Purpose

In preparing an information publication, a first step is to identify the purpose for which the information publication may be used in your agency.

Typical roles played by an information publication include:

• Informing the public of an issue
• Notifying the public about an upcoming event
• Soliciting feedback from the public
• Other purpose

Issues

What issue(s) will the Information Publication address? Is an information publication appropriate for this issue? Keep in mind that:

• Information publications contribute to reducing miscommunication and public mistrust of hidden agendas.
• Information publications can improve how residents view their role in the process, thereby increasing their level of participation.
• While the tool is one of the best means of sharing information, it provides limited opportunities for public feedback.
• Costs can be significant if a publisher is contracted to produce the publication.
Select a Target Audience

In selecting the audience, consider the following groups:

- All members of the public
- Residents in a specific geographic area affected by a particular proposal
- Special interest groups affected by a particular proposal
- Groups or communities traditionally underserved by planning

Consider preparing a list of communities or organizations to be provided with the information publication:

Prepare the publication’s content

An information publication typically includes the following content:

- Description of background issue
- Information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc.
- Language used is sensitive to and inclusive of women and marginalized communities
- Language is clear
- Rationale for involving the public in the consultation process

• Description of the participatory process
• Identification of planned events, dates and times
• Status report on the progress of a participatory process
• Up-date on important decisions and milestones in the process
• Contact information for the municipality.

Select a Format
The particular format will depend on the purpose, issue, audience and content, and will also be defined by time and budget constraints:

• Community or city newspaper article or insert
• Municipal / Department Newsletter
• Brochure
• Press release or bulletin
• Electronic format
• Other format:

Consider encouraging public feedback as part of the publication through one of several methods:

• Insert comment sheets or a survey that readers can tear out of the publication
• Dedicated phone lines advertised in the publication
• Social media links or website for additional engagement

Timing
Select a date for disseminating the publication

In selecting a date, consider the following:

• The release date is best if it coincides with key events occurring in the process.
• Where a publication is also being used to advertise a consultative event, it should allow for sufficient time to prepare the public.
• Ensure that feedback also goes to the language-specific groups if they were consulted.
• Allow for more time if planning translation into other languages.

Possible dates and times:
Establish the overall time frame

In preparing a work plan, keep in mind the following steps. Consider providing an estimate of days or weeks next to each step:

- Initial preparatory work
- Preparing written material
- Publishing time
- Translation time
- Distribution
- Follow-up activities

Time frame and deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Initial preparatory work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Preparing written material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Publishing time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td>Translation time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 15</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 20</td>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Follow-up Activities

Consider several options where a publication has provided opportunities for feedback:

- Ensure completed questionnaires are received from the public
- Record the publics’ comments and suggestions
- Identify the comments on the basis of demographics, i.e. by the specific comments made by residents of different income levels or communities
- Include the comments of the different populations in the next information publication

Prepare a Budget

Consider the following costs:

- Publication costs for a newsletter
- Advertisements in the media if in-kind contributions cannot be secured
- Translation costs
- Mailings to selected participants
- Return postage for attached response cards or questionnaires
- Contracting a publishing house
- Additional part-time or full-time staff

List expected costs:

Identify Funding

Consider a range of mechanisms for funding these costs:

• Departmental funding
• Municipal funding outside department
• In-kind contributions (volunteer time, facility space)
• Sponsorship/cash donations
• Funding from senior levels of government
• International sources of funding
• Other: ___________________________