

Part 3: Creating a Communications Plan

In KLCC II we learned how a strong communications plan could be instrumental in achieving group goals. A well-constructed communications plan will help your organization target diverse audiences and produce clear, memorable, and effective messages – and these messages, in turn, will help you advance your aims for community change.

Langhum Mitchell Communications assisted KLCC II communities with their communications plans and strategies. The sites used these tips in planning their communications efforts. These same tips will guide your group in developing your own strategic communications plan.

- 1. Determine goal(s).** Your group will likely have multiple communication goals. These goals may include increasing awareness of your group or organization, sending messages to the community, or recruiting more people to your cause.
- 2. Identify target audiences.** Each goal should have at least one target audience; messaging may need to vary accordingly. It's important to identify the target audience or audiences and envision their point of view and current level of awareness. Knowing your audience will help your group create the right message and the right method for delivering it.
- 3. Develop key messages.** Key messages are the concepts from communications plan that you want your audience(s) to remember. These messages will be woven through all your group's communications materials and will allow its members to create greater awareness of the group's community-change work.
- 4. Determine strategies.** Choose the best strategies to reach target audiences and achieve your group's goals. Knowing your strategy will help your group decide on the tools needed.
- 5. Identify tools.** Decide what tools will be used to accomplish stated goals. These tools can range from billboards to bumper stickers. Brainstorm with your group's members about how they have been most affected by messaging. Your group can have several tools, depending on the audience(s) it wants to reach.
- 6. Determine activities.** Activities are the actual steps your group will implement.
- 7. Establish a timetable.** Once you've identified objectives, goals, audience(s), and tools, create a timeline outlining a schedule. Many of these activities can and should overlap.
- 8. Determine evaluation criteria.** Your group should evaluate each activity to determine its effectiveness. There are many ways to evaluate a communication plan's success. See the **Reflect and Improve** tool kit in the "Activities, Tool Kits & Reports" section of our website, www.theinnovationcenter.org, for ideas on different methods of evaluation.