

SPIDR Recommendations for Government Agencies Sponsoring Consensus Processes

*In a 1997 report titled *Best Practices for Government Agencies: Guidelines for Using Collaborative Agreement-Seeking Processes*, the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (now the Association for Conflict Resolution – ACR) developed eight recommendations for government officials who sponsor consensus processes:*

1. An agency should first consider whether a consensus approach is appropriate.
2. Stakeholders should be supportive of the process and willing and able to participate.
3. Agency leaders should support the process and ensure sufficient resources to convene the process.
4. An assessment should precede a consensus process.
5. Ground rules should be mutually agreed upon by all participants and not established solely by the sponsoring agency.
6. The sponsoring agency should ensure the facilitator's neutrality and accountability to all participants.
7. The agency and participants should plan for implementation of the agreement from the beginning of the process.
8. Policies governing these processes should not be overly prescriptive.