

Alternative Methods of Public Notice

Objective

The objective of this activity is to establish strategies to widely distribute public notices into the hands of all citizens. This includes leveraging service providers and other partner organizations to reach persons who are most likely to have concerns about Consolidated Planning priorities, strategies, and projects.

Summary

This activity expands on the basic public notice requirement of the Consolidated Plan regulations by suggesting creative coordination with local partners to reach a broader audience. For example, coordinating with public and private entities to access their mailing lists, or partnering with institutions and advocacy organizations to help publicize citizen participation opportunities and generate interest.

Reaching out to these local organizations before public hearings can help publicize citizen participation opportunities and create interest. In general, partnering with more than one type of organization or group will allow a grantee to reach a wider audience. Potential partners can include:

- Local government or membership based organizations through regular mailings or other membership communication.
- Utility companies or regulatory agencies through distribution with utility bills.
- Large employers through email listserv or other communications with their employees.

Alternative methods of public notice may be especially beneficial to States, who often must reach geographically dispersed groups that have very different issue concerns. Alternative distribution of public notice can be used to target different constituencies with messages tailored to their particular economic needs such as: urban / rural issues, Colonias communities, seasonal and migrant worker communities, and unique Native American governance issues.

Additionally, institutional partners such as universities and non-profit groups may be willing to assist with preliminary activities to create interest prior to formal hearings. Activities could include conducting surveys or holding informal, single-issue meetings to generate interest in issues that will be discussed at official Consolidated Plan hearings.

Application to the Consolidated Plan

Employing a wide range of innovative public notice methods can help grantees successfully involve all of their target populations and demographics in Consolidated Plan outreach and citizen participation.

Target Audience/Usage

This activity targets residents who may not receive or respond to more traditional public notice and outreach methods.

Logistics and Materials Needed

- Written notice may need to be tailored to the groups receiving the information, or to address the requirements of partnering organizations.
- Written notices may also include surveys that seek to engage the public and generate interest in the Consolidated Plan process. If included, the surveys should contain instructions on how to return responses. Including return postage with survey forms can increase response rates. Relying on an employer, advocacy group, or other stakeholder with a vested interest in an issue or project to promote citizen participation activities may give the appearance of bias. Including a wide variety of partner organizations should offset the use of such groups for promotion.

Examples of the Use of Alternative Methods of Public Notice

- The [City of Corona](#), CA includes notification of public hearings and meetings in its city electronic newsletter titled “The Inner Circle.” In addition to publishing notices in traditional methods via the newspaper and on its website, the city of Corona is able to notify recipients of the newsletter, which includes stakeholders and city residents.