**Examples**

**Consensus Strategies**

While the process for structuring discussion and gaining consensus is important, a method for staff to indicate their position following the discussion and revisions is also essential. Once a group is moving in a clear direction with their discussion, the facilitator will want to ask staff to indicate visibly how they feel. Common methods for doing this include “fist to five,” “colored cards,” and “thumbs.”

**Fist to Five.** Participants are asked to raise their hand and indicate their level of support from five fingers to a closed fist:

5 Fingers = It is a great idea; I will be one of the leaders in implementing.

4 Fingers = Solid support; I will work for it.

3 Fingers = Neutral; I am not in total agreement, but it is a reasonable plan and I will support it.

2 Fingers = Minimal support; I do not agree; some minor changes could improve; I will support.

1 Finger = I do not agree; no support, but I will not sabotage; I will suggest changes that should be made.

Fist = No support; this is not a good idea, and I am going to sabotage implementation.

When all hands reveal two to five fingers, you have consensus and are ready to move forward; twos may be asked for any final tweaking. Anyone indicating one finger or a fist should be asked what they object to and what changes are necessary for them to support. “No support” voters can also be asked to join the planning group to seek solutions and bring a revised proposal back to the group.

**Colored Cards.**Each participant is given a set of colored cards — green, yellow, and red. The cards can be raised at the time of determining consensus:

 Green = Great plan; my full consent. Yellow = Some reservations; I consent.

Red = Opposition or objection; I do not consent.

 Again, when a member uses a red card, it becomes their responsibility to help come up with a solution.

**Thumbs.** Another signal is this one: Thumbs Up = agreement; Thumbs Sideways = have some concerns but will support; and Thumbs Down = I don’t agree and will not support. With only three positions, like the colored cards, this is more useful for an instant polling or to get a quick reading of a group’s sentiment. A slightly more detailed version of the thumbs signal includes a 5-point range:

Thumbs Up = strongly agree/complete support;

Palm Up = mostly agree/good support;

Thumbs Sideways = “on the fence” or divided feelings/support with minor changes;

Palm Down = mostly disagree/won’t support;

Thumbs Down = strongly disagree/won’t support/will sabotage.