OVERVIEW

1. Policymakers' use of research evidence

2. Strategies
   - Relationships
   - Communication
   - Research-to-Policy Collaboration model

3. Legislative process and opportunities

4. Avoiding the Slippery Slope into lobbying

ADVANCING
EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY

USING RESEARCH IN POLICY

Barriers

- Absence of personal contact
- Lack of timely, relevant research
- Mutual Mistrust
- Lack of access to research / poor dissemination

Facilitators

- Personal Contact and relationships
- Timely Relevance
- Summaries with policy recommendations
- Research synthesis
- Collaboration

Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014

RELATIONSHIPS

Trust guides inquiry, acquisition, and use of information
- Trusted colleagues and advisors
- Expert Credentials
- Transparency and impartiality of the information source

Barriers
- Stereotypes limit respect
- Cultural differences
- Lack of interactions

- **Science:** irrelevant "junk science"
- **Scientist:**
  arrogant
  self-interested
- **Policymakers:**
  self-interested
  short-sighted
  manipulating truths

Brownson et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014
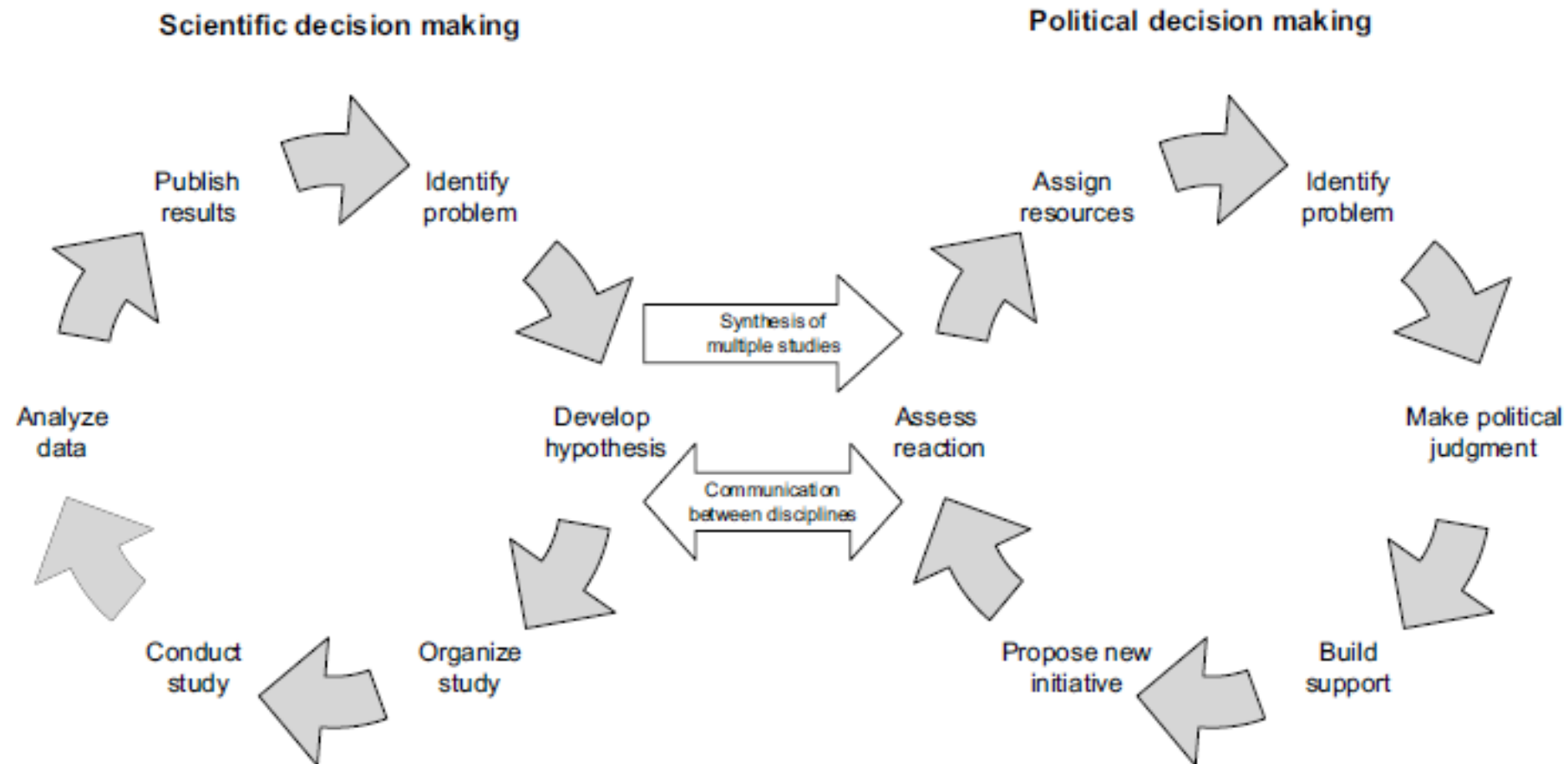
2 COMMUNITIES, DIFFERENT NORMS

Figure 1. The "real-world" process of decision making in science and public policy.

PROFESSIONAL CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Characteristic	Researchers	Policymakers
Knowledge	Specialized, narrow	Extensive, gist
Information Sources	Journals, Conferences	News, staff, colleagues
Opinion Leaders	Leading Scholars	Civic or Political Leaders
Advocate Engagement	Weak	Strong
Decisions	Empirical Evidence	Public Support
Timeframe	Long, deliberative	Short, opportunistic
Uncertainty Tolerance	Lower	Higher

Brownson et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2005

POLICYMAKER REALITIES

- **Responsive to a range of stakeholders**
  - Many-to-one relationship
  - Voters "trump" scientists
- **Timeliness may preside over quality**
  - Managing political crises
  - Immediate answers needed
- **We must manage our expectations:**
  - Scientific evidence is only ONE consideration in decisions
  - Policies are also based on values, emotions, and outside interests
  - Small wins - start with common ground

Brownson et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2005
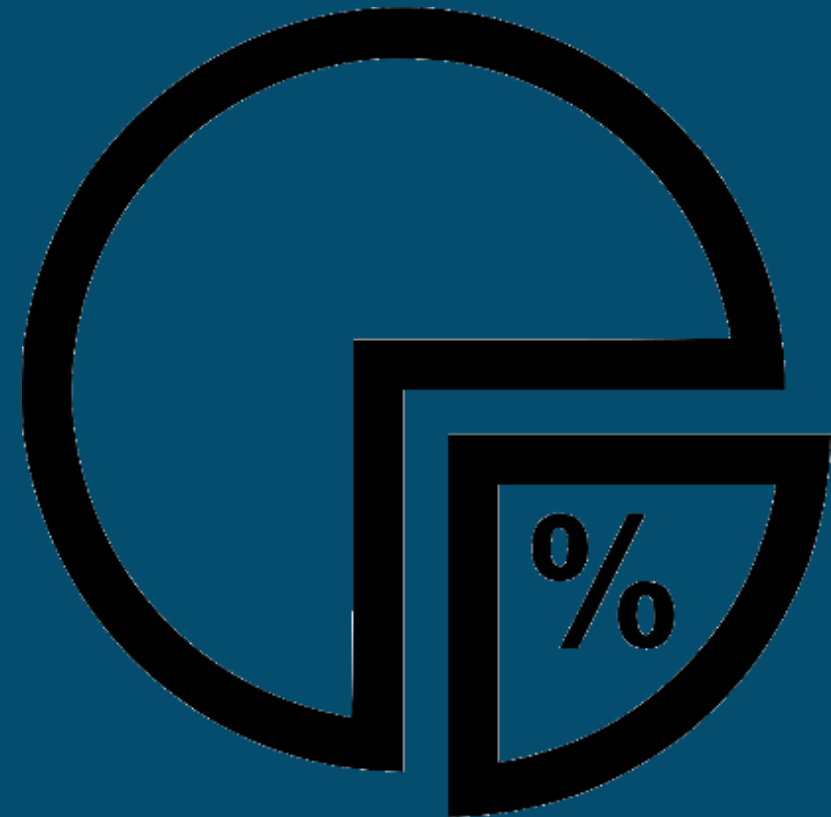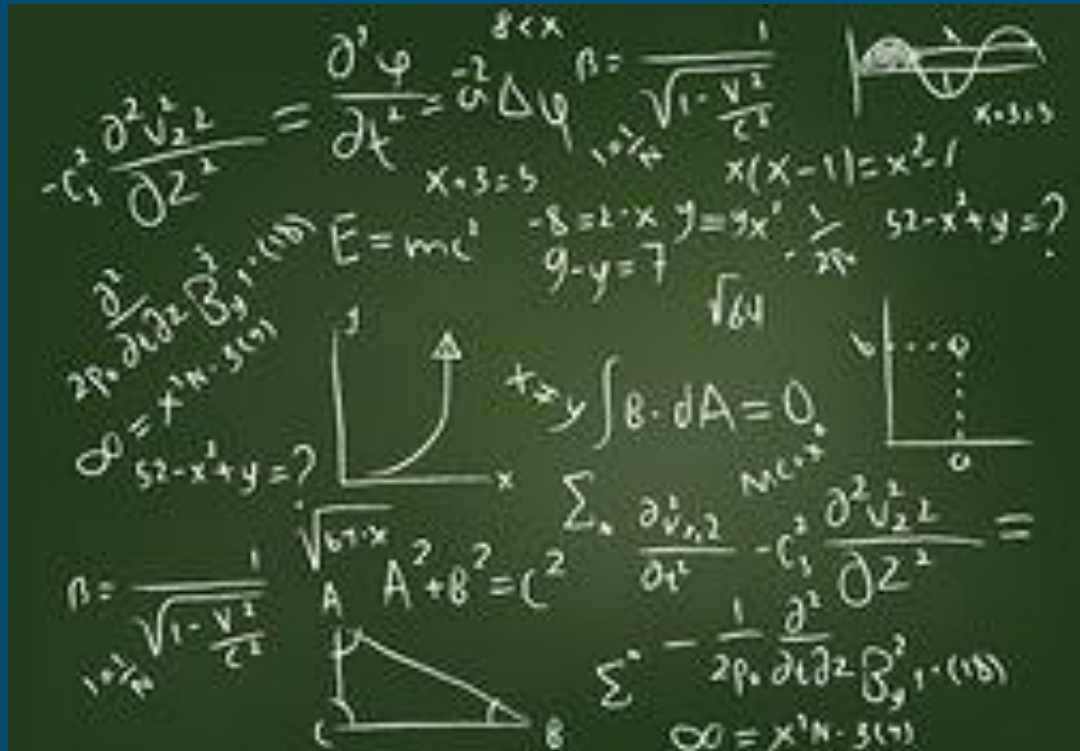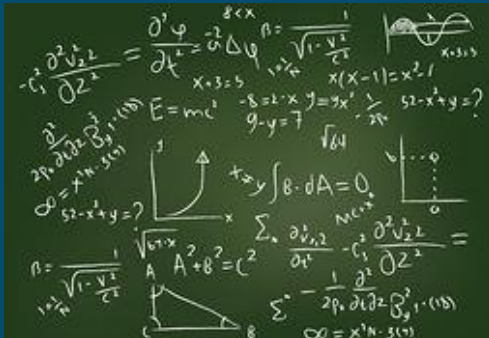
DEFINING EVIDENCE

DEFINING EVIDENCE

Researchers

- Insular, inward-facing
- Scientific methods
- Methodological rigor
- Limitations and caveats

Policymakers

- Anecdotes, personal stories or clinical experiences
- Quick assessments (e.g., polls; opinion surveys)
- Local surveillance data
- Tactful about knowledge gaps

Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

- Many demands, continue to grow

- 100's of messages daily, multiple sources, much is not assimilated

- **Rates of policymakers' information intake*:**
  o Many policymakers "never get to material"
  o About half skim information
  o **About 27% read in detail**

- **Policymakers may "read people", not reports**
  o Term limits reduce ability to develop expertise
  o Subject to "expert" lobbyists
  o Staff read more thoroughly

Brownson et al., 2006
* State policymakers, Sorian & Baugh, 2002

ADAPT OUR STRATEGIES

Goal → Strategy → Impact
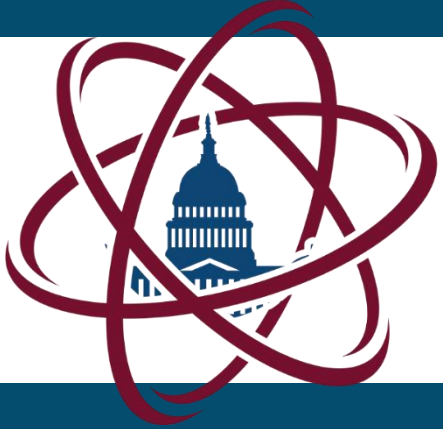
Research-to-Policy —Collaboration—

Partnerships between research and congressional offices

Researchers:

- Capacity development (policy competencies)
- Opportunities for engagement

Policymakers:

- Respond to needs (rather than "push")
- Timely and relevant research

Ongoing Collaboration:

- Developing trust and understanding
- Bi-directional information flow

Research ⟷ Policy
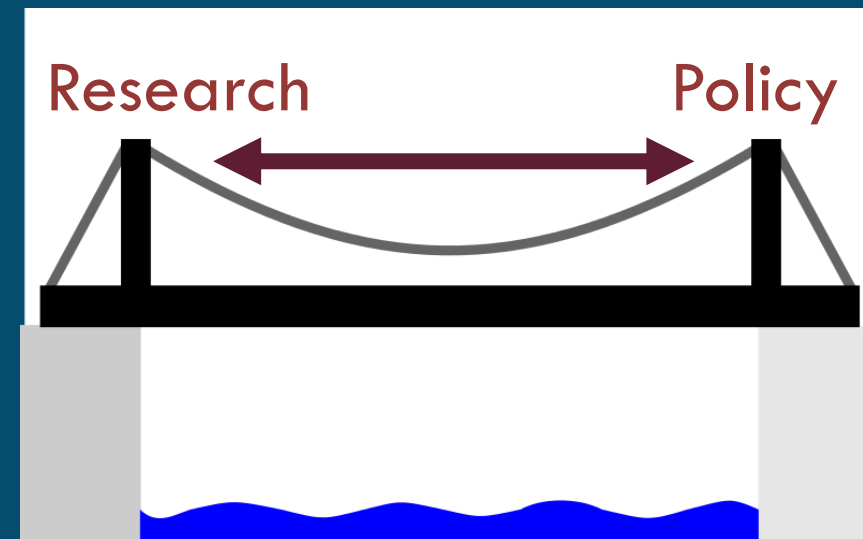
RPC APPROACH
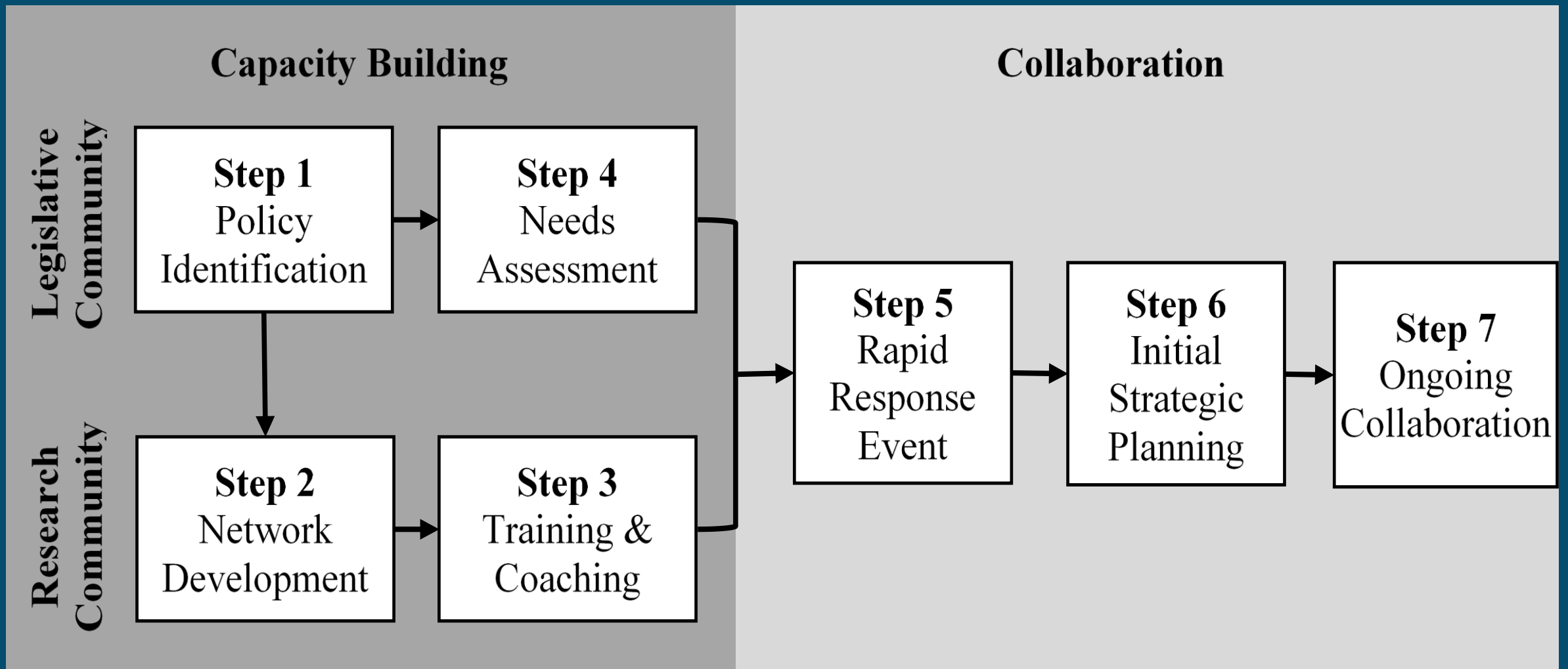
BUILDING RESEARCHER CAPACITY

- Rapid Response Network

- Confidence and skills
  - Building trusting relationships (e.g., cultural competency)
  - Avenues for collaboration

- Communication – unlearning science talk

- Knowledge brokering
  - Understand end-users' goals, problem definition, & culture
  - Research translation & access

Dobbins et al., 2009

RPC POLICY ENGAGEMENT

The real work happens after meetings

- Meetings → discussion & outlining next steps
- Follow-up is CRITICAL to building working relationships

Responding to Requests for Research

- Soliciting expertise and referrals
- Opportunities for connecting directly with offices

Rapid Response Event: Matching Expertise and Need

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

- Relevance
  - o Voters and districts
  - o Target audience values
  - o Do your homework!
    - Related bills
    - Public communications
    - Local data

- Norms and trends
  - o Keeping up with the Joneses
  - o Social desirability

American values
Equality
Hard work
Freedom
Fairness

RELATIONSHIP STRATEGIES

- **Active Listening** – responsive to others' views by hearing then reflecting

- **Non-biased Objectivity**
  - Policy neutral - focus on evidence not solutions
    Honest Brokerage → menu of policy options
  - Cite sources
  - Refrain from self-disclosure about political orientation

- **Transparency** – acknowledge limitations in knowledge

- **Respect staffers** – they are gatekeepers and opinion shapers

APA Public Interest Government Relations, 2014; Barbour et al., 2008; Brownson et al. 2006

BUILD TRUST

- Frequency of contact

- Clear, explicit roles

- Minimize relational conflict
Whereas "task conflict" can be productive

- Minimize Outgroup Perceptions
  - Outgroup is never very convincing
  - Triggers strong negative emotions
    - → outgroup message dismissed

- Reinforce (don't challenge) underlying values and beliefs

PREJUDICE DISLIKE FEAR

(Panteli & Sockalingam, 2005; Tobias, 2009 - SPSSI)

SOLUTION FOCUSED

- Helplessness → Overwhelming

- Emotional appeal
  - Avoid Crisis Messaging
  - Counteract Endowment Effect

- Instant gratification
  - Long term is less appealing
  - Small wins toward big problems

- Feel good factor
  - Optimistic frame
  - Positive Mood → Positive Response

(Frameworks Institution; Tobias, 2009, SPSSI)

COMMUNICATING EVIDENCE

- Adapt to your audience

- Useful formats and data
  - Bulleted lists, bolded key points
  - Graphs or charts
  - Key statistics
    - Public support
    - Priority of the issue
    - Relevance at the district level

- Straightforward language
  - Avoid jargon
  - Simplify caveats
  - Interpret body of evidence

- People-first language

- Narrative storytelling
  - Personally relevant; practical information
  - Examples of real trends
  - Thematic stories vs episodic stories
  - Solution focused
  - 5 parts:
    - Setting
    - Characters
    - Plot
    - Conflict
    - Resolution

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Stretch Break

POLICY PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

- **Not Linear: Policy Windows and Opportunity**
  - National mood
  - Media's short attention span
  - Acceptable solutions (alternatives)
  - Consensus building: persuasion and bargaining

- **Most bills die in Committee**

- 4% of bills became law in the 110th Congress (2007-09)

- **The agenda changes rapidly**

Kingdon, 2012

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

1. Referral to Committee
2. Committee Action
3. Subcommittee Review
4. Mark up
5. Committee Action to Report a Bill
6. Publication of a Written Report
7. Scheduling a Floor Action
8. Debate
9. Voting
10. Referral to Other Chamber
11. Conference Committee Action
12. Final Action
13. Overriding a Veto

Find info about existing bills at the Library of Congress: https://www.congress.gov/

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Congressional Research Service

- Supports congressional decision-making, per request

- Capacity limits

- Synthesis and (often) indirect expertise

Executive Branch

- Prior to enactment: ethical boundaries to minimize influence

- Enactment → interpretation by administrative agency

Budgeting

- Congressional Budget Office

- Office of Management and Budget
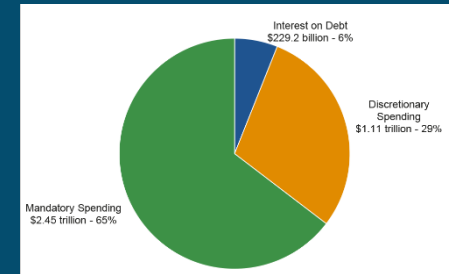
COMMON POLICY LEVERS

Discretionary Spending

- Annual appropriations

- ~29% of federal budget, 2015

- e.g., grant programs

Mandatory Spending

- "Entitlements"

- ~65% of federal budget, 2015

- E.g., social security, Medicare/Medicaid, "safety net"

Accountability

- Monitoring and reporting

- Evaluation

- e.g., pay for success

Regulation

- Inside or outside of government

- e.g., safety standards

National Priorities Project

Interest on Debt
$229.2 billion - 6%

Discretionary Spending
$1.11 trillion - 29%

Mandatory Spending
$2.45 trillion - 65%

AVENUES FOR RESEARCHER ENGAGEMENT

- Before Committee (e.g., model legislation)

- During Committee (e.g., expert testimony)

- On the floor for a vote (e.g., advocacy)

- After it becomes law (implementation, appropriations, regulations)

- **Policy briefs**

- **Congressional Briefings**

- **Expert Witness Testimony**

- **Model Legislation**

- **Outreach and Advocacy**

POLICY BRIEFS

- **Target audience** - Informs recommendation development and frame

- **Comprehensive but short:** 1-2 pages (~1500 words plus reference list)
  - Short, catchy title
  - Appealing layout with CLEAR key points (highlighting key points in bold; use bullets; graphs)

- **Practical and Action-oriented with viable recommendations**

- **Analysis-driven**
  - Facts and evidence (e.g., quantify problem)
  - Multiple reputable sources

Global debate and public policy challenge
SPSSI

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

- **Panel of speakers on a specific issue**
  - Engaging presentations for lay-audiences
  - Handouts and/or powerpoints

- **Planning – 2 months out:**
  - Identify Congressional sponsor
  - Invite Congresspersons from both parties – BIPARTISAN
  - Reserve a room on Capitol Hill
  - Confirm speakers
  - Announce and advertise

- Examples: http://www.npscoalition.org/#!congressional-briefings/cee5
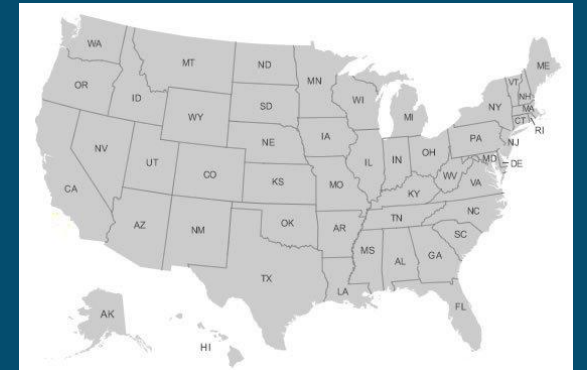
Research Caucus

EXPERT TESTIMONY

- **Call for Testimony**
  - Public document
  - Issued by Assembly, Senate, Committee, Task Force, or Agency

- **Review:**
  - Target audience (e.g., bi-partisan? For a specific committee?)
  - When (evening vs work day)
  - Location
  - Participation rules (e.g. time limits; need for approval)
  - Written testimony requirements
  - Multiple witnesses

- **Timely response**

- **Cite and attach relevant publications**

- **Involve the press**

Corbett, 2012: http://www.slideshare.net/gjcpp/v2i3-0008scra-public-policy-101-chicago-june-2011

MODEL LEGISLATION

- **Development of rules, regulation, or legislation**
  - Assess / modify existing legislation
  - Draft new legislation
  - Problems well solved in one community can be applied to others

- **Drafting legislation**
  - Text-Reuse
  - Sections and provisions
  - Word choice

- Drafting manuals, including those for different states

- **Examples**:
  - National Juvenile Justice Network and Reclaiming Futures

Chris Corbett, 2015

MEETINGS & DISCUSSION

By Issue

- **Best strategy when:**
  o Topic-specific research translation
  o Supporting existing priorities

- **Committees** - Specific Jurisdiction boundaries

- **Caucuses** – common legislative objectives

- **Bill Sponsors**

As a Constituent

- **Best strategy for:**
  o Lobbying
  o Advocating for priority change

- **By District** – 1 House Rep

- **By State** – 2 senators

WHEN ENGAGING, ALWAYS

CITE AND PROVIDE RESOURCES!

- Legislators lack time to chase down key sources or documents

Respect Legislative staffers

- Realistically, you will work with staff, not legislators

Be Prepared

- Bring materials to share, stick to the key message

Be Flexible

- Don't be surprised if you're asked about another issue or concern

Express gratitude

- Send a Thank You Note

ADVOCACY vs LOBBYING

TYPES OF APPROACHES

Inside - "working with"
- Working in the context of existing values and priorities
- Consulting
- Relationship building

Outside – pushing change
- Advocacy
- Lobbying
- Organizing

Communications: Applicable for both
- Framing the issue
- Conveying values

ADVOCACY DEFINITIONS

Advocacy
- Supporting or defending a cause or an issue
- e.g., recommending support of evidence-based prevention programs

Education
- Unbiased information to general public or public officials
- e.g., research on evidence-based prevention programs
- e.g., information about legislation, but make no recommendation for action

Lobbying
- A specific type of advocacy activity
- Seeks to influence the enactment or defeat of pending legislation
- e.g., asking a legislator to vote a certain way

- While ALL lobbying is advocacy, NOT ALL advocacy is Lobbying.

AVOIDING THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Lobbying Regulations – the use of certain resources
- 501(c)3 non-profits
- Government employees
- Federally funded research

Citizen Rights
- Freedom of speech: 1st Amendment
- Actively participate and advocate with your elected officials
  - When you're not on paid time
  - Using personal, voluntary resources (e.g., computer; travel)

Can Scientists be Advocates?
"*I shutter when I think about the implications of stripping scientists – **those who might know more about some given topic then anyone else** – of their citizenship.... When scientists reject advocacy as a principle, they reject a fundamental aspect of their citizenship.*"
        - Michael Nelson, associate professor of environmental ethics and philosophy at Michigan State University

AVOIDING THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Lobbying EXAMPLES

- Ask legislator to fund Medicaid. (direct lobbying)
  - Preparing for meetings
  - Scheduling

- Ask a group to contact their legislator to fund Medicaid (grassroots lobbying)
  - Preparing a call to action
  - Coordinating action among others

- Preparing persuasive materials encouraging Medicaid funding

NOT Lobbying EXAMPLES

- Contact legislator to provide information about healthcare issues

- Update a group on the status of legislation, without a call to action.

- Prepare nonpartisan analysis regarding healthcare

- Provide technical assistance on how to best implement a change to Medicaid (per request)

- Draft model legislation for education purposes (e.g., how to use evidence in law)

AVOIDING THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Recommendations

1. Focus on the issues and evidence

2. Make ranging, specific recommendations

3. Describe legislation objectively (not your opinion)

4. Describe how evidence does or does not align with specific legislation

Honest Broker

RESEARCHERS RECEIVING
FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING

Do's

- Share <u>your research</u> and its implications outside academia
- Share <u>best practices</u> and <u>success stories</u> with lawmakers
- Share evidence-based policy approaches or <u>model legislation</u>
- Make clear you are <u>speaking as an individual</u> scientist (not representing an organization)
- Lobby as an individual citizen on a <u>voluntary</u> basis (e.g., call or write your legislators)

<u>Don't</u> use appropriated funds or resources for...

- Lobbying regarding **pending or proposed legislation**, resolution, appropriation, or measure
- **<u>Pressuring government officials</u>** in relation to pending or proposed legislation
- Supporting **<u>activities that take a position</u>** on pending or proposed legislation

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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