**Guidance from Community Liaison Program Managers**

MAPC conducted a series of interviews with program managers from community liaison programs, including Cambridge, MA; Somerville MA; Austin, TX; and a local chapter of the nationwide Community Engagement Response Team (CERT) program.

These interviews aimed to better understand the program structures, successes, and challenges to offer guidance for future program managers.

The bullets below summarize the key reflections from the interviews.

**Frequently Cited Challenges.**

* **Continuity.** Maintaining engagement and interest among liaisons over time can be challenging, as other priorities may compete for their attention. It is important to consider how to continually add value to the program to keep liaisons motivated and involved.
* **Intermittency.** The peak season for community activity typically occurs between May and October, which may result in periods of inactivity or reduced engagement during other times of the year. This intermittency can pose a challenge in maintaining momentum and consistency in the program.
* **Language Access.** In many programs, accessing non-English speaking community members is a continued challenge. Consider language access needs and target liaison recruitment to multi-lingual residents, reserve budget for translation and interpretation.
* **Logistics of meeting in-person.** Both coordinating a physical space to meet and navigating across diverse schedules and availabilities makes meeting in person a logistical challenge, even though it was noted by most interviewees that in-person meetings are preferred.

**Training.**

* **Engaging training:** It is important to make the training fun and interactive, incorporating guest speakers and activities to keep participants engaged and motivated throughout the training.
* **Plain language.** Use plain language with a reading level around 7th grade and pause regularly to ensure comprehension. This can help make the training materials more accessible and understandable to a wide range of participants.
* **Build confidence.** Building the confidence of the liaisons in new topic areas is important, and having relevant materials on hand can support their learning and help them feel more prepared to engage with the community.
* **Flexibility.** The training curriculum should be flexible to accommodate participants’ emerging interests (e.g., having a core curriculum but also incorporating additional topics as requested to help make the training more relevant and tailored).
* **Turnover.** Turnover is inevitable. Design and deliver trainings in a way that allows them to be readily used multiple times to maximize its impact and make it a more efficient and scalable approach to community engagement.
* **EJ.** Start trainings with specific information about your municipality’s climate and environmental justice landscape. This can help set the context for the program and teaches the importance of considering equity and justice issues in climate readiness discussions.
* **Continued Learning.** Provide opportunities for continued learning outside of the trainings, such as inviting liaisons to other relevant municipal trainings, sharing short videos relevant to the training topics, and encouraging post-training community meetings, etc.

**Community Engagement.**

* **Personal Connection.** Tie climate resilience to lived experiences and guide story telling. This helps liaisons make the connection between their and their communities’ experience with climate change. By guiding storytelling and facilitating personal connections to the topic, liaisons can be more relatable and impactful when engaging the community.
* **Fun and interactive engagement.** Both the trainings and the liaison’s community activities should be fun and engaging, incorporating activities, games, and other interactive elements where feasible.