

Report Writing Guide

Contact Alice Chapman alice.chapman@kingcounty.gov or 206-263-1195 when you're planning to write a report.

□ Plan your report

- Determine what kind of report is it: technical, project summary, repository for reference data, methods and materials?
- Define your audience: LHWMP staff, LHWMP managers, external agencies, or technical experts?
 - Reports are rarely intended for our customers (residents or small businesses).
- Determine if you need an internal or public report
 - If it is public, allow extra time and expect greater scrutiny.
- Decide on a report structure
 - Look at typical outlines for similar reports
 - Determine what goes in the body of the report and what does in the appendices
 - Set a target report length; shorter is better
- Get feedback on a sample of your writing before you begin your report.
- Decide how equity and social justice can be addressed in the report. For example, report whether issues discussed have disproportionate impact, or present opportunities for LHWMP to improve service equity. Include demographic and geographic data, or information about potential audiences.

□ Public reports: Use the LHWMP report template and RefWorks

- Install the [template](#) into Word on your computer. Then, it will always be listed in your "available templates" called "My templates."
- Read the [template](#) for detailed report-writing guidance and for examples of all the template features.
- You can design your own report format, but it takes extra time and you may miss program requirements for public reports that are built into the LHWMP template.
- Use *RefWorks*, a computer tool, to cite your references while you write and automatically generate your bibliography in Word. Contact the [Research Services Team](#) to get started.

□ Internal reports: Report structure and RefWorks

- You may choose any report format. These minimum features are required:
 - Author, title, date (month and year), project, abstract

- “For Internal LHWMP Use Only” in the footer
- Use *RefWorks*, a computer tool, to cite your references while you write and automatically generate your bibliography in Word. Contact the [Research Services Team](#) to get started.

□ **Write your content**

- Outline your report and seek feedback from writers you trust *before* writing your first draft. Revising report structures is easy at this stage.
- Use the proper tense, which can differ between sections. For example, an Introduction may use present tense. When describing what you did (e.g., in Methods) and found (in Results), use past tense.
- Write in active voice, not passive.
- Speak directly to your audience. Use “you”, “we”.
 - Example: “We recruited ten businesses” rather than “Ten businesses were recruited.”
- Report the outcome of applying the LHWMP [planning and engagement tools](#).
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□ **Other tips**

- Stick to your target report length. This helps you focus on the most important points. Keep asking yourself, “How does this information serve the reader?”
- Focus on the meaning of information, rather than simply presenting information. What do the numbers mean? How do we apply this research? What is your interpretation?

When you’re done writing your report, go to either the [Public Report - Review Checklist](#) or the [Internal Report – Review Checklist](#).



**Local Hazardous Waste
Management Program
in King County**