

## Local Officials

### Who They Are

Local officials include council members, planning board members, mayors, and other local representatives who may be interested in how a project affects their constituents. Developing positive relationships with these officials can greatly assist a project team. They should be involved because their approval and cooperation may be required for current or future projects to proceed successfully, and they may also be a vital link to certain communities or have valuable knowledge about their constituents.

### Example

The Milwaukee Public Library offers semiweekly tours of their sustainable Green Roof, which features solar panels and gardens to help the library become more eco-friendly. The tours offer information on the Green Roof and tips on becoming more “green” at home and at work. While open to the public, tours of this type could also be adapted for local officials as a way of gaining their support for a project and promoting its benefits to the community.

[http://mpl.org/about/green\\_roof/tours.php](http://mpl.org/about/green_roof/tours.php)



### Best Practices

Outreach should be

- **Proactive:** Be sure to involve elected officials early in the process so they know their participation is valued and to allow them to receive information directly.
- **Personalized:** Officials will appreciate being reached out to individually, rather than as part of a group, especially if the project falls in their specific jurisdiction.
- **In Partnership:** Elected officials should know their communities well, and would appreciate being consulted for their expert knowledge.
- **Honoring:** Respect elected officials’ time and encourage future involvement by publicly recognizing those who attend the project’s meetings and events

### Recommended Strategies

- **Key Informant Interviews:** Interviewing a local official can help an agency obtain insight into the community and the issues of interest there.
- **Round Table Workshops:** Leadership-focused roundtables help participants collaborate to develop ideas around a particular theme. Officials may participate or lead a roundtable of citizens, which may help them to feel ownership of the project.
- **Tours:** Take officials on a walking tour of a new project site to answer questions. Being educated on the project will help them effectively share information with their constituents and encourage cooperation with project staff.