Web-based Surveys

Objective

The objective of this activity is to increase the opportunities for residents to comment on the Consolidated Planning process and for grantees to collect feedback on specific questions, components, or other points of interest related to the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan.

Summary

Web-based surveys are an effective means to complement paper-based or other traditional methods of data collection. Using web-based surveys allows grantees to reach a greater proportion of the population because they are easily distributed and may more successfully reach persons who rely exclusively on electronic media for news and information. Disseminating surveys electronically (e.g., social media, websites, email lists, etc.,) may also increase the response rate by eliminating the need to mail or deliver the survey response.

Application to Consolidated Plan

Surveys enable grantees to request feedback from residents and stakeholders to inform various parts of the Consolidated Planning process, including the needs assessment, market analysis, and programmatic components such as priority selection and geographic targeting. Surveys can be used at any point during the Consolidated Planning process as a way to inform the Plan, collect feedback on certain components, or analyze current or past activities.

When targeting larger audiences, web-based surveys should be conducted in concert with paper-based surveys to ensure that those without access to or familiarity with the internet have an equal opportunity to provide feedback.

Target Audience/Usage

Grantees can focus on any number of target audiences in the survey process. The survey could focus on:
- Geographic areas (e.g. leveraging neighborhood listservs)
- Certain populations (by leveraging stakeholder email lists—e.g. education and parks and recreation organizations for feedback on after school programs)
- Recipients of funding (consultation partners and residents or beneficiaries of CPD programs)
- Jurisdiction-wide (broader feedback)

Grantees should be aware that not all residents may have access to a computer or be comfortable completing a web-based survey, and should continue to offer paper-based surveys concurrently. Additionally, guidance on completing the survey could be provided at locations with publically accessible computers, such as a public library. Grantees might elect to host a "survey open-house" at which citizens can receive help filling out surveys.

Logistics and Materials Needed

Many web-based survey tools are available online for free or a small cost, including:
- SurveyMonkey
- Google Forms
- Zoomerang

- [SurveyGizmo](#)
- [PollDaddy](#)

The timeline for publishing and collecting feedback from a web-based survey is similar to that of a paper-based survey and should include ample time for participants to respond. The timeline depends on the target audience and breadth of the survey, but at minimum should allow 2-3 weeks response time. Possible benefits of offering web-based surveys include:

- Web-based surveys are low cost and many of the providers of these services offer pre-built question formats that reduce the amount of staff time necessary to implement the survey.
- Internet users increasingly rely on web-based sources of news and information exclusively, and therefore web-based surveys may represent an important means of reaching a new audience, particularly younger generations, who may be less likely to respond to traditional survey methods.
- Web-based survey services offer a variety of pre-built survey questions that help minimize bias and decrease the time required to design effective survey protocol.
- Web-based survey services offer a variety of analytic tools for agencies and businesses for robust demographic and other data collection on who is receiving and providing input.
- Web-based surveys may allow grantees to more easily sort and filter comments for incorporation into the planning process.

Examples of Web-based Surveys
- The City of [Fairfield, California](#) developed a paper- and electronic-based survey that it distributed via Facebook and email, and published on its website. The survey received responses from 139 residents.
- The City of [Santa Fe, New Mexico](#) published paper- and electronic-based surveys in both English and Spanish for community feedback.
- The city of Pharr, TX conducted a [Community Needs Survey](#) using SurveyMonkey in both Spanish and English to help determine the needs of Pharr residents as part of their Consolidated Planning process.