

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Gaining Support and Attracting Participation through Communication

Webcast Transcript

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Webcast Agenda and Meeting Logistics

Slide 1 and 2: Introduction Slides

Operator: Good afternoon. My name is Wanda, and I will be your conference operator today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the U.S. EPA Webcast, “Gaining Support and Attracting Participation through Communication Conference Calls”. All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise.

If you should need any assistance during the call, please press star, then zero and an operator will come back online to assist you. Thank you. I would now like to turn the call over to Ms. Emma Zinsmeister. Please go ahead.

Emma Zinsmeister: Thank you and, welcome, everyone. Thanks for joining us for today’s Webcast. We’re going to be covering the topic, “Gaining Support and Attracting Participation through Communication” focusing on how state and local climate and energy programs can use communication strategies strategically to help build support for their programs

Slide 3: How to Participate Today

Emma Zinsmeister: So before we move into today’s agenda, I just want to go over a few reminders on how to use the GoToWebinar software so everyone can participate. You’ll be able to access the GoToWebinar features through the control panel which looks like what you see on the screen here.

You can open and collapse the panel by clicking on the arrow in the orange box. And, as mentioned, everyone is on mute today and you can access us and ask questions of our speakers by typing them into the control panel and hitting “Submit”. If at any point in time you have any technical difficulties, Wendy Jaglom is on the line and can provide assistance. You can e-mail her at wendy.jaglom@icfi.com.

Slide 4: Webcast Agenda

Emma Zinsmeister: We have a full agenda for you today. I’ll start off by providing a little bit of background information on our state and local climate and energy program and the Webcasts that we’re hosting in this series. We’ll then hear from Susanne Moser of Susanne Moser Research & Consulting who will talk about and provide a little bit of background on communicating with purpose and engaging folks in work on climate change.

We’ll then hear from Connie Roser-Renouf from George Mason University. She’ll talk a little bit about their research on different perspective on climate change in the U.S. and ways to message to meet those audience interests.

And then, we’ll hear two case studies, one from Samantha Kappalman from Maryland’s Department of the Environment and then from Robert Graff of the Delaware Valley Regional

Planning Commission. At the end of the presentations, we'll do a facilitated panel discussion and then take questions from the audience.

So please, as folks as giving their presentations, type in your questions into the GoToMeeting panel. Be sure to indicate who your question is for. That just helps us facilitate the Q&A and we'll be sure to get to those at the end of the call.

And once we conclude the call today, you'll see as you close out of GoToWebinar that an optional questionnaire will pop up. And I highly encourage you to provide feedback on today's Webcast and your interest in this topic. We use that information to develop our resources in future calls, so we do take that into consideration in our planning.

Slide 5: U.S. EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Program

Emma Zinsmeister: So just some background information on our state and local climate and energy program here at EPA. Our objective is to help state and local governments with their climate change mitigation work primarily. We focus on the multiple benefits of reducing greenhouse gases and ways to facilitate inter-agency collaboration at different levels of government.

At the Web address listed at the bottom of the screen, you can access all of our resources which include Webcast and peer-exchange opportunities like we're having today, a variety of analytic tools, information documents and best practices and case studies which will be helpful for you.

Slide 6: Communications Methods for State and Local Climate and Clean Energy Programs

Emma Zinsmeister: So, as I mentioned, today's call is part of a three-part series we're doing on communications methods for state and local climate and clean energy program. The next two calls will be on December 11th and December 18th. The structure of these calls is really meant to track with how you can use communications throughout the design, implementation and evaluation of your climate and energy program.

So today, we're going to be talking about using communication strategically from the program development perspective. Next week, we'll be talking, about once programs are up and running, how communication strategies can help move your audience from interest and motivation to action. And then, on the third call, we'll be looking at creative and innovative ways to share the results that your programs are achieving to maintain momentum and be responsive to the participants that you've engaged.

And ultimately, all of the recordings and presentations from these Webcasts will be made available on our Web site. You can access them using the link at the bottom of the screen. Usually we got files up a few weeks after the call has concluded.

Slide 7: Communications Framework

Emma Zinsmeister: In addition to and in parallel with this Webcast series, we're developing some new material for our Web site that's meant to provide how-to guidance on how state and local agencies can develop and implement communication strategies. And what you see on the screen here is just an outline of the framework that we're in the process of developing and we are really looking for your feedback to see if this resonates with the work that you've been doing and to see if this fits with your programs.

And so, they'll be multiple opportunities through today's Webcast to provide your insights and feedback. And just to quickly run through this, the idea with this framework is to help folks speak through the process of how you go about defining the objectives of the program and identifying the target audience – really understanding their perspectives – challenges and barriers that they face – ways that you can engage with them – different opportunities and times to do so and then the process of developing and testing frames and messages for delivering your program – implementation strategies that could involve things like different marketing approaches such as community-based social marketing strategies or competitions or other methods and then you know the process of selecting channels for communication and the right messengers.

So that's to give you a little bit of a flavor of what we'll be developing for our Web site which will be accompanied by much more in-depth information along with the diagram.

Slide 8: Contact Information

Emma Zinsmeister: So if you have any questions at all at any time about our program and the work that we're doing and the resources that we offered, please feel free to contact me. I'm more than happy to answer your questions.

Poll Question #1

Emma Zinsmeister: And before we move into the feature presentations for today's Webcast, we're going to do a quick poll question to get sort of your immediate feedback on our framework here. So Wendy, if you want to go ahead and pull up the first poll question?

Wendy Jaglom: Yes. And it should be up on the screen now. And so, as Emma said, we're looking for feedback on the draft communications framework based on your experience. So there are five choices up there.

You can choose all that apply. The choices are, all key steps are captured, one or more key steps are unfamiliar to me, one of more steps should be removed, one or more steps should be renamed and the order of steps needed to be adjusted.

Emma Zinsmeister: And if you have any more specific thoughts on you know what should be changed or what is unfamiliar to you, feel free to you know type in any of that information into the GoToWebinar control and we'll have access to that as well as we – as we work on revising this framework to meet everyone's needs and experiences. So I'll give everyone just a minute or two to respond to that and think about and just kind of reflect on whether or not this framework will be useful for you.

All right. Wendy, let's go ahead and pull up the results of the poll. And folks will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback. So if you had more thoughts or comments, you can certainly provide those later. We'll show you additional opportunities to do that.

Wendy Jaglom: So results are up on the screen now and it looks like 55 percent of you said that all key steps were captured, 30 percent say that one or more key steps is unfamiliar to me and then we had 1 and 2 percent for the other three choices.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. So it looks like you know our framework resonates with folks' experience and practice. And, as I mentioned, we're going to have a lot more in-depth sort of instructive information on our Web site as we flush out these steps in that content. So anything that is unfamiliar to folks hopefully will be clarified with the full version of the material that we're developing.

Communicating with Purpose – Communicating for Change

Slide 1: Title Slide

Emma Zinsmeister: So, with that, we should move on to our presentations today. We're going to first hear from Susanne Moser. Dr. Susanne Moser is the director and principle research or Susanne Moser Research & Consulting. She's also a social science research fellow at Stanford and a research associate with the Institute for Marine Sciences at the University of California, Santa Cruz, as a nationally and internationally-recognized expert in climate change adaptation, communication for social change and science policy interactions.

She works with researchers, governmental and non-governmental organizations in the U.S., Europe and Australia. Dr. Moser is a geographer by training with broad inter-disciplinary expertise. She previously held positions with the National Center for Atmospheric Research and the Heinz Center in Washington D.C., as well as the Union of Concerned Scientists.

She served on scientific and advisory boards for Future Earth, IHCP and the U.S. National Research Council, the U.S. National Climate Assessment and numerous other agencies. She's also contributed to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Reports. So, with that, I am going to turn it over to Susanne. Thank you.

Susanne Moser: Thanks so much, Emma. And, hello, everyone. It's wonderful to have such great interest in this Webinar series. And so, my task here is to just position what we're trying to do with this series in the context and then I'm very happy to tell you that everyone else is going to tell you how to do it. I just tell you what the problems are, so, with that, let me just write in what we want to do here.

Slide 2: Are We Getting Through?

Susanne Moser: One of the really important things for me is that we're you know challenged every day with trying to get our messages through to people who are faced with just a plethora of other information from you know coming at them through whatever – every handheld device on the planet and through advertisement and TV and what-not – how do we get through at that moment?

Slide 3: Are We Making a Difference?

Susanne Moser: You know that's one of the big challenges that we face, but it's more than getting through. It's also, are we actually making a difference? Is it going to change anyone's behavior? Is it going to change everyone's mind, anyone's mind?

I love the saying here that comes from a Dutch source that I don't know – I just heard it there – which is, "Said is not heard, heard is not understood, understood is not agreed and agreed is not

implemented.” You can see how many steps there are between what we might say and what another person may or may not do and how many times we might fail in that process.

Slide 4: Beyond “Getting the Right Message Out”

Susanne Moser: So really, what this Webinar and this whole series is about is trying to make that connection between saying something and doing something, making that work as best and smoothly and successfully as possible. So, to me, then, this whole issue is more than about just getting the right message out. That’s still very much the sort of notion of one way deliver and just you know throwing it at people and hoping that something happens.

We could be much more effective, much more strategic about that. And, in many ways, as you will encounter and probably already have, it’s not just about you know us saying something to other people, but also being in dialogue with them and understanding their concerns, understanding why is it that they don’t act on this very persuasive information that we have, that sort of thing.

So we need to get you know away from just thinking it’s a one-way delivery. They don’t have the information and we just need to fill their you know empty heads and then some magic happens and all of a sudden they will act. It’s what we call the information deficit model.

And we need to get away from thinking it’s just about if they know something they will also act. You know what kind of behavior change? What kind of engagement do we actually want and how do we mobilize them from being sort of passive recipients of information to actually being actively engaged.

Slide 5: Communicating – Really

Susanne Moser: And so, I want to remind you about what communication actually means. It goes back to a Latin word that it has at the root the word “communion” – to impart, to share, to make common. So this is the ultimate goal in mind of creating – or having effective communication – if, you, in the end, share something in common with the people that you’re trying to reach

And the love this quote here from Bill McDonough that says, “Communities are groups of people communicating.” They have made things common. They share that in common. So how do you – how do we get there?

Slide 6: Key Challenges and Needs

Susanne Moser: And you know looking at the kind of challenges that people like yourselves often have, it is a real big challenge. This is the – this is the context that you’re facing – the typical challenges that are difficult to communicate have to do with climate change, energy, sustainability. All of them are very vague and you know some of them loaded with political issues.

The first issue is, how do you make that real? How do you translate this abstract idea, something that comes out of the socket you know? How do you translate that and link it to everyday activities that people actually can enact?

Then, how you – what’s the right message to get across to people if – to the extent that it is about the message per se? What should you say? How should you say it? What’s most effective?

And you know people get – you know as I said, they hear a lot of messages. And so, how do you prioritize? You know if you have three programs going on, is there, like, a top message and then everything else underneath? Or, how do you prioritize? How do you make it simple enough for people to capture and really get and remember?

Oftentimes, you cannot reach the masses. You need to actually focus with the limited budget that you have on a smaller number of people that are socially very influential. And if you can reach them effectively, then, they can take your message and spread it to the people who you know trust these influentials, so how do you identify those and then make them into champions and, of course, then, being impactful so that you have actually something to show for at the end of your communication.

And you know let’s not you know forget this. And I’m not sure it’s going to be dealt with today, but it’s certainly something that you need to be dealing with and hopefully will come up in one of the other Webinars. You do this all in the context that is highly polarized and that is often colored by political backlash working in the shadow of Agenda 21. I’m sure many of you are familiar with that and struggling with that on a daily basis.

Slide 7: Connecting Talk to Walk

Susanne Moser: So this is why I love this picture, just you know the path between communication and behavior change is a really treacherous one. There are many downfalls. And what we hope to do is to really take this apart and make you comfortable with linking those two.

Slide 8: Engaging How? Need to Set Clear Goals

Susanne Moser: Let me also say a word about what do you want to achieve. There are many, many different ways that you might affect an audience or, if you will, goals that you might perceive. And, often, we use the word, “Well, we want to engage people.” Well, what does that mean? On what level?

It might be you might engage their brains, cognitive engagement; or you might want them to care, emotional engagement; or you might want them to do something, behavioral engagement. For many of you, you might focus on a particular professional group you know water managers or energy utility managers. You want them to do something different in the context of their work.

It's a whole different set of things than if you talk about behavior in a household, let's say, or students in a school. Or you might socially engage them where it's really about engaging the peers and the social reference groups that has such a strong influence on what we do. Then, it goes on from there.

Slide 9: Engaging How? Need to Set Clear Goals (cont.)

Susanne Moser: A lot of people in the faith community are really interested in sort of stimulating our reaction from a moral or spiritual point of view to basically get people to find their engagement around this based in their values and their belief – civic engagements, showing up at meetings, participating in public hearings or dialogue sessions, whatever – or political engagement, of course, which ultimately can lead to the much bigger changes by you know putting the people in Congress that we want to see there or getting people to engage locally or at the state level to support certain positions.

So you might really want to think about what goals you are after and then, therefore, who do you really need to talk to. Everything in this context starts and ends with the audience and is matched with the objectives that you have.

Slide 10: It Starts and Ends with the Audience

Susanne Moser: So where can you make the biggest difference and where, then, is your primary audience? It might very well be that if you don't have a direct line to your ultimate audience, you might need to communicate with people in between, to go to the influentials that then can have the influence on others, so I'll put up a few here for you to think about.

Is it your council members or other elected officials? Is it your boss in your agency? Is it other colleagues that you work with in your agency or certain community leaders and what do we actually mean by that?

Who is a community leader? Someone in the faith community. Maybe you want to engage them because you think that will be the most important way to mobilize people. Or folks who make decisions in households about purchases or you know appliances or cars or what-not.

Maybe you want to get at – to people via schools, colleges, teachers, business leaders – and a very important group – utilities make big energy decisions, of course. So really think about it – where do you want to focus? Maybe you have you know only this much money in your budget and this year you're going to focus on one group; next year, it's going to be another one. It will make all the difference to the way you design your communication strategy.

Slide 11: Effective Engagement

Susanne Moser: So I want to leave you here with a couple more slides that are just sort of a very rough roadmap, if you will. What do we mean by effective engagement? Well, for communication to be effective, in other words, if you actually achieve the goal you intended, not

just some random other outcome you didn't think you might achieve; but if you actually want to achieve the thing that you had in mind, you have to accomplish two things in between.

One is, you have to first give people a good reason of why they should change what they do – you know the comfortable things. The default option is to do nothing different than what you're already used to. That's the easy part, but that is often not what gets you to you know energy use reduction or emission reductions or what-not, so how do you elevate and motivate people to change.

And then, secondly, in any one of these cases, there will be barriers or internal resistance to making that change. So you have to help lower those barriers and resistance. Sometimes it's, like, "I don't know what to do." Or, "Well, nobody else is doing it," whatever.

So in any one of these cases, whatever your goal is with a particular audience, you have to think about what would motivate that audience, what specific resistance or barriers do they face in order for you then to design your communication that leads to the outcomes that you really want to have.

Slide 12: Spell Out & Test Your "Theory of Change"

Susanne Moser: And so, that really – this is my last slide here – really opens up the question – how do you think the world actually works? How do you think information makes a difference or communication makes a difference in people's lives?

So if you start at the very top here with your long-term impact, your ultimate outcome, if you will, what do you really want to achieve? How will that look? How will you know that you have achieved that? And then, before that, what will have to happen that – to have – make that you know outcome come about? And, before that, what will have to happen before we get there?

And then, in other words, that then leads you to your short-term activities and the kinds of things you might do to bring that about. So I really want to challenge you to spell out for yourself and to test against reality whether or not your, if you will, theory of change – you hypothesis of how your communication links to behavior change actually works out.

Do that with your colleagues, test it with your family you know. And you might be surprised to find, "My God, I'd never thought about you know these obstacles or this kind of implication or this way out people use." So you really want to lay that out as you design your strategies.

I think the communication that is guaranteed to fail is the one you don't think strategically about. If you really don't lay this out, you will not get to understanding your audience, to understanding what motivates them, what thing could move them, who is influential, what barriers do they face and then you know who is the audience and how might you actually reach them with persuasive communication.

Slide 13: Drum roll, please...

Susanne Moser: So with that one, I'll just you know put that out there. There is simply no trick to this. It is a lot of work, it is persistence. You have to do this repeatedly, you have to test it, you try it out.

Slide 14: Thank you!

Susanne Moser: And I know you are all faced with limited budgets to make this work. So you really want to think hard about how to strategically design your communication and address it towards a few influential so that you, then, can actually be very – have a widespread impact on a much broader audience with their help, if you will. And, with that, I will turn it back to Emma or whoever is next – Connie, I suppose.

Emma Zinsmeister: Thank you, Susanne. That's a great context for the rest of our discussion today and on our upcoming Webcast. We're going to be diving into a lot of the points that Susanne had mentioned and to more concrete examples of strategies you can use to accomplish the different steps that she has mentioned.

Poll Question #2

Emma Zinsmeister: Before we move on to our next presentation, we're going to pull up another poll question. Susanne mentioned a number of audiences that you might consider as you are looking at getting your programs up and off the group.

So we're interested in hearing from you on which audience's support is the most important for the success of your program. This could be elected official, utilities, members of your community, the business community, other institutions that are important like schools and churches.

And, of course, there are obviously multiple audiences that may be important to you. But if you could just select the top one that you're focusing on at the moment, that would be really helpful for us. So we'll give everyone a moment to provide their answers.

Susanne Moser: Emma, I think you still have me on the screen. Is that correct?

Emma Zinsmeister: I think folks should be able to see the poll. Wendy, is that up?

Wendy Jaglom: The poll question is up and people are responding.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. All right. We should pull up the results just so we can keep things moving along. And so, it looks like the most popular answer – 43 percent was elected officials and other local or regional planning board at 43 percent, individual community members at 24 percent, the business community at 15 percent, community institutions at 11 percent and utility companies at 7 percent.

So thank you, everyone, for providing that information. It's really insightful for us to be able to see who you're trying to reach and it helps our speakers you know frame their conversations as well. So, with that, we're going to move into our next presentation.

Communicating with Global Warming's Six Americas: Understanding and Reaching Diverse Audiences

Slide 1: Title Slide

Emma Zinsmeister: Connie Roser-Renouf is an assistant research professor at George Mason University's Center for Climate Change Communication. As a member of a collaborative research team at Yale and George Mason, she participates in the design and analysis of bi-annual surveys on Americans' climate-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, which is titled, "Climate Change in the American Mind".

Her research focuses on understanding how diverse public views, interpret and respond to information on this issue in order to identify effective communication strategies that inform and engage the audiences. So Connie is going to be diving in a bit more to how you actually go through the process of understanding your audience which was something Susanne mentioned is absolutely critical to getting effective communication strategies off the ground.

So, with that, I will turn things over to Connie. Thank you.

Connie Roser-Renouf: Thank you. Is my screen up? Can you see it?

Emma Zinsmeister: Yes.

Connie Roser-Renouf: Great. OK. So I am going to extend and expand on some of what Suzy just talked to you about talking to you about how to communicate with Americans about the issue of climate change.

Slide 2: Effective Communication Begins with Understanding Your Audience

Connie Roser-Renouf: So effective communication begins with understanding your audience. What we have in the U.S. is a wide range of beliefs and opinions about climate change. And audience research that's been conducted at George Mason in collaboration with our friends at Yale has identified six different groups that hold fairly coherent beliefs, values, opinions on the issue. And when we understand what those different groups think and how they feel about the issue, then, we can address their concerns more directly.

Slide 3: Global Warming's "Six Americas"

Connie Roser-Renouf: The groups that we identified are Global Warming's Six America and you can see them here laid out on a spectrum from the alarmed down at the – at the left end of the spectrum, who are the most convinced that climate change is occurring, they are the most worried about it, the most motivated to take action themselves, the most supportive of government action to mitigate climate change.

And at the other end of the spectrum, we have the dismissive who are convinced that climate change is not occurring. They are likely to think that it's a scientific hoax and they oppose government action to reduce climate change. In between, then, we have a range of belief and levels of concern.

Slide 4: Primary Differences between the Six Groups

Connie Roser-Renouf: And these six groups differ in their values, in their political orientation and their religiosity. But there are two dimensions that are particularly important for us as communicators. First, belief and concern decrease steadily as we move from the alarmed to the dismissive. But there is a second pattern here that's also very important in terms of communication and that is how involved with the issue is the audience – how much do they care about it, how much do they think about it.

And at the end of the spectrum, we have people who think about the issue and talk about it and care about it. And in the middle, we have the people who – for whom this is just not on their radar. I love Suzy's slide of the woman with the megaphone talking to the young girl on her cell phone. Those are the people who are in our disengaged group. And we're going to think about how we can reach them. We need different strategies for talking to them than we do for talking to the people at the other end of the continuum. So I'm going to show you a couple of examples of this.

Slide 5: Do you think that global warming is happening? How sure are you?

Connie Roser-Renouf: Here, we have a slide showing how certain people are that global warming is or is not occurring. And what you can see is that the top four segments – the alarmed through the disengaged – all believe that global warming is occurring but it's only the alarmed who are really sure of that, whereas the cautious and disengaged have very weak belief that it is occurring. The doubtful are right there at the middle of the scale saying that they don't know. And the dismissive down at the bottom are pretty sure that global warming is not occurring.

Slide 6: Perceived Harm of Global Warming, April 2012

Connie Roser-Renouf: Here is an example from risk perceptions. These are averages of eight items asking how much do you think global warming will harm you or your family, your community and so on. And you see the same steady decrease except that here we see the cautious and the disengaged have very similar levels of risk perceptions.

But what's different between them here is that if – these questions did not include a “don't know” option. If we had had a “don't know” option there, the vast majority of the disengaged would have said, “I don't know.” So their best guess is similar to the cautious, but they are much less sure of their opinion than the cautious are.

Slide 7: Assuming that global warming is happening, do you think it is...

Connie Roser-Renouf: Here, we have human causation. You can see the steady decrease from the left to the right. The doubtful, who say that they are not sure if global warming is happening or not, one thing that they are pretty sure about is that if it's happening, it's being caused by natural changes in the environment, rather than by human activities.

Slide 8: How much had you thought about global warming before today?

Connie Roser-Renouf: Now, here is the second pattern – how much have you thought about global warming before today. And there you can see the curvilinear relationship with the alarmed having thought about it a lot; the disengaged, little to not at all. And the dismissive saying they've thought about it some.

Slide 9: "I could easily change my mind about global warming."

Connie Roser-Renouf: What that translates into is attitudinal certainly. The agreement with the statement, "I could easily change my mind about global warming," the cautious and the disengaged tend to agree with that, whereas the alarmed and dismissive strongly disagree that they could change their opinions on this issue.

Slides 10 and 11: Primary Differences among the Six Groups

Connie Roser-Renouf: Now, if we go back to the model that I presented to you earlier, this has implications, then, for communication. So at the alarmed end of the spectrum, we have people who are willing to pay attention to what we have to say on the issue. They're willing to read about it, they're likely to seek out information on climate change, they're predisposed to accept what they – what they hear that is supportive of the science and to take action themselves.

At the other end of the spectrum, the dismissive, and to some extent, the doubtful, they're not going to go seeking information on the issue; but when they come in contact with it, they will pay attention. However, they are unlikely to be persuaded by what they hear. In fact, they may be re-confirmed in their wrong belief because what they will spend their time doing is counter-arguing, thinking of all the reasons they disagree with the science.

And then, there in the middle, we have our audiences who have low issue engagement who are not very willing to pay attention or to – they don't want to read about it, they don't really even want to hear about and while they have a weak belief that global warming is occurring, they can be easily persuaded one way or another depending on what the most recent argument that they've heard is.

So they hear one thing and they think, "Yes. OK." And then, they hear something else and then they're changed in that direction and they don't hold information. They don't believe very strongly.

Connie Roser-Renouf: Currently, we have just over 40 percent of the U.S. population in our two most concerned segments, 28 percent down there in the least concerned segments and about 30 percent of the population there in the middle.

Slide 12: Potential objectives for each audience

Connie Roser-Renouf: So when we think about objectives for these audiences, our alarmed segment, and to some extent, the concerned, what we want to try to do is activate them. This refers back to what Suzy was talking about with getting them to talk to other people. We also want them to engage in political and consumer activism you know contact their representative. They are the most active politically, but they – only a small proportion of them are actually doing anything in terms of contacting legislators and so on. And we would like to get them talking about it more.

The middle segment, we want to engage them. And in terms of the different types of engagements that Suzy presented earlier, I would say this is emotional engagement. What we wanted explained to them is why they should care about this so that they become more motivated to learn more about it and do something.

And with the dismissive, our primary objective is to just avoid annoying them because they become angry and then they speak out against the action and we don't want them to do that. We want to avoid that as much as possible.

Slide 13: Our Survey Data

Connie Roser-Renouf: So what we want to try to do I think is think about how we are going to engage those middle segments. The alarmed and concerned are already on our side. The dismissive we're not going to persuade.

However, those middle segments, we have the opportunity by teaching them or helping them to understand why they should care, to get them engaged and move them up towards the alarmed end of the spectrum which would help us greatly in getting policies passed that take action to mitigate climate change.

Slides 14 and 15: An Overarching Strategy

Connie Roser-Renouf: So the overall – overarching strategic advice that we use is to use simple messages that we repeat often and use a variety of trusted sources. Simple messages require little-to-no processing; we get them very easily.

Repetition addresses the problem with the middle segments forgetting. Repetition means, after a while of hearing the same thing, it sticks. And trusted sources – well, people accept more readily from trusted sources.

And the messages that we think are most important to communicate about climate change are that it is real, that it is harmful, our actions are causing it, that scientists agree that it is real and human-caused and that our actions can reduce the threat. It's very important for people to understand that there is – there are things that we can do that will reduce the threat.

Slide 16: Perceptions of the Scientific Agreement Influence People's Key Beliefs about Climate Change, Which Influences Mitigation Support and Action

Connie Roser-Renouf: There is a growing body of research showing that when people hold four of those beliefs – certainty, harm, human causation and solvability – it increases their desire for a societal response on the issue. They become supportive of climate policies and they are more likely to engage in political and consumer act activism.

And when we increase the fifth key belief there – perceived scientific agreement – when people come to understand the scientific consensus on the issue, it strengthens all four of those key beliefs. So that's what we want to get across.

Slide 17: Barrier #1: Low Interest

Connie Roser-Renouf: Let's think about barriers then. First of all, low interest in the issue. Here, you see that majority of the disengaged, doubtful and dismissive say they really don't want to hear about it.

Slide 18: Barrier #2: Low Ability

Connie Roser-Renouf: Second barrier is ability that over three quarters of the disengaged say they have difficulty understanding news reports. But even among the alarmed, we see 23 percent agree with that statement. Scientific information is intimidating to a large proportion of the American audience.

Slide 19: Barrier #3: Low Trust

Connie Roser-Renouf: Third, there is low trust in the mass media. We can see that majorities of every single segment believe that news reporting on the issue is biased.

Slide 20: #1. Provide People with Answers to Their Questions

Connie Roser-Renouf: So let's talk about, then, strategies. First of all you know Susanne referred to the dialogue and that is really a good place to start that we want to elicit from our audiences, to the greatest extent we can, the questions that they have and then speak to them not simply what we want to say, but what they are interested in hearing.

So the – our alarmed and concerned want to know what kinds of actions they can take. The middle segments want to know, "Why should I care? What harm is global going to – global warming going to do because if it's not going to be harmful, why should I care about it?" And the bottom two segments are most interested in knowing how we can be so sure that it's happening and that is human-caused.

Slides 21 and 22: Effortful Processing and Automatic Processing

Connie Roser-Renouf: Now, let's talk about information processing given that a large proportion of the audience isn't willing to invest very much effort in processing information on this issue. Digesting a chart like this one takes cognitive effort, whereas this image, you get it immediately. I am not suggesting by the bear that we want to scare people. It's just a really cool picture and I like it, but – and it makes the point.

Slide 23: #2. Use Visual Imagery, Rather than Numbers & Statistics

Connie Roser-Renouf: But if you look at this picture of glacial retreat, you get that by looking at it immediately. You don't have to put any effort into understanding. So we want to turn to visual imagery whenever we can.

Slide 24: #3. Use narratives with characters they can identify with to build emotional involvement with the issue

Connie Roser-Renouf: Third, we want to try to use narratives wherever we can. These people I've pictured here are residents of Shishmaref, the village in Alaska that had to move because of coastal erosion. But you can also use scientists and fictional narratives as well.

When people follow a story with characters that they can identify with, they temporarily assume the perspective of the character that they're identifying. And that can lead to changes in attitudes. We also know that science information presented within narratives, even fictional narratives, is learned. And so, it's a good way of getting the audience engaged.

Slide 25: #4. Build positive new social norms

Connie Roser-Renouf: Fourth, to the extent we can, we want to build positive new social norm. We don't want to believe, but we really are social animals and we do what other people are doing. So to the extent that we can suggest that environmentally-friendly behaviors and beliefs, that they're prevalent, that other people admire them, that they're trendy and the coming thing; that encourages people to assume those same beliefs and behaviors. This is what we all do.

And what you want to avoid doing is talking about the prevalence of behaviors that you really want to extinguish even when you're lamenting them saying so many people are doing the wrong thing. What the audience hears is, "Yes. That's really sad and that's what everyone does and I go on doing it and thinking it's sad." So that can actually reinforce that negative behavior rather than motivating people to reduce this.

Slide 26: #5. Move the Conversation from Debates about Whether Climate Change is Occurring to Risk Management

Connie Roser-Renouf: Fifth, we want to try to move the conversation from debates about whether climate change is occurring which can be a way of stalling action to, instead, risk management. So here's an example. We know that 97 percent of the world's most qualified experts agree that climate change is real and human-caused.

If 97 percent of the world's most qualified pediatricians thought that your kids was really sick, you wouldn't ignore their warning, right? So the only responsible thing to do is to take seriously the reality of climate change. That is a risk management framing of the issue.

Slide 27: #6. Emphasize the co-benefits for people's health, our communities and the economy

Connie Roser-Renouf: And, finally, I saw that EPA is emphasizing this – I'm glad to hear that – emphasizing co-benefits for people's health and our communities and the economy is a good way to get those middle segments engaged when they can see all the other good things that are going to come about if we take action to reduce climate change.

Slide 28: Communication Strategy Summary for Audiences with Low Issue Involvement

Connie Roser-Renouf: So just in summary, again, to review those, we want to start from an audience-orientation and provide people with the answers to the questions they have. We want to use visual imagery and narrative. We want to try to build positive new social norms, move the conversation to risk management and emphasize co-benefits.

Slide 29: Website

Connie Roser-Renouf: I'd like to encourage you all to go our Web site. We have a wealth of materials there on climate change communication. You can subscribe to our newsletter.

Slide 30: Closing Slide

Connie Roser-Renouf: And, finally, the last thing is I would like to thank our funders, Grantham, Surdna, and 11th Hour because without their support, we couldn't be doing this research. Thank you.

Emma Zinsmeister: Thanks, Connie. It's a really helpful framing of the conversation and some really great insights onto how to actually build on what we know about our audiences and communicate effectively. And we'll be hearing a little bit more about how this has been done and this process and analysis has been done in Maryland in just a moment.

Poll Question #3

Emma Zinsmeister: But before we move on to Samantha's presentation, we want to pull up another poll question. And so thinking about you know the methods of communication and types of messaging that Connie just described, which strategies do you think will be most effective in getting this information to encourage participation in the programs that you are running?

So we're interested in hearing about what you think will be effective ways to reach your audiences or what you've tried and what's worked. So please select from these options you know as many as are applicable.

We've included articles and public service announcements and traditional types of media, word of mouth, using local champions, technical information, social media and then other – and if you're looking for additional information on methods then certainly choose that answer as well and hopefully we'll be providing some of that through our subsequent presentations.

So if folks could just take a minute to submit their answers, we would appreciate that. All right. We're going to have to go ahead and pull up the responses thus far since we need to keep things moving along.

And so, it looks like, by far, the most popular response at 71 percent is word of mouth and local champions. And I think – and, so far, what we heard in the presentations from Susanne and Connie that that's certainly something that you know using those trusted sources is really a key way to get to your audiences.

Other options that were popular, at 40 percent was the social media; 38 percent, articles and PSAs; and about 32 percent are looking for more methods. And I think, also, as we heard in Connie's presentation, technical and scientific information doesn't often resonate with folks or can be a little bit more challenging for folks to understand. And so, that was one of our least popular responses.

So, thank you, everyone, for providing that information. And just a reminder you know if you have any questions for the speakers that we've heard from thus far, please type those into the GoToWebinar control panel and indicate who your question is for and we'll get to those at the end of the call today.

Using Effective Communication Methods to Ensure the Long-Term Success of State and Local Climate & Clean Energy Programs

Slide 1: Title Slide

Emma Zinsmeister: So, with that, we want to move to our first case study presentation from Samantha Kappalman. Samantha is the director of communications and digital strategy for the Maryland Department of the Environment. She returns to state government two years ago after four years at the National Education Association. She has also worked as the press secretary for Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown.

Previous to her work with the O'Malley-Brown administration, she was a speechwriter, special assistant and liaison to the Board of Public Works for former Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening. She is a graduate of the University of Florida and has a Master's Degree from the University of Maryland at College Park. So, with that, I'm going to turn things over to Samantha.

Samantha Kappalman: Great. Can you see my screen?

Emma Zinsmeister: Yes.

Samantha Kappalman: Great. So a lot of what I'm going to talk about is going to look very familiar because we work extensively in Maryland with George Mason University and all of the research that Connie just went into, so I just want you to know you'll see how we've been using this research.

Samantha Kappalman: The first thing that we did – I can't move my screen. That's a problem. Can one of you at – take the control and actually move the...

Emma Zinsmeister: I see a box up that says "Resume Slide Show". Do you see that on your screen? Click on that.

Samantha Kappalman: Does that work?

Emma Zinsmeister: Yes.

Samantha Kappalman: Did that move it?

Emma Zinsmeister: Yes.

Slide 2: Messaging and Slide 3: Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan Message Triangle

Samantha Kappalman: Wonderful. So the first thing we did was we took what Connie showed of the main messages that came out of their polling and we put together a message triangle. And we had no idea at this point of what the polling would be in Maryland, but this was just our initial messaging based on their research for the Six Americas and you can see where a lot of what she talked about is both in the center and to the left on our message triangle because those are – those are the messages that we wanted to be very core of what we talked about in Maryland.

And then, of course, we had to add in what our plan actually did and the co-benefits to the economy. At this point, we had – we did not add in the co-benefits of health, but we did later on. But we do have slightly just it's harmful and human-caused. But, in the end, we did add in the co-health benefits too. But we did this main message triangle and then every document, everything that we did we based on this.

Slide 4: Climate change is real

Samantha Kappalman: And this is the first page of the executive summary of our actual greenhouse gas plan. So, in July, the governor released the final climate change plan for Maryland. And we had been working with George Mason since last October on messaging and how we would go into the release of this plan.

So we took all of our messaging and our message triangle and we used it in our executive summary. So you can see how we have all of that in here. And then, I'm not going to click on the video, but just as Connie was talking about, we're showing the visual images, we have the video that shows Greenland and the ice slowly dissipating, so we use that a lot as well.

Slide 5: Sea Level Rise is REAL

Samantha Kappalman: And we also used the “Bringing it Home to People and Showing that it's Real”. And this is about giving answers to the questions for those that need to be engaged and those that we don't want to annoy. So this is also – this is all from the executive summary. This is showing that sea-level rise is real and bringing it home with it having pictures that show how it's real in Maryland was really important.

Slide 6: Maryland's Vulnerability to Sea Level Rise & Coastal Storms

Samantha Kappalman: So this is an area in Maryland that most Marylanders can idea with and showing where the water was going to come up to in whatever year. It's showing – just showing the progression of sea-level rise.

Slide 7: Cost of Inaction

Samantha Kappalman: And then, also bringing home that there is a cost to our inaction, so trying to activate and engage with a – with a – not passively, but giving an actual action that could be done.

Slide 8: Percent annual reduction of carbon-dioxide equivalent per sector

Samantha Kappalman: And then, also as Connie was talking about with not showing statistics and showing images, those previous images I just showed go into that. But we also wanted to show what sectors were the ones that we can make the most difference and which ones can have the largest reduction.

Slide 9: What you can do

Samantha Kappalman: And, of course, we have the “Engaging the Public”. We have a lot on what – on what you can do. So we had – we have a Web site that we put together for the release of the plan and to go forward. That’s the one-stop shop for climate change in Maryland.

And so, we have the list of – we have academic reports, scientific reports and we have what you can do. So we don’t just – we have a general “What You Can Do” and then, we also broke it down by audiences. So we have what you can do with your business, what you can do at home, what you can do if you are a local community.

And all of these were really crucial to not just engaging but also activating, showing that there are things that can be done and really making it the simplest way possible to show that there are things that can be done like using energy-saving light bulbs and not using grocery bags from the store, but using actual reusable canvas totes. Those are simple everyday things that anyone can do to make a difference.

Slide 10: Newspaper Headlines

Samantha Kappalman: And so, we’ve used all of that building up and we released the climate change plan and the climate change Web site went live all on the same day. And we put together a video of our governor introducing the plan – it’s a very short video – and we did YouTube ads and we got a huge response through the YouTube ads and in a 12-hour period we had 4,000 hits to our Web site and that’s what we wanted.

You know we – we’re using all of these different messages to get everybody to this place where we can make sure that we would, a) capture their e-mails for future e-mail distributions and have a place where we can get all of the information out that we want to get out on climate change. And these were just some of the headlines that we had as a result of the summit that we did.

So the governor released this plan at what we called our “Maryland Climate Change Summit”. And the governor spoke and then we had a panel discussion of very trusted sources in Maryland. We had a mayor, we had businesses, we had renewable energy companies, we had a physician.

So we covered all of the different areas that we needed to cover, but we did it with trusted sources. And then, we had workshops in the afternoon for how to engage community members and how to talk to elected officials about climate change.

Slide 11: Climate Communication Consortium of Maryland's Mission

Samantha Kappalman: So how did we do all of this? We did this through what was put together as a Climate Communication Consortium of Maryland. And that was what started last October and it was done with George Mason as the lead. And George Mason got a grant from the Town Creek Foundation which is out here in Maryland.

And the consortium is made up of community leaders, advocacy groups, local government, state government, non-governmental organizations and the faith community; so all the folks that the previous speakers have spoken about. And we all worked together to find ways and strategies and messaging that we could use to engage the public and what's here is the actual mission and you could look – find out more about the actual consortium on the climatemaryland.org Web site.

Slide 12: Goals

Samantha Kappalman: But we could not have done it without the consortium. It was all of these folks working together to help us meet our goal which was to have a huge launch, basically, of our – of our climate change efforts with the summit and with the release of the plan.

Slide 13: Simple clear messages, repeated often

Samantha Kappalman: And also, what we did was we all talked about climate change the same way. And that's crucial so that they kept hearing it – they, being the public, kept hearing it over and over again using not necessarily the exact same words, but the same concepts. So that if the advocacy groups sent out e-mail blasts, it was saying the same thing that we have been repeating over and over again so that the public knew that that's what they were – that's what they should be hearing.

And as Connie said that this is simple clear messages repeated often by a variety of trusted sources.

Slide 14: Graphic

Samantha Kappalman: This is also familiar, right. We used the research to form the messages, finding trusted users to change attitudes and behaviors.

Slide 15: Public Opinion Polling

Samantha Kappalman: And then, after that initial round of messaging, and this is actually just right before the release of the final plan, George Mason released another two reports of research and polling that they did on climate change. And these two reports are also up on our climatechange.maryland.gov site which is our one-stop climate shop in Maryland.

Slide 16: Public Opinion on Global Warming

Samantha Kappalman: And we're using this polling to guide our next set of messaging for our next steps. So this is what you saw before with Connie and she talks about the different parts and where – what the percentages of population are in the U.S. And then, this is what it is in Maryland.

So we're very lucky in Maryland that our alarmed and concerned are 62 percent of our population. So we have a good audience to pull from – of people who want to be active on this and they want to be engaged and that is incredible for us.

So we – what we were doing now for our next steps is figuring out how to engage the cautious and disengaged. And some of what we found out from the polling – the most recent polling that was done is that the public doesn't know a lot about the programs that we have in place in Maryland to help meet the goals of our climate change plan, so that's partly what we're going to work on next.

Slide 17: Localization of Messages on the Scientific Consensus

Samantha Kappalman: But also, what we learned from the polling that they just did and then they did testing on messages that we created out of that was that we need to focus on the scientists as a trusted source of information. That people respond differently to different scientists and that the use of a local scientist is better for moderates and conservatives.

Slide 18: More than 97% of climate scientists have concluded human-caused climate change is happening

Samantha Kappalman: So we're working now on messaging for how to talk to people using local scientists. So this is an example, this is all through the consortium not through our Maryland Department of the Environment. We are just part of the consortium.

Slide 19: Graphics

Samantha Kappalman: So this is some of the messaging that's going to be going out. This hasn't gone out yet. But this shows the University of Maryland scientists talking about climate change and these are also some additional messages that should resonate in Maryland. Because in Maryland we're – we really are America in miniature in that we have an eastern shore that is very conservative but is very concerned about environmental issues because most of the economy is focused on the bay and areas like that.

And then, in Western Maryland, we have a lot of farmers and folks who aren't as interested in bay restoration you know. And maybe not necessarily climate change, not only because of conservative and not you know and architecture of the population but also you know how is climate change going to affect them.

Slide 20: What's next

Slide 21: Consortium Plans 2013-2014

Samantha Kappalman: So what's next for the consortium is doing that localization of scientific consensus and creating a speaker's bureau which, together with MDE, we're doing a lot of that together and then repeating the polling and repeating the message testing which will help to inform all of us in the consortium on what our next step should be.

Slide 22: MDE Plans 2013-2014

Samantha Kappalman: And for MDE, for the Department of the Environment in Maryland, we are implementing an education and outreach campaign. And we're doing that with having in mind you know to get out the word about what the programs are. So how can everyday people take action?

And we're going to be doing that by putting together local champions and the speaker's bureau as it says. You know they are four to speak in local communities. So instead of having a climate change meeting by the Department of the Environment, we're going to have a trusted source of – you know it might be a scientist, it might be a physician, it might just be a community leader go and talk to the lion's club or go and talk to a PTA.

And so, we're going to be utilizing the local meetings themselves with trusted sources going and talking to them in ways that will have the same messaging but we will be altering it for each individual group that we'll be going to. And that's over the next 12-13 months that that's going to happen.

Slide 23: Closing Slide

Samantha Kappalman: And all of this is possible because of grants that we are continually applying for from the Town Creek Foundation. And also we're using some funding that comes into the state through our Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. But all of this is – you know it's very limited budget. We don't have any internal budget, so it's all through these grants that we're getting.

And we use them for the different – the Web site, through the individual fact sheets. And we also created videos which you can see it's right on the home page of our Web site, the climatechange.maryland.gov. And we used a scientist, a physician and a mayor to get across the different messaging that we wanted to get across and so all of that was done.

And we also did create social media. But we haven't had the money to really promote that the way that we want to. So we focused on the YouTube ads right before to promote the Web site. And then, we're going to do another round of YouTube ads and this is the last bit of money we have for that now that all of our videos are up on the Web site. So I'm excited to see what kind of metrics we get out of that as well. And that's it.

Emma Zinsmeister: Thank you, Samantha. It's a great example of how to drill down you know our understanding of audiences that Connie's provided to the national research to a more specific community and how you're taking steps to craft specific messages for each of those audiences.

And as Susanne had mentioned earlier and as you reemphasized it's a process of continually testing and resurveying and relearning about your audience to make sure things are in line – your messages are in line with your perspective, so it's a really great example. Thank you for that.

Poll Question #3

Emma Zinsmeister: And before we move on to our last case study, we're going to pull up another poll question. And based – and as Samantha mentioned, several different ways in which the consortium is working to reach audiences – she mentioned the speaker bureau and other – and other activities they're doing. So we're curious to hear how you intend to increase communication efforts to enhance support of your intended audience or within your community.

So from this list, please select all that apply because you're developing a communications framework; you know really sort of doing the research and applying that to your community as a starting point; working to target specific intended audiences more effectively using different tactics, maybe changing what you're doing based on what you're learning today or reframing the benefits of your program. So please go ahead and select from this option you know based on you know the conversations today, what you think you might be doing in the future to reach your audiences.

All right. We got to keep things moving. So why don't we pull up the responses to the poll thus far? And so, it looks like about 78 percent are interested in targeting specific intended audiences more effectively, 46 percent in developing a framework, 36 percent reframing benefits, 32 percent using different tactics and only about 2 percent planning not to do anything new or additional. So thank you for those responses.

And just as a reminder, if anyone has any questions for Samantha about the work going on in Maryland, please enter those into the GoToWebinar panel and indicate that the questions are for her and we could get to those later today.

Engaging Municipal Officials

Slide 1: Opening Slide

Emma Zinsmeister: So with that, we're going to move into our last case study presentation from Robert Graff. Robert Graff manages the Office of Energy and Climate Change Initiatives for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission which is the regional planning form for the Greater Philadelphia region and it focuses on transportation, land use, environment and economic issues.

Mr. Graff manages initiatives to reduce energy use in greenhouse gas emissions and works to prepare the region for the long-term impacts of a changing climate. His work includes developing tools and guidance for identifying, prioritizing and implementing cost-effective strategies to reduce energy demand and curb greenhouse gas emissions in the region both in buildings and the transportation sector.

Prior to joining the commission in 2007, Mr. Graff serves as the senior project manager at the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia. And he's also worked as an associate scientist in the business and sustainability group of Tellus Institute in Boston where he helped to create the global reporting initiative which is now the global standard for corporate sustainability reporting.

He has both a master of public affairs degree and a – and a bachelor of arts in engineering sciences. So, with that, I'm going to turn things over to Rob. Thank you. Rob, you might be on mute.

Robert Graff: Good morning or afternoon depending on where you are. It's a pleasure to talk with you about how DVRPC has engaged municipal officials in one of our projects. Now, this is very much an on-the-ground project and not as sort of – although it's a climate change-related project, it's not dealing as directly with sort of the – some of the communication issues that we've talked about. But is sort of an on-the-ground implementation project I think is very valuable.

Nothing I'll talk about is particularly innovative. If I have to boil it down, you have to design engagement in from the beginning thinking about what project experience will be like for a participant. Attention to details matter. And my slides are not advancing – there we go.

Slide 2: DVRPC Region

Robert Graff: DVRPC is the Regional Planning Organization for Greater Philadelphia. We cover nine counties, four in New Jersey and five in Pennsylvania; including the city county of Philadelphia. Our region has over 350 municipalities and it's home to about five and a half million people. The project I'm going to talk about serves the five counties in Pennsylvania.

Slide 3: Circuit Rider for Energy Efficiency (1 of 3)

Robert Graff: DVRPC was fortunate enough to receive a U.S. EPA Climate Showcase Communities Grant to support our circuit writer for energy efficiency in municipal operations. The program is run by me and by my colleague Liz Compitello, who, with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, our counties and energy consultants that's under contract with the DVRPC.

Slide 4: Circuit Rider for Energy Efficiency (2 of 3)

Robert Graff: DVRPC essentially serves as a shared energy manager through this project for group of small municipalities in South Eastern Pennsylvania. Like many municipalities, they do not have a lot of money, are short-staffed and are facing lots of demands on their time and money.

Slide 5: Circuit Rider for Energy Efficiency (3 of 3)

Robert Graff: Our goal through this project is to provide analysis and guidance to help municipalities identify the most cost-effective ways to save energy and reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions. While the project's intention is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we generally do not emphasize that aspect, focusing instead on what they're interested in, generally, saving money through energy and improving performance and meeting environmental goals.

Our municipalities are inundated with sales people that often provide incomplete or inaccurate information on the cost-effectiveness or even the advisability of whatever measures they are selling, be it LED traffic signals, new windows, new lighting, more insulation, new street lights, new HVAC, the controls and so forth, but generally, know that they have an opportunity to save money through energy efficiency and conservation, but they lack unbiased analysis and advice to help them provide the best way to do so.

The circuit writer provides this through a series of publications, workshops and a direct technical assistance program. Most of what I will be focusing on is through the direct technical assistance – is related to the direct technical assistance program, although some applies to other program elements. And I think I've lost some control of my screen due to the fact I'm on here or so I'll have to just remember some things here.

Through the direct technical assistance portion of the circuit writer, DVRPC selected 10 municipalities in the region through an application process to receive one-on-one technical assistance including utility bill analysis and in-depth energy assessment of their building and an assessment report as well as assistance with implementing their energy conservation measures.

At the outset of the project, we are trying to figure out how to best engage municipalities in our direct technical assistance. We realized that providing free technical assistance does not necessarily guarantee engagement.

From experience, we know that one of the counties of our region had provided in-depth energy audits at no cost for every municipality in the county funded through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. The municipalities – the municipality simply had to accept the auditor’s visit and then they got a report.

And as a result, close to 70 municipal building audits were conducted. But as far as we are able to tell, this was several years ago, all of them sat on a shelf with no action taken. So this is not what we wanted at all.

Slide 6: If you give it away, it must not be worth much

Robert Graff: In part, due to what we learned at the Climate Showcase Communities’ training session from EPA in Madison, Wisconsin in 2012, we decided to require that municipalities apply for this assistance. What you see is the top page – top half of the one-page application for this program. Each applicant had to provide a point of contact, provide basic information on their energy use and, looking at the bottom of the form, articulate their energy concerns and provide recent monthly utility bills.

The instructions for the application clearly explain what we expected of the program participants. This application has achieved several goal for us. First, it signaled that this program was a two-way street. We would not simply provide a municipality with an audit document that could sit on a shelf.

It also indicated that we were interested in what they needed and wanted. Finally, by requiring a single point of contact, completion of an application and submission of utility bills, it provided us with a means to assess the ability of each applicant municipality to be a responsive partner. We received 25 applications and selected 10 municipalities.

I believe that this step was a single most critical step in ensuring engagement in our program. Like a lot of organizations, DVRPC has often provided assistance without thinking about how to assure that we are providing it in a way that’s both needed and understood in advance. So this is a sort of a step away from the, “Well, we’ve got a great idea, so people will come running to us.”

Slide 7: Value Your Partners (1 of 4)

Robert Graff: Another key element of successful engagement is to be sure you understand and really understand how valuable your partners are, in this case, the municipalities. Our program was successful and very satisfying to us because our municipalities are not simply recipients of our assistance but are truly partners in working together with us to address real concerns that they have.

A couple of specifics that we try to keep in mind – be sure to hold meetings at the time and place that’s convenient to them. This often means that we have to hold – that we hold meetings at times and places that are not always convenient for us. However, this maximizes the time our very busy partners are able to spend with us and allows easy access to both records and individuals who will not be able to travel to a central location for a meeting.

We also use this principle for several – for the several multiple municipality meetings and workshops that we’ve held as part of the programs. These are often held really early in the morning and never held at our office which is centrally located but does not have good parking or easy road access.

We time the delivery of the energy assessment reports to align with the municipal budgeting process which usually takes place between September and December each year. This allowed municipalities to incorporate the energy conservation measures that we recommended into their budgets for the next year.

From a communications standpoint, this meant the DVRPC had to be flexible with how the reports were delivered. This is very much an intricate process as we learned which energy conservation measures were feasible for the municipal budgets and what pieces of information they need from us to present before their boards or councils to approve the inclusion of our ECMs into their budgets. For instance, they might need the estimated cost of a study or estimated cost of a lighting upgrade or of a boiler upgrade.

Slide 8: Value Your Partners (2 of 4)

Robert Graff: It’s essential to listen. When we visited municipalities to discuss their energy needs, we first presented them with an overview and understanding of what we had learned from analyzing their energy bills. Then, we ask them what they thought about their energy use.

What offices are uncomfortable? What systems are you having problems with? What are the concerns of your residents and township council? How do you plan to budget – how do you – how do you already plan and budget for energy?

Slide 9: Value Your Partners (3 of 4)

Robert Graff: This provided us with a roadmap to their concerns and an understanding of where they were most likely to take action. Remember, that they know more – that they know their buildings, facilities, budget, politics and priorities much better than you ever will.

We followed up after a preliminary meeting with them by providing them in writing with our understanding of their priorities for energy work. We then spoke with them to correct and clarify this. Only after this, did we perform an energy assessment and create a report for energy conservation measures.

We presented this report as a draft, delivering it in person with – to their staff and listening careful – I’m sorry – and listening carefully for feedback on our recommendations. For instance, in one case, we learned what we thought was a natural gas supply pipe was in fact the stub end of a defunct system. And in other case, a recommendation for internal storm windows initiate a long conversation that indicated they knew a great deal about the challenges of using these and suggested a revision in a – of our recommendation.

We continually communicate to our municipalities that their feedback and communication to us is crucial to the success of this program. DVR communicates that we will be learning as much, if not, more from them through this process as they might gain – I’m sorry – we learn as much from them as they might gain from the technical assistance.

So they receive the assistance from us for free, we ask in return that they help us better understand how they make decisions internally to implement energy conservation projects and how they budget for energy measures. We emphasize this in all of our meetings with them, so that they really understand how important they are to our work.

Slide 10: Value Your Partners (4 of 4)

Robert Graff: It’s important to spend time on the materials you provide to the municipalities. We design the logos seen here to help brand our products and make them have a professional appearance. We also proofread and edit the memos and documents that we provide to municipalities with the same level of rigor and to the same high standards that we apply to all of DVRPC’s published documents.

While there’s a temptation sometimes to save time by providing them with good-enough documents so they – so we can deliver them quickly, the time spent on making the documents as professional as possible indicates to our partners how much we value their time and advice.

Slide 11: Understand Your Role

Robert Graff: And adjunct to this is to regularly remind ourselves that our role is to aid in helping them do what they want to do, to connect them to resources and to smooth their work, taking on tasks that they either do not have time to do or do not have the expertise to carry out. And in some cases, this can be mundane work such as entering utility bill data into ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.

Slide 12: Reward and Acknowledge

Robert Graff: Another step we took based from what we learned from the Climate Showcase Communities training meeting in Madison is to reward and acknowledge the participation of our partner municipalities. We had our executive director write a letter to the highest official in each municipality, usually the township manager, with a copy sent to the board representative from their county, usually a county commissioner.

Slide 13: Document

Robert Graff: Our executive director publicly thanked the municipalities for their participation at our monthly board meeting. We delivered a press release to a local newspaper that cover the municipalities and we had our executive director welcome and thanked the selected municipalities at the project’s kickoff meeting.

At the end of the program, we plan to provide them with a certificate of completion suitable for framing. Paying attention to acknowledgement lets they're higher ups in the community know how important this program is. It also submits the obligation from their end, helps to ensure follow through and build support for the program as a whole.

Slide 14: Focus on Partners (1 of 4)

Robert Graff: A few other tips from the small to the great – be sure to provide simple coffee and donuts or something else tasty; it doesn't cost much. And people always like to have something to eat.

Slide 15: Focus on Partners (2 of 4)

Robert Graff: Again, make sure the meeting time is on their schedule, not yours. We always use polling or e-mails to set meeting schedules.

Slide 16: Focus on Partners (3 of 4)

Robert Graff: There are some simple steps you can take to make meeting participants feel both comfortable and valued. We always provide tables tents for every meeting participant. Not only does this help everyone remember the names and roles of everyone around the table so that the meeting goes as well as possible, but also signals to them that everyone around the table are equal participants and partners.

Slide 17: Focus on Partners (4 of 4)

Robert Graff: As I mentioned, in addition to one-on-one meetings with municipalities, we've held several workshops. Or, if possible, we try to make use of other meetings already taking place where we expect our municipalities will be. These local groups are often looking for relevant content for their meetings and are a great place to establish connections with municipalities.

Slide 18: Talk Their Language (1 of 2)

Robert Graff: We've been very careful to try to talk the language of municipalities where possible. Here's the first internal graph of the introduction to the application to our direct technical assistance program. Note that it talks about our grant, the EPA, and is filled with language that is drawn from – drawn from our funding application. This talks about what we care about, not what municipalities care about.

Slide 19: Talk Their Language (2 of 2)

Robert Graff: Here's the final introductory text for that application. We restructured it to directly address municipalities. I think you'll agree it's a lot more compelling. It's obvious but be sure to write your text with your reader in mind.

Slide 20: Facilitate Exchange

Robert Graff: Another principle that we brought back from the Climate Showcase Communities workshop in Madison was to facilitate exchange between municipalities and to foster a bit of competition. We'll be holding a meeting of all of our direct technical assistance municipalities at the end of January where they will each have to present what they have done and what they have learned from the program. We think and expect that this – preparing for this peer exchange will further engage the municipalities.

Slide 21: Be Flexible and Helpful

Robert Graff: It's important to be helpful even if it's slightly outside of the project. We had one municipality that was interested in getting connected with someone who could help them scope out a solar – a voltaic – a solar photovoltaic array for their building. Although this was not an energy efficiency or conservation project and probably didn't have the same level of economic payback as other projects, we provided them with some basic evaluation on solar potential and cost. They were very appreciative and this helped further deepen our engagement with that municipality.

Slide 22: Take Aways

Robert Graff: So here are a few key points I want to leave you with today. This is about how we've tried to engage municipalities through this program. First, it's important to select your partners carefully to be inclined from the start to be engaged. We did this through our application process.

Treat your partner as partners. Value their knowledge and let them know that you value what they know. You are a facilitator and educator. The real expertise lies with the municipality.

We've also used public engagement, public acknowledgements through the communications – sorry – through communications with the public and top managers to deepen engagement. We tried to focus on what our partners want and need and to schedule meetings to be convenient and comfortable to them.

Make your communications clear and directed to the interest of your municipalities, not to your interests. We've facilitated – we've also facilitated exchange among our partners and tried to be as flexible and helpful as possible.

Slide 23: Closing Slide

Robert Graff: As I said at the outset, the single most important thing is to think about what it is the municipality needs and wants and build everything around that. If you provide value, your municipalities or project partners will be engaged. Thank you for your time. Here's my contact information and our Web site where you can find more information about this and other projects. Thank you.

Emma Zinsmeister: Thanks, Rob. And I just want to mention for folks that he – Rob mentioned a few times that they received a Climate Showcase Communities Grant from EPA as part of the support for this work. And so, if you're interested in hearing more about what they've done under the grant, epa.gov/climateshowcase, is the home page for those grant projects and you can get to more information about the DVRPC work under there.

And thanks, Rob, for a great presentation that really highlights sort of tangible ways to use the different strategies we've been talking about through the earlier presentations and how to really focus on a specific audience being that of municipal official.

Poll Question #4

Emma Zinsmeister: And so, I know we're running low on time. So I want to jump to our very last poll question before we start panel discussion. And we'd appreciate it if folks could take a minute to tell us what factors pose the greatest challenge related to increasing support in engaging participation in your program.

And we've heard a lot about how to tackle disengagement or different ways of communicating information to try and address different perspectives and needs. But in terms of actually implementing these types of programs, what things really are posing barriers for you. So if you could just go ahead and take a second to choose all of the options that apply, we would appreciate it.

All right. Just to keep things moving, I think we should pull up our result. And so, I think, as most people would probably agree or as we may have expected; that staff capacity, funding and disinterest particularly on the part of the community are really some of the top barriers folks are dealing with.

And hopefully, a lot of the strategies that we've covered today and that we'll continue to talk about in the next two calls will be helpful in tackling some of those challenges. If anyone has any questions for Rob or any of our other speakers, please do enter those into GoToWebinar and we will get to as many as we can at the end of the Webcast and then also respond in writing to those that we're not able to discuss today.

Panel Discussion

Emma Zinsmeister: So, at this point, we want to transition to do a little bit of panel discussion. We have a couple of questions for our speakers to generate some discussion. And so, I would like to pose the first question to both Rob and Samantha and ask how have you engaged allies or trusted messengers to help deliver key messages and gain community buy-in for the climate and energy work that you're doing?

Samantha Kappalman: This is Samantha. I can start first, Rob, if you want.

Robert Graff: Sure. That'll be fine.

Samantha Kappalman: We – as I mentioned, the video series that we did that's one the home page of climatechange.maryland.gov, that was the step we've taken so far with the trusted messenger. So we're getting these videos up. And then, the next step, as I mentioned, is getting them into the community at local meetings, so that's how we're using them.

And also, before we released the climate change plan, we had a scientist who happens to be – who's the president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and we're very lucky to have him. He's internationally renowned as the climate change expert; it's President Don Boesch. And he wrote an op-ed for the Baltimore Sun before the release of the climate change plan. So it's through all of those different pieces that we're utilizing those trusted messengers.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. Thank you. Rob, do you have anything you'd like to share?

Robert Graff: Yes. I think the way we got – you know we have a lot of municipalities in this region as I noted, that are – you know they've been really inundated about energy and greenhouse gas reduction by vendors who were trying to sell them all kinds of things.

One thing I – we worked through – you know there's a lot of mistrust of any of this kind of work. We had one municipality that they'd ordered their receptionist if any time anyone mentioned energy to hang up the phone. So you know we had a lot of trouble getting through to people.

One of the things we did, then, was we worked through our County Planning Department which have very good relationships with our municipalities, with municipalities we already knew and with – through our Department of Environmental Protection in the state which has excellent relationships with municipalities.

So we tried to find people that – and once we – you know then, talk to the municipalities. We also assured – we assured them that we would not have any vendors present at any of the workshops that we held and we – and that any speaker would not be talking about any sales of products. So that's sort of some of the ways we built trust.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. Thanks for those examples. My next question is for Connie and Susanne. How do you tailor or range of strategies to reach a range of audiences and keep them interested given that folks often have constraints on their budget and limited funds available?

Connie Roser-Renouf: Susanne, you want to go first?

Susanne Moser: I can – I can try. It's a really tough issue and I guess my first thing would be to really, again, come back to the question of what do you want to achieve for the people who can make the change that you're looking for and then focus.

You know don't try to do all the things at once. Don't try to use all the strategy at once. Really try to focus in on your most important audience and maybe a supporting audience to really you know get whatever movement on the issue.

Focus on the influentials which is a much smaller task and make it – you know I think Rob was really great in laying out sort of their process and I think this is – it's really the recipe. You really understand and listen to what are their concerns. You make it worth their while and find the synergies with what you want to achieve.

And you know you build a few champions and then think about how the people who are the early adaptors how they can spread the success and the insights that they've gained so that you get you know a bigger bank for your buck by them advertising how they have achieved it.

Don't ask everyone to show up for every meeting if all you have to do is just you know give them the latest update on a meeting or a report or whatever. That's – you know people are busy. You need to simply be aware of that just as you are in your office with all the tasks.

And so, you really have to make it worth their while. Make it fun. Bring in food. I mean you know whatever you can do. Meet at – on their grounds. Meet when it works for them.

And you know simply expect that not everyone is going to show up every time. It's just unrealistic and it's not personal; it's just life. Those would be my first off-hand suggestions on that one. Connie, what would you add?

Emma Zinsmeister: Connie, did you have anything you wanted to add?

Connie Roser-Renouf: Yes. I would just reemphasize what Susanne said about reaching the influentials. We know that interpersonal communication is much more persuasive and influential than mediated messages. And so, to the extent that you can get people who already care about the issue to talk to other people, that's going to really extend your reach.

And the second thing that I would say is, in terms of presenting local impacts, that that really connects people to the issue, but that also it's really important to emphasize solvability. And, in fact, I've seen some – like, really effective uses – I'm thinking particularly of the Science Museum of Minnesota – of presenting solutions first before even talking about impacts because

so many people are in despair about the issue of climate change. The people who really get it are in despair. And we need to give them hope so that they will keep active and keep talking about it.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. Thank you. So we are at the end of our time here. And if speakers are willing to stay on for just an extra minute or two, we can get to some of the questions from the audience. But before people start to drop off, I just wanted to remind our audience that, as you leave our Webcast today, you have the opportunity to provide us with some feedback particularly on this framework which we are developing for our Web site and we'll provide more in-depth content along with the diagram.

And, of course, you heard many of these themes emphasized by the speakers today. So this is the framework we're referring to. And the first question you'll see in the exit questionnaire, so please do provide us with your comments and your feedback on the Webcast. We really appreciate and value your input and your time to participate with us today.

Questions and Answers

Emma Zinsmeister: So any questions that we were not able to get to for Q&A, we'll share those with our speakers and get written responses that we can post on our Web site, so you will get answers to your questions. And so, with that, I think we can probably take one or two questions from the audience. Wendy, if you want to ask a couple and then we'll have to close out to be respectful of folks' time.

Wendy Jaglom: Sounds good. The first question then is for Connie Roser-Renouf. One participant wrote, "I'm interested to hear your thoughts on using positive messaging to achieve behavioral change; for example, using a visual of a low carbon future versus talking about the doom and gloom of climate change. Is there research into the effects of positive versus negative messaging?"

Connie Roser-Renouf: Yes, although the research is not entirely clear. My own take on it from my understanding of the literature is that a greater problem among Americans is the issue of solvability, so using tactics that includes solutions or involves people in developing the solutions is important. So, those visions of a low carbon future and how we can take action that will reduce the threat is essential and should be upfront and central.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. Thank you, Wendy. Let's do one more question.

Wendy Jaglom: Sure. So the next question is for Samantha Kappalman. You said – you talked about having scientists be the trusted sources and speakers at community group meetings. Can you comment on the issue of scientists not always being well trained in communication? In other words, sometimes scientists communicate in "data speak" rather than compelling and engaging messages around narratives, success stories, generating information and motivation for behaviors.

Samantha Kappalman: Yes. In fact, thank you for asking that question because we will be conducting message training all of our trusted sources who will be going out into the community and they'll all be using tailored PowerPoint presentations in these meetings (they'll all be developed by us, so that we can keep everybody on message). Thank you for pointing that out.

But we also want to make sure that not only are illustrating with images and stories but that we're also keeping and repeating the simple messages. That is really, really important because sometimes when you put a scientist up there, you end up only understanding every other word (which was "and" and "the"). So we will be training everybody before we send our climate champions out into the community.

Emma Zinsmeister: Great. Thank you. And thanks to all of our speakers for sharing their experiences and expertise today. We did get a number of other questions from the audience and we will be sure to get responses to those since we do want to provide everyone with feedback and clarification on the questions that they have.

So thank you, again, to everyone for participating. Our framework, again, is up on the screen here, so you can see that as you go through the exit questionnaire. We greatly appreciate your feedback. We want to build the resource that is most helpful to you and your state and local agencies and your opportunity to weigh in is at the end of the Webcast here at the – with the questionnaire.

So thank you, again. And we greatly appreciate everyone's questions and our speakers' time. We hope that you will join us for the second and third installments of the Webcast on the 11th and the 18th. The registration information was included earlier in the slide. Everyone should've received copies via e-mail earlier this morning.

And we will make all these files available on our Web site as soon as possible after the conclusion of the series. So, thank you, everyone. I greatly appreciate your time and we hope that you will join us on the next call.

Operator: Thank you. This does conclude today's conference call. You may now disconnect.