



## **Communication Strategy Checklist**

Directions: Use the following list of questions to guide the design of your communication strategy. These questions should be used during the initial planning of the strategy and should be reviewed periodically to ensure that your program's communications continue to meet the needs of your stakeholders.

### **Questions to Ask About the Communication Strategy**

- How will we assess the effectiveness of our communication strategy?
- Have we identified all of our audiences?
- Have we targeted all messages appropriately to each audience?
- Have we identified relationships between audiences that may affect how we communicate with them (e.g., calling on one group to influence another)?
- Do we maintain an ongoing record of communications with each audience?
- Do we regularly review our communication strategy to ensure it is still meeting the needs of our audiences?
- Have we given one person or group ultimate responsibility for communications?

### **Questions to Ask About Each Audience**

- What kinds of information does this group want or need to know about the program?
- How does this group like to receive its information?
- What is this group's association with the program?
- How involved has this group been in the past?
- Does this group have a leader or group of leaders that influences the group's opinions?
- What is the group's familiarity/comfort level with the program?
- What is the level of trust between this group and the program?
- What is the level of support provided by this group to the program?
- From whom is this group most comfortable receiving messages?

### **Questions to Ask About the Community as a Whole**

- What percentage of the community has our program-age youth in high schools?
- What percentage of the community has our program-age youth out of high school?
- What are the primary languages used in the community?

- What are the primary employers in the community?
- What are the largest and/or most active faith communities, and civic organizations, etc., in the community?
- What are the major sources of news/information in the community?

### **Questions to Ask About Each Outgoing Message**

- What do we hope to achieve with this message?
- How will the target group feel upon receiving this message?
- What is the best format for this particular message?
- What language(s) should be used for this message given its audience?
- Does this message have a “hook” that will make the audience more likely to pay attention to it?
- Is this message concise?
- Does this message contain three or fewer main ideas?
- Is this message presented in an appealing, easily understood format?
- Does this message create a visual image that will leave a lasting impression?
- (For written communications) What reading level is required for this message?

(Some experts suggest that messages sent to parents should be at the fourth- to sixth-grade reading level.)

### **Questions to Ask About Each Feedback Opportunity**

- Have we requested feedback using different formats that respond to the needs/preferences of each group?
- Have we requested feedback in a variety of locations and at a variety of times to take into account the varying needs/preferences of each group?
- Have we demonstrated that we listen carefully and respectfully to all audiences? How?
- Have we used the input of our audiences? How?
- Have we demonstrated to our audiences that their input influenced program decisions? How?