

Building Your Reputation: How Your Agency can Become Subject- Matter Experts

Lauren Murfree, PhD, MPH
Policy Analyst



I N D I A N A
COMMUNITY ACTION
POVERTY INSTITUTE
Research and Public Policy

Housekeeping



Interactive session: Be prepared to be engaged, asked to write, move around during this session –activities planned



Questions during the session? Put them in the parking lot!
Will work to address them at the end.



As an individual:

Post-it notes
A working pen/pencil



As a group

Clustering by region!
Big sticky note



In the room

Big sticky notes

Who is presenting?

- PhD in Science Communication & MPH in Family & Community Health
- From the Pocono mountains to the plains of Indiana
- Grew up on Section 8/HCV
- Policy Analyst at INCAP
- Best movie I can recall...Everything Everywhere All At Once



Icebreaker [3 mins]

On your post it notes, please write & then place on this larger sticky pad here:

1. One thing you are hoping to learn from this session?
2. On a scale to 1-10 how familiar are you with engaging with local government entities and decision makers?
3. What was the best movie you can recall that you saw?



Overview of Today's Conversation




WHAT IS A SUBJECT MATTER
EXPERT?



HOW DO YOU GET OTHERS TO
CONSIDER YOU A SUBJECT MATTER
EXPERT?



HOW DO YOU ENGAGE
WITH DECISION MAKERS AND BUILD
UP A REPUTATION AS A SME?



What is a Subject Matter
Expert?

What is a Subject Matter Expert (SME)? [2 mins]



Put what you think a SME is on a sticky note



Think about:

Who do you consider a subject matter expert in your region?

What is a Subject Matter Expert (SME)?

- Someone who has extensive knowledge on a particular topic or field they are the authority on that subject = subject matter expert



Think Point # 1

[3 mins]



Think of a time when you felt the most knowledgeable:

Why did you feel knowledgeable?

On a scale of 1-5 did you feel you were able to share what you know in understandable way?



Write this down on your sticky note and place on the larger sticky note



If you start to see patterns pull the sticky notes into clusters!

How Do Get Others to Consider You a SME?



KNOWLEDGE &
EXPERTISE



EXPERIENCE

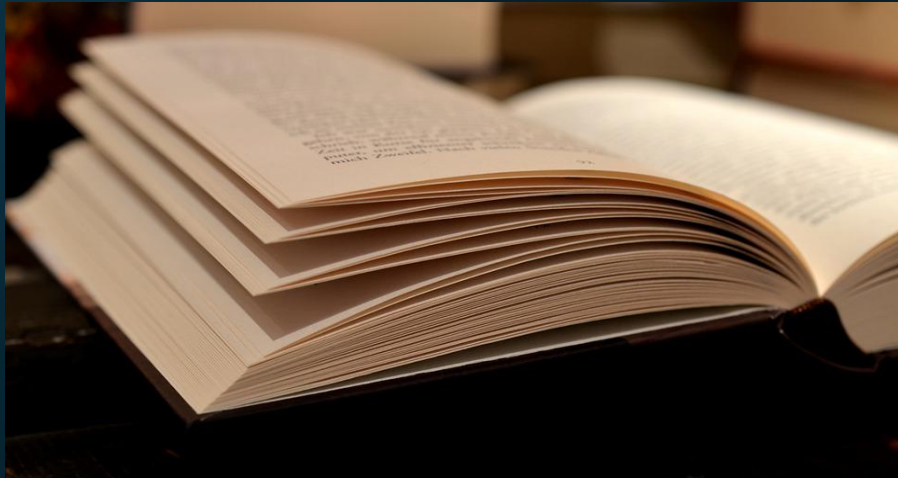


REPUTATION



CONNECTIONS

Knowledge & Expertise



- No one person is an expert on every topic
- The knowledge you have on the specific population/topic or concern may be more than the decision maker
- Decision makers rely on individuals they consider SMEs for important information
 - Particularly those they have connections with and trust

Experience



**Practical hands-on application
of knowledge**



**Your experience in your field is
invaluable**

Decision-makers highly value those who have hands on experience – ideally hear from them directly on issues

Reputation

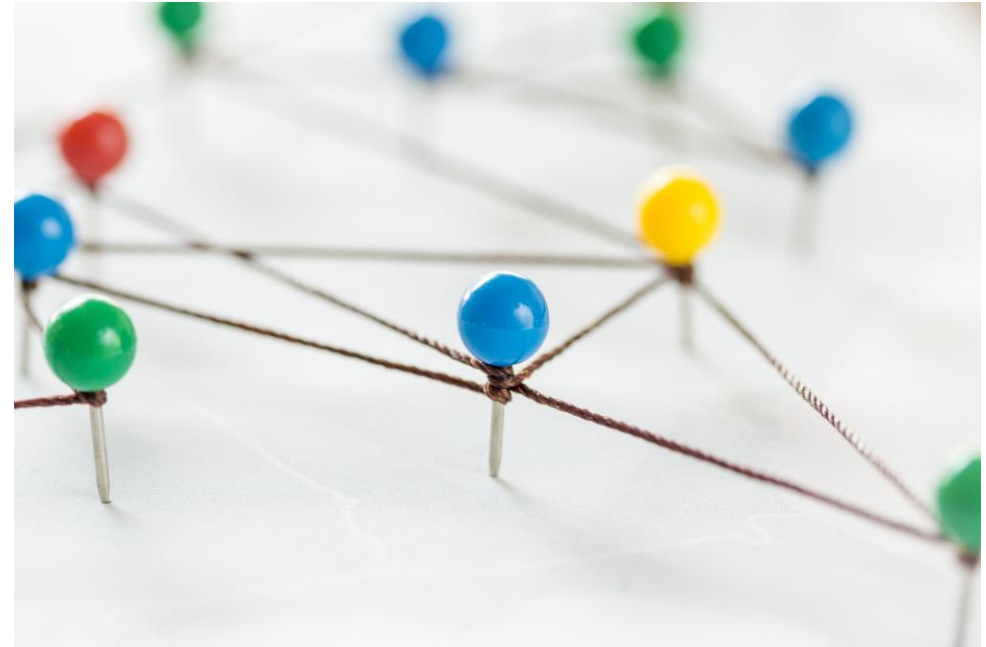
Beliefs and
opinions others
hold of you

Are you known in
your community
as a person who
speaks truth?

Do decision
makers know you
and hold a opinion
on you?

Connections

- Relationships are extremely valuable
- **Consider:**
 - What ties to stakeholders, influential persons, decision makers do you have?
 - Do you know someone who knows someone?



Think Point # 2

[3 mins]



Do you know who are your local:
[Y/N]

City council members
State government officials
Federal officials



Have you spoken with any of these persons before? [Y/N]



Do you have a relationships with them ? [Y/N]

How Do You Engage with Government Entities and Build up a Reputation as a SME?

How Do You Prepare?



WHO WILL YOU BE
ENGAGING?



WHAT WILL YOU
ENGAGE THEM ON?



WHAT IS THE GOAL OF
YOUR ENGAGEMENT?

Prep: Who Are You Engaging?

Do Your Research

- Background on the person
- Their positions, events they attended – potential values
- What groups do they engage with the most?
- Determine format for making contact & engagement
 - Legislative assistant, secretary etc.
 - In-person scheduling, email, calling

Example: Select-Fort Wayne, Local Decision Makers

Sharon Tucker – 6th District



Nathan Hartman - 3rd District



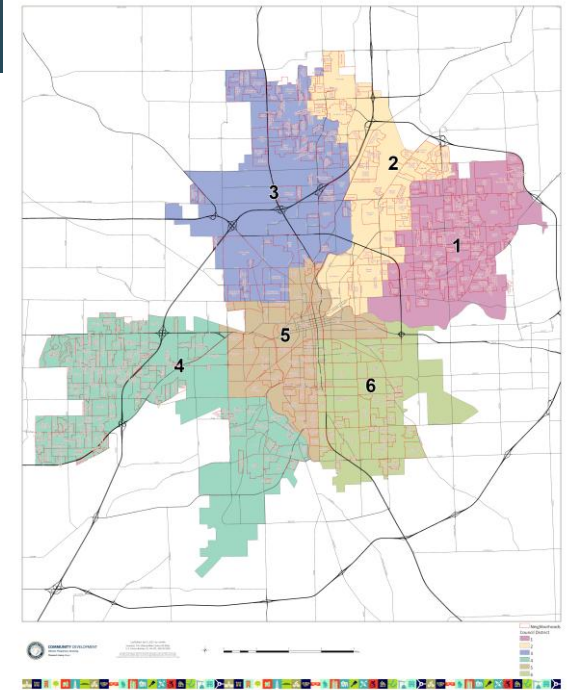
Nathan is honored to represent the residents of Fort Wayne's 3rd

Dr. Scott Myers - 4th District



- Important to know faces & names!
- Possible you can run into people in town and not even know it- informal connection opportunities
- <https://www.cityoffortwayne.org/city-council-home/53-city-clerk/city-council.html>
- Note: Sharon Tucker is now Mayor of Fort Wayne

Fort Wayne Council Districts
2020 - 2030



Prep: What Will You Engage with Them On?

- Define Your Topic
 - State this up front!
- Prepare materials – relevant stories & stats
 - Bring supportive handouts- best practice is less than two pages
- Keep Your Scope In Mind:
 - More narrow - fewer topics = More in-depth conversation on that specific thing.
 - Broader - more topics= Attention is spread out.

*NOTE: You will need to have this defined before scheduling a meeting

Prep: What is the Goal of Your Engagement?

- What do you hope to come out of the conversation?
 - Better understanding of your work/program
 - Awareness of community concerns on XYZ
 - Relationship building, connection with you and trust in your expertise
 - Willingness to engage with you on addressing XYZ

Think Point # 3

[3 mins]



Who is your decision maker?



What topic/concern/issue would you focus on with your decision maker?



What would be your end goal of your engagement?

How to Apply in Practice

In Practice

- **Start:**

- Remember your why- kick it off with that!
- If first engagement prepare for QUESTIONS!
 - From them- You may get many questions that may seem basic to you
 - From you- Come with questions to have an open conversation

- Build up rapport and reputation – if you express interest in them as a person, they are more likely to do the same to you
 - *"Why did you get into politics?"*
 - *"What sort of things are you most interested in working on?"*

- **End:**

- Positive note- thank them for their time.

Roleplay: Scenario - Local Government Leader

[3-5 mins]

You are reading in your local paper about increased concerns about unhoused persons in your area, with a quote from your local city council member suggesting they are also concerned about unhoused persons sleeping outside.

Your organization, which focuses on services for unhoused individuals, has decided to connect with this city council member and offer them a tour of your facilities and share information about your programs.

The roleplay starts after you have just given a tour of the facilities.

Debrief



WHAT POINTS DID YOU FEEL WENT WELL IN THIS ENGAGEMENT?



WHAT POINTS DID YOU FEEL THINGS GOT STUCK OR SEEMED TO BE UNCERTAIN ON NEXT STEPS?

In Your Regions –If Time Allows!



Get into groups of 2



Take turns playing:

Decision maker

Yourself/ non-profit SMEs

Debrief

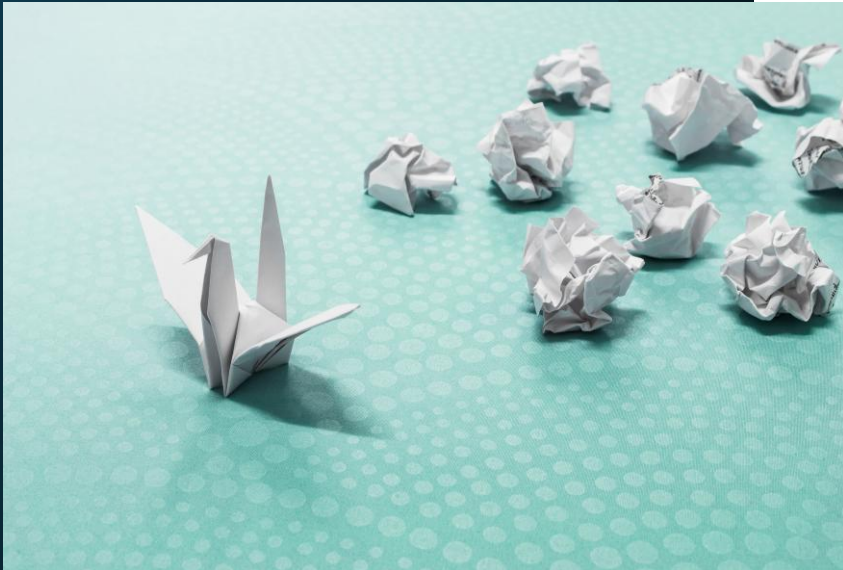


WHAT POINTS DID YOU FEEL
COMFORTABLE IN YOUR
ENGAGEMENT?



WHAT POINTS DID YOU FEEL STUCK
OR UNSURE WHAT TO DO?

Best Practices



- Engage with your decision makers ideally outside of high stressful times
 - Helps build a relationship
- Invite to your facilitates for a tour, presentation, or engagement opportunity
- Have information ready to hand off – keep to 2 pages if possible
- **Consistent engagement is key-** it's a relationship like any other
 - Give thanks
 - Follow up

Want to Stay In Touch?



I N D I A N A
COMMUNITY ACTION
POVERTY INSTITUTE
Research and Public Policy

- Stay informed about what the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute (INCAP) is doing and the storytellers we are engaging!
- Our Email: Institute.incap.org



Q & A & Feedback

Feedback Survey: <https://tinyurl.com/incapfb>