



## **Webinar Transcript**

### **Messaging Matters Part 1: How to Message and Communicate Your Program's Successes to Your Most Important Audiences**

Operator: Welcome, and thank you for standing by. All participants will be able to listen-only until the question-and-answer portion of today's conference. To ask a question, please press Star-1. Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, please disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Ms. Tammy Bartasavich. You may begin.

Tammy Bartasavich: Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to welcome you to today's Pregnancy Assistance Fund Webinar, *Messaging Matters: How to Message and Communicate Your Program's Successes to Your Most Important Audiences*. And this is Part 1.

Part 2, we will be offering on April 20th, just so that you can make a note of that. The focus of today's webinar will be crafting messages for your program and communicating program outcomes and research findings to key audiences.

On behalf of Child Trends and all the presenters, we would like to thank the Office of Adolescent Health for the opportunity to share this vital information about communicating your programs successes to your most important audiences.

And as you see on this slide, there's a disclaimer that the webinar was developed by Child Trends under contract, and the views expressed and written, and the training materials, publications of presentation speakers or moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services.

At this time, I would like to turn it over to Brandon Stratford, Senior Research Scientist in the Youth Development program area at Child Trends.

Brandon Stratford: All right. Thanks, Tammy. So, before I get started, I do see that some folks asked something about the audio, and I believe you should be able to hear the audio through your computer, if you choose that option when you're logging in.

It's a little hard to hear people if they're talking through their computers, so that's why we generally recommend the phone, but I think that you should be able to hear the audio — either through your computer, if that's the option you've selected, or through your phone. If you're having trouble, feel free to say something on the chat or in the Q&A, and somebody will try and help you out.

So, as I said, I'm very happy to be joining you all today to lead this webinar. We've got some great presenters. And before we get started, I'm going to go through a couple of other logistics, in addition, to just - how you can hear what's going on.

There are a couple other ways that you can interact with us and with one another while you're on this webinar. So, on this screen, you'll see a couple of those different options. So, up at the top of your screen, you should find that little blue bubble that is circled in a red circle on this slide, but up at the top, it's in the top right corner of your window for this Webinar and it says, "Chat."

If you click on that, you should see a little box show up; that is the chat box. Some of you have already started using it. If you want to chat just to one of the participants, one of the panelists, you can select "Panelist" or "Host."

If you want to chat something that you want everybody to see — and we will be asking you to do that a couple of times — we'll ask some questions and we'd like to see your responses, and it would be great for everyone to see them — so if you're going to do that, then when you're putting in your chat, you should just go ahead and select "All Attendees." And that will allow everybody to see your response.

Alternately, there is the Q&A, which is on the far right, at the top of your screen, and it has a little question mark in it. And that is where you can put questions that you want to ask just of the presenters.

And I know some people get worried that they might forget the question they wanted to ask. So, you can feel free to just type that into the Q&A box, and then, we'll be going through those questions when we get to our Q&A sessions, so you don't have to remember it. You can always jot it down, but if you'd like to just put it in so it's in the queue, feel free to do that as well.

Finally, we're going to be showing a brief video clip towards the beginning of the webinar, and that sound will only come out of your computer, so if you've called in, I think the sound should also come out of your computer.

But just to know that that is where the sound is going to come out for the video, so you'll need to make sure your volume is on for your computer in order to hear the video. And we'll give you a quick reminder about that when we get to the video.

All right. So, we'll go ahead and kind of go over the objectives for today. So, as you can see here — hopefully you saw in the Grantee Digest —we're excited to see that we're going to be talking about communicating your program's story and successes.

So, in particular, we expect that you all will be able to describe the importance of messaging and how it fits into a strategic communications effort.

You'll be able to develop a messaging framework to use in the strategic outreach to key audiences.

And you'll be able to develop a communications plan to promote your program's success, and if you've done any evaluations, hopefully you'll also get some tips on how to use this process to share your evaluation findings.

And I will say, a lot of you probably already do have some strategic messages. I've talked to some of you, and you, you know, you have your elevator speech, or the kind of message that you gave to folks when you were first rolling out your program, and so that is awesome.

Also, we're going to be talking about, now that you've got additional information about your program, because it's been running and you've had successes, how are you going to integrate that information into your strategic messaging as well?

Finally, we are going to be asking for volunteers, so please pay attention because it's going to be very, kind of, skills-based and practical, and we're going to ask for a couple of you to volunteer for the next webinar to actually share with your fellow grantees your experience.

We'll be able to provide some additional technical assistance to you in that process. So, between now and the next webinar, which is Thursday, April 20, anybody who volunteers will have the opportunity to get some additional feedback from our presenters, and we'll also have people available who can contact you and kind of help walk you through this process a little bit more.

I will also say, for those of you who don't volunteer, you can also contact your TA Manager or your PO and ask for technical assistance as well. So, you don't have to be volunteering for the next webinar in order to get technical assistance, but we do want to ask for a couple of volunteers.

So, make sure to take notes so you can ask questions and make sure that you feel comfortable with this, and like I said, we'll have opportunities to follow up and get additional help.

Now, I'm just going to move on to the meat of the presentation today, and for that, we've got two very knowledgeable and savvy professionals who are going to be sharing their expertise on messaging and communication. So, I will introduce them, and then I will turn it over to them.

So, first we have Alicia Torres. Dr. Torres is the Senior Director of Communications and Hispanic Outreach here at Child Trends. She has led numerous research projects on communications research, and is an author of the recent publication, *Reaching and Engaging with Hispanic Communities: A Research-Informed Communication Guide for Non-Profit Policymakers and Funders*.

So, if you're working with Latino or Hispanic populations, make sure to check that out. She directs communications for the Child Trends Hispanic Institute, which involves active communication of research results to media, policymakers and Latino communities' funders and stakeholders. She has a B.S. in Math and a Ph.D. in Communications, both from the University of Texas.

Next, we've got August Aldebot-Green. He also is here at Child Trends, and he is the Director of Communications. He's responsible for developing and executing communication plans to promote new research findings, policymakers, funders, program administrators, researchers, and the news media.

He's worked on a number of different issues, like teen pregnancy prevention, parental incarceration, LGBT families, child welfare, education – the list goes on and on. Fatherhood — I know a lot of you are interested in that.

So, August holds an MA in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from the University of California at Santa Barbara, and prior to joining Child Trends, August worked as a Communications Manager at TAF, an education-focused non-profit in Seattle and as a grant writer at Best Buddies, an international non-profit working on behalf of children with intellectual disabilities.

So, with that, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Dr. Torres to get us kicked off. And again, please use your Q&A box or your Chat to ask questions. We've got some very knowledgeable speakers for you. So, take it away, Alicia.

Alicia Torres: Wonderful. Thank you, Brandon. And hello to all of you, or good afternoon. I will be speaking today about strategic messaging. What you have on the screen in front of you is a depiction of the various stages, or steps, of a communication plan or communication initiative. You will be seeing this framework throughout our presentation a number of times.

I will be speaking mainly to the component of messaging in this plan – a key and central element of the framework. Our next speaker, August, will be walking you through the other elements, and he's going to show you how they all fit together.

For this section, then, we'll be focusing on learning how to develop messages that advance your objectives; messages that speak to the target audience in a way that is relevant and resonates among with them; and, messages that are delivered through communication channels that your audience uses and trusts. But because of its central role in the entire framework, we really felt that messaging warrants its own consideration.

So, strategic messaging is critical as we strive to effectively communicate with our audience through all of the various channels that we have available to us. Spending the time to develop strategic messages about your OAH-funded program will improve your effectiveness as you work to share your program's successes with a variety of audiences.

The communication plan you develop, with your strategic messaging as its foundation, will serve as your roadmap as you spread the word. So, why is messaging important?

Messaging frames an issue so that you can communicate your perspective to your audiences in a way that really makes sense to them. Messaging can also inform an audience.

You will likely have multiple audiences, as I'm sure you already know, and you'll want to reach them as you work to make sure that your program continues. For example, you may need to tailor the same message for different audiences in order for your messages to be most effective.

Messaging also can influence public opinion. Teen pregnancy and childbearing can be hot-button topics in some communities. Developing a strategic message about your program can help frame the lens through which these issues, then, are understood, discussed, and ultimately acted on.

Messaging can also help shape decisions. It's likely that important decisions made at the local or at the state level or at the national level will have some effect on your program or on the youth that you're serving. Strategic messaging, then, can be useful as you work to accurately inform that process.

Strategic messaging can also help build support. Your strategic message can help garner support for your local community and from your local community and partners, for example, as well as among potential funders.

And finally, strategic messaging can prompt action. It can increase the chances your audience will be motivated to take action in support of your program or to participate in your program, triggering them, for example, to

make referrals or make a call to inform decision-makers or even provide resources. It's important to note, as I'm sure that you know, though, that federal funds *cannot* be used for lobbying.

So, how do you know the message is effective? Messages are effective when they communicate something you, the sender, want to convey in a way that the receiver understands and responds to in a positive or intended fashion.

So, before going into details about how to develop effective messaging, we wanted to show you an example of effective messaging and delivery even while discussing controversial topics like stem cell research.

This video clip is from the Colbert Report, and it features Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the National Institutes of Health. As we watch this video, think about how it provides a good example of how to tailor your message to your audience, and how to stay on message. Remember to mute your phones and to have the volume of your computer turned on.

Brandon Stratford: And you'll need to go ahead and click on the tab. I think it says, "Interview Clip."

[Colbert Report interview plays.]

Alicia Torres: So, as you can see here, there was — when he walked into that interview, he knew what he wanted to say. And try as he might, he was not able to — Colbert was not able to deviate him from his main message.

And he knew what his message was about, what NIH is, and he knew what his message was about stem cell research, and he was able to deliver it in a way

that fit with the audience. And he rolled with the punches, but always stayed on message. So, we think that that's a really great example. So, next slide.

So, now, let's start taking a look at how you can develop your key messages. There are five key questions that can guide you as you start to develop them for any given audience. It starts by clearly understanding what are you trying to achieve with your communications effort.

And the first question is, to whom and why do you want to communicate your work? So, for example, it may be that you want to communicate with the general public because you want them to understand that your program is important for this community. This way, you would be able to rally support for your program, if needed or you're having trouble sustaining it. But it's important to ask that question.

Secondly, how is my program relevant to the audience? We think that most people in the community, for example, want children to be safe and healthy. And they want productive adults who are able to contribute to the economy and to society. So, how can you leverage this?

Look at your own goals. Look at your program goals, for example. Supporting expectant and parenting teens can help children to grow up safe and healthy and can help teen parents stay in school so they can be better prepared for the workforce.

The third question is, what is the specific intended outcome? What do you want to come out of that message? So, an example is that, you know, despite the negative perceptions that many people have of teen parents, you may want the public to connect your program with the positive outcomes for the

community. Outcomes that they value, so they will be willing to advocate for your program, for example.

Fourth question is what information does your audience need in order to achieve your intended outcome? Well, they may need to understand that your program is effective and that it targets the kinds of outcomes that align with their values of healthy children and productive citizens.

And the fifth question is, what are the audience's preferred ways of accessing this kind of information? And this is a really important one, because you can have the best messages out there that align well with the audience, but if you don't deliver it to them through channels that they trust, or through spokespersons that they trust, they may never receive it.

So, an example of that is, you know, to really think about where does your audience prefer – what are their preferred media outlets? Are they active on social media? And who are the opinion leaders in any given community?

Thinking through all of these questions begins to arm you with the information that you need to develop effective messages.

So, let's talk a little bit about communications planning. Here you are at the bottom left here. You have a message now that you want to deliver to your target audience over there on the right-hand side bottom – on the bottom right-hand side.

You sometimes could deliver that message directly to that target audience because you're participating in webinars, or because you're giving a talk in the community, but frequently, you do have to go through a transmission medium.

That transmission medium may be a media outlet, it could be social media networks, it could be opinion leaders in your community. But you sometimes are going to want for that message to go on to that transmission medium so that they will carry it to your target audience.

But sometimes, as those dotted lines now imply, you send a message out, and it never makes it on to your target audience, or it never quite makes it onto the transmission medium. Or even if it does make it onto the transmission medium, when it gets sent to your target audience, your target audience does not interpret it the way you intended it to be.

So, what we know is that messages need to align with the audience. And in order to be able to do that — next slide — in order for that to be able to happen, you really need to understand your target audience when you develop — before you start developing your message.

And the target audience – it may very well be the transmission medium. You have to understand, because in order to get it onto that transmission medium, there's certain rules of engagement. So, for example, if you're going to be using Twitter, you know that you can only have a limited number of characters in your message. Those are kind of the rules of engagement of Twitter.

But there's also rules of engagement for trying to get something on TV, or trying to get something into the community newspaper. You know, there's certain ways that you can really leverage how you design that message in order to increase the probabilities that that transmission medium will, in fact, pick it up and deliver it to the target audiences in a way that's effective.

So, bottom line, for this whole communication process to work, you need to do some research on your audience. So, it begins with knowing who your audience is.

It could be funders, partner organizations, community leaders, decision-makers, program participants, or the media. And the media is very large. That's a very – includes a whole lot of different audiences, because you may be looking at media that is just community based, like community newspapers; or you may be wanting to look at media that targets specific specialized groups, such as educators.

But the media is a way of reaching the general public and groups within the general public. So, there are many ways of finding out about your audiences. And one of them is existing research.

We recognize that teen pregnancy and teen parenting can be controversial topics in some communities. So, it's important to find out more about how your audience sees these issues.

And while we don't have national opinion data on support for teen parenting programs, per se, data from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy indicate that about 85 percent of the public think that teen pregnancy is a serious problem. But only about 66 percent believe there should be more efforts in their community to prevent teen pregnancy.

So, it's clear that there's a disconnect between the value that people place on the issue — how they perceive it — and their support for programs to address the issue. This kind of information — if you look at research, and you find this kind of information, it presents a great opportunity for strategic messaging

in order to be able to help align the audience's value for the issue and their support for the issue.

So, like that, there's many other research sources that you would be able to tap into to learn more about your audiences. But there's also other ways. How else can you gather information about your audiences in order to be prepared to develop effective messaging, and to help you answer those five questions we raised earlier?

So, on this slide, we've got some ideas. For example, surveys. A survey is an investigation into the opinions or experiences of a group of people. It consists of a series of questions. And there's pros and cons to all these different ways of gathering information.

Surveys are, you know, you could administer them yourself. They could be pretty quick. And you could administer them to a larger group of people. You could even do a short survey at a community meeting that you leave on people's chairs, for example.

At the same time, though, surveys will give you limited information, because a lot of the survey questions are going to be yes/no or, you know, closed-ended questions, and they don't give you a lot of context. They give you information but, you know, if you want more context, you also need to sometimes supplement surveys with interviews.

And interviews can be in depth; they provide you more in-depth information about the opinions of people. They're more time consuming, though, and they're harder to get a larger number of participants. And, as you know, when you're trying to gather information, the larger the sample, many times, provides you more accurate information.

Another way of gathering information is through focus groups. And focus groups, as you know, are a formal, facilitated, small-group discussion about a set of pre-defined questions or topics. And they provide in-depth information about opinions, people can react to one another's opinions and, you know, you're able to gather more context to this.

At the same time, they're a little bit more difficult to schedule, because you have to get about eight or nine participants, and you usually have to do more than one. They require a skilled facilitator, and they can take longer to analyze the data.

But all of these are ways that you can really work to gather more information about your audience and in order to inform your process. Next slide. Yes, thank you.

So, let me just share an example of some of the findings that we had when we were in the process of developing that guide that Brandon mentioned earlier. We were developing a guide for service providers in helping them effectively — you know, effectively reach and engage Latino families for their programs.

And so, obviously, we wanted to hear from the parents. And we wanted to hear from the service providers. So, we conducted a number of focus groups with parents, and we also did interviews — in-depth interviews — with the service providers. And we also did a literature scan to look at what research was already out there about how Latinos like to receive information and access information.

So, some of the findings, then, that we found were that, in fact, parents preferred to be spoken to and reached out to in their preferred language. And

that may be Spanish in some places; it may be English in others. And it may be a mix in other places. So, you do have to do your homework and find out.

Parents preferred clear — that the messages would be clear and to the point, and they wanted it to be relevant to the information that they were seeking. So, they also didn't want to be receiving text messages when they hadn't ask for them.

And so, there's a lot of information there, but we really gathered that information in a way to be able to inform these guidelines in that guide that's available on our web site.

Some of the research we looked into suggests that messages that align with the values and the beliefs of the audiences and its culture – those are the ones that tend to be the most effective. And similarly, messages that do not align well with an audience's beliefs and culture, those were found to be less effective.

So, that's just one example, but it's an example that can provide and get translated into the kinds of things that you may be looking to do in terms of your messaging.

So, here are some general tips in approaching your audience. First, remember that your audience may not have accurate information or perceptions about teen parents. This is an opportunity. With all the data that you have collected, as well as other research you might be aware of, you have an opportunity to better educate folks about your program and the youth that you serve. The chances are that you'll be correcting some misperceptions.

Secondly, frame your issue in a way that your audience cares about. That might be how your program improves graduation rates, for example, or child health, or reduces child welfare cases.

And third, make sure you use a messenger who your audience trusts. Consider who are the people that your audience trusts the most? For some, it may be someone with a strong science background or a medical doctor. For others, it might be a program participant – a peer. Peer-to-peer communication is very powerful. Also, keep in mind that you need to look at those media outlets that your audience trusts.

So, as Brandon mentioned, we're going to be asking for a couple of you to volunteer to develop a messaging document. And this is the one-pager here that we will walk through with you in just a minute. But before doing that, I just wanted to recap what we've covered so far.

There are many audiences you may want or need to reach that are likely to be receptive to what you have to say. In order to reach them effectively, it is important to understand these audiences, so that you can make sure that your message will resonate with them, both in terms of its content and as well as how you are actually getting that message to them. Now, let's dig a little deeper into this kind of information your audience will want to know.

So, we'll be asking you to work on this one-pager. And, as you can see, there are four questions that — that would be the first step, is to answer those four questions.

On the top left, you want to address what is the problem that your program is trying to address. So, define the problem. And on the top right, is what are the

implications of that problem? Why should your audience care about that problem?

Then, on the bottom left, you're going to have what is the solution that you're offering through your program? And on the bottom right is then, what are the outcomes that you expect if your solution is applied?

So, every time you go through those — I mean, you'll be answering those four questions, and eventually then you will prepare a core message, a summary message, which is that blue part in the center. But let's focus now on the proof points that we want you to include under each of those questions that you answer.

What is a proof point? We want you to have three proof points for each of the statements that are responses to those four questions. A proof point is a fact that backs up a core message. It can be an example that supports the core message. It could be a research finding. Or it could be a testimonial from a participant or partner, for example.

So, remember, you'll be answering those questions. For each one, you'll have three proof points under them. And once you do that, you'll be ready to work on developing your core message. So, to build your core message, here is the formula that we are presenting to you. And you can see it with that yellow square bullet there.

It would be: For [whatever population you serve], your program [whatever the name of your program is] provides services [define your services there] to help them do what [what are your programs going to – what are the outcomes of your program].

This sentence should be 30 words or less, and it's very important you keep the language clear and concise. So, for example: For the OAH, the core message is, "The Pregnancy Assistance Fund is a grant program that funds states and tribal entities so they can provide a seamless network of support services to expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers and their families."

So, we're going to ask for the volunteers — and you may already, as Brandon says — if you've got your service running already, you already have messages on how you define your work. But we're going to ask you to walk through this and develop that one-pager.

So, here are some final tips on messaging. Know your audience and what you want to achieve with them. Use plain language. Keep things simple. Shorter is better. Know what is most important to communicate to which audience. Test it on people close to your program, and refine it as you get feedback so that you can improve your next round of communications.

In summary, effective messaging will help your program gain support by motivating key audiences to take action. Basically, it will help bridge the gap between the knowledge and expertise that you have about what works for expectant and parenting teens, and the audience's interests, their needs, their practices. And ultimately, with the outcome being increased participation and support for your program.

So, in closing, keep in mind that the information that you have about your program can ultimately help people see the value of your program and result in support and increased participation.

Make sure that people know what you're trying to do, why you're doing it, the impact that it has on the community, and don't forget to let people know

where your funding is coming from. This can help build support for the funding source and make sure that they will be around to support these efforts in the future. Thank you.

Brandon Stratford: All right. Thanks, Alicia. So, I am going to make an executive decision and say that if you have a question, please type it into the Q&A box, because I want to make sure that we can get through the rest of our content, and then we'll have an open Q&A session also at the end, where you can either type into the chat box, or the Q&A box, or you can ask your question on the phone as well.

But if you're afraid you're going to forget it, type it into the Q&A box and we'll make sure to cover it.

So, now, I am going to turn it over to August, who is going to talk more about developing a communication plan.

August Aldebot-Green: Thank you, Brandon. Next slide, please.

All right. As Brandon mentioned, I'm going to speak about the general process of creating a communications plan. If you want to reach your target audience, you need a communications plan. Making a communications plan is like programming the GPS for a long trip. Not having one is like forgetting to plan a menu for Thanksgiving dinner.

These are the components of a communications plan. Setting objectives, determining the target audience, creating messaging, building an outreach strategy, execution of that strategy, data collection, and feeding that data back into your planning. This should look familiar from earlier in the presentation.

Now we're going to take a few minutes to go through each component in a bit more detail.

We'll start by talking about the steps in this first blue box here. Setting objectives and deciding who your target audience will be. How do you set objectives? First, think about what it is, specifically, that you want to accomplish. Can it be measured or tracked?

Here are some examples of communications objectives: increase visitors to our web site by 20 percent over the next 12 months; increase program participant inquiries by 15 inquiries over the next six months; generate positive media coverage of our report findings in at least two key media outlets over the next two weeks; make contact with three new potential funders this month; or increase the number of small donors by 10 percent over 12 months.

Once you have objectives that are specific and measurable, identify who you want to reach with your message. Alicia touched on this briefly earlier when she talked about the importance of knowing your audience to develop effective messaging.

I have a list of examples of audiences here, but while I'm talking, it would be great if you could type some of the audiences you target in your work in the chat box. Maybe there's some audience your fellow grantees haven't thought to target.

The examples I have include current or potential funders, community leaders, decision-makers, or local media. If you're trying to recruit, you might also want to target potential participants or organizations to partner with in making

referrals or to partner with in other ways. I'm going to pause here and look at the chat box and see if you guys have entered any of your target audiences.

Which I see that you don't, but hopefully, you're all thinking about it in your heads right now, and maybe later you can share it with each other or with us. Next slide. Thanks.

How can you reach your target audience? Alicia spoke about this, in terms of developing your message, but I want to reiterate that identifying and understanding your target audience is critical. Direct contact is most effective. This could be contact in person, via email, or by phone.

There are many sources of information on how you can reach different categories of targets. One is formal research, such as research from Pew, Frameworks, and other organizations that study this topic.

Another great way to figure out how to reach your target audience, though — and this would depend on the type of audience you're trying to reach — is to ask members of that audience themselves. How you reach a teenager may be vastly different than how you would approach a decision-maker. If you want to reach teenage fathers, ask teenage fathers how to reach them.

Now that we've talked a little about objectives and determining the target audience, let's talk about the next two steps in communication planning: tailoring your message and developing an outreach strategy.

For messaging, I am just going to reiterate from Alicia's presentation. When you tailor your message for a given audience, you should be answering a few key questions.

First, to whom and why do you want to communicate your work? Second, how is this relevant to them? Third, what is the specific intended outcome? Fourth, what information does your audience need in order to achieve your intended outcome? And fifth, what are their preferred ways of accessing this kind of information?

Once you have your messaging in place, it's time to decide how you're going to get your messages out into the world. Timing is important. What strategies will you put into place before you launch your initiative or report? Which would you use as part of the launch itself? And how will you continue outreach once the immediate launch created has ended?

Next, you should select your messengers. Who are the most credible with the target audience? When your audience is youth, it may be youth, themselves, who should be doing some of the outreach. If you're working in a rural area, using local messengers may be more effective than bringing in outsiders.

Then consider what materials and other resources you'll need to do your outreach. Maybe a press release, a slide deck or a presentation, or informational flyers.

Finally, think about potential partners. Are there other groups that could support your effort? Local partners can be effective messengers, but they may require some guidance when it comes to sharing the information you want them to share. It's important that you be receptive to their input and open to adapting your plan or messaging for different audiences, based on that input.

The next step in the plan after building an outreach strategy is tactical execution. Tactical execution is the big phase when you develop the materials you'll need to do your outreach and when you actually do that outreach.

You'll want to include general timelines for getting everything done, and remember to refer back to the rest of your communication plan as you think about this stage.

Here are some of the tools you might have at your disposal for doing outreach: a Web site, e-newsletter, or a blog. Now these could be from your organization, but maybe you don't have a blog. Or maybe, you know, of someone whose blog or e-newsletter has a lot of the followers you would like to reach. Maybe you can reach out to them and see if they'd be willing to post something on your behalf.

Social media is another tool that might be effective, and different social media platforms might be more or less appropriate, depending on your audience, who your messenger is and what your message is. You'll want to target your message based on the platform you use, and be attuned to the nuances of using that platform.

On Twitter, for example, many of you likely know that you can target different audiences using hashtags. Media outreach is a tool that might be appropriate, depending on your objectives and audience.

Don't worry about getting your program into the New York Times. If your objective is to increase the number of participants you recruit, talk to neighborhood bloggers or reporters at the local paper. Find out who covers your issue by looking through the directory, but most importantly, by paying attention to what people have covered in the past.

If a reporter has covered teen pregnancy, she may be interested in covering it again, and you can mention when you reach out to her that you read her recent article and that will give it a personal touch.

Another tool available during the tactical execution phase is outreach to stakeholders. For example, you might send your materials to organizational or project partners and see if they will share them. Promotional tools could include advertising, direct mail, or other tools.

Finally, think about other opportunities to speak directly to your target audience. This might be in person or, depending on your message and audience, through some electronic means, such as a webinar. And so these are just some examples, and you guys might have some more things in your communication tool box that you can use.

The next and nearly final step in the communication plan is data collection. Here are some examples of data you might collect to ensure the success of your campaign.

One is web views. You can set your web site up for Google Analytics, and there are tutorials for this online or programmers who will do it for you, or there might be an easy way on the back end of your web site for you to track views already.

For emails, if you use something like MailChimp or Constant Contact to send your email, you can check opens or even clicks on a certain link in the email. You can even see who specifically has opened your email.

In social media, you can track many things for free using tracking provided on the social media platform itself. You can track the number of likes or shares of something, or a general audience engagement with a particular post.

Media coverage can be tracked using a paid service or just using Google Alerts, if you're expecting coverage that you might not find manually. If you're working with a specific reporter, though, it might be as easy as asking if they can send you a link to the coverage once it's posted, or by following their particular outlet to see when something has been published.

Qualitative feedback from key stakeholders can be priceless. That's feedback you can use to improve your program or outreach, but also, for you to use in things like grant reports or applications or recruitment materials. Of course, there may be lessons you learn during your outreach about the outreach, or even about your program, and you should record those and use them.

So, for the next few minutes, I'm going to walk you through the components of the communication plan that we developed for the 2015 release of the report about children whose parents have been incarcerated.

Now, this is just an example. If you're trying to increase participation in your program, or let community leaders or funders know who you are and what your successes have been, how you fill out a communication plan template will be different. But the components of the plan itself — in other words, the headings in the plan template — will largely be the same.

So, I think we're going to share the communication plan template with you guys via the web at some point, but we have slides with it here also. We have — and it's something that you can use to create your own communication plan.

Now, this isn't set in stone. You may not need or want to reach media to talk about a given initiative, for example. You might want to add potential

participants to this list. You can change it as you see fit, so that it works for your needs.

But you can see that, generally, the first part of the plan template includes an overview — this is just a short narrative of what the plan is about; objectives — and remember to make these specific and measurable; and key audiences.

For the *Parents Behind Bars* report, we also started with an overview of the report itself, including its key findings and implications of those findings. Thinking through this part helped us think through who the target audiences would be. If you aren't issuing a report, you, likely, won't have key findings or implications to include. And including an overview in your objectives would be more appropriate.

The next section is where you list out your target audience. We usually segment by audience type: practitioners, decision-makers, media, et cetera. This makes it easier to think about the organizations and outlets that should go into each section, but it also helps us think about outreach strategically, because the same type of outreach might not be appropriate or idea for all audiences.

This is not meant to be a comprehensive list, at this point, but it should include the audiences you can think of while you're generating the initial plan. You can refer back to it when you make a specific list of targets with contact information, but you can also sort of add more targets at that point. So, for that report, we actually had a pretty long list of organizations we had thought of initially, but sometimes we just have a few, and we fill it out later on.

Next, in the plan, we list the communication materials we intend to create as part of the outreach effort. For this report, those included the report itself,

including formatting for a release online and graphics that we would include in media outreach and in outreach to social media.

So, here's an example of one of the graphics we ended up with. Other materials for outreach about this report included a news release, a story in our e-newsletter and social media posts for Child Trends channel.

We also created a social media tool kit, which is just a suggested post that we send out to other organizations and people that makes it easy for them to share with their followers on social media. They can just pull from the kit and they don't have to think about it. We also plan to write a blog post and do a webinar about the report.

The final part of this plan is where you talk about timing. We included the period before we released the report, largely for creating outreach materials and starting outreach to partners and media.

The launch period is when we released the report, and post-launch was for extending the conversation beyond that initial launch period. You can't see it here, but in the final phase, we included a couple of points on collecting and reporting on metrics.

I'm going to end with this slide as a reminder that the process of communicating about your program is likely to be ongoing. You may find that some of your strategies are not as successful, so you might want to swap those out for a strategy that is more effective.

Alternatively, you might have identified a new audience that you need to incorporate. Circumstances change over time. Community demographics change, as do key decision-makers.

As Alicia said, an effective message is one to which the audience responds in a positive or intended fashion. So, consider your communication plan to be a living document, and use the responses to feed into your later efforts. Thank you.

Brandon Stratford: All right. Well thank you to August and Alicia. We have a few minutes left for some question-and-answer period. So, I didn't notice any questions in our Q&A box, but I did notice a couple of people who mentioned some different audiences that they might target, like faith-based organizations or also potential employers of the young adults to help lead to self-sufficiency.

So, folks, feel free to add additional ideas as we're talking, but also if you have a question, feel free to type it in to either the chat box, at this point, or the Q&A box. And I believe it was also Star 1, if you wanted to actually ask your question over the phone.

Operator: Yes, Star 1.

Brandon Stratford: All right. Anybody have any questions? If not, I've got some of my own, but I want to make sure that you all have time to ask your questions, because we're hoping, again, that a couple of you will volunteer to get a little extra assistance over the next month-and-a-half or so, and then participate with us on the second webinar.

So, while people are thinking up their questions, I'm going to ask August – you talked about kind of monitoring the importance of data collection and monitoring the effectiveness of your communications plan. Could you talk a little bit more about logistics? How can people find out if their plan is

effective? Are there specific tools, or strategies, software, or anything like that that people ought to be aware of?

August Aldebot-Green: Yes. So, I mentioned during the presentation that you can monitor media coverage using Google Alerts, which is free. And you can also monitor specific papers. Or you can pay for a subscription to a media monitoring system, if you're interested in that.

For social media, there are actually a lot of free tools that you can use. One is just using the social media platforms themselves. So, Twitter has its own analytics page, and I think if you just do a search for Twitter Analytics, it's operated from your Twitter profile, so you just go to the Twitter Analytics and it will show you, you know, different metrics.

And then on Facebook, you can collect stats and get a lot of reports. But any online search you do for free social media monitoring tools would give you a number of recommendations for different platforms that you want to monitor.

Brandon Stratford: And how would people know if they're actually being effective? I mean, they might get some numbers, but how can they put context to those numbers to know what it means?

August Aldebot-Green: Yes, well, part of it goes back to when you're setting your objectives. So, if you're setting objectives that are specific and measurable, then it will be pretty easy for you to figure out how to measure them. You know, if you say, I want to be increasing the number of participants by 1 percent over 12 months, then you just look at the number of participants that you have, and see if that number is going up in accordance with your timing.

And then, other ways — you know, some of it is if you have a way of measuring feedback, if you have a, you know, a survey, or you can do interviews and measure qualitative feedback, then that is a great way to do it, if you have the capacity to do that. But a lot of it is just making sure your objectives tie into what you're actually measuring.

Brandon Stratford: I see we did have a question. When will be the deadline for volunteers to submit our ideas to share during the next Webinar?

So, we're hoping that some of you, today, might think, hey, this is a great opportunity, and knowing that you're going to get some extra assistance makes you even more confident this would be a great opportunity. So, if, you know, today, feel free to speak up.

You can either Chat it into the Q&A box and we'll follow up. You can also, because we do want to be able to give you all some support, and going through this process, if we could know in the next week or two, that way we can make sure that our presenters or somebody else will be available to kind of check in with you and help you work through some of this.

And don't feel like you have to commit to doing an entire thing. I think the kind of messaging template seems like it could be doable, whereas for some folks, the entire communications plan might seem like more than they want to commit to doing by the next webinar.

So, whoever is going to be working with you is, you know, we'll be flexible in terms of whatever makes sense that you could get done. We just want to be able to kind of be there to support you, but also to give you an opportunity to share your experiences so that you can help your fellow grantees.

And also, it will be a great opportunity, actually, if you do volunteer, because when you're part of the next webinar, as Alicia was saying, in terms of getting feedback from people who are familiar with your program, or are close to your program about your message, you know, I think a lot of your fellow grantees understand some of the context that you all are working in.

So getting their feedback about your strategic message would probably be, you know, really useful as you set about getting ready to kind of launch that and use that as your strategic message.

I don't see any other questions yet, but Alicia, did you have any examples that you might be able to share about strategic messaging — either kind of some things to avoid, or just some concrete examples that you're aware of folks that have been successful?

Alicia Torres: Well, I'm trying to think now of one that would be — a lot of times, people assume that they know their audience, and so they develop messages without really digging into gathering more information about audience.

And I think a good example of that is, you know, there's been a lot of people the last few years, ever since — you know, all these figures have come out about how a lot of low-income families have access to the Internet through smart phones.

And so, all of a sudden, you have throughout the country all these people saying, oh, people have smart phones, so now we can communicate via smart phones with people, because they're going to be — they'll access this information via their smart phones.

But in fact, when you dig deeper, you know that people aren't using their smart phones for the kinds of things that people – that some service providers or some people that were trying to send messages to them. So, it didn't sync. It wasn't syncing.

Just like the example I gave with, you know, using text messages, right? Parents don't like to — we've found out after we talked to parents. They don't like to receive text messages, because they're at their work.

And, you know, all of a sudden, they've got text messages coming in. They think something's happened to one of their kids or something like that. And when they get a text message from someone who's promoting something, then they feel that it's not the right use and that they don't like it.

So, it's very important to understand that although the technology is available there to reach people in many different ways, you need to really take into account how people want to engage with that technology, and how they would want to receive your messages.

Brandon Stratford: Great. Yes, I think it's a great point. Just because we can do something doesn't mean it's going to be effective.

Alicia Torres: That's right. Yes.

Brandon Stratford: I did get a question, and somebody wanted to just confirm that what I was saying was that you can submit a request for TA on developing that communication plan.

And the answer is yes. You can submit a TA request for developing a communication plan either through your PO or through your Technical Assistance Manager.

If you want to volunteer to be a part of the next webinar, you can also let your PO or your Technical Assistance Manager know, or you can let us know right now. But you don't have to be volunteering to present on the next webinar in order to get technical assistance on this.

It's something we would — we need a couple volunteers to do, but if that's not your thing, but you still want technical assistance on developing a communications plan, please make sure to reach out to your Technical Assistance Manager or to your PO.

Some other folks have asked about when the slides and our recording will be up, and that generally takes about a week after the webinar to be able to get that up on the Resource Center.

All right. Well, I think we'll go ahead. If anybody has any other questions, please type them in. But I just want to get to the next couple of slides, because we have a few more resources that we want to share with you all. So, right now, we're actually going to take all this information that is in this slide and put it into the chat box for you, because that way, you'll actually have some live hyperlinks.

Once we do post the presentation, in about a week, this will be a PDF, and that will have some live hyperlinks as well. So, if you want to wait a week, this will be posted, and you'll be able to get all these links at that time. But we are going to have somebody go ahead and put those into the chat box shortly

so that you can maybe copy and paste from the chat box, as well so you can go and look them up later.

Also, shortly, we are going to do something called a file transfer. And the file transfer is basically a little window is going to pop up for you, and it's going to allow you to download some of the resources with our presenters were talking about today. So, like the communications plan template; also, the strategic messaging template, which was that one-pager with the box and the four different questions to answer.

And I believe we also have the report that Alicia had prepared and about communicating to Hispanic communities. So, it just kind of gives you a good idea of some things to think about as you're thinking about communications.

And we will — I'm going to just kind of remind everybody of what we've done today, and I'm going to encourage you – if you could think about one thing maybe that you're going to take away from today; one thing that you learned, or maybe just something that you already knew, but now you're committed to trying over the next couple of months.

So, if everybody could type into the chat box just one thing that you either learned or are thinking about doing as a result of this webinar. That might kind of spark some ideas for some of your fellow grantees of things that maybe they want to take away or give a try. So, I'm going to give folks a couple of minutes to go ahead and type something into the chat box. All right.

Maybe people are typing away. Aha. It looks like we've got somebody saying they're motivated to start coordinating some focus groups.

And I heard somebody else saying that they have developed a one-page communications tool that looks a lot like what we just went over, so maybe that's a volunteer who would love to share that with us on the next webinar, so I will follow up with you on that.

I see some other folks saying that they are going to try using social media platforms and infographics.

Other folks saying that the one thing they took away was really the importance of honing your message to the specific audience that you're addressing. I think that's great, because I think, you know, we have our elevator speech, but sometimes we need to realize that it might need to be tweaked a little bit, depending on who you're talking to.

Somebody else who said that they're utilizing infographics to send out to funders and decision-makers that includes program data and services offered in the community. So, that's a great way to kind of make your proof points or make your strategic messaging also include some visuals to be memorable.

All right. So, I am going to go ahead then; it seems like we might be having some technical difficulties, because I'm not seeing our hyperlinks for our resources up yet. But we are going to go ahead and do the file transfer now, it looks like. So, click on that if you would like to download the different resources that we've been referencing today.

And you'll see a list of things coming up on that little window that should have popped up. And you can select them and then click on the download button. And that will download; I think you might have to do it individually, but you can go ahead and download those various resources.

And while you're doing that, I think we're also going to put into the chat box a link to fill out a feedback survey. And I would say that we are particularly interested in your feedback because we're actually going to continue the conversation, and in the next webinar, we're going to be going a little bit deeper on this.

So, this is really your opportunity to help us make sure that this next webinar really meets your needs. So, you know, if there is something that we kind of brought up, but you wanted to learn more about it, please let us know in that feedback survey. You can also put it in the chat box now, if you want, but definitely let us know in the feedback survey, because we will be looking at those and taking that into consideration as we're developing the next webinar.

And I think we can go ahead and move to the next slide, because I'm getting questions about when the next webinar is. So, if we move past our slide about objectives, and we'll get to the next one that gives us the date for the next webinar.

So, I will just reiterate that the next webinar is in two months. It's at the same time on a Thursday. We're still looking for some volunteers. You can get technical assistance to help you kind of get something together to share on the next webinar, and then of course, you can get technical assistance, apart from that, through your TA Manager or your PO.

And I want to thank our presenters, August and Alicia.

August Aldebot-Green: Thank you.

Brandon Stratford: And please don't go anywhere until you've done the file transfer, if that's what you want to do, and also, we're going to get the link for the feedback survey up in just a moment.

And, like I said, it's really important for you all to fill that out because August and Alicia are going to join us again, and they would love to hear your feedback so that they can make sure that they're addressing anything that didn't get addressed this time, or just things that you want to make sure to learn more about. So, with that, I think I am going to turn it over to Tammy for any last words.

Tammy Bartasavich: I just wanted to thank everyone for participating, and please think about being able to share what you've done at the next webinar. And if you wanted to talk more about that, you can always talk to your Project Officer. But thanks, everyone.

Also, I did cut and paste and put those resources in the chat box, in case anybody wanted those. Well, I think that's it for today.

Brandon Stratford: All right. Well, make sure not to log off until your file transfer has finished, if that's something that you're doing, because once you log off, your connection will be cut. So, we'll leave it up for a few more minutes, for those of you who might still be downloading things. Thanks for your participation, and we look forward to going even deeper on this in two months.

Tammy Bartasavich: Wonderful. Thank you all.

Operator: Thank you for your participation. You may disconnect at this time.

**END**