

Email Announcements

Objective

The objective of this activity is to enhance the effectiveness of communication through the use of email lists. The grantee's consultation process can benefit from using an email listserv to conveniently distribute information to partner organizations. Citizen participation can also benefit if consultation partners or managers of community-based listservs are willing to forward Consolidated Plan information to their listserv subscribers.

Summary

Many public agencies and stakeholders maintain a listserv that can be adapted to send out Consolidated Plan announcements or requests for citizen input and the times and locations of public hearings. Convenient and effective, email notifications are received immediately and can be widely distributed to most residents, even those with lower-incomes. Emails – paperless, environmentally friendly, and very low-cost for the partner – can also be also applicable for communicating updates to consultation partners.

Additionally, the grantee could publish information prominently on its website, as well as on other public notices and through media outlets, on how to sign up for the listserv and receive future email announcements. The announcement might list an email address, website link, or other method whereby interested parties can submit their comments.

Application to the Consolidated Plan

Employing email communication as part of a strategy of innovative public notice can help grantees to both successfully publicize opportunities for public participation and generate interest in the Consolidated Plan process by reaching residents who may not otherwise receive notice of hearings and meetings.

Target Audience/Usage

The target audience for this activity is both stakeholder organizations and residents with access to email who are comfortable and capable of corresponding electronically. Citizens of particular interest to grantees may include both young people, who are frequent users of mobile email, and also elderly persons or persons with limited mobility, who may be more difficult to reach through other forms of public outreach.

Logistics and Materials Needed

- Email content may need to be tailored to the groups receiving the information, or to address the requirements of partnering organizations.
- Grantees and partner organizations must be careful to respect the anonymity of recipients by using the bcc: field to avoid disclosing recipients' email addresses.
- Grantees and partner organizations must be mindful of the technical limitations of embedding HTML images, formatting, or other complex content in email communications.

Examples of Using Email Announcements

- The [City of Boston](#), MA maintains a Consolidated Plan email list of interested citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties to provide notice of the issuance of Consolidated/Annual Action Plans, subsequent public comment periods, and any public hearings related to the development of these plans.
- The [Delaware State Housing Authority \(DSHA\)](#) utilizes its mass email list to notify citizens of public meetings for the Consolidated Plan. Additionally, DSHA uses this mailing list to send personal invitation emails for these meetings to public officials and other interested parties. Public comment period notification is also provided via email and interested parties can respond by emailing their comments.
- Iowa City, IA's [Citizen Participation Plan](#) includes a section on developing comprehensive electronic mailing lists of interested parties, adjacent local governments, religious organizations and public and private agencies that provide affordable housing and use these email lists to send summary information, public hearing, or comment period notices.