

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE ADVISORY PANEL

General Selection Process

Because there may be questions about how and why the members of any special committee and/or advisory panel are chosen, it is good to have a clear sense of the selection process. Local library leaders must keep in mind the goal is to appraise honestly the potential impact of each member on the total functioning of the group so that the very best results can be attained by the project and so that the overall experience of the community is a positive one and one that creates new partnerships while strengthening existing ones.

Selection of the Advisory Panel

The selection of the Advisory Panel (Typically a small number – about 5-10 people) is coordinated by the library leaders at the local level. In selecting people for the Advisory Panel, efforts should be made to include people who can contribute ideas connected to the following:

- Literacy programs/activities currently taking place in the community
- Under-served segments of the community
- Overlaps in services or groups served
- Potential community partners and projects to reach the under-served

In selecting people for the Advisory panel, efforts should be made to represent the entire community with attention to special target groups. Look for:

- Men and women of a variety of ages
- Knowledge of preschool literacy programs; k-12 literacy programs; continuing ed programs
- Connection to the City government, business, the media, the Chamber of Commerce or economic development groups, and/or civic organizations
- The time and ability to commit to the project
- The ability to positively communicate information to their respective target groups and to the community as a whole
- The ability to represent the project in the most positive manner
- Good listeners and sharers during the meeting
- Commitment to committee work on the high level of cooperation, consensus building
- Knowledge of securing local financial support

Note: During the initial brainstorming time, do not limit the number of people included on the possible list of possible candidates. (People selected may not be able to serve because of time-constraints, etc., so it is beneficial to have back-up names.) If the list eventually needs to be narrowed, consider which people would represent more than one target group.

HOW TO CONTACT THE ADVISORY PANEL

Example Conversation

The Library Leader pre-existing connection/relationship with each of the potential Advisory Panel members will dictate this conversation's tone. Below is one possibility:

- “This is (name of the Library leader), (name of library position), and I am calling with an invitation/opportunity for you regarding First Lady Karen Baldacci’s literacy initiative in the state.

You may have heard how Mrs. Baldacci is initiating the Maine Reads Community Literacy Project in the state and I’m happy to report that (name of your community) has been selected to be one of the communities for this project. Both the public and school libraries will be involved, but we also need community input, which is why we are calling you.

In an effort to receive input from people representing numerous target groups in our community, we are asking 5-10 people to serve on an Advisory Panel and your name has come up as an excellent choice for this role. Do you have a few moments so that I can tell you more about it?”

If you receive a negative response:

Say “Thank you for your time,” and end the conversation.

If you receive a positive response:

Highlight the roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Panel members emphasizing that it requires attendance at three meetings but does not obligate the person to implement the project. If he/she is still interested, tell the person that you will be sending him more details of the project and meeting times.

A possible information sheet to be sent to prospective Advisory panel members follows.

INFORMATION FOR ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

The Advisory Panel's main goal is to identify the specific project for the community. This project selection will be made through a series of three meetings. (See below.) Advisory panel members should attend all three meetings.

Though the Library Leaders are responsible for bringing the project to completion, there may be follow-up opportunities for the Advisory Panel. These opportunities could include, but not be limited to, helping in the implementation of the project, offering project financial sponsorship, and/or helping with the evaluation of the project.

It is recommended that a person from outside the community facilitate these three meetings, but it is not required. The ideal person is a trained facilitator, but we realize that may not be financially feasible.

We're hoping that the limited number of meetings won't overburden your schedule. If you have any questions about the information or the schedule, please contact any of the library leaders listed in the introductory letter that accompanies this sheet.

Meeting #1: Focus Group (Your meeting date and time.)

The Advisory Panel meets with a facilitator and/or library leaders to identify the following:

- Literacy programs/activities currently taking place in the community
- Underserved segments of the community
- Overlaps in service or groups served
- Potential community partners and projects to reach the underserved

Meeting # 2: Public Forum (Your meeting date and time.)

The Advisory Panel attends a Public Forum Meeting where members of the literacy community (educators, childcare providers etc.) are invited to share issues and different viewpoints on the four items listed from Meeting #1. The primary role of the Advisory Panel at this meeting is to observe and listen.

Meeting # 3: Project Selection (Your date and time.)

The Advisory Panel meets and selects their community's Maine Reads Community Literacy Project. This selection is based on the Advisory Panel's initial discussion (during the Focus Meeting) and on the information/insight gained through the Public Forum Meeting.

HOW TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC FORUM

Purpose

The Public Forum is, as the name suggests, open to the public, although library leaders and the Advisory Panel should encourage members of the literacy community to attend. Public Forum attendees will share insight/information about four basic elements:

Literacy programs/activities currently taking place in the community

- Underserved segments of the community
- Overlaps in service or groups served
- Potential community partners and projects to reach the underserved

Suggested Process

- Materials needed for the Forum may include name tags, pencils, copies of the Public Forum Worksheet (see attached), and results from Meeting #1 with the Advisory Panel.
- Library leaders welcome, take care of the “housekeeping” issues, and make introductions of the library leaders, the Advisory Panel members and the facilitator. Depending on the size of the forum, the attendees may introduce themselves as well.
- Library leaders or the facilitator describe why the Forum is being held and briefly discuss the vision, goal and objectives for the Maine Reads Family Literacy Project.
- Facilitator discusses how the Forum will be conducted and reviews the possible rules of participating. (See below.)
- Facilitator conducts the Forum. (See Public Forum Worksheet.)
- Public Forum recorder takes notes of the proceedings.
- Worksheets are collected by the library leaders at the end of the Forum.

Suggested Rules

The following rules may be used as a guide for the Public Forum meeting.

- One person speaks at a time.
- Participate with brief, succinct remarks
- Speak no more than 3 minutes at a time
- Listen to other participants
- Ask questions to clarify ideas
- Think broadly – beyond your own organization about what is best for the people of the community
- Community members should be encouraged to share and submit to the library leaders any materials about literacy projects in which they are already involved.

After the Public Forum Meeting

The results of the meeting must be compiled and shared with the library leaders, the Advisory Panel and the facilitator. The person responsible for doing this must be decided upon prior to the meeting. These notes should be referenced when completing your library’s Final Report to Maine Reads.

PUBLIC FORUM WORKSHEET

Directions

Forum attendees may share their ideas orally or in writing.

- What is the most important contribution your organization/target group makes to your community?
- What is the one project that your organization/target group is already doing to work toward the Vision, Goal, and/or Objectives of the Maine Reads Community Literacy Project?

Who besides your organization/target group is involved in this project?

Are there any potential partners not currently involved in this project?

Who in the community are you not reaching with this project?

- After looking at the results of the Advisory Panel Forum and the results of tonight's meeting, who, in your opinion, is not being served by any literacy project/program in our community?
- Brainstorm with other community members in your break-out group about possible literacy projects that could fill the gaps in service in our community and then share them with the Forum. (How this is handled depends on the size of the Forum – there may be no need for breakout groups.)

Other comments:

Name _____

Organization and full address _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

May we reproduce your responses on the Maine Reads website? Yes No

HOW TO CONDUCT A PROJECT SELECTION MEETING WITH THE ADVISORY PANEL

Purpose

Advisory Panel members will identify two basic elements:

- The target audience to be served by the selected project;
- The selection of their local community's Maine Reads Community Literacy Project

Suggested Process

Before the Session

Library leaders and the Advisory Panel members should have received the compilation of the Public Forum meeting and any pertinent statistics that may have been gathered.

During the Session

The meeting facilitator presents the main questions for consideration:

- "What are the characteristics of a good project?"
- "Who should be the target group served by this project?"
- "What should this community's project be?"

The facilitator will then lead the group in a discussion by:

- Sharing with the Advisory Panel a tally of what groups are currently being served by literacy projects in the community;
- Sharing with the Advisory Panel a tally of what groups are currently NOT being served by literacy projects in the community;
- Asking the Advisory Panel members to think about the input that has already been gathered and to list silently two ideas for a community project on a piece of paper;
- Having the Panel give one idea from the list and continue documenting these on a flip chart round-robin style until all ideas are listed;
- Checking in and asking the group if any ideas need to be clarified;
- Having the group establish criteria for voting;
- Conducting a vote by handing out 3x5 index cards to each panel member on which panel members write down the top five ideas from the list and grades them 1-5 with the top idea getting five points;
- Collecting the cards, tallies the points, and records them on the flip chart sheets;
- Having the group discuss the rankings;
- Asking the group if each person can support the project selected.

After the Selection Process

With input by Advisory Panel members, the Library leaders brainstorm project names, possible funding sources including a Maine Reads implementation grant, and set the first of the Project meetings to start fleshing out and implementing the project.

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE PROJECT TEAM

General Selection Process

As with the selection of the Advisory Panel, it is good to have a clear sense of the process used when selecting the Project Team. Because of the important role the Project Team plays, it is essential that those selected to be on the Team possess the appropriate skills and necessary qualities for the implementation and completion of the Project.

When using the guidelines below, local library leaders and the Advisory Panel members can focus on who would potentially guarantee the best chance for success of the Project -- making it a good experience for the Target Audience being served and for the community as a whole.

Selection Process

Library leaders are members of the Project Team. Selection of other members of the Project Team is done by the library leaders and members of the Advisory Panel and may very well consist solely of members of these groups. In selecting the people for the Project Team, efforts should be made to include people with the following skills/qualities:

- Ability to present the Project in the most positive manner;
- Time to commit to the Project activities;
- Ability to communicate information to the Library Leaders/Advisory Panel regarding the progress of the project;
- Knowledge of and insight into the target audience being served;
- Ability to do the tasks associated with the Project.

Note: The skills necessary to complete the Project will be specific to the Project that has been selected by the local community.