READY

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Appalachian Regional Commission

THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

(ARC) is an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the Region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation.

ARC's "READY Appalachia: A Community Capacity-Building Initiative" provides direct technical assistance and funding to support four key pillars of economic development in the Region: Appalachian local governments, local development districts (LDDs), nonprofit organizations, and community foundations. The READY Local Governments training program is designed to help local governments in the Appalachian Region better apply for, manage, leverage, and implement federally funded projects to invest in infrastructure, business and workforce development, and other long-term solutions to improve the lives of residents.

The curriculum was created in partnership with GrantWorks and CO.STARTERS to provide a nine week virtual cohort-based training at no-cost to participants. While the content has been developed with local governments in mind, it is relevant to many types of organizations doing important economic development work in grant application development.

ARC
Appalachian
Regional
Commission

COURSE 4

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

READY
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

COURSE 4

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AS YOU ARRIVE...

(10 minutes)

Building on your course and fieldwork from last week, please make note of the following so you are fully prepared for today's session.

1. After filling out the SF-424, do you have any remaining questions?

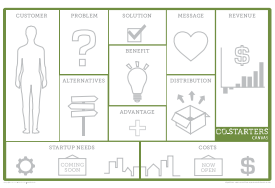
2. Were you able to draft your grant narrative and budget? If not, where are you stuck? How can we help?

3. Who agreed to write letters of support for the project? List below.

4. What sort of community engagement strategies does your local government currently use? List below.

5. Review your completed CO.STARTERS Canvas of your project. Has anything changed in the past week? If so, make updates.

CO.STARTERS Canvas



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 101

(20 minutes)

As we already discussed, community engagement plays a part in identifying local needs and priorities before you even start looking for grants. But, you can't stop there. To truly be successful, you need to integrate community engagement into every part of your federal grant initiative.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Simply put, **community engagement** is getting everyone in a community involved and working together to make the community a better place. Through a collaborative process, community engagement seeks to empower individuals, build relationships, and foster shared ownership over issues, projects, or initiatives.

While it can take many forms, the underlying goal remains the same: building trust.

Whether you're getting the word out about an opportunity, asking for opinions or feedback, or trying to get community buy-in, everything is easier (and more effective!) when there is trust.

And it's not something that happens once and you're done. To truly do community engagement well, it must be an iterative, ongoing process. As you listen to and work with constituents, you have the opportunity to learn and adapt.

WHY IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT FOR FEDERAL GRANTS?

Community engagement is crucial for a local government to undertake around a federal grant for several reasons:

Transparency: Talking to the community about how the local government gets and uses the federal grant funds helps build trust. When community members feel that decisions are made openly and with their best interests in mind, they are more likely to trust the decisions and actions being taken.

Accountability: When the community has a say in how the money is spent, it makes sure the government uses it well and in alignment with community needs and priorities.

Input and Feedback: Letting people share their ideas on how to best use grant funds ensures that the local government's decisions reflect the actual needs and desires of the community. People want to believe that their local government has their best interests in mind. Community engagement shows that they do, especially when they feel heard and their concerns are addressed.

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Better Decision-Making: By tapping into the knowledge and perspectives of community members, local governments can make more informed decisions about how to use federal grant funds to address local challenges and promote community development.

Community Ownership: When people have a say in how the money is used, they feel more responsible for making sure things go well, which leads to more support and involvement in projects or initiatives. We're all in this together.

Maximizing Impact: By talking to the community, the government can find other ways to make the money go even further and leverage additional resources. Community members may have valuable connections or insights that can enhance the effectiveness of grant-funded initiatives.

Equity and Inclusion: Giving marginalized or underrepresented groups a voice in the decision-making process helps promote social equity and inclusion within the community.

Reducing Conflict: Community engagement provides a structured and respectful space for dialogue and negotiation. Moreover, through engaging in discussions and decision-making processes, people gain a better understanding of the issues at hand, as well as the perspectives and concerns of others. This increased understanding can help reduce misunderstandings that often lead to conflict.

Building Relationships: Sometimes it's challenging for constituents to get their heads around why a project or initiative is important or visualize how it will come together. Community engagement provides an opportunity to put faces to an otherwise abstract idea. When they get to know the people behind the project, it makes it easier to understand and accept change.

ACTIVITY: Community Engagement

In your cohorts, discuss:

What has been your experience with community engagement? What have you seen work well? What didn't work and what did you learn?

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BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(30 minutes)

As you decide what tactics or strategies are best to use, keep a couple things in mind.

UNDERSTAND THE GOALS + REQUIREMENTS OF THE GRANT

It's very likely that the grant itself will outline some requirements for how to engage the community—especially if it is providing services to residents. Know the grant inside and out to make sure your efforts are aligned.

SEGMENT YOUR COMMUNITY

To truly do community engagement well, you have to have a clear picture of who you're trying to engage with and why. Likely, there are different segments of the community who will each be affected by the grant initiative in a different way. Thinking through how your community breaks down and getting more specific on the wants and needs of each constituent type can help you create more targeted and effective strategies. Consider groups such as:

- Government leadership and elected officials
- Nonprofit leaders (including churches!)
- Local business owners
- Partner agencies
- Local media
- Residents and recipients (those affected by the grant)
- Cultural or special interest groups

TIP:

Churches and their leadership are often an overlooked source of community access and reach. Various segments of your community might belong to a faith community.

START WITH THE "INFLUENCERS"

You know who they are. In each segment you identified, there is likely a person (or two) that everyone in that segment looks to, that everyone trusts.

If you focus your efforts on them first, they can be your advocate and win others to the cause. You don't necessarily have to reach everyone in that segment if they're willing to help by leveraging their relationships. They already have the trust. Get them on board and invite them to help with the others.

STAY FOCUSED ON THE VISION

We've all been there. You're at a community meeting and there is a lot of concern over what is being shared. People start focusing on the smallest details and seem to be missing the bigger picture.

One way to get community buy-in from the start is to focus on what you all care about—making your home a better place.

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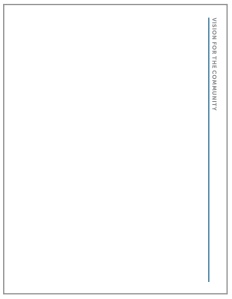
If you focus first on the vision—what you want your community to ultimately be—the details and strategies are more likely to fall into place. People will be more inclined to see how they connect. And they are more likely to see that we all really want the same things.

ACTIVITY: Vision for the Community

Think for a moment about what you'd like your community to be. How will this grant change things? If your work is successful, what will your community be like? Then, use the ***Vision for the Community*** worksheet to draw us a picture and be ready to share with your cohort.

Community Vision



BE INTENTIONAL + INCLUSIVE

Some people in the community may be harder to reach than others. But a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives is what community engagement is all about. And remember, diversity isn't just about race. You need to think about other factors like age, gender, and socioeconomic status. To ensure that all members of your community have the opportunity to participate, anticipate any barriers and address them. Common barriers include:

Language: There may be people you need to include who do not speak English. Making sure you have materials, information, and opportunities available in a language they understand can help bridge the divide.

Time: Consider offering opportunities to engage at different times of the day to accommodate a variety of schedules. For example, some jobs don't allow people to get away during the workday, while elderly populations might be less inclined to drive at night.

Transportation: Physical distance or transportation issues can make it difficult for community members to participate in in-person engagement activities, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Consider providing transportation or locating activities in close proximity to those you're trying to reach.

Childcare: Some people are unable to engage because they have children they must care for. Consider offering childcare to make it easier for them to join.

Digital inequality: Disparities in access to technology or digital literacy skills can create barriers to online engagement strategies for certain segments of the community. Consider using some tactics that do not require access to a computer—both when doing engagement and in your communication strategies.

Lack of trust: Whatever the reason, if they do not trust you, they will not engage. This is a great opportunity to engage partner organizations or "influencers" who have their trust to help bridge the gap.

TIP:

Be sure engagement opportunities are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. The ADA aims to ensure equal access and opportunities for individuals with disabilities in various aspects of life, including employment, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. ADA compliance involves removing barriers and making adjustments to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access and participate in various aspects of public life on an equal basis with others.

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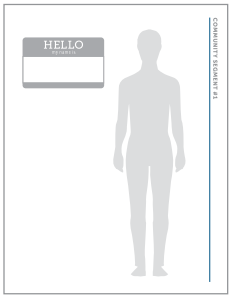
Community Segments



ACTIVITY: Community Segments

What are the top 5 community segments your community engagement should focus on for this grant initiative? Be sure to think about those hard-to-reach ones. List them below:

Then, for each community segment, use the ***Community Segments*** worksheet to draw a picture representative of this segment. Be sure to address:

- Why is this person/segment important to the project?
- Why will they care?
- What do they want/need? How will this meet their needs?
- How do you think they'll feel about it?
- What are the challenges or barriers standing in their way? What barriers will you need to address?
- What do you need them to do? How do you want them be involved?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TACTICS + TIPS

(30 minutes)

Community engagement can take many forms. From social media outreach and online town halls to utility bill inserts and notes in kids' backpacks, the most important consideration should be what works best for the people you're trying to reach.

The best thing you can do is meet them where they're at. They'll be more likely to engage if you make it easy for them to do so. Get creative!

With that said, several tried and true methods typically work.

COMMUNITY/TOWN HALL MEETINGS

In these types of meetings, people from a community come together to talk about issues affecting their town or city or give input on community projects. People can learn about what's going on, ask questions, share their thoughts, and give feedback. While there is no standard format, keep these tips in mind:

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Be clear on the meeting purpose and goals (and stay focused). A common pitfall is trying to do too much in one meeting. Know what you hope to accomplish and craft a strategy to do it.

Craft an agenda. Having an agenda will not only keep you on track and make sure everything is covered, it will also help attendees know what to expect. If people see there is dedicated time for what they find important, they are less likely to rabbit trail early in the meeting. Use a "shelf" or "parking lot" to keep the conversation on point while acknowledging you've heard their concerns/questions and put time on the agenda to cover anything in it.

Engage a facilitator. A facilitator can provide impartial guidance and ensure that the meeting remains focused on its objectives. They help maintain order and fairness, ensuring that all voices are heard and that discussions stay on track. Great facilitators can also draw insights and connections to help you achieve your goals more efficiently.

TIP:

While you may have someone on your team who can play the facilitator role, hiring a professional may be more effective. As a neutral voice, they do not have a personal stake in the community—making neutrality easier—and can bring an outside perspective to the conversation.

Utilize breakouts/small groups. Not everyone is willing to stand up in front of a room full of people and share their thoughts. In fact, people you really need to hear from might be intimated to speak up. Small groups (especially when they are facilitated) make sure every voice is heard.

Employ a team to help. A team of people, each with clear roles, will make your community meeting run much smoother. From managing sign-in to capturing information, having a team ensures that all important things get done.

TIP:

Use volunteers to extend your team! Members of the community can provide valuable help, while also creating deeper community buy-in.

Have a plan for dealing with conflict. You have to be prepared for someone to disagree or conflict to arise. Have a plan spelled out before it happens. Set ground rules for respectful communication and behavior at the beginning of the meeting. Emphasize the importance of listening to others, avoiding personal attacks, and focusing on finding solutions rather than assigning blame. Consider having someone available who can take those needing more time aside (maybe in another room) to carefully listen to their needs.

Allow space for challenges. While you want to focus on the vision for the community and the benefits of the initiative, it's important to dedicate time to addressing challenges or obstacles that stand in the way. Provide time on the agenda to hear them and invite the community to share ways to overcome them.

Be intentional about what happens next. Let participants know what happens from here and how they can continue to be involved. Remember, community engagement is an ongoing process! If you want them to engage, you need to communicate how.

Collect relevant information. You likely have requirements on what needs to be reported back to the federal agency in the grant. Make sure you know what those requirements are and collect what is needed. For example, you may need to report attendee numbers or demographic information—make sure you get it.

TIP:

Use the information you collect to help with your diversity and inclusion efforts. See who hasn't engaged and target strategies to reach them.

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ACTIVITY: Community Meetings

In your cohorts, discuss:

What additional tips do you have for running effective community meetings?

FOCUS GROUPS

A **focus group** is a small gathering of people (the more diverse the better) who discuss a specific topic guided by a moderator. They are a great way to hear different opinions and insights on a subject. The group talks openly, helping organizers understand people's thoughts and feelings about the topic.

TIP:

Consider providing an incentive (it doesn't have to be monetary!) to get people to join. It can help with recruiting truly diverse groups.

You're likely familiar with the idea of using focus groups to gather feedback or get input on a variety of topics. More intimate than community meetings, you may have more control on who is selected to participate and be able to address a topic more narrowly.

But focus groups also provide an opportunity to test messaging and communication strategies. Local governments can gauge how different messages are received by community members and identify the most effective ways to communicate important information before deploying it at large.

When conducting focus groups, keep these things in mind:

Define clear goals: Clearly define the purpose and objectives of the focus group. What specific questions or topics do you want to explore? Having clear goals will guide the discussion and ensure that you gather relevant insights.

Select diverse participants: Aim for diversity in the composition of focus group participants to capture a range of perspectives. Consider factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location to ensure representation from various segments of the community.

Use neutral, skilled moderators: Ensure that moderators are trained in facilitating focus group discussions effectively. They should be skilled in asking open-ended questions, actively listening, managing group dynamics, and keeping the conversation on track.

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SURVEYS + QUESTIONNAIRES

Using surveys for community engagement can be a powerful tool for local governments to gather feedback, understand needs, and involve citizens in decision-making processes.

When developing and deploying surveys, keep these things in mind.

Strive for simplicity: Design the survey with simplicity and clarity in mind. Use clear language and avoid jargon. Keep the survey concise to encourage participation. Your response rate will be affected if you make it too long or complex. Also, be strategic in where you use quantitative (multiple choice, rating scales) verses qualitative (open-ended questions) to get the best data.

Do a test run with a small group before broad deployment: Sometimes a poorly worded survey can skew the results. Have a small group of people not involved in the project complete the survey and give you feedback to ensure the questions are clear and not open to misinterpretation.

Craft a promotion strategy: Building the survey is one thing; promoting it is another. Have a plan to promote the survey widely through various channels such as social media, local newspapers, community centers, and public events.

Establish a feedback loop: Let the community know what you discover! Share key findings, insights, and any actions taken as a result of the survey. This helps demonstrate that their input has been heard and acted upon.

TIP:

Engage community leaders and partner organizations to help spread the word and encourage participation. Leveraging partner relationships can not only help you disseminate information, but also better reach marginalized facets of your community.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) / MEDIA

Public Relations (PR) is a strategic communication process that aims to build mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its various stakeholders, including the public, media, investors, customers, employees, and community members.

When considering community engagement strategies for a federal grant, you need to consider how you'll engage traditional channels, both digital and print. Although we'll talk more about communication plans shortly, a couple things to consider:

TIP:

Before engaging in PR and earned media strategies, check the grant requirements to make sure there are no restrictions on doing so.

Craft a compelling narrative: Develop a narrative that highlights the importance of the project or program that the grant will fund. Emphasize how it addresses community needs, improves quality of life, promotes economic development, or solves pressing issues.

Be proactive: Tell the story first and reach out to local news sources before they reach out to you. This proactiveness helps ensure your version is the one being told. Don't forget that the media are one of the important stakeholders in your community! Involve them in your stakeholder engagement early on.

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Highlight successes: Build credibility by telling the story of positive community change through this grant. Feature residents affected and use testimonials. If you are leveraging a strategy used successfully by another community, share their story and how it connects to yours.

COMMUNICATION PLANS

(45 minutes)

For a federal grant, everything comes together in the communication plan. A **communication plan** is a detailed strategy that outlines how an organization or entity will communicate with its various stakeholders. It's essentially a roadmap for your community engagement efforts.

While communication plans come in many forms, they tend to all have several key components.

TIP:

Thoroughly understand the grant requirements before you craft your communications plan. The contract may spell out what targets you need to hit (for example, percentage of low to moderate income people) or strategies you must use.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

The objectives section clearly sets out what you want to achieve through your communication efforts. These objectives should be clear, measurable, and aligned with the overall goals of your grant initiative. While goals will vary from grant to grant, you'll want to think about things like increasing awareness, promoting engagement, driving services, or providing education.

AUDIENCES

The audience section outlines who you need to communicate with or target through your efforts. Think about the Community Segments activity we did earlier. This would be a good place to start when identifying your audience. Include relevant information about their demographics, psychographics (values, beliefs, lifestyle), needs or concerns, and communication preferences.

KEY MESSAGES

The key message section outlines the main points you want to convey to your audience. These messages serve as the core content of your communication efforts and should be clear, concise, and aligned with your objectives. When crafting your message think about:

TIP:

You always need to be prepared to adapt your message based on feedback, changing circumstances, or new information. If you aren't achieving your objectives, tweak your message.

- Why would someone care? How will this benefit or affect them?
- What about this initiative would spark their interest? What is unique or compelling?
- What do they need to know? What's most important?
- How do I want them to engage? What do I want them to do?
- How will my message make my customer like and trust me?

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Remember, **messaging should always be used consistently, communicating the same information even if in different ways.** Just like mixed signals can ruin a personal relationship, mixed messages to your constituents can muddle your communication efforts.

TIP:

Use your Canvas as a starting point!

Customer + Problem + Benefit = Message

ACTIVITY: Key Messages

In 5 words or less, write down 3 key messages for your initiative. Don't overthink it! You can always iterate later.

1.

2.

3.

TACTICS/CHANNELS

The tactics or channels section sets out methods or platforms you'll use to deliver your messages, like emails, social media, or press releases. You'll want to think about how you'll use the various tactics in three areas.

1. **Marketing strategies**: These are primarily informational and aimed at awareness. Common channels include website landing pages, television, radio, newspapers or other publications, social media, billboards/signage, newsletters/email, and press releases.
2. **Outreach strategies**: These strategies tend to be more targeted with a clear goal or call to action attached. You want people you're targeting to sign up for a program, come to an event, or take some other action. Common channels include fliers, community meetings, door-to-door canvassing, phone or text strategies, and community partnerships.
3. **Community input strategies**: These strategies aim at gathering input. Common channels include many of those we've already covered, like community meetings, surveys, and focus groups.

TIP:

Make sure your communications needs are built into your budget from the start. Thinking through what will be required during implementation while you're going through the application process can ensure you get the costs appropriately covered.

When thinking about communication channels, it's easy to think you need to do *all* of them in order to be effective.

The good news is that you don't. In fact, you can be incredibly effective by choosing only a few channels, but focusing on those most likely to reach your target audience.

By thinking about your customer—their life, their preferences, and their daily activities—you'll be able to identify which communication tactics will be most effective.

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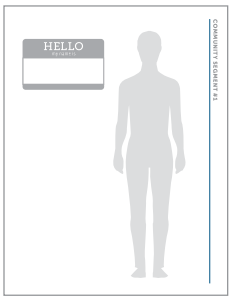
For example, if your target audience uses Facebook daily but doesn't have an Instagram account, it's not the best use of your time to build out an Instagram strategy. Your target customer will never see it anyway. Or maybe they don't use social media at all but are avid radio listeners. A radio ad strategy would get you much further.

There's no single right answer. The channels that make the most sense are dependent on your audience.

Community Segments



ACTIVITY: Channels for Community Segments

Look back to the ***Community Segments*** activity we did earlier. For each one, write down in the margins 3 channels you think would be most effective for reaching this particular audience. Remember, you want to be where they already are.

TIMELINE

The timeline section of a communication plan outlines the schedule for when communication activities will occur. It helps ensure that messages are delivered in a timely manner and that communication efforts are coordinated effectively.

As you plan the timeline, think through the sequence in which communication activities will occur. Establishing a logical order helps ensure that tasks are completed in a timely manner and that dependencies are accounted for.

You'll also want to set deadlines for completing each communication task or activity. Deadlines create accountability and help prevent delays in the execution of your communication plan.

RESPONSIBILITIES / TEAM

A strong communications plan not only outlines what will be done by when, but also includes who is responsible for creating, delivering, and managing communication efforts.

You may want to outline each team member and their expertise, but it's also helpful to assign a specific person or people for everything listed on the timeline—each deliverable.

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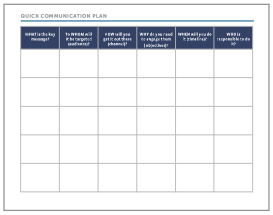
ACTIVITY: Quick Communication Plan

While a full communications plan takes time to craft, you can get some basic thoughts down using the ***Quick Communications Plan*** worksheet. Think through:

- WHAT is the key message?
- To WHOM will it be targeted (audience)?
- HOW will you get it out there (channel)?
- WHY do you need to engage them (objectives)?
- WHEN will you do it (timeline)?
- WHO is responsible to do it?

Then, share one row of answers with your cohort. Is it clear to them?

Quick Communications Plan



CREATE AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(20 minutes)

One great way to ensure ongoing community engagement over the lifecycle of a federal grant initiative is to create an **advisory committee**—a group of people who come together to provide advice, suggestions, and recommendations.

These committees are usually made up of individuals with relevant expertise, knowledge, or experience related to the subject matter being discussed. The purpose of the advisory committee is to help decision-makers at the local government level make informed choices by offering diverse perspectives, insights, and guidance. While advisory committees do not have decision-making authority themselves, their input is often highly valued and considered when making important decisions.

When creating your advisory committee, keep a couple things in mind:

Represent a diversity of interests. An advisory committee can help ensure that the community voice is represented, not just policymakers'. Pull in people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Also, don't go for the "usual suspects" (i.e. people who already get asked to be on every committee). Use the advisory committee as an opportunity to bring in new people to help.

Put the loudest voices to work. If community members are particularly interested in what's going on, involving them on your advisory committee can be a great way to give them an outlet to constructively participate. Give them an appropriate role and specific tasks to keep things running smoothly.

TIP:

Not sure where to start? Think about crisis management. If your worst fears happen regarding this initiative, who do you want on your team? Ask them.

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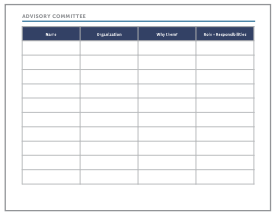
Tap into local expertise. Advisory boards are a great way to involve individuals with expertise relevant to the grant's objectives, such as representatives from local community organizations, academia, businesses, or other stakeholders. This ensures that the local government can tap into diverse perspectives and knowledge to effectively plan and implement the grant-funded programs or projects.

Advisory Committee



ACTIVITY: Advisory Committee

Think about your initiative. Who would be helpful to put on your advisory committee? Brainstorm 5-10 names and fill out the ***Advisory Committee*** worksheet to capture your thoughts.

WORKING WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

(15 minutes)

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking competitively when it comes to neighboring municipalities—the cities, towns, and counties surrounding your local government. You each have the responsibility to look out for your own constituents and care for the things within your borders.

However, when it comes to federal grant opportunities, working in collaboration with neighboring municipalities tends to pay off and can increase your chances of a successful grant.

The fact is, your borders are not as hard and fast as they may seem. A project benefiting one community often benefits the region.

For example, a riverfront park development, though based in a particular town, may provide recreation opportunities for people in the neighboring counties. Rather than being a detriment, the draw of new people into town can benefit the local economy. The development benefits the region as a whole.

There are some clear benefits of working together:

Enhanced Resource Pooling: By partnering with a neighboring municipality, local governments can combine their resources, expertise, and capacities to submit a stronger grant proposal. This can include sharing staff, equipment, data, and other resources that may be necessary to meet the requirements of the grant.

Increased Competitive Advantage: Collaborative proposals often stand out in the eyes of grant reviewers. Partnering with a neighboring municipality can demonstrate a commitment to regional collaboration and a broader impact, which may increase the likelihood of receiving the grant funding.

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Leveraging Specializations and Expertise: Each municipality may have unique strengths, experiences, and resources. Partnering allows them to leverage these specializations and expertise to address complex issues comprehensively. For example, one municipality might excel in environmental planning while another has a strong track record in community engagement.

Expanded Project Scope: Partnering with a neighboring municipality can allow for larger-scale projects or initiatives that address regional challenges. This broader scope can lead to more significant impacts and benefits for both communities involved.

Shared Risk and Responsibility: When multiple municipalities collaborate on a grant-funded project, they also share the associated risks and responsibilities. This can help distribute the burden of project management, implementation challenges, and financial risks.

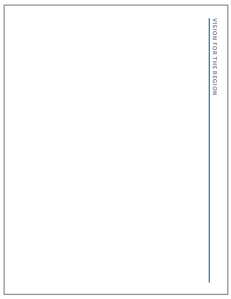
Fostering Relationships and Collaboration: Collaborating on a grant provides an opportunity for local governments to build relationships, trust, and goodwill with neighboring municipalities. This can lay the groundwork for future partnerships, joint initiatives, and regional cooperation beyond the specific grant-funded project.

Efficiency and Cost Savings: Partnering can help local governments reduce duplication of efforts and costs associated with grant proposal development and project implementation. By sharing resources and expertise, municipalities can achieve economies of scale and operate more efficiently.

ACTIVITY: Vision for the Region

Think for a moment about what you'd like your region to be. How will this grant change things? How will it affect your neighboring municipalities? Use the ***Vision for the Region*** worksheet to draw a picture and be ready to share with your cohort.

Vision for the Region



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ONGOING PROJECT TRANSPARENCY

(15 minutes)

Part of doing effective community engagement is creating ongoing transparency.

Remember, grants are tax dollars at work. If you want to keep the community engaged, it's important for them to be aware of the progress being made and opportunities to get involved.

While there are many ways to create transparency, a couple ones you may consider include:

Create landing page for the project. Having a dedicated page for each initiative makes it easier for people to find relevant information regarding the project. In addition to outlining the plan, you can post monthly project updates.

Share a public view of your project management system. By making your project management system public (think dashboard), the whole community can watch the initiative progress. The added bonus is it helps with internal accountability and keeps things on track.

Report regularly at council meetings. Establish a regular cadence of reporting during public meetings. In addition to helping elected leadership understand how the project is developing, it also helps inform the public when the meetings are recorded or the minutes are posted online.

ACTIVITY: Transparency

In your cohorts, discuss:

What methods for creating transparency have you seen be effective? What have you seen work well? What didn't work and what did you learn?

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- ☐ Share your ***Vision for the Community*** and ***Vision for the Region*** drawings with a couple people. What did you miss that they would add?
- ☐ Finish filling out your ***Quick Communications Plan*** template and compare notes with your team.
- ☐ Meet with your team to go over your ***Advisory Committee*** worksheet and solidify who you would like to ask. Then reach out to a few people to see if they'd be interested in being involved.
- ☐ Set up meetings with leadership of your neighboring municipalities to discuss potential projects and collaborative opportunities for the region.

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NOTES:

COMMUNITY SEGMENT #1

COMMUNITY SEGMENT #2

COMMUNITY SEGMENT #3

COMMUNITY SEGMENT #4

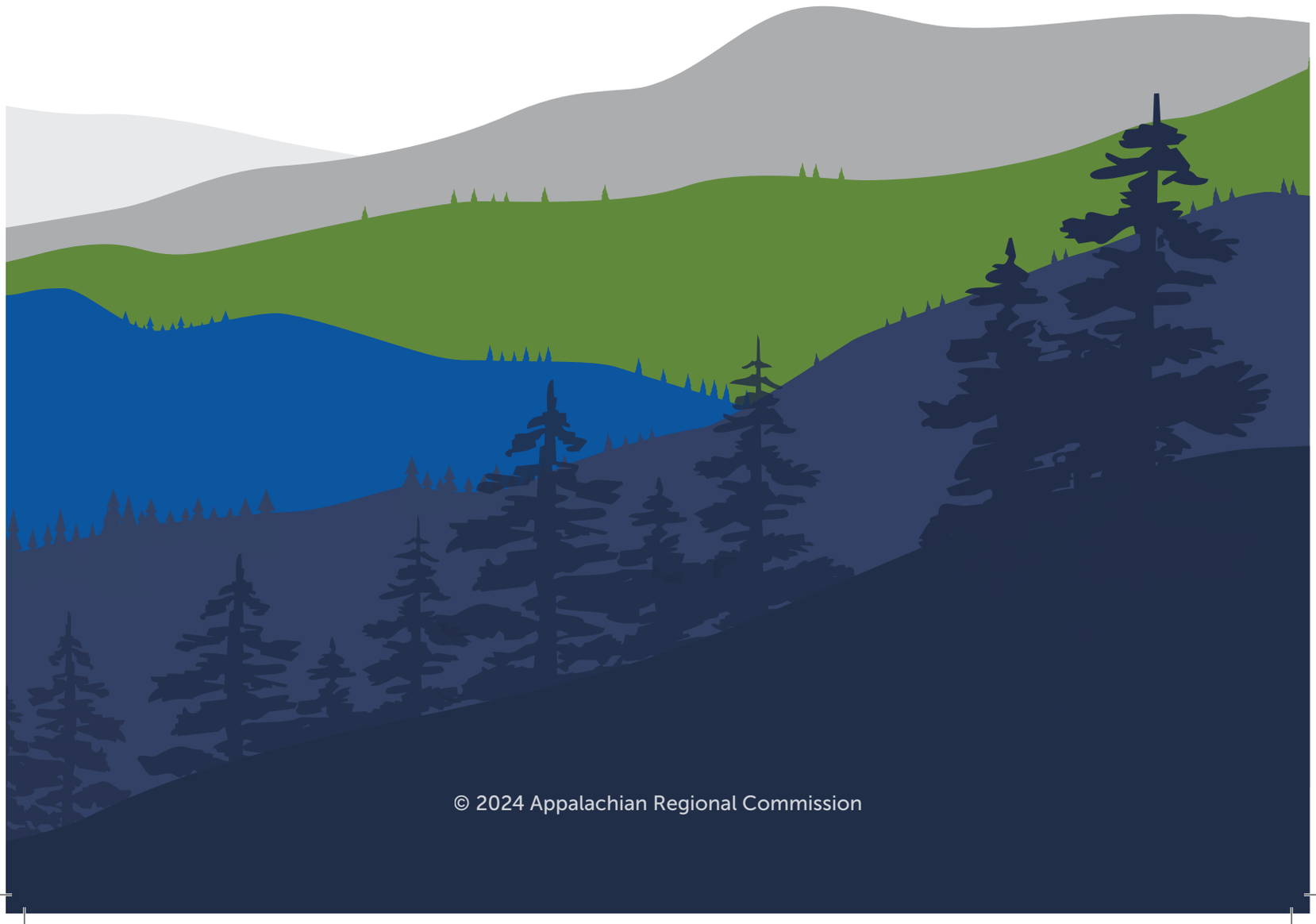
COMMUNITY SEGMENT #5

QUICK COMMUNICATION PLAN

WHAT is the key message?	To WHOM will it be targeted (audience)?	HOW will you get it out there (channel)?	WHY do you need to engage them (objectives)?	WHEN will you do it (timeline)?	WHO is responsible to do it?

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Name	Organization	Why them?	Role + Responsibilities



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