

How to Write an Abstract*

Purpose—why write an abstract?

An **abstract** serves the function to entice individuals to read and review your work—in this case your poster or symposium presentation.

Abstract Format—how do I organize an abstract?

CESS abstracts are limited to no more than **250 words**.

Components of an abstract vary by discipline. You are free to follow the conventions common to your field of study and you may want to talk with a faculty member or other mentor as you prepare your abstract.

Alternatively, you may use the following headings to structure your abstract:

- **Background**— Describe the setting of the project/activity. Include a statement that describes the community-identified issue or question to be addressed. Who was involved?
- **Objectives**— What was your project trying to accomplish? What dimensions of an issue did your project address? How were the outcomes defined and by whom?
- **Methods**— What steps did you take or strategies did you use to achieve project objectives?
- **Results**— What *happened* as a consequence of your activities in and with the community? What were the products of your project (if any)? What was the impact of the project on the community(ies) served? What was the impact on you and your fellow collaborators?
- **Conclusion**—What information was learned that can be used by other groups or organizations? What did you learn?

Abstract content--what information should be included?

Regardless of the nature of your project, you will have opportunities to collect data on your activities. You may want to include some of these in the abstract. You will definitely want to include these and/or related types of data on your poster and/or in your symposium presentation.

A few ideas on data to include (remember, these are just ideas—if not relevant to your project/advocacy/scholarship pick something else):

- The number of interventions/services offered
- The number of individuals reached or the number of volunteers recruited
- Number of people attending your programs over X period of time or types of communities reached.
- Examples of impact:
 - Number of parents who asked that you help them enroll their children in the after-school fitness program that you discussed in your training;
 - Number of trees planted;
 - Amount of funds raised for cause X;
 - Number of students with increased reading proficiency as a result of your tutoring program;
 - Before and after shots of an urban garden transformation project;
 - Number of families and individuals who established a garden plot as a result of making the garden space available.