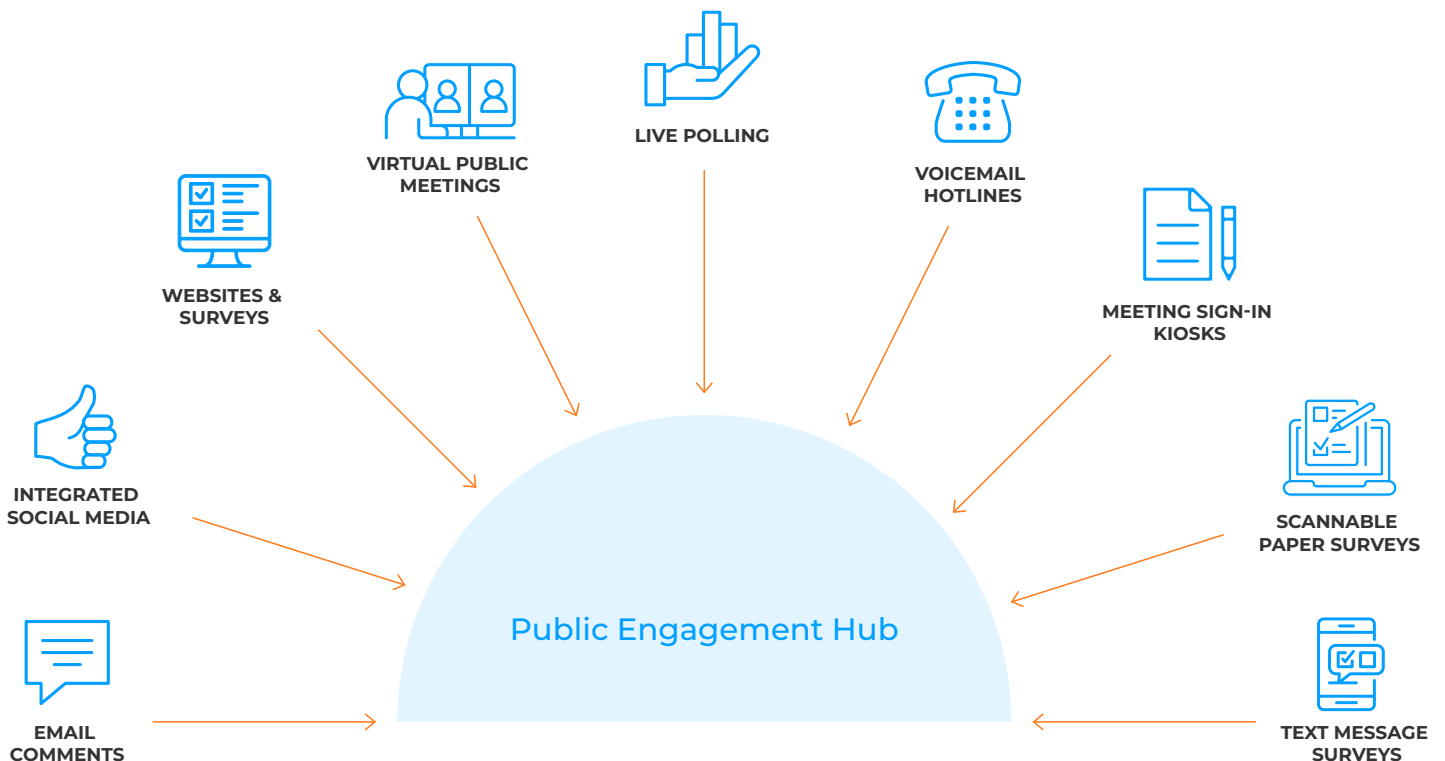
The pandemic drove new expectations around communication and accessibility. Before, residents tolerated traditional, in-person ways of engagement. Today they expect to be able to participate remotely in ways that fit in their schedule. Meeting attendance and engagement have more than doubled as a result — and organizations and the public are not looking back.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE IN IMPROVING PUBLIC SECTOR PROCESSES?

Just as public engagement software is improving resident experiences with government, it's also improving how organizations demonstrate representative engagement to support decision makers.

As government organizations receive input on more channels (virtual meetings, surveys, social media, phone and email), it can be increasingly challenging to understand who they have heard from and more importantly, who they have not.

Forward thinking governments are shifting their approach to close the digital divide and demonstrate they've heard from the broader community. The right public engagement software supports this process by powering multiple means of reaching residents, the ability to easily understand what part of the community they represent and facilitating geo-targeted outreach to close the gaps when they arise. Organizations are leveraging platform technologies to manage this process from one central system-of-record to reduce complexity for staff, ensure resident data privacy and provide clear reporting for decision-makers.



KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SELECTING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Does the solution give you the ability to engage the public through multiple formats?

- Can residents participate online and offline and across all common channels?
- Can the software automatically capture public meeting participants and the comments they made?
- Will you know if a resident has already participated to avoid “ballot stuffing”?
- Can the software identify demographically who has engaged and where?

Can you easily understand and demonstrate how representative public feedback was of your community?

- Do reports have built-in benchmarks like census comparisons and Qualified Census Tracts?
- Can you easily measure participation in underrepresented groups, rural communities or areas of project impact?
- Can you easily track and visualize demographics and the geography of residents who did not participate?

Do engagement opportunities create more meaningful feedback by providing context for residents?

- Can you inform residents as they participate using dynamic and engaging content like video, imagery and educational documents?
- Do your visualizations include interactive feedback options like geospatial pins, lines and comment tags on a map?
- Do your participatory budgeting exercises effectively convey scarcity, trade offs and the hard decisions facing the community?
- Does the solution allow for qualitative feedback and provide the tools necessary to glean insights when lightning-rod topics yield high participation rates?

Does the software store public engagement data in a central, secure location?

- Does the software provide Personally Identifiable Information (PII) security and comply with the Consumer Privacy Act?
- Are you able to view and track participation history, down to the individual resident?
- Do residents have visibility to the data they’ve provided and can update it on their own?

Is the solution accessible and usable for all residents?

- Does the solution include alternative formats for engagement (i.e. call-in phone lines and voicemail) for residents who do not have broadband Internet access or are among the almost 1 in 10 Americans who do not use the internet?
- Can content be easily translated and tailored for local dialect, including alt-text for images, to ensure equitable access for ESL residents?
- Does the software regularly audit itself for compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?

Is the software easy to use for both your team and for your residents?

- Does the software allow residents to instantly participate with no sign-in, username or password required?
- Are you able to recreate the same engagement experience across formats like text-to-participate surveys and website surveys to collect uniform public input data?
- Does the software make it easy to follow up with residents via email or text and catalog your communication efforts?

Is the software designed to give consultants working with your organization a great experience?

- Does the software provide multiple levels of administrative access for consultants to collaborate with staff or take the lead on projects?
- Are consultants using the software able to customize their reports without your involvement?
- Can the software provider connect you to an ecosystem of consultants with proven expertise using their software?

Will you be responsible for driving adoption and will you have dedicated training and professional services?

- Does the company's training and customer success team have a background in government, public engagement experience and a first-hand understanding of your needs?
- Does the company provide on-demand time with engagement practitioners and professional consultants?
- Will you have access to thousands of example projects and surveys used by organizations like yours?

**PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT
SOFTWARE
DESIGNED BY
PUBLIC SERVANTS
FOR PUBLIC
SERVANTS.**

OUR MISSION

PublicInput's mission is to create a more collaborative democracy through technology.

To do this, we enable local governments to manage the broader public engagement process, not just a singular aspect. That's why we've focused our efforts on creating an all-in-one platform that streamlines projects from beginning to end and builds public trust over time.

OUR PROMISES

1

Make it easy

for government organizations to use public engagement best practices through technology.

2

Maintain a central system

of record that government organizations can use to deeply understand who their residents are and what they have to say.

3

Unlock the ability

for government organizations to make truly representative decisions that they can confidently stand behind.

WE'RE PROUD TO PARTNER WITH HUNDREDS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE U.S. INCLUDING:

Government



Consultants



WE'D LOVE TO HELP

Let's talk about how we can help you simplify the way you engage, educate and collaborate with your community's residents.

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)



PublicInput