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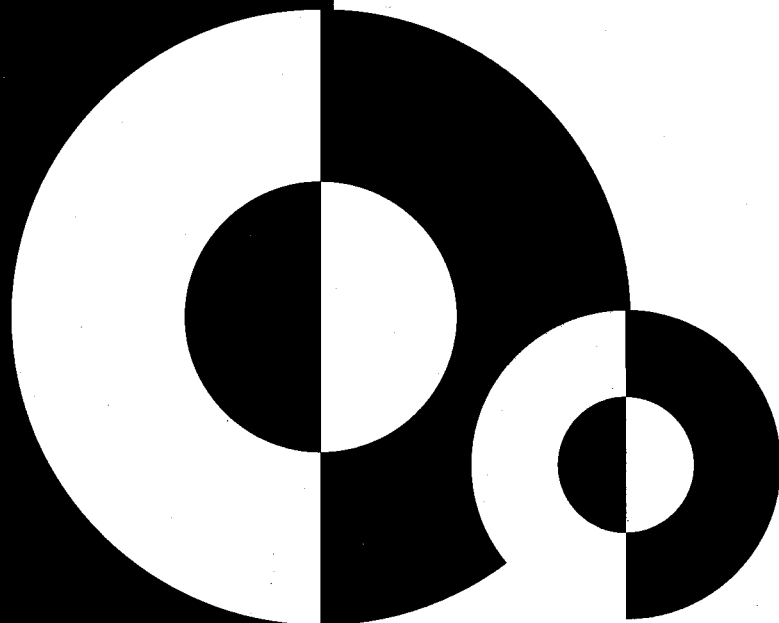
# **Increasing competence in resolving public issues**

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**National Public Policy Education Committee**

**Cooperative Extension**

**Public Issues Education Materials Task Force—1994**



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## **Preface**

This book is designed as a guide for people who want to initiate the process of exploring public issues. You may be an elected official, a member of an advocacy group or a neutral educational organization, a private citizen eager to see an issue handled more satisfactorily, or an Extension educator who wants to make a contribution.

*Increasing Competence in Resolving Public Issues* supplements previous Cooperative Extension publications such as *Working With Our Publics Module 6: Education for Public Decisions* and *Public Issues Education: A Handbook*. Like the recent videoconferences on public issues education, it is part of a system-wide emphasis on enhancing the way Extension helps society deal with controversial issues and public choices.

This book should help you:

- See your issue in the broader context of public problem solving.
- Select the best role for you.
- Size up the contribution an educational approach could make.
- Decide how to get started.
- Incorporate the latest thinking about collaboration, problem solving, dispute resolution, and other methodologies.
- Help your community move toward a shared understanding of the issue and the process.
- Identify resources to support your efforts.
- Assess the impact of these other activities.

Chapter 2 of this publication is titled “Step-by-Step Approaches to Public Issues Education.” It is important—even essential—that people working on a public issue collectively understand the sequence of steps in which they are involved. Chapter 2 is designed to help the public issues educator think about what that sequence should be.

Chapter 3 addresses three topics that are basic to designing successful public issues education programs:

- choosing issues
- identifying participants
- selecting educational methods.

Chapter 4 addresses five special topics that contribute to successful programs:

- creating new structures, such as coalitions
- science and dialogue: blending technical information and process assistance
- collaborative conflict resolution with polarized groups (the interest-based problem solving model)
- public issues educators and the news media
- evaluating public issues education.

It is our sincere hope that this book will help you contribute to public issues and wise public choices.

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