

Local Leaders Conference 2019 – Holiday Valley Resort & Conference Center, Ellicottville, NY
Session Descriptions and Speaker Bios

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

Rethinking your Workforce

Recruit and keep experienced staff by understanding the links between workforce development, system sustainability, and long-term planning. In this session, you will learn how to analyze gaps in your current workforce, write compelling job descriptions, and prepare for the Baby Boomer retirement phase with succession planning tips.

Public Engagement and Meeting Design

The one group that local governments must report to on a regular basis is the ever-changing public they serve. Issues such as property taxes, service delivery, and land use can put a community on edge. This session addresses how best to communicate with the public in a way that will garner support and encourage public engagement. Participants learn tools for communicating with their constituents directly and through media outlets, as well as conducting effective meetings.

Effective Communication Strategies for the Public Sector

From the boss to the front desk, successful employees need strong communication skills to influence attitudes and get things done. You will learn how to communicate with the public, your board, regulatory and funding agencies. You will also learn how to build support for decisions, and become a compelling communicator to raise awareness, and change attitudes and behaviors.

This workshop is designed to: a) improve participant's ability to turn dry numbers and facts into a compelling story, and b) help attendees create the key elements of an effective message so they can build their story and take it to the community, their board and their elected officials.

The workshop will be broken into the three following sessions.

1. Connecting with Others Through Story What makes an effective story? Why is story important to moving your audience and how does it trigger action? Facts alone do not change people's minds.

Objectives: Participants will understand the concepts and construction of a powerful story in order to be able to use story as a tool to move forward issues with limited visibility or that are contentious. This session will include a group storytelling exercise.

2. Crafting a Presentation That Inspires Learn what you have been doing wrong all these years and how you can make a more effective and powerful Powerpoint presentation.

Objectives: Understand the structure and tools needed for effective technical or non-technical presentations to diverse audience types. Participants will learn to incorporate multi-media to create a visually striking and compelling presentation.

3. Framing Your Message Learn techniques to develop a strong and persuasive message,

framed for your audience. Build on the techniques above (storytelling, powerful presentations) to create a message that will motivate your community.

Objectives: Participants will learn a simple problem-solution-action approach to developing a powerful message. This session will include a group messaging exercise.

Grant Writing 101

Receive an introduction to the basics of grant writing, including how to identify priority projects, plan for a proposal, and the mechanics of grant writing. You will learn how to craft more competitive grant applications and increase the success rate of your submissions. We will also discuss how relationship building can support your proposal and how best to convey the needs of your organization to grant reviewers.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

Overview of the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) and Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Process

A brief introduction to the REDC and the CFA application explains the annual process to access many state funding programs. Learn tips to working with your REDC and improve your grant success rate through the CFA.

State and Federal Funding, Financing, and Resources for Municipal Infrastructure Roundtable Discussion

Are you interested in learning more about funding and financing municipal infrastructure projects in your town or village? Meet with state and federal agency representatives to learn about funding opportunities for safe and clean water management and other community investments. If you plan to apply for funding in 2019, this session will provide updates on grant and financing programs, dialogue on the importance and opportunities for co-funding, and a panel discussion with audience participation. Several state and federal agencies will be represented, including: NYS Homes & Community Renewal, NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of Health, USDA Rural Development, and NYS Department of State. Khris Dodson, Associate Director of the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center will moderate the panel and audience questions.

Bios:

Sarah Diefendorf is the Executive Director of the Environmental Finance Center West, a program housed at Earth Island Institute in Berkeley, California. She has founded and managed numerous nonprofit organizations throughout her career and has specialized in building business, financial, communications and leadership capacity in the US and abroad. For the past five years Sarah has worked as a national trainer for a USEPA small water systems grant and has delivered Leadership Through Communications workshops for small water systems for small and rural communities and Tribes throughout the United States. Sarah recently served as an Expert Witness for the USEPA National Environmental Finance Advisory Board, serves on the Board of the California League of Women Voters, and is the past chair of the Carbon Cycle

Institute. She holds a BA in International Relations from San Francisco State University and an MS in Environmental Geography from Cambridge University.

Khris Dodson is Associate Director for the Environmental Finance Center. Khris provides technical assistance to local municipalities on topics related to resiliency, comprehensive planning, workforce planning, stormwater management and other topics related to local infrastructure management and finance. Khris has master's degrees from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and Syracuse University.