

9. Prepare the Report and Disseminate the Results

Writing and disseminating survey results allow an agency to share findings with others in a meaningful way. Sharing the results can help increase program effectiveness, advocate for additional funding, and publicize programs.

The first step in writing the report of survey results is to consider the audience. Who would be interested in the results? Results can be shared with program staff, board members, community members, agency or funding administrators, and policy and decision makers.

Writing the Report

The purpose of the report is to summarize and interpret the findings, provide conclusions, and make recommendations for program changes and enhancements as needed.

Make reports informative and easy to understand. Keep the language simple and avoid using technical language or jargon. Presenting findings in different ways through visual displays, quotes, and narrative comments will make the report interesting to read. Visual displays such as graphs and tables can highlight information in a concise and interesting manner. Choose the type of graph (e.g., bar, pie, line) that best conveys the results.

(See Appendix B for Ohio Department of Aging, Analysis of Surveys: Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.)

To help stakeholders locate key information quickly, the report should contain several components. A sample report outline that describes the purpose of each section is on the next page.



Sample Report Outline

I. Executive Summary—Provide a short summary of the report.

II. Background—Include information about the programs and services being studied and the local agency or agencies involved.

III. Purpose—Explain the purpose of the survey and the report.

IV. Methodology—Describe the process of sampling, data collection and data analysis. Include the response rate, etc.

V. Findings—Detail the findings from the survey(s) conducted. Include charts and graphs to highlight key points.

VI. Conclusions—Summarize the findings and draw conclusions.

VII. Recommendations—List recommendations for program improvement, as appropriate.

Creating Other Documents

There is more than one way to share survey findings. Agencies can create documents that present survey findings for diverse stakeholders. For example, funding authorities may prefer a report that details the survey process and results, while people receiving services may favor an informal overview of the key findings. Below are other types of documents to consider when disseminating survey results.

- 1. Newsletters.** Short, non-technical articles that summarize the key findings and the “bottom line” message from the survey.

(See Appendix B for North Carolina’s Pass it On Newsletter.)

- 2. Handouts and Fact Sheets.** A one-page handout or fact sheet that conveys key information gleaned from the survey is another effective method to share findings. Brief handouts allow an agency to present findings in a concise and easy to understand manner. For example, a transportation fact sheet from POMP survey data introduces information funded by the OAA to a human services transportation council. The same handout was used at a public listening session discussing transportation issues for older adults.

(See Appendix B for the Report to NCDOT Public Transportation Division’s Human Services Transportation Council.)

- 3. Annual Reports.** Many AAAs and service providers produce an annual report for current and potential funders. Annual reports typically include data on the agency’s outputs, such as number of meals delivered or number of older adults receiving in-home aide services.

(See Appendix B for the Amber River Area Agency on Aging Annual Report.)

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- 4. Service Provider In-House Memos.** If an agency's survey includes a large enough sample from specific subpopulations, it will allow comparisons among subpopulations (e.g. counties, providers). The agency will want to use these for discussing quality issues.

(See Appendix B for a sample Memo to In-Home Aide Providers – this is an example of a memo from an AAA director to county agencies within her region. The director uses findings from the survey to raise questions prior to a meeting with providers to discuss quality issues. Notice that the findings are used as a launching point for discussion.)

Disseminating the Findings

Consider the target audience when disseminating findings and choose a mix of dissemination methods to reach different audiences. The suggestions below are by no means exhaustive. Agency staff may have other ideas for sharing the survey findings.

- 1. Presentations.** Use presentations to share findings at office meetings, agency or regional sessions, public gatherings, or at professional association meetings. PowerPoint slides are an effective tool to present findings. PowerPoint presentations are most effective when they highlight key points of the survey findings. However, observe the adage “less is more.” If too much information is placed in the presentation, the audience may be focused on reading the slides rather than listening to the speaker.
- 2. Handouts or fact sheets.** These can be used to supplement a PowerPoint presentation or can be used independently. One benefit of handouts is that users can easily reference the information. The type of presentation delivered and the resources incorporated depend on the audience.
- 3. Web Posting.** Post reports, newsletters, or PowerPoint slides on the agency’s website. If posting documents on the Internet, ensure that documents meet the agency’s information technology (IT) requirements (e.g. Section 508-compliance). Also, consider posting documents in several electronic formats (PDF, Word, etc.) to ensure accessibility for all those interested in the agency’s findings. Notify stakeholders that survey findings are available on the agency’s website.
- 4. Mail/Email.** Mail or email are direct methods of data distribution. If mailing the report or other documents to stakeholders, make sure that funds are budgeted for supplies and mailing costs. If emailing, ensure accurate contact information (e.g., addresses, email addresses) for all those on the agency’s distribution list.

