

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN TABLE OF CONTENTS TEMPLATE

This document is intended to be a road map for developing a public outreach and stakeholder engagement plan for your organization. It is used to create a comprehensive plan or to address specific topics of concern.

Your stakeholder engagement plan is a living document that should be developed and used throughout the outreach process. It should be updated, adjusted and tweaked as you conduct your outreach and education. This flexibility allows you to incorporate new messages, tools and approaches as you go. **Don't let it be just another paperweight!**

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND (1-2 pages)

This section should provide a high-level overview of the purpose of the outreach plan. Questions this section should try to address include:

- What specific project or program is the plan being developed for?
- What is the project or program trying to accomplish *in general*?
- What is the expected role of the public and stakeholders in helping the project/program meet its goal?
- What is the intent of the public outreach and stakeholder engagement plan?

II. APPROACH (~1 page)

This section should provide a brief overview of the approach to developing the Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The approach should include the level of engagement you seek from your stakeholders. This could be a different level for each of the stakeholder groups identified.

- How do I want to engage the stakeholder? Will they be making decisions or simply receiving information?
- What role(s) do I want stakeholders to have?
- What tools should I consider?

TIPS: Refer to Resource Guide in Tab 1 “IAP2 Participation Spectrum.” Consider that the more controversial your issue, the higher level of engagement with your stakeholders you should plan for.

III. PRIORITIZED LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

This list will include the results of a stakeholder mapping effort. It should illustrate the high, medium and lower priority stakeholders.

- High priority: [DEFINE]
- Medium Priority: [DEFINE]
- Low priority: [DEFINE]

TIPS: Refer to Resource Guide Tab 1: “Stakeholder Mapping Process” for instructions on conducting a stakeholder prioritization exercise.

IV. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (2-4 pages)

This section should include your specific outreach and engagement strategies that you plan to employ for each of your three groups of stakeholders (high, medium and low), as well as your implementation plan. A table that includes the activity/action, a description of the activity/action, key questions and information that that activity/action will address, and which stakeholder groups will be targeted (H, M and/or L priority) is recommended.

V. KEY MESSAGES (1-2 pages)

This section should include key messages that have been agreed on by the core project team. Be prepared to have key messages prepared for all levels of the organization personnel. Your media spokesperson would have slightly different messages than the organization leader.

Guidance on key messages:

- Key messages should be concise, accurate, understandable, and compelling.
- All technical terms should be defined and all acronyms spelled out.
- Key messages should be wrapped into all outreach and engagement activities described in Section IV.

TIPS: Refer to Resource Guide Tab 3 “Message Box” to develop your key messages.

VI. RECOMMENDED TIMELINE (1 page)

This section should include a timeline of the outreach and engagement activities described in Section IV.

- Your timeline should be detailed and thoughtful about how outreach will be conducted.
- Be aware of major events that could occur during your outreach activities that may either help extend the reach of your message or conflict with your efforts.
- If you are targeting a specific community with your outreach, be aware of community activities such as neighborhood association meetings, social gathering events, etc. and utilize those events for your outreach. Go where they are already gathering!

VII. OVERVIEW OF OUTREACH METHODS (1-2 page)

This section should include a detailed overview of outreach methods and tools that will be used to carry out outreach. These may include:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Websites
- Listserv
- Social media tools
- Videos
- Workshops
- Open-houses or town-hall meetings
- Advisory Groups or other stakeholder workgroups
- Mailers and fliers
- Radio and TV

TIPS: Be creative in your thinking about the tools you should use. Don't get stuck in the rut of doing the same old thing. Be mindful of your audience and how they communicate including demographics of your audience, the kind of message you are conveying, and the level of engagement you are trying to achieve.

VIII. LIST OF ISSUES, OBSTACLES AND CONCERNS (1-2 pages)

This section should contain a comprehensive list of issues, obstacles and concerns that the project team thinks are likely to result from the project/program. This provides an opportunity for project team members to problem solve in advance of issues arising, and to develop key messages and outreach strategies that will address them. The following are examples of the types of issues that may arise prior to or during a spill event:

- One or more stakeholder group is confrontational and hard to engage
- Not all of our target audience have email or use the web
- History of interaction with your organization regarding other issues

TIPS: Learn from past experience. Find lessons-learned from other agencies or organizations with experience in successful stakeholder engagement. Also, learn from mistakes and keep adjusting your plan if you are not reaching your target audience.