

STEP 4

Develop Your Message



Understanding your audience is critical to developing effective messages. Who are you trying to persuade—voters? Policy makers? The local business community? *Your audience may shift or expand during each stage of the process.*

1. **Name your primary audience.**

- Who makes the decision?

- Who influences this audience?

2. **Name your secondary audience(s)** [if applicable].

- Who makes the decision?

- Who influences this audience?

3. **Why does achieving your goal matter** to them and their constituencies?

What are the most important things you want others to know, delivered in terms that will resonate with your audience? These are your key messages. They should be consistent with your goal, connected with your audience’s priorities, and concisely expressed. These messages will be repeated in conversations, interviews, promotional materials, and presentations. They should be easy to remember.

Meet your audience where they are. Take the time to understand their perspectives. What do you want them to think? Feel? Do?

Key message(s)

1.

2.

3.

Tips for Telling an Effective Story

- Keep it simple, brief, and personal
- Center community impact
- Position library as solution
- Connect to the priorities of audience
- Incorporate key message
- Include a clear ask



Develop Your Talking Points

What data, examples, and stories support your key messages? Anticipate questions or comments and use the talking points to elaborate on your key messages. As you develop your talking points, be aware of your audience, their priorities, and how these talking points connect your messages to issues they care about. You may choose to emphasize certain talking points with specific audiences.

Talking points:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Prepare

Work individually and with your team to practice delivering your key messages, packaged with talking points and supporting stories.

Additional Resources

Create an “elevator speech.” An [elevator speech](#) is a brief, persuasive speech that you can recite to convey your message in the amount of time an elevator ride takes, hence the name. Be prepared to make your case quickly and effectively!