

STEPS FOR WRITING BRIEFS



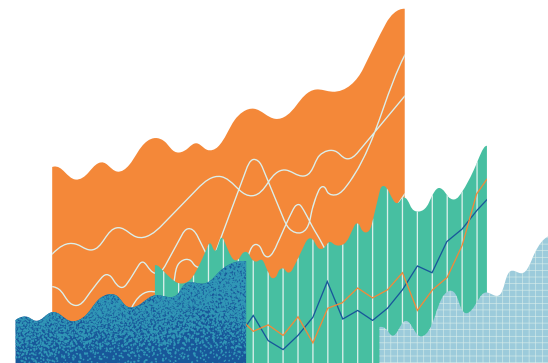
When you're ready to start developing your brief, consider the following steps.



1

IDENTIFY YOUR KEY AUDIENCE

Potential audiences may be those who inform policy at the federal, state, or local level; federal, state, local, or nongovernmental decision makers; or other stakeholders.



3

DETERMINE YOUR PURPOSE AND MAKE SURE YOUR MATERIAL CONTAINS ONE OBVIOUS MAIN MESSAGE

Lead with your 'bottom line up front' (BLUF) which captures the purpose and main message.



2

CONDUCT AUDIENCE RESEARCH

In order to translate the evidence in a way that is easy to understand, get to know your audience. Don't guess or assume. Review data or, when possible, gather new data through formative research.

4

DEVELOP CONTENT FOR THE TYPE OF BRIEF YOU WANT TO CREATE

- Define and explain terms that may be unfamiliar to your audience. Avoid using jargon or technical terms unless absolutely necessary.
- Organize information into chunks with headings.
 - » A "chunk" is the amount of words or numbers people can hold in their short-term memory and group with other words or numbers. A chunk should be only one idea that people can connect to other, related ideas.
 - » Use headings to organize and label chunks.
- Use bulleted or numbered lists to break up text in the body of the material and make information easier to scan and read. Lists with more than seven items should be broken into sub-lists.
- Review the [CDC Clear Communication Index](#) for other tips on communicating clearly with your intended audiences.



5

INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE VISUAL AID THAT CONVEYS OR SUPPORTS THE MAIN MESSAGE

Photographs, graphs, and infographics are visual aids. Simple, well-designed visual aids help people easily and quickly grasp information. Make sure words and visual aids convey the same message and reinforce each other.



6

INCLUDE CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE KEY AUDIENCE

Be clear about what the evidence might mean (as it relates to the issue at hand) but also what it might not mean (if relevant), and frame the evidence in a way that is accurate and easy for the audience to understand.

7

FORMAT YOUR BRIEF

Finally, your brief should be concise, compelling, and visually appealing to your audience.

