**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? - T**hese may influence your strategies.
   * Useful sources of information on communication trends include:
     1. Business publications (for example, Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryalton/2017/05/11/how-do-millennials-prefer-to-communicate/#3dd15c1b6d6f>
     2. Research institutes (for example, Pew) <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/>
     3. 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:
     1. <https://profiles.ucsur.pitt.edu/profiles/county/42003/overview/>
     2. <https://censusreporter.org/>
     3. <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.

1. **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?
2. **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.
3. **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.