

CYI Narratives Help Document

Introduction:

This section is designed specifically for CYI staff and provides information and examples of what to report in the narrative section “Progress Toward Deliverables”.

Knowing your audience is important. One question we wanted to answer is “who reads my narrative and why”?

District coordinators read them to gain perspective and more complete information than they can glean from the outputs section, for writing the county annual reports and further discussion with county decision makers.

Dr. Julie Chapin reads them as a way of keeping up on all of the good work going on around the state. It is especially helpful when she is asked for updates on programming in particular content areas or counties from legislators, stakeholders, administration and other key decision makers. The narrative is the place Dr. Chapin looks for information on progress people are making on planned efforts, challenges people are encountering and to see who is working in key areas when grant or partnership opportunities present themselves.

Supervising educators read them to better understand total program efforts. Narratives provide supervisors with updates on the “little things” that may not otherwise be touched on during county visits or phone calls, and provides supervisors with a bigger picture understanding of work efforts. They are also reviewed in conjunction with performance reviews to identify what has gone well, what has been accomplished and challenges that have been identified.

What information goes where?..:

Using *Goldie Locks and the 3 Bears* as our model, we will give three examples on narrative entries that illustrate too much information, too little information, and just right. But before we go there, let’s first talk briefly about what should go in two other sections that closely connect to what you write in the progress toward deliverables section. It is important to remember that while we may report on what we do in different sections of MIPRS they are all very much connected and together tell our whole story.

The first of these sections we should mention is the Outputs section (Program Coordinators can jump down to impact summaries since they are not reporting outputs). Remember an output is a program, event, or training that took place such as volunteer or staff led training, field trip, show, or community outreach event. When you enter an output you will find a notes section

to complete. The notes section should include the “who, what, when, where, and why” of an output. It may look something like this:

- Who: This program was open to all youth 9-19 within Henry County
- What: Henry County 4-H Communications Day
- When: April 6, 2014
- Where: Henry County Town Hall, Cambridge MI
- Why: Our 4-H program and volunteers believe communication skills are important and created this event to help improve this life skill and give youth an opportunity to demonstrate mastery by competing in competitions and be recognized for their accomplishments.

The second related section is Impact Summaries which is another narrative section you will find right above Progress toward deliverables within MIPRS. Impact summaries should include the “so what, who cares, and why?” and often includes evaluation data and testimonials from a program or effort. As its name suggests, this is the space to summarize the impacts from your program or event. What positive results occurred because of the program? Do you have evaluation data to share that shows that the participants learned something new? Do you have a quote from a participant? All of these things are really important to help show the difference we are making in the lives of children and youth.

So..... if that information belongs in outputs and in Impact Summaries - what belongs in the Progress Toward Deliverables narrative section?

While the outputs section discusses all about the program/event/activity that took place and the impact summaries explains meaningful results from that program, the progress toward deliverables section can talk about planning, preparation and needs assessment that took place leading up to the event. This is also the place to include connections and linkages you are making for MSUE, CYI, or 4-H. In other words, where are you representing MSUE? And finally you can include conversations, needs assessments, or work you have done regarding local or state wide issues and needs that affect your clientele. All of which, help tell the whole story and are key components to reaching the deliverables in your plan of work. To that end, you can think about having the following three headings in your Progress toward Deliverables narrative section:

- **Works in progress (programs, curriculum, etc.)**
- **Community connections & linkages**
- **Local or state wide issues**

You may not have effort to report on each of them every quarter, but using these headings will help you frame your efforts and provide helpful information within the Progress toward Deliverables narrative that compliments and does not duplicate what you are reporting in Outputs and Impact Summaries. Using these headings, I have included examples of work that could be listed under each heading along with three examples of how the entry could be written: 1) too much information, 2) too little information, and 3) just right!

Examples of Progress Toward Deliverables Narrative Entries – aim for just right!

Works in Progress

Example 1 – Communications Day

- **TOO MUCH INFORMATION**
 - Attended meeting April 1, 2014 from 6:00 – 7:30 Pm. I organized the meeting by setting the date that worked best for the committee and typed and printed the agenda. I typed up the minutes and set the next meeting date for April 10th.
 - I left a message with a person from our local bank and a representative from Wal-Mart about their interest in supporting our program. I'm hoping they will consider providing volunteers or by giving supplies or money to financially support the event. I will stop by and talk to a member of the bank next week.
 - I received 3 phone calls from youth participating in the contests and help answer their questions regarding times and rules for the event.
 - I sent 6 emails to various volunteers in our county recruiting them to attend communications day and helping with various tasks from registration to scoring. I also promoted volunteering opportunities through Facebook and have garnered the interest of some teen volunteers.
 - I Attended the April 10 meeting from 6:00 – 7:30 pm. I led the meeting again and made sure that everyone was completing their assigned tasks. I had someone else take minutes this time and I forwarded them out to the committee.
 - I went to Wal-Mart and purchased supplies for the event. Supplies I purchased were table cloths, balloons, pens, clip boards and poster board. I billed it to xxxx account.
- **TOO LITTLE INFORMATION**
 - Ran meetings, recruited youth and adults volunteers and purchased supplies
- **JUST RIGHT!**
 - The planning committee continues to meet to finalize arrangements. We have discussed the importance of getting more adult and teen volunteer involved so we discussed strategies to do so. I made some personal calls and am using our

Facebook page to promote the program and opportunities. Teen leaders seem to be receptive to this approach.

- The program would benefit from additional support in the form of donated supplies or sponsorship. I have identified local businesses that may be interested based on previous giving and company interests and am reaching out to determine interest.

Example 2 - County 4-H record book Revisions

- **TOO MUCH INFORMATION**
 - I organized a meeting on April 15, 2014 at the town hall. I created and printed the agenda which focused on reviewing the latest edits from the group and discussing if we should pilot what we currently have with two clubs or if we should wait till later in the year before piloting.
 - The committee made more edits outside of the meeting and I took the edits I received and made them in our master document. I then sent the revised document out to the rest of the committee for feedback.
 - Members of the committee requested paper copies so I printed each a hard copy and mailed it to their homes.
 - I received two phone calls from volunteers not a part of the record book committee with concerns about some of the changes they heard were taking place. Some were false and some were true. We talked about it and ultimately they agree that this is an important area for youth to grow in.
 - Relevance of the metric system, the number 11, and what exactly is a Euro?
- **TOO LITTLE INFORMATION**
 - I organized meetings, empowered some volunteers, directed other volunteers and made edits to the new book.
- **JUST RIGHT!**
 - The record book committee continues to meet to update the record book. I ensure discussions focus on identifying the most relevant and age appropriate information to include within the book so that it is a helpful resource for our 4-H youth to learn record keeping skills and financial literacy.

Community Connections and Linkages

- **TOO MUCH INFORMATION**
 - I ran into a man named Dave at Communications Day who works at Consumers Energy and talked to him about 4-H and potential partnership opportunities with Consumers Energy. He sounded interested and said he may be able to come and

talk to our 4-H youth about the company and what he does. I don't know if it will lead to anything but I am going to call him and follow up.

- I attended the school board meeting on March 20th. Discussions focused around some new band equipment and hiring another part time staff member to work in the cafeteria. Nothing that impacts 4-H was discussed, but I wore my MSUE polo shirt and said hi to the chair before I left the meeting.
- I attended the soil and water conservation board meeting on March 21. I continue to hope that more will be done on education, but the group continues to focus on policies and making sure guidelines are followed. I left after half the meeting concluded, but it was a small gathering and I waved at the board members before I left the room.
- I saw a flyer from the town library at the local grocery store promoting a reading literacy program they have coming up. I called the local library and spoke to the librarian to learn more about it and to share what resources MSUE has in the area. I was invited to come and meet with them next week to talk about their program and see if there are any opportunities for us to partner together. They seemed fairly proud about their program and we haven't partnered much with them in the past, but this maybe a chance to start.
- **TOO LITTLE INFORMATION**
 - Pursuing opportunities with consumer energy and the local library
 - Attended the school board and soil and water conservation board meetings.
- **JUST RIGHT!**
 - I had a brief conversation with an employee from Consumers Energy. He may be interested in speaking to 4-H youth about energy and his job. Need to explore further.
 - I attended the March meetings for the school board and soil and water conservation looking for linkages to MSUE programs. Nothing of relevance this month but I believe my presence shows support and interest in working with them.
 - I am meeting with our local library staff to discuss reading literacy programs and possible ways we could work together to support this shared outcome in our community.

Local or State Wide Issues

Example 1 - Animal health

- **TOO MUCH INFORMATION**

- The 4-H advisory council and the fair board discussed concerns over PEDv and animal health at the fair. We talked for 2 hours on March 16th and 1.5 hours on March 23rd and debated health policy, biosecurity and premiums. Final decisions on what to do have not been made but many individuals are concerned about animal and human health issues associated with PEDv and we want to be careful. The committees did decide to talk with Dr. Dan Grooms at the MSU vet college to see what his suggestions are. I encouraged them to contact the Michigan Pork Producers Association in case they had more information about this along with recommendations for biosecurity plans at fairs and exhibitions. I am going to seek out MSUE specialists and bring back information at the next meeting.
- **TOO LITTLE INFORMATION**
 - PEDv is a big concern. I'm bringing back more information to the committee to help make decisions.
- **JUST RIGHT!**
 - PEDv is a large and growing concern among swine producers, the fair board and 4-H youth with swine projects. I attended the 4-H advisory council meeting and the fair board meeting since this was on the agenda and is an issue we will need to approach together. We know that biosecurity and swine check in policies may need to change. At this point we are seeking advice from MSU, MSUE and our local veterinarians before making a decision. I have volunteered to contact our MSUE specialists and bring that information forward at the next meeting.

Example 2 – Financial education for youth

- **TOO MUCH INFORMATION**
 - The 4-H advisory council along with some club leaders continue to voice their concerns over the lack of financial education youth are receiving within schools and that this literacy gap is having negative consequences when youth leave high-school. We talked about the updates to the record book and how that could help our 4-H youth, but many think that is not enough. They want to see a more robust 4-H program that goes into detail about financial management within their projects. One volunteer talked about partnering with a local bank and visiting them once per week. Most of the group supported this and thus the volunteer is checking into it and will report back next week.
- **TOO LITTLE INFORMATION**
 - Youth need more education around managing finances.
- **JUST RIGHT!**
 - There is a growing interest among 4-H leaders in this county to expand on the financial literacy education 4-H provides. We agree that youth are not very

proficient in this area and this is something that 4-H can step up and help meet this need. We are exploring partnership opportunities with a local bank and working to include more information within the revised record book. Still exploring opportunities on how we can meet this need.

Example 3 – Parent concerns

- **TOO MUCH INFORMATION**
 - Two parents came into my office and were very concerned that all the snow days that occurred this winter will increase the number of make-up days well into June affecting 4-H participation in Exploration Days, State Awards and preparations for county fairs. The parents felt that their kids were better off participating in 4-H programs rather than attending these make up days “where all they do is have parties and free time”. They went on to talk about how schools don’t teach how to write in cursive anymore and how youth today aren’t growing up with the right discipline and skills to succeed.
- **JUST RIGHT!**
 - These types of conversations occur frequently and are important for building positive relationships. At the same time they should NOT be recorded in MIPRS.