

SPARC Leadership Program 2021-22

Bi-monthly Training: Communications and Messaging

• Virtual Conference •
Thursday, October 28, 2021

Summary of Events

Crafting messaging for our communities and decisionmakers requires that key elements are addressed to ensure that the content, language, and tone are informative, concise, and audience-appropriate. This was the second convening in a series of three SPARC Leadership Program bi-monthly trainings. With the theme of this training centered around communications and messaging and the one previous on health equity, the Leadership Program is working its way on how to deliver messaging to key decisionmakers and policymakers, which will be addressed more specifically in the final installation of the bi-monthly trainings.

Policy Project Groups

The policy project groups met with SPARC staff and their respective coaches to further focus the topics of their policy projects. Some groups are collaborating on larger projects, while a number of fellows have already made headway in their individual projects. With the Capstone ahead in February, we excited to track the progression of everyone's projects.

“Was It Something I Said?”: How to Craft and Leverage Messaging for Policymakers

Four professionals experienced in communications spoke candidly about their respective expertise for a panel discussion. We were joined by Kathy “Toki” Ko, the Organizing and Engagement Manager for the California Tobacco Endgame and Commissioner for the City of Monterey Park; Amber Valenzuela, the Field Media Advocacy Manager for the California Tobacco Endgame; Joyce Liu, the Senior Policy and Communications Manager with the VENG Group; and Rachel Hernandez, who serves as a City Councilmember for the City of Riverbank and also APPEAL's very own Communications Manager.

The panelists expressed several elements necessary to communicate messages effectively, starting with clear, culturally-sensitive, and accessible language (including interpretation, when necessary); the importance of repetition in messaging; and the effectiveness of open and patient listening. They also expressed how impactful storytelling and sharing personal narratives can be in tying relevance to a particular message. Lastly, the panelists shared how important it is to know your audience and what moves them.

Reaching Community Leaders through Messaging

To give the Fellows an additional viewpoint on messaging, Tana Lepule joined us to share his longstanding history and extensive experience as an advocate for NH/PI communities.

Elements of Messaging

Rachel Hernandez broke down the components necessary to consider and implement when crafting messaging to policymakers. This was followed by small group practice involving hypothetical scenarios in which each group was asked to craft a 1-minute message to policymakers on a specific tobacco-related policy.