

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

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Jefferson City, MO

MOST Policy Initiative launches the Missouri Local Science Engagement Network

MOST Policy Initiative today launches the Missouri Local Science Engagement Network, a grassroots science engagement and advocacy program aimed at elevating the role of science and the science community in civic and policy decision-making in Missouri.

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). Missouri LSEN will recruit and empower 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; and develop evidence-based and locally-relevant content to help facilitate these engagements.

Missouri LSEN will channel the commitment of an energized community to build a lasting engagement infrastructure that quickly identifies, connects with, and “plugs in” scientific experts to conversations about challenging science issues such as climate change and its local implications. The LSEN program represents a commitment from AAAS to invest resources and build capacity to establish lasting networks of local science organizations and leaders, elevating their advocacy skills in local and state science policy discussions.

“In order to help leaders and elected officials use science when making decisions, we must not only be able to communicate our science responsibly, but we must also know when, where, and to whom we communicate,” said Rachel Owen, director of the MOST Policy Initiative. “Through the Local Science Engagement Network, we are thrilled to facilitate trusted relationships between scientists and decision-makers across the state of Missouri that will help us identify opportunities to more effectively include science in policy discussions.”

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is launching the LSEN as a pilot program. This engagement and advocacy program seeks to establish, nurture and guide local and state-based multidisciplinary peer networks of scientists and science advocates dedicated to elevating the role of science in public policy. The goal of LSEN is to help science

advocates identify opportunities to engage civic and policy leaders in the role and use of evidence-based perspectives as communities seek locally relevant climate solutions.

“Facts alone cannot help us make informed decisions,” said Dan Barry, director of LSEN at AAAS. “Because people need science, and science needs people, the Missouri LSEN will help decision-makers connect with science and scientists who can help inform their thinking about critical social and policy issues.”

Interested participants and supporters can find more information at <http://mostpolicyinitiative.org>.

About MOST Policy Initiative

[MOST Policy Initiative](#) is a nonprofit organization, based at the University of Missouri, aimed at bringing scientists and policymakers together to improve livelihoods for people and communities in the Midwest. MOST Policy Initiative works side-by-side with elected officials to incorporate more scientific information into state and local policy decisions, provides resources and training for scientists interested in interacting with the policy-making process, and engages with the broader community on issues related to science and technology.

About AAAS

The American Association for the Advancement of Science ([AAAS](#)) is the world’s largest general scientific society and publisher of the journal [Science](#), as well as *Science Translational Medicine*; *Science Signaling*; a digital, open-access journal, *Science Advances*; *Science Immunology*; and *Science Robotics*. AAAS was founded in 1848 and includes more than 250 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals. *Science* has the largest paid circulation of any peer-reviewed general science journal in the world. The nonprofit AAAS is open to all and fulfills its mission to “advance science and serve society” through initiatives in science policy, international programs, science education, public engagement and more.

CONTACT:

Rachel Owen, MOST Policy Initiative. 573-507-0141; Rachel@MOSTpolicyinitiative.org