

Gathering Information on the Problem



Why gather information on the problem?

- To develop a good understanding of the problem
- To be able to compare information and choose what seems to be most reliable in developing an accurate description of the problem
- To see the problem from a variety of perspectives that reflect different interests, goals, and priorities

Sources of Information

- Libraries
- Internet
- Newspapers
- Professors and Scholars
- Lawyers and Judges
- NGO's. Interest groups and other community organizations
- Legislative offices
- Administrative offices

Data Gathering

- Data from printed publications
- Data from Interviews

Guidelines for conducting Interviews

- Introduce yourself
- State the purpose of the interview – state the problem you are studying
- Briefly describe the problem
- Set an appointment
- Ask for documents about the problem you are studying

Guidelines for Conducting Interviews

- Introduce yourself
- State your task
- Give a brief description of the problem you are studying
- Ask the following questions:
 - Extent or seriousness of the problem in the community
 - Possible cause(s) of the problem
 - Presence of a public policy that deals with the problem
 - Description of the public policy – who acts on it, what form does it take
 - Adequacy of the public policy in solving the problem – why is it adequate or not? Is it poorly implemented or not enforced?

- Should this be handled by the government
 - Why or why not, what level and branch or agency should handle it, what is the gov't currently doing to handle the problem
- Should gov't ask for assistance from civil society and/or private sphere to solve the problem
- Disagreements in the community about the problem
- Major individuals, groups or organizations involved
 - interest in the problem, position, advantages and disadvantages of their positions, how they influence government
- How to influence the government in adopting the group's chosen policy

Interview Tips

- Prepare interview questions beforehand
- Conduct a mock interview to improve and practice interview skills
- Be polite but assertive
- Be straight to the point
- Be prepared to deal with rudeness or not being taken seriously
- Maintain eye contact
- Listen carefully
- Ask follow-up questions
- Take down notes