



Tip Sheet: How to Increase Client Participation in the Stakeholder Survey Process

Engaging clients in the COA Stakeholder Survey Process can sometimes be challenging. Many organizations serve clients that do not have easy access to a computer to get email or take the web-based Consumer Survey. Others may not own a telephone to take the telephone survey. And others may have disabilities that make using either method of taking the Survey a challenge. The following are a few suggestions that may be helpful.

1. Provide access to a computer and telephone at your program sites.

Make a room available at scheduled times with a computer and a telephone. The room should enable service recipients to take the Survey in private.

Have a staff person available to explain how to take the Survey and to help those who need assistance.

2. Use assistive technology to help people with disabilities take the Survey.

There are numerous ways to adapt your computers and other technology for use by persons with disabilities. Many are built into the computers themselves.

[Assistive Technology for Public Computers](#) is a recorded webinar that provides a comprehensive overview. The resource is made available for free by the non-profit technology organization [TechSoup](#).

You may also want to instruct people who are hearing impaired on how to access a [TDD or TTY device or Relay Service](#) to take the Survey. Most cell phones now have built-in TTY capability so many hearing-impaired service recipients may already have access to the technology.

3. Emphasize confidentiality.

If your organization is making a computer or telephone available for service recipients to take the Survey, it may be helpful for staff to remind survey-takers that the data and their participation will be confidential.

Many people are concerned that personal information will be collected if they take online or telephone surveys or visit websites. So it may also be helpful to find other ways to emphasize the confidential nature of the Survey. The survey invitation language that COA provides includes a statement about confidentiality. But that won't help if the recipient deletes the email or doesn't read it once they learn they are being asked to take an online or telephone survey.

4. Use a URL shortener to minimize mistakes made when typing the Survey web link.

A common problem occurs when a stakeholder tries to type the link to the survey website into their web browser after receiving the survey information in the mail.

The link provided by COA is very long and for this reason we strongly suggest that you only send information about the telephone survey to clients who you cannot contact by email.



A good solution to consider to the problems presented by the long survey link is to use a service like [bitly](#) to shorten the link. Bitly is free and you don't have to sign up to use it.



Here is an example of a long, complicated web link that was shortened using bitly. The original link is for a page on COA's website: <http://www.coanet.org/front3/page.cfm?sect=6&cont=4118>. Using bitly, the link was shortened to: <http://bit.ly/fuuJm3>. The shortened link can then be copied and pasted into your invitation email or letter.

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