

LAUNCHING THE SCENARIO

The First Outreach Meeting: Engage the Community

Be realistic about the community's level of interest in developing a scenario. One way to gauge that interest is to begin the scenario project with an open forum designed to attract a wide range of individuals who have been active in earthquake research and mitigation fields. Use the meeting to identify the level and sources of political commitment to hazard mitigation generally, and earthquake mitigation specifically. By involving a number of disciplines, broad community support for the scenario can be built.

Some ideas to ensure an effective meeting

- Discuss participants' expectations for the project. Who will use the scenario and how? Will it stir the general public to take measures in self-preparedness or will the scenario serve as a lobbying tool for new government policy?
- Stress the need for the participation of experts from a wide range of disciplines. Who will sponsor the scenario, providing funds and other support? Who will take ownership of the scenario when it is completed?
- Demonstrate local support for the effort by including speakers and endorsements from government, leaders in the business community, and members of the academic and research fields.
- Together, determine the size, scope, and probability of the scenario event. The earthquake and its impact must reflect current scientific and engineering knowledge to be credible to policy makers and others who will be in a position to take necessary actions.
- Remember that the scenario is a tool to enhance advocacy. It is the first step toward mitigation, which can take many years to accomplish.
- Keep a sign-in list of participants. This list provides an indication of interested people who may be called upon to serve on committees or periodically review the scenario as it develops. It will also help to identify users of the final product.