



# **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

## **Fiscal Year 2019**

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

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## Overview

With this communication plan, the PLB will successfully execute communication efforts which support the current strategic plan. This plan has been developed to ensure consistent themes and messaging of the organization in all communication and outreach. Additionally, this plan will assist in increasing overall awareness of the newly identified key audiences of the efforts made by PLB to improve the quality of life for individuals in St. Louis County with developmental disabilities and their families.

This plan is designed to improve the overall success, as well as enhance the vision and mission and goals, of PLB. To maintain relevance and effectiveness, this plan should be reviewed annually and modified as needed.

## Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to establish consistent messaging throughout the PLB and provide the strategies to communicate that messaging and awareness to key audiences. The Communication Plan will serve as the guide for internal and external communications, including communication goals and objectives, audiences, messages, media, responsibility assignments, measurements and evaluation and outreach.

The overall purpose of communication efforts is to support PLB's mission and help achieve the goals outlined in the PLB Strategic Plan. This primarily means providing, in a credible, compelling and consistent way, the vital information stakeholders and key audiences need to support the PLB's mission, goals and objectives. Similar to the function of the PLB's Strategic Plan, this plan is a blueprint for achieving the specific communication goals deemed to be critical for PLB's success.

## Strategic Plan Goals

All communication activities must be directed toward achieving a clear purpose that is consistent with the PLB's Strategic Plan.

For this reason, all communication efforts will be mapped and in support of the goals outlined by the Board in its Strategic Plan and follow-up Board retreats, which are to:

- 1. Implement an organization that will best serve residents of St. Louis County with developmental disabilities**
- 2. Provide funding for a spectrum of quality services**
- 3. Become a more open and transparent organization**

# Objectives

In alignment with the Strategic plan, the overall objectives identified for this comprehensive communication plan are:

- A. Generate greater visibility for PLB through a plan that:
  - Keeps key audiences informed about PLB activities
  - Elevates the understanding of the role and value of PLB and its activities
  - Provides a level of transparency that results in the generation of trust in PLB
  
- B. Develop and implement a public relations strategy that:
  - Informs the public regarding the initiatives of PLB and invites feedback
  - Re-establishes PLB as an expert in the field
  - Generates engagement, goodwill, and an understanding of developmental disabilities among its key audiences
  
- C. Promote collaboration, networking, and educational opportunities to:
  - Increase agency success
  - Encourage information exchange amongst our key audiences
  - Identify opportunities for individuals to enhance their success

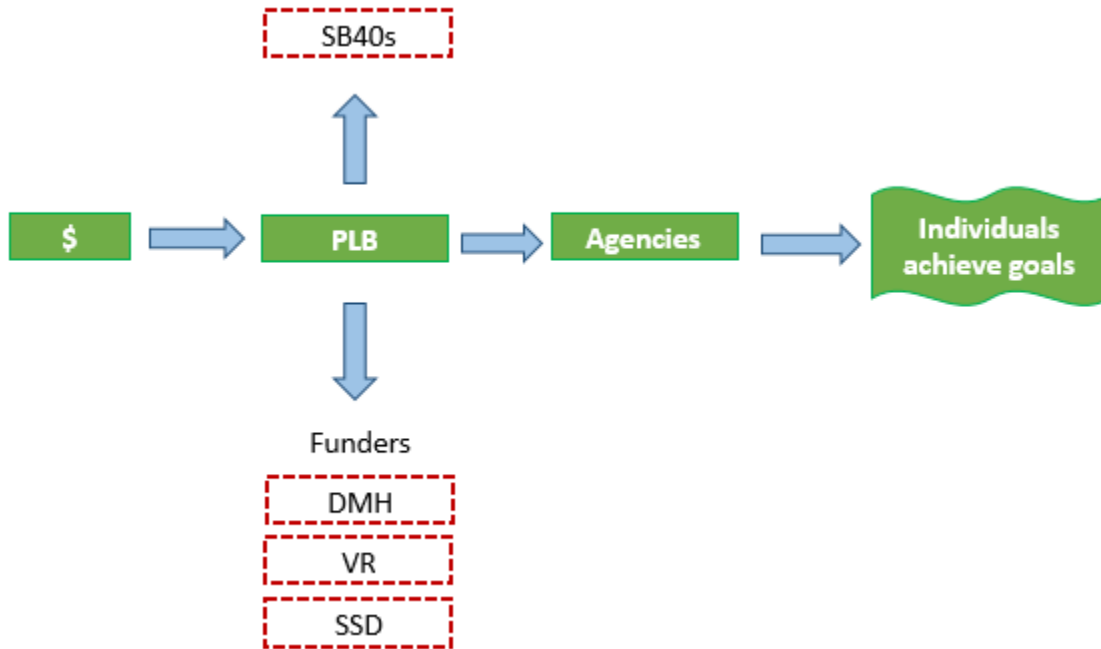
These objectives will increase the likelihood that PLB will participate in conversations and activities that shape the provision of services in St. Louis County, and influence the successful outcomes of its families.

# Key Audiences

## **HISTORY**

Prior to 2018, PLB's communication model was linear. By design, PLB's key audiences were limited to the agencies receiving its annual funding and a single annual satisfaction survey to the individual receiving services from that PLB funded agency.

## HISTORICAL KEY AUDIENCES



## **POST STRATEGIC PLAN**

Communication is intended to influence stakeholders and key audiences to support the PLB's objectives. With the adoption of the Strategic Plan, PLB expands its communication model beyond funded agencies and limited interaction with individuals and families to 8 different key audiences. Each key audience has different needs, issues and/or interests which might require special messaging delivered by various communication channels.

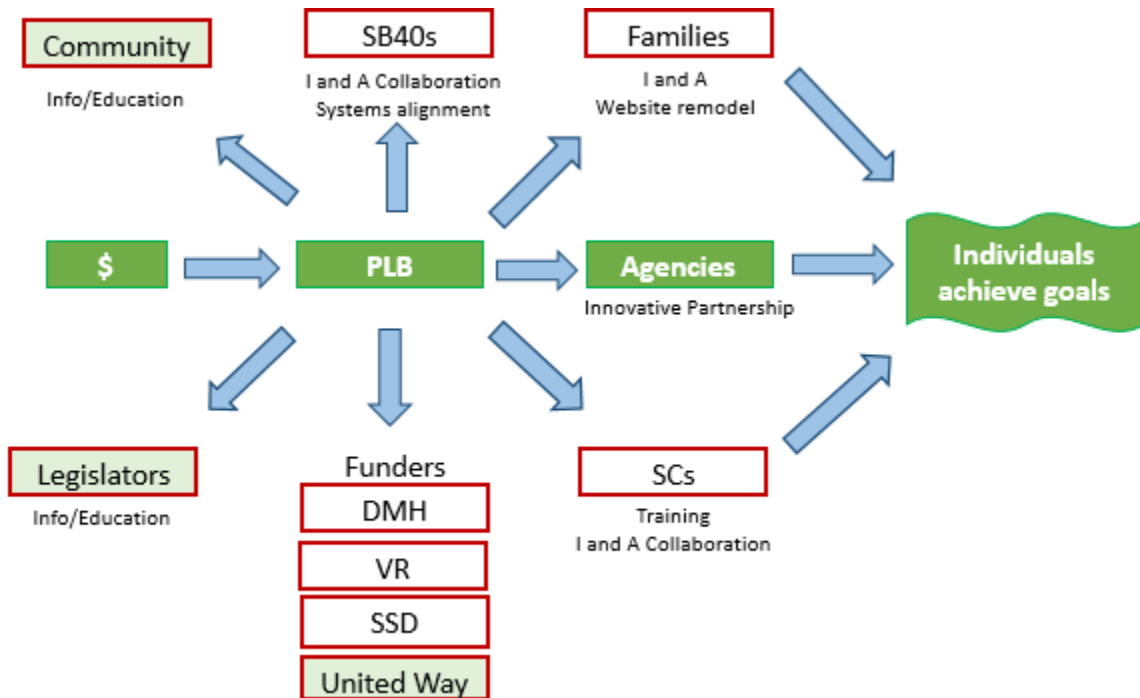
## **KEY AUDIENCES / EXTERNAL**

- Funded Agencies
- Individuals
- Families
- SB40 Boards
- Funders (DMH, VR, SSD, United Way)
- Service Coordinators/Community Connectors
- Legislators
- Community

## **KEY AUDIENCES / INTERNAL**

- Board of Directors
- Staff

**FUTURE KEY AUDIENCES**



**Strategy Groups**

An assessment of the key audiences indicates a level of parity amongst some of them. This similarity will allow for grouping the key audiences into three different message categories. Uniform messages will be developed to communicate similarly to each Strategy Group yet tailored so as to resonate with the key audiences in that group.

Below are the Strategy Groups and the key audiences that make up each group:

**STRATEGY GROUP #1**

Legislators  
Community

**STRATEGY GROUP #2**

SB40 Boards  
Funders (DMH, VR, SSD, United Way)

**STRATEGY GROUP #3**

Funded Agencies  
Individuals  
Families  
Service Coordinators/Community Connectors

## Theme

An overall theme, which defines PLB, is critical in implementing a strategic and integrated approach to communication efforts. It also is critical in supporting PLB's current vision.

***Individuals of all abilities are provided with opportunities that allow them to fulfill their potential and live as respected and included members of the community.***

The following theme helps to shape messages identified in this section. Understanding the key messages and how they relate to the current strategic plan is a full-circle approach to enhancing PLB's identity and role in the community.

***Influencing success in achieving the best quality of life.***

## Strategies

PLB will achieve its communication objectives by employing broad approaches and specific communication tactics that will describe the channels to use. The strategies to employ include:

- Empower funded agencies to continue to share their stories about the services they provide but also how PLB funding has helped them and the individuals and families that they serve be successful. Expand their message to include how partnering with PLB not only provides finances but also the support that they receive from PLB in other areas (direction, program development, back office support, innovation, and partnership).
- Determine the intended audiences for PLB events and programs and develop targeted messages that align with theme (fostering success, innovative ideas and collaboration).
- Use multiple messages to communicate the impact PLB collaboration and initiatives have on the community. So that the message resonates with more than one intended audience, tailor the message, language and examples that appeal to all of our specific audiences and at all levels within each audience.
- Educate the community on what PLB does and how it impacts the quality of life and strives for each individual's success.
- Provide the key audiences with relevant platforms for which to share their messages, needs and concerns. Listening is a critical component of this plan. Including this ongoing feedback from multiple key audiences will create a hardwired backbone for a new "customer-centric" culture at PLB.

# Plan Implementation

This plan will be implemented by undertaking the following actions for FY 2019  
(listed in priority sequence):

- Communicate with PLB leadership, staff and Board at the beginning of the fiscal year to share the theme for the year (***Influencing success in achieving the best quality of life***), key messages, communication strategies, policies and processes.
- Revise and continuously improve the content and production of PLB documents, websites, portals, and other collateral materials to be used for informing and communicating with PLB's key audiences.
- Revise and continue to update and improve the PLB's website as a tool for communicating the role of PLB to all key audiences and how it benefits the community and members.
- Seamlessly integrate the PLB-funded IDHelp program into the PLB's website, phone, agency and other community portals.
- Implement professional public relations programs which support the goal of conveying the message of PLB and its Board of Directors to the community at large.
- Develop an integrated campaign of public relations efforts to deliver key messages and future messages of topical importance, as defined by PLB via its Board of Directors.
- Establish an advisory board of individuals with ID/DD who meet regularly with staff and Board to identify areas of improvement and share personal successes that can be implemented on a broader scale.
- Assess PLB's use of social media platforms to help achieve our objectives and leverage when it helps to achieve the PLB's objectives; individual and family successes; agency successes; provide valuable information to key audiences; and provide a platform for collaboration and community engagement.
- Establish continuity and preserve the integrity of PLB's message to the community.
- Use PLB funding decisions as an opportunity to launch a communication's vehicle to all key audiences.



## Measurement and Evaluation

To measure the effectiveness of the communications efforts, a variety of methods will be employed, including:

- Advisory board feedback
- Modification of annual satisfaction surveys to be specific to an individual's needs
- Agency surveys
- Stakeholder feedback
- Quantity of media articles
- Interviews
- Website and social media analytics
- Email analytics

## Executive Director as Chief Communications Officer

The Executive Director will serve as PLB's Chief Communications Officer (CCO). The CCO is primarily responsible for managing the communications risks and opportunities of PLB, both internally and externally. The CCO is responsible for communications to a wide range of stakeholders, including employees, agency staff, media, individuals, family members, government agencies and other SB40 boards, legislators and the public. It may be necessary for the CCO to partner with other organizations in sharing joint messages that impact the stakeholders at a regional or statewide level.