

COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Consider these questions before you fill out your communication planning document.

- 1. What are our objectives in communicating? What do we want to happen as a result of the communication?**
- 2. Who are our priority targets for communication? (list in order)** -These may be community members, business interests, the government, etc.
- 3. Who will be in charge of communicating with stakeholders?**
 - Who will be managing the flow of communication overall? Who will be developing the content of your communication?
 - Consider roles – Who is the best person to communicate with different groups?
- 4. What are key messages?** – You may need different messages for some of your targeted groups.
- 5. What questions might people have?** – Add to or modify your messages if necessary.
- 6. What are communication and demographic trends?** - These may influence your strategies.
 - Useful sources of information on communication trends include:
 - i. Business publications (for example, Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryalton/2017/05/11/how-do-millennials-prefer-to-communicate/#3dd15c1b6d6f>)
 - ii. Research institutes (for example, Pew) <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/>
 - iii. Blogs or publications by companies that specialize in communication (for example, <https://www.civicplus.com/blog/ce/communication-trends-for-public-information-officers>)
 - Useful sources of information for demographic trends include:
 - i. <https://profiles.ucsur.pitt.edu/profiles/county/42003/overview/>
 - ii. <https://censusreporter.org/>
 - iii. <https://tools.wprdc.org/>
- 7. What are the best methods for communication?** Some of your potential options include:
 - Social media posts
 - Events (creating events and tabling or attending other events)
 - Text messaging
 - Telephone trees
 - Paper – flyers, newspaper ads
 - Door knocking

- News – press releases, radio and television news stories

They will likely be different for different populations. Note which methods are likely to work best for which groups in your area.

- 8. What is our timeline?** – Will there be pushes or campaigns, or are you planning an ongoing process? What kind of lags do you want to include in order to give target audiences a chance to communicate back with you?
- 9. How do we communicate our strategy?** –Don't forget to make sure important people will be able to learn about your communication strategy – decide where it will be kept and who will receive it.
- 10. How will we track our effectiveness?** It's important to identify ways you can both keep yourself accountable to your plan and determine if your community outreach is successful. Ask yourself what success looks like - also considering what you can effectively influence. Good metrics are measurable, useful, and easy.

Once you've considered these questions, you are ready to complete a communication plan.