

POLICY WRITING

Memos and White Papers

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Outline of Presentation

- What are policy memos and white papers?
- Policy Memos:
 - Purpose, Audience, What to include, Best practices
- White Papers:
 - Purpose, Audience, What to include, Best practices
- UCLA GWC Resources



Policy Memos and White Papers

- **Policy Memo:** A brief analysis and/or recommendation of the costs, benefits, and trade-offs for a particular audience regarding a situation or problem.
- **White Paper:** A slightly longer report to educate and persuade both decision-makers and the public at-large.



Purpose of a Memo

*“Memos have a two fold purpose: they bring **attention to problems**, and they **solve problems**.”*



Writing a policy memo

To begin...

- State the problem
 - What is the specific problem?
- Identify your target audience
 - Decision-Makers and/or Stakeholders
 - What are their needs?
 - What are their interests?
 - What do they already know and/or care about?
 - What is their technical expertise (terminology)?



Components of a Policy Memo

1. Heading



Components of a Policy Memo

Heading:

- Includes:
 - TO: Intended reader(s)
 - FROM: Writers
 - DATE: Date memo completed
 - SUBJECT: What the memo is about (keep it short)



Example



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460
MAR 5 2007

OFFICE OF
WATER

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Using Green Infrastructure to Protect Water Quality in Stormwater, CSO, Nonpoint Source and other Water Programs

FROM: Benjamin H. Grumbles, Assistant Administrator

TO: EPA Regional Administrators



Components of a Policy Memo

1. Heading
2. (Optional) Executive Summary



Components of a Policy Memo

(Optional) Executive Summary:

- Like an abstract for your Memo
- Summary of issue and brief summary of conclusions/recommendations from your analysis
- Recommended for longer memos (e.g. ≥ 2 pages)



Example

Executive Summary of the Medical Education and the Future of American Health Care: Policy Recommendations



Components of a Policy Memo

1. Heading
2. (Optional) Executive Summary
3. **Introduction/Background**



Components of a Policy Memo

Introduction/Background:

- The Introduction/Background will provide information on the purpose, problem, and context (short paragraph)
- You may choose to have an Introduction AND a Background (longer paragraph or two shorter paragraphs)
 - Introduction: Shorter broader overview of the problem
 - Background: Detailed description of the problem and context
- **Fact based! Use citations**



Example

Green infrastructure approaches essentially infiltrate, evapotranspire or reuse stormwater, with significant utilization of soils and vegetation rather than traditional hardscape collection, conveyance and storage structures. Common green infrastructure approaches include green roofs, trees and tree boxes, rain gardens, vegetated swales, pocket wetlands, infiltration planters, vegetated median strips, reforestation, and protection and enhancement of riparian buffers and floodplains. Green infrastructure can be used where soil and vegetation can be worked into the landscape. It is most effective when supplemented with other decentralized storage and infiltration approaches, such as the use of permeable pavement, and rain barrels and cisterns to capture and re-use rainfall for watering plants or flushing toilets. These approaches can be used to keep rainwater out of the sewer system to reduce sewer overflows and to reduce the amount of untreated stormwater discharging to surface waters. Green infrastructure facilitates or mimics natural processes that also recharge groundwater, preserve baseflows, moderate temperature impacts, and protect hydrologic and hydraulic stability.



Green infrastructure has a number of benefits:

- *Cleaner Water* - Vegetation and green space reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and, in combined systems, the volume of combined sewer overflows.
- *Enhanced Water Supplies*-Most green infiltration approaches result in stormwater percolation through the soil to recharge the groundwater and the base flow for streams.
- *Cleaner Air* - Trees and vegetation improve air quality by filtering many airborne pollutants and can help reduce the amount of respiratory illness.
- *Reduced Urban Temperatures* - Summer city temperatures can average 10°F higher than nearby suburban temperatures. High temperatures are linked to higher ground level ozone concentrations. Vegetation creates shade, reduces the amount of heat absorbing materials and emits water vapor - all of which cool hot air.
- *Increased Energy Efficiency* - Green space helps lower ambient temperatures and helps shade and insulate buildings, decreasing energy needed for heating and cooling.
- *Community Benefits* - Trees and plants improve urban aesthetics and community livability by providing recreational and wildlife areas and can raise property values.
- *Cost Savings* - Green infrastructure may save capital costs on digging big tunnels and stormwater ponds, operations and maintenance expenses for treatment plants, pipes, and other hard infrastructure; energy costs for pumping water; and costs of wet weather treatment and of repairing stormwater and sewage pollution impacts, such as stream bank restoration.



Components of a Policy Memo

1. Heading
2. (Optional) Executive Summary
3. Introduction/Background
4. **Summary of current policy and future recommendations**



Components of a Policy Memo

Summary of current policy:

- Focus on SWOT of the current policy
 - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- If no policy, focus on the limitations of not having something in place and reasons for needing structured policy



Components of a Policy Memo

Recommendations:

- Longest portion of the memo (focus)
- Start with strongest recommendation moving to weakest
- Provide supporting evidence



Components of a Policy Memo

Supporting evidence:

- Start with strongest examples/evidence moving to weakest
- Items to include:
 - Pros/Cons, Strengths/Weaknesses, feasibility, timing and strategies for implementation, comparison of each recommendation
- Use persuasive language



Example

Recommendations to Providers

CMS recommends that facility leadership review current policies and procedures to ensure adequate plans are in place in the event of an attack. For instance, most IT Directors and policies within facilities require systems to be shut down, and specific timelines to notify appropriate State and Federal agencies and State Health Departments.

Additionally, some providers have shared best practices and mitigation methods, which include retraining of staff to include use of non-electronic methods, such as written discharge instructions, care planning and medical records. Some providers have pre-printed discharge instructions based on common or reoccurring patient care, such as influenza and common cold, and a blank area for additional information which can be hand written by the medical staff.

Providers have also encouraged staff to familiarize themselves with the knowledge of the paper medication administration record (MAR) process, and the transmission of laboratory and radiology orders on paper-based requisition forms that are hand delivered to departments for processing. Finally, providers have also taken the initiative to pre-program phone/fax numbers into the fax machine to avoid any delay in the event computer systems are inaccessible.



While the new *Emergency Preparedness Requirements for Medicare and Medicaid Participating Providers and Suppliers* regulation does not specifically address elements of cyber-security, the regulation requires providers and suppliers to have an emergency plan and risk assessment based on an “all-hazards” approach. An all-hazards approach is an integrated approach to emergency preparedness planning that focuses on capacities and capabilities that are critical to preparedness for a full spectrum of emergencies or disasters.

CMS encourages providers to consider cyber-security as an element in the development of their emergency plans, risk assessments, and annual training exercises. While not a requirement, facilities may consider adding cyber security protocols to their policies and procedures. Additionally, given the regulation’s requirement for facilities to establish communication plans, which also includes alternate means of communication, the facility could consider addressing within their policies and procedures an element of how to communicate with staff and different departments in the event computers or other means of communication are inaccessible. Finally, facilities may also choose to conduct table-top exercises, with or without assistance from healthcare coalitions or State emergency officials, which are focused on cyber security and how to continue operations in the event of a cyber-attack.

We encourage facility leadership to work with the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO); Risk Manager; Performance Improvement Director; IT Director and Nursing Directors, or anyone the facility deems appropriate in managing cyber-attack mitigation practices. Section 10(b) of Executive Order (EO) 13636, “Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity” requires, “if current regulatory requirements are deemed to be insufficient...agencies identified in sub-section (a) of this section shall propose prioritized, risk-based, efficient, and coordinated actions...to mitigate cyber risk.” While HHS has concluded that the Department’s current regulatory authorities are sufficient, the Department is implementing a number of non-regulatory activities to enhance the cybersecurity of private sector critical infrastructure partners



Components of a Policy Memo

1. Heading
2. (Optional) Executive Summary
3. Introduction/Background
4. Summary of current policy and future recommendations
5. **Conclusion**



Components of a Policy Memo

Conclusion:

- Recap of problem
- Why policy is needed?
 - What are the implications if you don't implement/
do implement?
- Why your recommendation is a best fit solution



Components of a Policy Memo

1. Heading
2. (Optional) Executive Summary
3. Introduction/Background
4. Summary of current policy and future recommendations
5. Supporting evidence
6. Conclusion
7. **Attachments, Appendices, etc.**



Components of a Policy Memo

Attachments, Appendices, etc.:

- Additional supporting documentation
- Supplemental



Example

WHO Memo on Collaboration on the
Prevention and Control of
Noncommunicable Disease
Memorandum between UNDP, WHO
and the World Bank



Best Practices in Memo Writing

Length:

- Shorter the better (~2 pages)

Formatting:

- Headers and sub-headings
- Graphs and Tables: Use only when directly related to the topic

Attentive to Audience:

- What level of detail would this decision-maker likely want?



Best Practices in Memo Writing

Attentive to Purpose:

- Is the main point explicitly spelled out?
- Are the implications clear?

Clear and Concise Writing:

- Use simple vocabulary (avoid jargon!)
- Short, action-oriented sentences
- Be persuasive



Purpose of a White Paper

“A white paper is an authoritative report or guide that often addresses issues and how to solve them.”



Writing a White Paper

To begin...

- State the problem
 - What is the specific problem?
- Identify your target audience
 - Decision-Makers and/or Stakeholders
 - What are their needs?
 - What are their interests?
 - What do they already know and/or care about?
 - What is their technical expertise (terminology)?



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview



Components of a White Paper

Executive Summary:

- Like an abstract for your White Paper
- Summary of issue and brief summary of conclusions/recommendations from your analysis



Example

Executive Summary of the Bellagio White Paper



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview
2. **Introduction/Background**



Components of a Policy Memo

Introduction:

- The Introduction/Background includes information on the purpose, problem, and context of the White paper
- Fact based! Use citations



Example

Introduction of the Bellagio White Paper



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview
2. Introduction
3. **Background/Evidence of the problem**



Components of a Policy Memo

Background/Evidence of the problem:

- Topic-based, more brief literature review of all the problems, contexts, and evidence highlighting the problem/issue the white paper is addressing
- Fact based! Use citations



Example

Part One of the Bellagio White Paper



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview
2. Introduction
3. Background/Evidence of the problem
4. **The over-arching solution to the problem**



Example

Part Two of the Bellagio White Paper

Sections:

- Mainstreaming Public Health Practice Strengthening and
- The Role of National Public Health Institutes in Strengthening Public Health Practice



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview
2. Introduction
3. Background/Evidence of the problem
4. The over-arching solution to the problem
5. **A specific policy recommendation or set of policy recommendations to address the specific problem (including evidence that solutions will work in the form of data, case studies, testimonials, etc.)**



Components of a White Paper

Recommendations:

- Main focus of the white paper
- Propose your solutions
- Provide supporting evidence
- Provide information about the strengths and limitations
- Provide evidence as to the feasibility of your recommendation



Components of a White Paper

Supporting evidence:

- Start with strongest examples/evidence moving to weakest
- Items to include:
 - Pros/Cons, Strengths/Weaknesses, feasibility, timing and strategies for implementation, comparison of each recommendation
- Use persuasive language



Example

Part Two of the Bellagio White Paper

Sections:

- Personal and Professional Development of Workforce
- Strengthening National Level Public Health Performance
- Performance Improvement Units
- Financing a robust public health system
- WHO regional office initiatives
- Global Efforts in Public Health Performance
- Putting public health on the global agenda
- Opportunities to create global public goods and
- What Needs to be Done



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview
2. Introduction
3. Background/Evidence of the problem
4. The over-arching solution to the problem
5. A specific policy recommendation or set of policy recommendations to address the specific problem (including evidence that solutions will work in the form of data, case studies, testimonials, etc.)
6. **Identification of challenges of implementing policy recommendations and methods of addressing those challenges**



Example

Part Two of the Bellagio White Paper

Section:

- What Needs to be Avoided



Components of a White Paper

1. Short executive summary/Overview
2. Introduction
3. Background/Evidence of the problem
4. The over-arching solution to the problem
5. A specific policy recommendation or set of policy recommendations to address the specific problem (including evidence that solutions will work in the form of data, case studies, testimonials, etc.)
6. Identification of challenges of implementing policy recommendations and methods of addressing those challenges
7. **Summary/Conclusion**



Components of a White Paper

Summary/Conclusion:

- Recap of problem
- Why policy is needed?
 - What are the implications if you don't implement/
do implement?
- Why your recommendation is a best fit solution



Example

Summary of the Bellagio White Paper



Resources

- Provide FREE appointments for graduate and professional student for writing consultations
 - Writing assistance for dissertations, theses, journal articles, course papers, résumés, CVs, cover letters, etc.
- Webpage: <http://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/>
- Reservations: <https://app.gsrc.ucla.edu/gwc/reservations/>
- Workshops: <http://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/Workshops>

Thank you!

