

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

## *Recommended Practices for Science Communication with Policymakers*

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### 1 PLANNING AHEAD

**RESEARCH YOUR AUDIENCE** With whom should you communicate? What are their responsibilities, priorities, and background?

**WORK WITH OTHERS** Are there colleagues or organizations who have complementary expertise or more experience than you interacting with policymakers?

**CONSULT AVAILABLE RESOURCES** What advice or training is available from your employer, scientific society, or other organizations?

**PRACTICE AND GET FEEDBACK** Have you role-played your meeting or asked a colleague or friend to read your written material?

### 2 COMMUNICATION GOALS

**IDENTIFY AND ARTICULATE YOUR GOALS** Why are you communicating? What are you asking of the policymaker?

**COMMUNICATE SHARED GOALS** Consider the policymaker's perspective. Why should they devote time and resources responding to your request?

### 3 COMMUNICATION CONTENT

**PRACTICE ETHICAL COMMUNICATION** Is the information you are conveying accurate and does it reflect the breadth of quality work on your subject? Have you considered how your biases are influencing your communication?

**MAKE SURE YOU ARE UNDERSTOOD BY NONEXPERTS** Is your communication concise, well-organized, and jargon-free? Do you use concrete examples, narratives, and (where relevant) visual data displays?

**BE RELEVANT** Does your communication convey to the policymaker why they should care about the information you are providing? Have you selected examples and narratives that are likely to resonate?

**COMMUNICATE CREDIBILITY** Have you conveyed your expertise? Are your argumentative points well-justified and factual statements well-documented?

### 4 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

**ESTABLISH TRUST** Are you connected to an organization or individual known to, and respected by, the policymaker?

**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** What natural connections — geographic, topical, or social — can you build on to foster a relationship with a policymaker?

**PRACTICE RESPECT** Do you appreciate that your conversation partner is a policymaking professional with expertise in that arena and an interest in serving the public? Are you ready to listen to their perspective and exchange ideas?

### 5 COMMUNICATING IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT

**REMEMBER SCIENCE IS ONE INPUT OF MANY IN THE POLICY PROCESS** Are you aware of the varied influences the policymaker likely will take into account when making a decision in which you are invested?

**RESPOND TO POLITICAL DIVERSITY PRODUCTIVELY** Are you considering opportunities for productive communication among those with whom you do not always see eye to eye? Have you thought through strategies for appealing to politically diverse audiences, including grappling with points of disagreement?

### 6 PRACTICALITIES WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH POLICYMAKERS

**RECOGNIZE VARIOUS TYPES OF POLICYMAKERS** With what type of policymaker should you communicate?

**GAIN ACCESS** What is your strategy for getting the attention of a busy policymaker?

**CHOOSE HIGH-IMPACT COMMUNICATION** Can you set aside time to tailor your written communications to your audience or meet a policymaker in person?

**TIME YOUR COMMUNICATION** Have you sought information on the policymaker's schedule and/or the timing of key legislative decision points?