

**Location:** Brea

**Issue:** Brea's Service Prioritization

**Methodology:** Facilitated Meetings

**CSC:** 2008 Catalyst Grant Recipient

Following six months of a collaborative budget strategic planning process involving over 40 employees, we have presented a balanced budget for 2008-09, but relied on a series of short-term strategies to do so. Following a recent decision by the Council to not place a tax measure on the November ballot, we need to engage our community in a process by which they can assist us in identifying community priorities as we prepare next year's budget which will contain significant reductions in city services.

Brea has been working internally for several years to transform our organization from the traditional 18th Century, post-industrial, hierarchical model, to a constant change organization that is flatter, more flexible and much more quick reacting. The protocols we use to do this include total employee participation, ownership of our decision-making process, and easy access to all relevant information.

We have significant experience in conducting community outreach programs, but the effort we are planning now goes to a different level (although I cannot describe what that is, because it will find its own conclusion). Our idea is that some form of community engagement (be it town hall meetings, email surveys, community briefings), are needed to educate the public as to our budget crisis, describe what we have done so far to cut costs, and, most importantly, solicit their assistance in helping us craft a plan the City Council would support that would likely reduce city services to the community. The key here is to raise awareness of the many competing priorities (all of which have passionate constituencies), but end up with a process that will be perceived as fair and inclusive.

During our work of the past six months, several community members have become interested in our budget issues and have volunteered to be a part in leading this effort. Some of them are former elected officials; some are new community activists. Additionally, we have a very active Chamber of Commerce, and a Brea Downtown Business Owners' Association, both of whom would be involved. This effort involves every department of the City.

***CSC supported this project with a \$5,000.00 Catalyst Grant.***