



Session #606:

Clarity and Purpose: writing effective policies and procedures

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Legislative Overview

Housing Services Act, 2011

- sets basic Provincial policy directions
- gives Service Managers greater flexibility and control

- **LOCAL RULES**

How do you eat an apple?



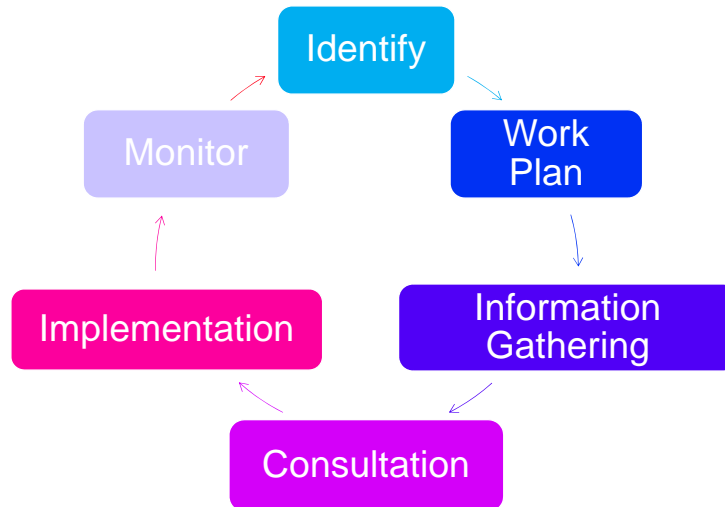
One bite at a time!



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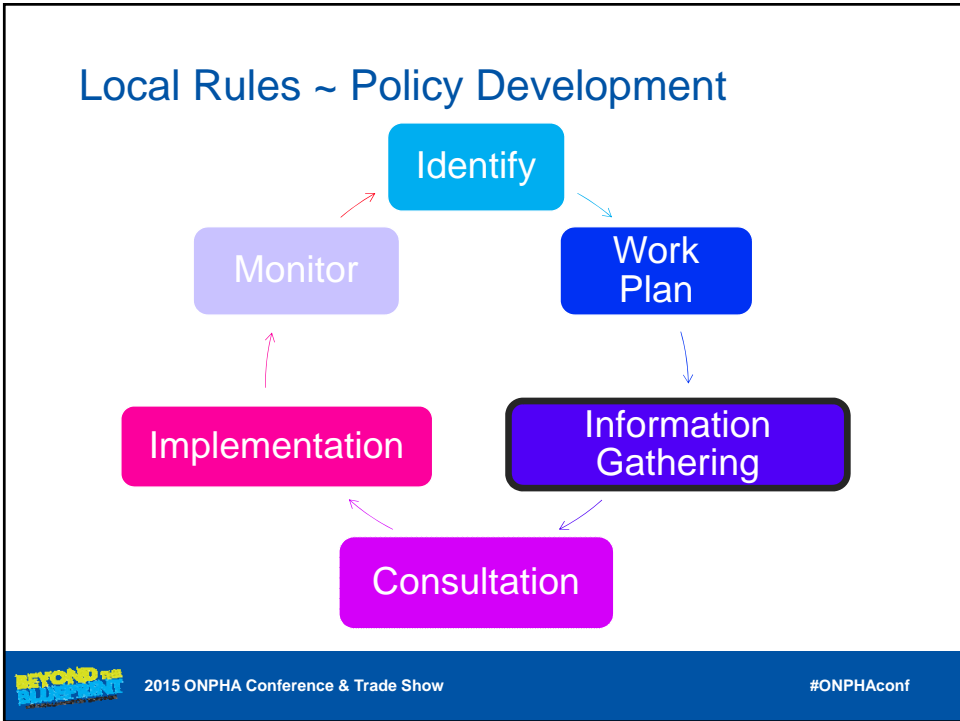
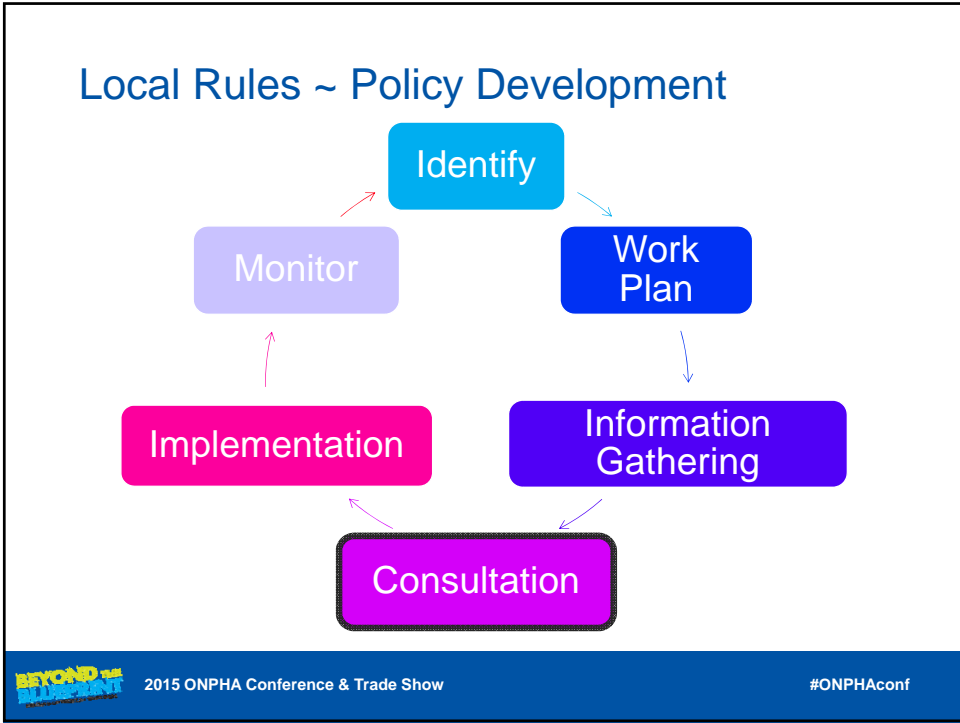
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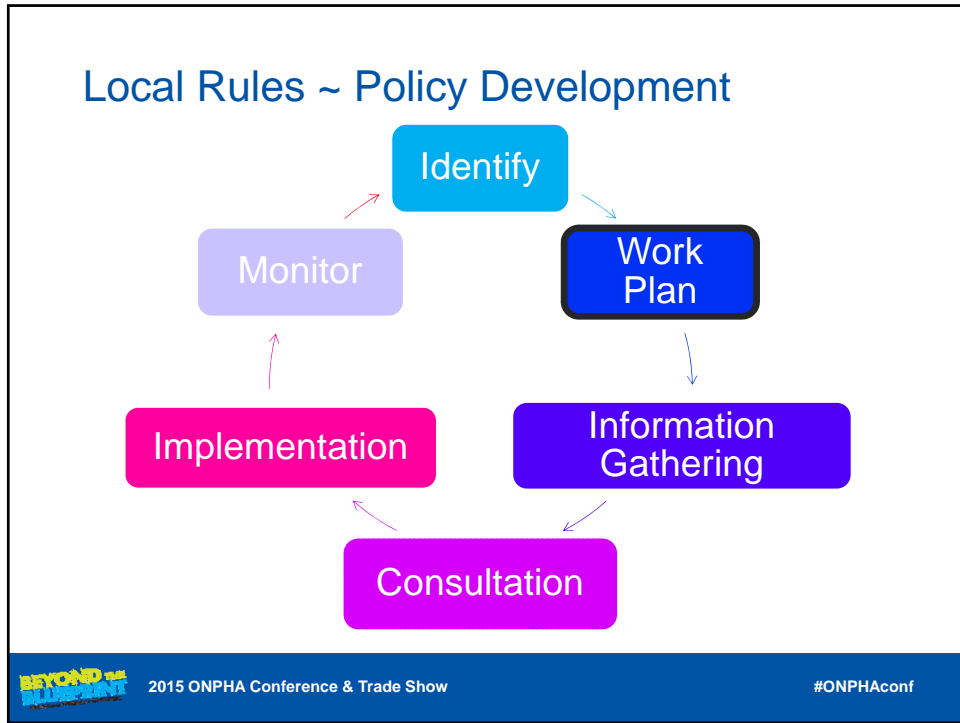
Local Rules ~ Policy Development



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Identify

Scope and Objectives

Scope: create new or revise existing local rules as defined by the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA)

Objective:
 To implement local rule policies which ensure compliance with the HSA and consistency with the municipality's strategic direction


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Identify

What are the local rules?

- **RGI Wait List**
e.g. local priorities and selection system
- **RGI Eligibility**
e.g. occupancy standards, overhoused and reviews of RGI decisions
- **Housing Provider Standards**
e.g. conflict of interest, number of board meetings and housing provider plans



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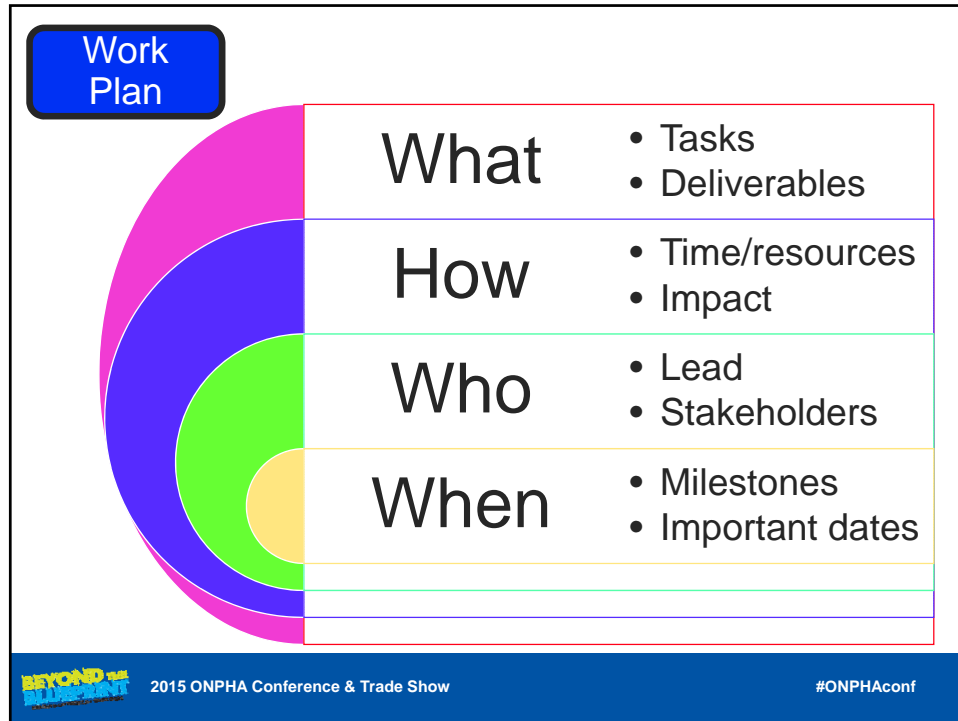
Areas of Service Manager Discretion

Legislative reference	Topic	Details
367/11 Section 28	Notification of Changes	Tenants have 30 days or longer to report a change in income or household composition.
367/11 Section 29	Failure to Provide Information	If a household fails to provide information to verify their eligibility for RGI, the service manager may determine that a household remains eligible for subsidy if extenuating circumstances exist.
367/11 Section 30	RGI to Market Rent (12 Month Rule)	An RGI household ceases to be eligible for subsidy after paying normal (market) rent for 12 consecutive months.
367/11 Section 31	Failure to Obtain Income (Pursuit of Income)	A service manager may determine that a household remains eligible for subsidy if extenuating circumstances exist and may not require the household to obtain income from the following sources: Ontario Works, child support, EI, OAS, or support from a sponsor.
367/11 Section 32	Divestment of Property	An RGI household must divest themselves of residential property suitable for year-round use within 180 days after the first day of the month of receiving



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Information Gathering

- Defining the problem
- Is there more than one problem?
- What questions should we be asking?
- What do we know? What don't we know?
- Who should we bring into the conversation?

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Information Gathering

R&D?



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Information Gathering

R&D!



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Consultation

Benefits of Consultation

- Communication: to inform and educate
- Consultation: multi-directional path that can serve many purposes:
 - Offer feedback on proposed options
 - Generate solutions or responses
 - Participate in decision-making

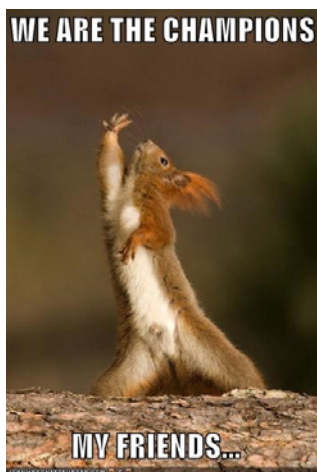


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Consultation

Benefits of Consultation



- Your committee can become “policy champions”
- Build consensus
- Strengthen relationships
- Relationships between providers can be a positive side-effect
- Opportunities to pilot projects



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Consultation

Tools & Techniques: Briefing Note

Issue	Key question that guides policy inquiry
Background	Why do we need to look at this now? A history of decisions to date.
Implications for Stakeholders	How the situation impacts: Tenants Housing Providers Service Manager
Policy Options	Options outlined with Pros and Cons
Recommended Option	Your recommendation (this can change!)
Next Steps	Implementation steps, milestones
Resources	Financial, human & other support required



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Consultation

Tools and Techniques



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Implementation

Organizing
Background Material

- Compile the gathered information and consultation responses by related topic
- Verify that your consultation feedback fits with legislation



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Implementation

Writing Policy and
Procedures

Policies address *what* the Policy is, *when* the Policy is used, and *why* the Policy is required.

Procedures detail *who* performs the procedure, *what* is performed, *when* the function is performed, and *how* the procedure is performed.



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Implementation

Preparing the Draft

1. Start with the old policy framework or the policy from another Service Manager
2. Ensuring new legislative directives have been incorporated
3. Insert local rules around legislative discretionary items
4. Incorporate any other items from consultations etc.



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Implementation

Best Practices and Tips

- Cross-reference background information
- Review draft policy with your Access Staff and Housing Providers – make sure it is **clearly** understood!
- Distribute draft policy to appropriate stakeholders for review and comments.
- Set a review period
- Not every stakeholder needs to also be a reviewer.



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Implementation

Tips for Writing Policies and Procedures

1. **Use a policy and procedure template**
2. **Use plain language** - Use the shortest, most common words possible
3. **Define terms** – Use a Glossary of Terms and/or have a definition section in each policy



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Implementation

Tips for Writing Policies and Procedures

4. **Be clear**
 - use "shall", "will", "required" or "must" when there is **no discretion** and it is necessary to comply;
 - use "should" if there is **some discretion**;
 - use "may" where there is **full discretion** that a part of the policy or the procedure may be by-passed or changed.



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Implementation

Best Practices and Tips

- Use some 'mock' situations to help test or demonstrate the policy- use **Process Flow Charts**
- Develop Service Manager tracking tools
 - i.e. track the # and type of Requests for Review



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Implementation

Creating any Related Forms

- Many benefits to implementing standardized forms
- Forms should be drafted to include policy criteria

Does tenant share custody of the children listed in this application?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (obtain custody documentation)	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Will there be a change in the size of the household?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Expected Date of Change:	<input type="checkbox"/> No
For this specific address, are you currently under your RGI target?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the tenant experienced a significant loss of income, which was involuntary?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Please describe situation which led to the request for in-situ:		
Was tenant able to provide supporting documents to substantiate the change in income?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have any members of the household recently been involved with any housing violation such as damagers, illegal acts, or rental arrears?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

In-Situ Priority Application – Market to RGI – Feb 2013

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Implementation Roll-out

- Seek Council or related approval
- Finalize forms
- Update Operational Review reporting templates

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Implementation Distribution and Communication

- Ensure that your new policy and any related forms are distributed to:

Providers SM staff Public Information Resource Website

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Monitor

Policies can be Revised

- Regularly review policies at Housing Provider meetings
- Check for implementation during the Operational Review
- Monitor - ease of use, compliance and changes or revisions required



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Monitor

Policies can be Revised

Key Questions:

- **What is the policy impact?**
- **Does policy need some revision?**



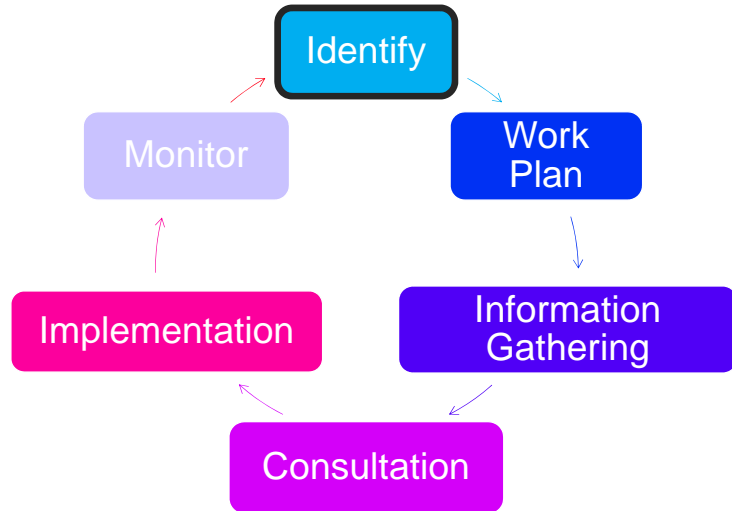
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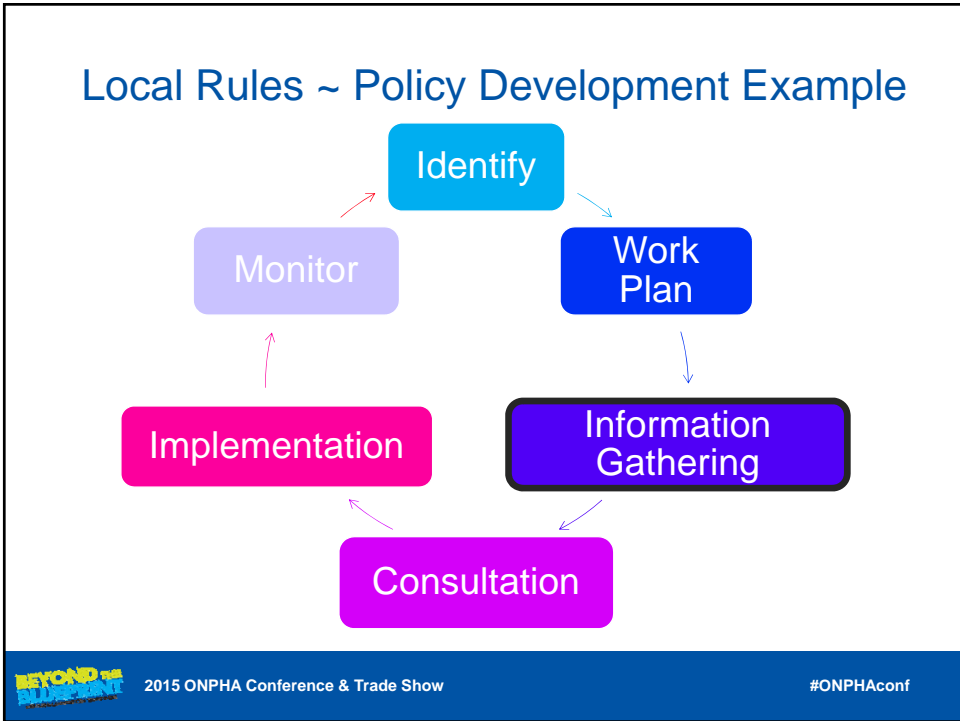
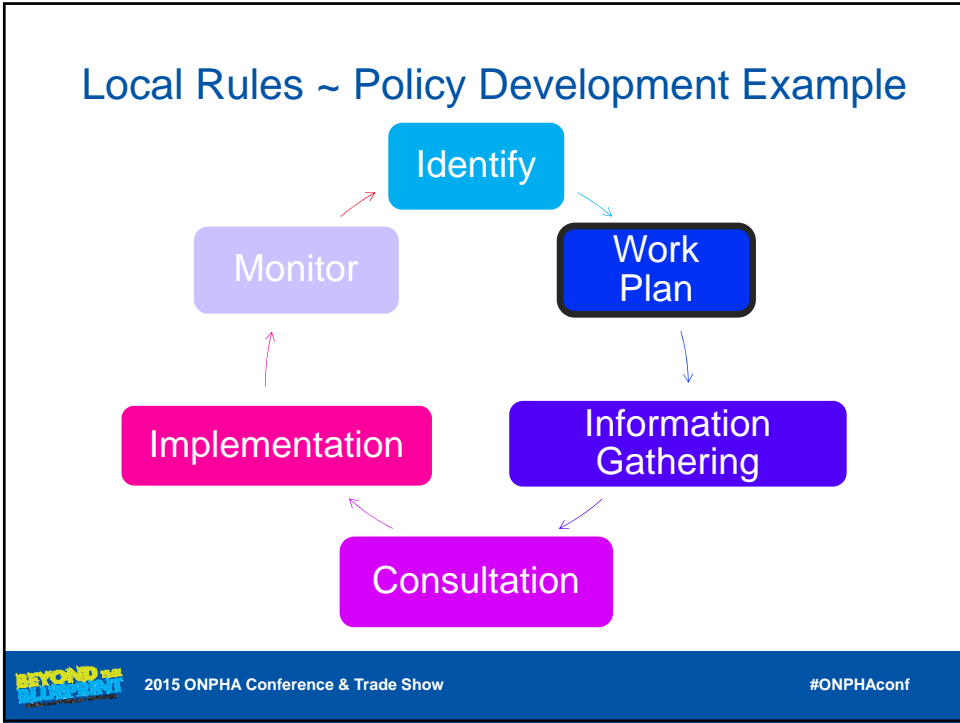
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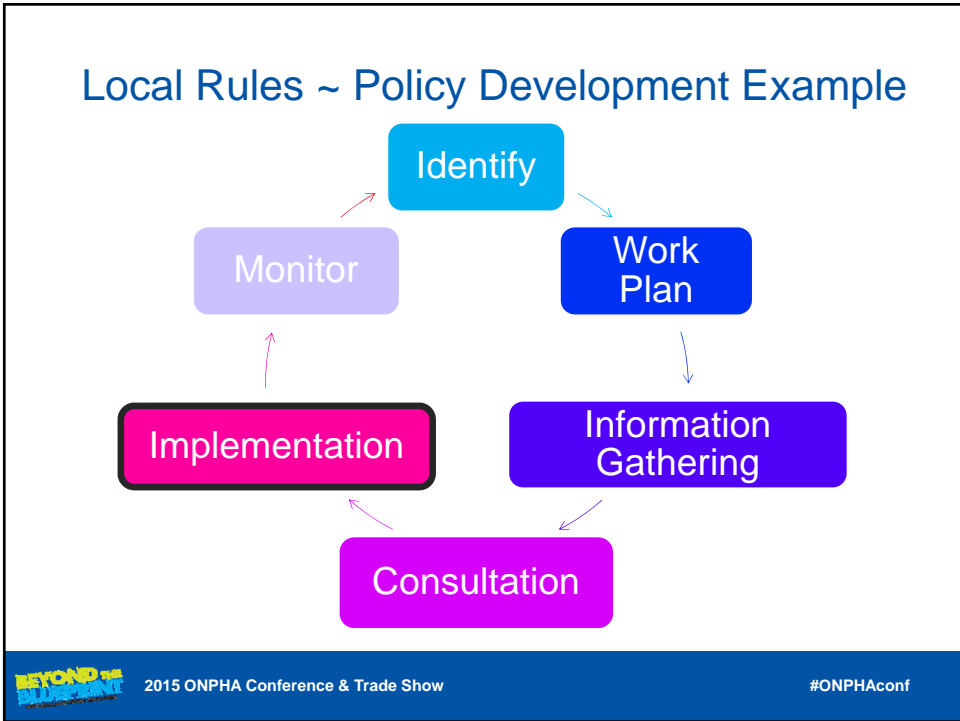
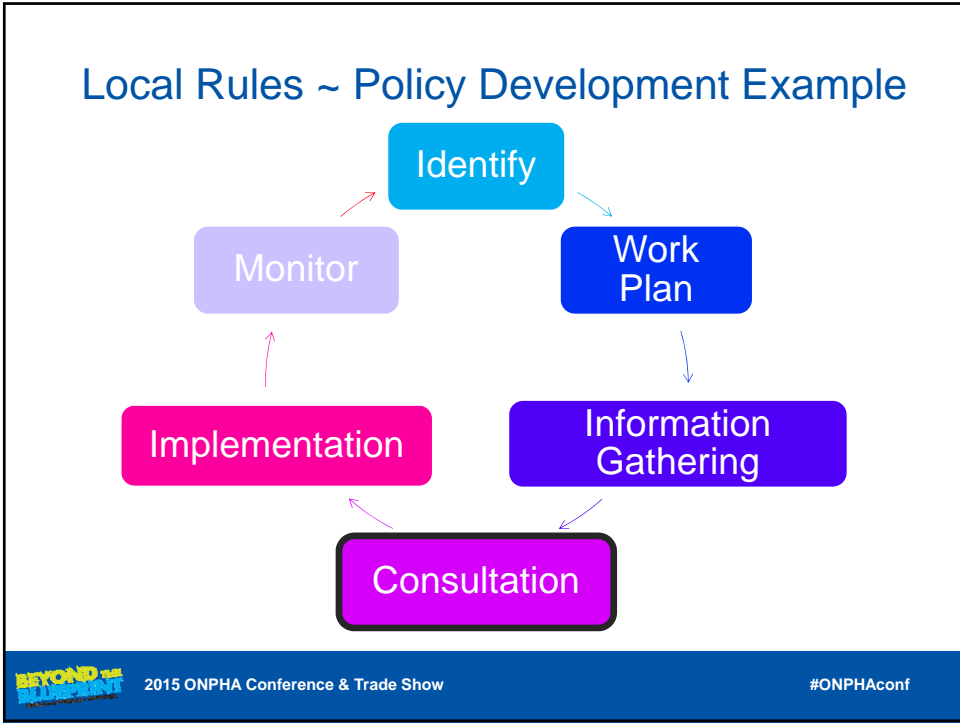


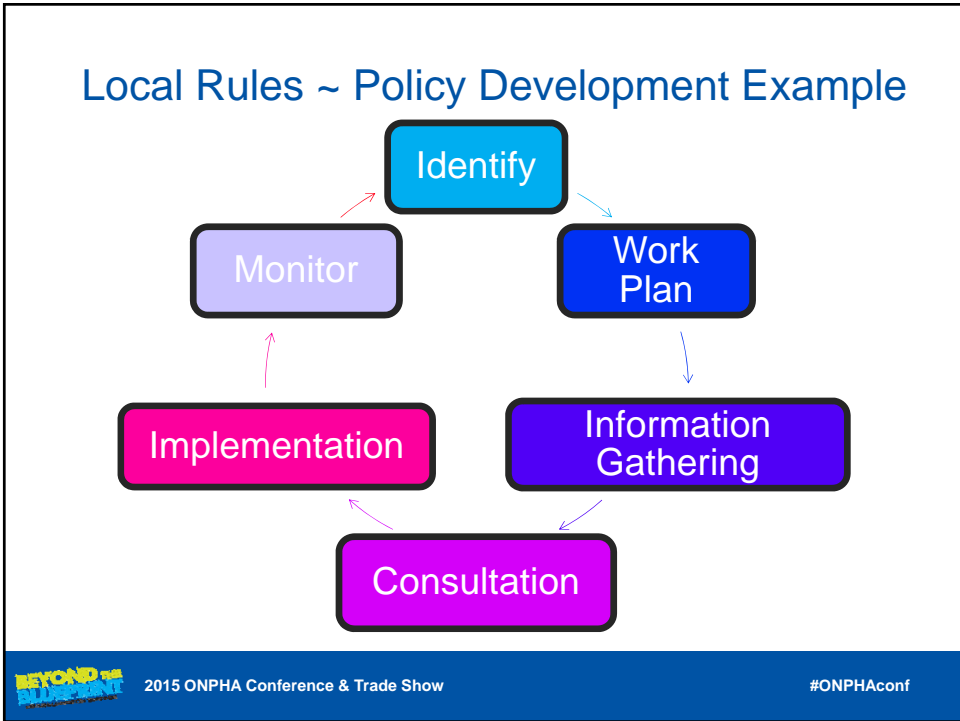
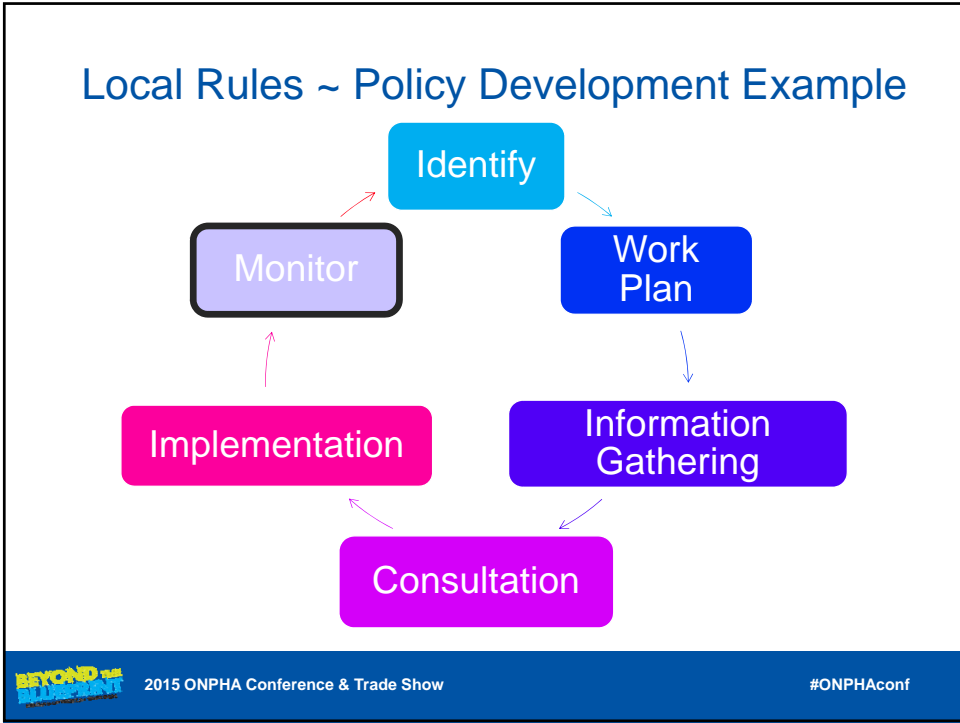
policy development is not a race

Local Rules ~ Policy Development Example









Local Rules ~ Policy Development Resources

Briefing Note
Template

Policy and
Procedure
Template

Service Manager
Areas of
Discretion

Writing Policies
and Procedures –
Tip Sheet

Writing Policies
and Procedures –
Check List



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THANK YOU!

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