

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Missouri Local Science Engagement Network?**

The Missouri Local Science Engagement Network (LSEN) is a program of [MOST Policy Initiative](#) in partnership with the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS). MO-LSEN aims to elevate the voice of science and the use of evidence in civic society and policy discussions in Missouri. MO-LSEN will recruit cohorts of local science advocates; provide training and guidance in science communication, civic engagement and effective advocacy; engage with local decision-makers on how science can inform the deliberative process (in policy, program and practice); and develop locally relevant content to help facilitate these engagements.

### **Where will this program be launched?**

Missouri is the first site of the Local Science Engagement Network, a pilot program that AAAS will launch in 3-5 locales across the country in 2020. Ideal pilot site locations, like Missouri, will provide a compelling set of local challenges that can be better addressed by including the scientific perspective in reaching solutions, sufficient political and policy momentum towards achieving meaningful solutions, and a base of AAAS members, university scientists, and scientists from other science societies from which to recruit LSEN participants.

### **How will Missouri LSEN support science engagement?**

MO-LSEN will elevate the voices of Missouri science advocates by providing training and guidance in civic engagement, science communications, effective advocacy, and media relations, and will foster and guide dialogue between the science community and local decision-makers, forging opportunities for scientists and decision-makers to build long-term working relationships that permit collaboration on topics of pressing local concern.

### **What is the primary goal of this program?**

The core objective of the MO-LSEN is to mobilize and support multi-disciplinary cohorts of scientists who will advance the evidence-based perspective in support of locally-relevant, achievable policy solutions. By forming and training local science advocates, MO-LSEN will establish a state-wide peer network of science experts who can provide civic and elected leaders with actionable knowledge, and who can draw upon each other to fill knowledge gaps in order to better serve decision-makers as they weigh opportunities to address social, economic, and business challenges with sound policies.

### **How do Missouri scientists get involved in this program?**

The MO-LSEN program is a voluntary effort open to any scientist willing to gain and use communications, engagement, and advocacy skills MO-LSEN will provide through a series of capacity building workshops and seminars. A local Advisory Council and Missouri-based program partners will help evaluate the context for local advocacy and chart the course for effective engagement and advocacy with key decisionmakers whose leveraged climate leadership can produce beneficial results. MO-LSEN will develop a “policy map” that will guide program activities in areas where the greatest

direct impacts on policy deliberations, program implementation, and practical application of science-based knowledge can take place and produce benefits.

### **Why is the LSEN program focused on the state and local level?**

Over the past two decades, elected and community leaders in cities and states across the U.S. have emerged as critical front-line leaders in issues of pressing concern related to energy, sustainability, and climate, as well as other complex science-related policy concerns. Today, local leaders across the country are advancing detailed plans and programs to cut the pollution causing climate change, while also strengthening communities to confront impacts that include sea level rise, extreme and variable weather, and extreme heat and drought, and their consequences to human, built, and natural systems.

### **How will the LSEN program connect scientists to local deliberations?**

AAAS's LSEN program will connect local decisionmakers with networks of AAAS members and other scientists who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and commitment to support informed discussions concerning locally-relevant climate solutions. In conjunction with local partners and science leaders, the LSEN program will guide scientists as they engage with and build relationships among local and state elected leaders, agency staff, community leaders, and front-line communities by helping to identify key local, science-based climate issues. Our science communities will share locally-relevant content that evaluates climate risks and exposures, while spotlighting opportunities for solutions and equipping leaders with relevant evidence that is meaningful and actionable.

### **Will AAAS be supporting particular policy measures?**

The LSEN program will position our science advocates as "honest brokers" of evidence and analysis of locally relevant risks and solutions. Science can assure us that our knowledge of the complex dynamics of climate provide us with a basis of understanding that makes solutions possible. Science can continue to provide current technological solutions to the climate crisis that are largely in place and accelerating, as well as breakthrough solutions that are in development. Science can continue to inform policy solutions to the climate crisis, most of which are currently available and being implemented by local and state governments at an increasing rate.

### **What will MO-LSEN advocates\* be trained to do?**

MO-LSEN science advocates will gain access to a range of workshops and trainings offered by AAAS and other science societies that enable scientists to become effective advocates, including fundamental communications, media training, social media and online communication, and climate communication; workshops that combine tutorials on policymaking with tools and tips on effective communication for advocacy; and training focused on communicating with specific communities, like religious leaders. Funding provided for the implementation of the grassroots effort will support strategically planned workshops and field trainings across Missouri, as well as the dissemination of online resources that provide training and guidance on grassroots advocacy efforts, both broad and climate-specific.

\* MO-LSEN science advocates will not lobby in support of or opposition to any specific policy measures being considered at the local, state, or federal level, in accordance with direct advocacy limitations imposed on 501 C 3 tax-exempt organizations.