## MPA Program Core Competencies

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Who is your audience?

• Other public managers and organizations, stakeholders and clients:
  – Internal emails and memos.
  – Press advisories and releases.

• Decision-makers (city managers, elected officials, board members):
  – Memos presenting policy alternatives.
  – Financial and budget analysis.
  – Constituent services and complaints.
What are you producing?

• Clear, professional and unbiased information and analysis.
  – Not your opinion.
  – Not poorly sourced “facts” or poorly reasoned “conventional wisdoms.”

• In short, you are helping to sort through the information environment and make decisions between difficult alternatives.
Example 1: Press Release

Naperville

For Immediate Release
Day of the Week, Month Date, 2015
Page X of Y, if necessary

Times New Roman, 15-pt., Bold
Subhead Goes Here, 12 pt., Times New Roman, Bold and Italic

NAPERVILLE, III.  __Times New Roman, 11 pt. Text

Subsequent paragraphs go here

If media release requires second page, use the following header information on the top of pages subsequent to page one.

Title in 16-point, bold, Times New Roman on first line, italicized
“Page X of Y” in 10-point, bold, Times New Roman on second line, italicized

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About Naperville: Located 23 miles west of Chicago, Naperville, Ill., is home to approximately 145,000 people. This vibrant, thriving City consistently ranks as a top community in the nation in which to live, raise children and retire. The City is home to acclaimed public and parochial schools, the best public library system in the country, an array of healthcare options and an exceptionally low crime rate. Naperville has ready access to a variety of public transportation, housing and employment options. The City’s diversified employer base features high technology, firms, retailers and factories, as well as small and home-based businesses. Residents also enjoy world-class parks, diverse worship options, the opportunity to serve on several City boards and commissions, a thriving downtown shopping and dining area, a renowned outdoor history museum known as Naper Settlement and an active civic community. For more information, please visit our website at www.naperville.il.us.
Example 2: Internal Communication

CITY OF NAPERVILLE
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Month XX, YEAR

TO: Name, Title

FROM: Name, Title

SUBJECT: Subject

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this memorandum is to.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:
Explain topic.

RECOMMENDATION:
Advise on action.
Example 3: Completed Memo

Memorandum

To: City Council
From: Bart Olson, City Administrator
CC: 
Date: June 3, 2015
Subject: Municipal Electric Aggregation Bids

Summary

Review of municipal residential electric aggregation bids for a one year or two year residential electric aggregation program.

Background

This item was last discussed by the City Council at the May 26th meeting. At that meeting, the City Council authorized the City’s electrical supply broker (NIMEC) to solicit bids from alternative energy suppliers.

Electrical aggregation supply bids will be received on the morning of June 9th, and will be distributed in a supplemental packet that afternoon. The City Council must choose a winning bidder at the meeting that evening or reject all bids and rebid at a future meeting. If the bids are rejected and rebid, the aggregation program would likely have to start on October 1. The City is currently involved in an aggregation program. A NIMEC representative will be present at the June 9th City Council meeting to answer any questions.

As a reminder, the City’s supply rate with First Energy between 2012 and 2014 was 4.76 cents per kWh. Since Summer 2014, ComEd’s rate has varied between the high 6-cent and high 7-cent per kWh. The most recent residential aggregation bids in other towns have been around 7 cents per kWh in the first year with a lower rate in the second year.

ComEd’s current supply rate is 5.995 cents per kWh (runs through May 31, 2016), with a 1.074 cents per kWh transmission service charge. With the monthly variable PEA charge (purchased energy adjustment) at a credit of 0.058 cents per kWh, for June 2015, the effective ComEd rate is 6.975 cents per kWh. While the supply rate and transmission service charge will be static for a year, the PEA charge changes monthly in the range of +/- 0.50 cents per kWh.

Recommendation

Bids and final staff recommendation will be available in a supplemental packet mid-day on June
Example 4: Policy Recommendation

DATE: 10/29/2015

TO: Honorable Mayor
    City Council

FROM: City Manager
    Click here to enter text.

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals

I. Summary
   A summary of the item is added here.

II. Background
    A history of the item and how it came to the current status is added here.

III. Community Groups/Interested Parties Contacted
    Include names and information from stakeholders.

IV. Legal Impact
    Input from City attorney included here.

V. Financial Impact
    Costs associated with this item should be articulated here.

VI. Options
    Staff should provide different options for moving forward on this item.

VII. Recommendation
    Staff's recommendation is included here.
Your Role as Policy Analyst

• Virtually all public administrators are involved in some manner in policy analysis:

Lindblom on policy analysis (1959)

• Scientific process:
  – Reliant on a body of theory applied to a specific situation
  – Most all relevant variables included
  – Distinction between values (subjective) and facts (objective)
  – Some presumption of the policy process derived from theory and treated as a general rule

• Policy analysis:
  – Less reliance on theory
  – Fragmented view of necessary vars
  – Intertwining of the search for values and facts
  – No presumption of a policy
Policy Analysis Steps

1) Verify, define and detail the problem
   - You must introduce the problem you wish to analyze, identifying a specific issue and why it is important.
   - Detail its history and any prior efforts to address the problem. Place it in historical context.
Policy Analysis Steps

1) Verify, define and detail the problem
2) Establish evaluation criteria
   – Define how you plan to decide between options. What values or objectives are the most heavily weighted?
   – How will these goals be measured?
   – Is there a rank order of importance among the criteria?
   – What are the rules for comparing alternatives?
Policy Analysis Steps

• 1) Verify, define and detail the problem
• 2) Establish evaluation criteria
• 3) Identify alternative policies
  – Consider a wide range of alternatives
  – Consider the status quo counter-factual (what will happen if no action is taken?)
Policy Analysis Steps

1) Verify, define and detail the problem
2) Establish evaluation criteria
3) Identify alternative policies
4) Assess alternative policies
   - Select appropriate methods and use them correctly (regression, comparative case analysis, focus group, survey)
   - Estimate expected outcomes of each alternative
Policy Analysis Steps

1) Verify, define and detail the problem
2) Establish evaluation criteria
3) Identify alternative policies
4) Assess alternative policies
5) Display and distinguish among alternatives
   – Each alternative may have strengths and weaknesses; outline them in a neutral and objective fashion
   – Describe best- and worst-case scenarios
Policy Analysis Steps

• 1) Verify, define and detail the problem
• 2) Establish evaluation criteria
• 3) Identify alternative policies
• 4) Assess alternative policies
• 5) Display and distinguish among alternatives
• 6) Implement, monitor, and evaluate the policy
  – How would the recommended policy be implemented?
  – Design a monitoring system and program evaluation.
Policy Analysis is not a Personal Manifesto

- Observed ways students try to pass off opinions as if they are policy analysis:
  - No citations.
  - No credible citations.
  - Too few alternatives considered.
  - Making gigantic leaps in logic.
  - Confusing correlation with causation.
  - Unclear writing.
Professionalism in Memos

• Use neutral language: ‘argues’ or ‘states,’ instead of ‘accuses.’
• Don’t say ‘I believe,’ or ‘I recommend.’ Say, ‘staff concludes.’
• Don’t get conversational. This isn’t a text to a friend. ‘Feels like’ …’lawsuit didn’t work out.’
• Don’t get opinionated:
  – ‘Residents … will be upset.’
  – [your town] ‘is a very nice area.’
  – ‘The state of Illinois is not making the matter easier.’
• Don’t try to explain theory to elected officials; apply it.
  – (Military members learning to parachute don’t need the law of gravity explained to them.)
Exercise: To Lunch, or Not to Lunch

• Problem: Due to the state budget crisis, NIU’s MPA program is considering changes to its orientation for new students:

• Options:
  – Eliminate etiquette lunch training.
  – Restrict it to only Fall enrollees.
  – Maintain the luncheon, as is.

• Request: Write a brief memo to Dept. Chair Kurt Thurmaier reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the three options. Make a recommendation.

• Use any online resources you need.