

**Sharper Advocacy: The tools to move tribal policies  
and influence with strategic planning, effective  
communication & best practices**

# **Understanding and Assessing the Landscape – The Playing Field**

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# Sharper Advocacy – Why?

*American Indians and Alaska Natives are affected by policy action. Because of this, it is extremely important that tribal leadership and key staff advocate their goals and objectives with focused and effective strategies when working with political, intergovernmental entities and departments & agencies.*

The art of communication is important:

- Know how to talk “the language” of policy
- Know who to talk to -- Leadership? Local Grassroots? Press/Media?
- Advocacy – why are you doing what you are doing?
  - Push an agenda
  - Finding allies and support
  - Strategic planning and action

# Today's Tribal TPEP In-Person Training Goals

- Training topic is tribal tobacco policy and talking with tribal leaders and community members about policy change.
- Focus in to working with tribal departments, tribal decision makers, and the tribal community to make local level tribal policy change.
- Most Tribal TPEP Coordinators are faced with the daunting task of advancing tobacco policy change from a position of limited power and influence within their tribes.

# Key Concepts for Sharper Advocacy

*A list of key concepts for sharper advocacy that should be considered when planning and assessing a strategy for advancing American Indian and Alaska Native interests before the Executive and Legislative Branches of the government.*

- *Indian affairs 101*
- *Public Policy 101: Process & Works*
- *Agenda(s): What is it? What do you want? How can I help you?*
- *Strategic planning: Understanding the languages of advocacy*
- *Cross-cultural communication to affect change and understanding your audience*
- *Advocacy, Process, Timelines and pushing an agenda with support*
- *Best Practices and Current landscapes*

# Presentation Overview

**What is the playing field out there? Assess the landscape for what you are trying to pursue.**

- What's on the books?
- What is the issue and who is involved?
  - Are their allies? Are their champions? What is the resistance? What are the flags?
  - In seeking support and community mobilization – who has the personal connections to the issue? Are there stories? What is the dynamic, if any, on the national/state/local stages that could potentially affect the effort?
  - Are there best practices in the field as examples for adaptation or adoption?

# Jurisdiction, Process, Framework Recap

*Framework is important - strive for the three “C’s” –  
- clear, concise, complete – in your planning.*

- » What is the issue? What is the ask?
- » What is the background to lead up to the ask?
- » Who is on board (pro)? Who is against (con)?
- » What is the current situation? If passed, what would be the hopeful outcome?
- » Is there a cost associated?
- » Is this a new effort? If not, what is the precedent?
- » Will current law, policy, code be amended or needed?
- » What are the starting dates for action?  
implementation?

# Group Discussion

- What are your challenges at the local level?
- What are the strengths at the local level?
- On your issues -- How engaged or willing is:
  - Leadership?
  - Relevant committees/departments?
  - General community at-large?
- How familiar are you with the process?
- What resources (i.e. media, partnerships) could you lean on?

# Assessing the landscape – Timing Can Be Everything

Take a look at current events – What is the mood or feeling of your effort – nationally, state, local, tribal – are people focusing on it or something similar you can connect to?

For example, tobacco use, or other issues associated with it (i.e. health disparities).

**Political Timing:** Is it a “Sexy Issue”? (policy reference...meaning it is something that is appealing or attractive (+/-) to keep on the radar) – these are the kind of issues that can have traction in any venue if strategically planned and communicated well.

**Calendar Timing:** Key times in the calendar year to make an effort to make change or an effort (i.e. New Year & Wellness timing, Election Year, Memorial Day, etc).

**Special Events Calendar Timing:** Youth Summits, Elder Retreats, Veterans Stand Downs, Pow Wows, Canoe Journey, Tournaments, Treaty Day & Memorial celebrations, etc.

**Fiscal timing:** End of year monies could be made available or could be threatened to reduce or eliminate; plan accordingly.



# Potential Allies and/or Flags

**Economic Development, Tribal Ventures, and Tourism are major efforts that tribal governments are engaged upon in hopes to stimulate the tribal economy.**

There needs to be an awareness of entities that could be flags and/or potential allies. If approached strategically, carefully, and with thoughtfulness, partnerships & collaborations could be finessed. It is a delicate balance to strike and a necessary one to avoid any perception to undermine tribal economic development efforts and prevent a backlash in an unnecessary and contentious manner. Goal: compromise.

For example:

- Tribally-owned tobacco & liquor shops

- Casino & Resorts/Hotels

- Small businesses located on tribal leased lands where tobacco is sold

- Private small businesses located in tribal areas where tobacco is sold

- Tribal Sports (i.e. golf courses) or Entertainment Venues

(Note: make a mark of jurisdiction of venue – refer to check list as this will dictate process and who will need to be involved in the effort).

# Know Your Audience – Who are you talking to?

**Communication – the power it possesses cannot be over-estimated!**

Cross-Cultural Communication is an art and integral when expressing your message. However, know how to speak and to whom – be aware.

1. Cultural relevance and Sensitivity – especially with a native/tribal audience
2. Grandma and/or 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Test of communication/interpretation – talk with the audience, not down to the audience – the challenge of sharing your message that can be understood by a Grandma or a 5<sup>th</sup> grader.
3. Attempt to identify personal stories – community mobilization and connection through personal relationships, experiences, efforts
4. The Power of Language
5. Direct & Negative (Western) versus Circular & Positive (Traditional)
6. Political rhetoric – The three “Cs”: Clear, Concise, Complete