Endorse more deliberative processes, but are cautious

67% believe deliberative engagement can bring out fresh ideas, 69% think such approaches should be used for only a few public decisions.

Local officials and their organizations can gain from:
• Partnering with community-based organizations
• Hiring and training staff to increase public engagement skills
• Networking with colleagues who have effective practices
• Evaluating local efforts

Civic leaders and their organizations can gain from:
• Partnering with local officials
• Hiring and training staff to increase public engagement skills
• Networking and sharing resources with other organizations
• Evaluating local efforts

Funders can make a difference by supporting:
• Partnerships between public officials and local organizations
• Training and technical assistance
• Experiments, including use of online engagement tools
• Research, evaluation and knowledge sharing

Highlights from research with local officials, civic leaders, and community leaders in California:

- Local officials in recent years.
- Angrier and mistrustful of public officials.
- Say the public has become deeply strained.
- Say local officials seem to have worked elsewhere. Many are already experimenting with more inclusive and deliberative public engagement approaches.
- Find the relationship between the public and local government is deeply strained.
- Say the public has become angrier and mistrustful of local officials in recent years.

About the research: Survey and qualitative research conducted in 2012 with local public officials in California (elected and nonelected from cities and counties) and community leaders and civic leaders in organizations interested in engaging residents on local issues.