



County Health  
Rankings & Roadmaps

# Webinar

**Bridging across political differences and  
reducing polarization**

June 17, 2025

[countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org)



University of Wisconsin  
Population Health Institute  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Guidelines

**1**  
**Share**  
successes and  
lessons learned

**2**  
**Offer**  
resources

**3**  
**Build**  
knowledge

**4**  
**Listen**  
for multiple  
perspectives

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**County Health Rankings & Roadmaps**

**Join the conversation**

**Question and Answer**

**Welcome to Q&A**  
Questions you ask will show up here. Only host and panelists will be able to see all questions.

Where can I find strategies to address children in poverty?

☐ Send anonymously

**Webinar Chat**

Me to Everyone

JL: Hi Everyone, I'm James, from Madison, WI.

Zoomhost CHRR to Everyone: Hello James and welcome to today's webinar.

Who can see your messages?

To: Everyone

Your text can be seen by panelists and other attendees

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## Group agreements

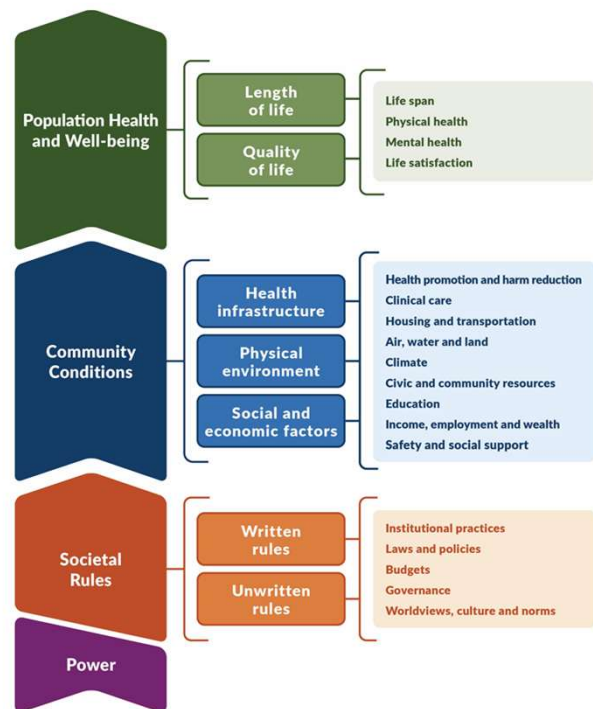
1. Listen actively
2. Participate fully
3. Speak from your experience
4. Lead with curiosity
5. Be conscious of body language
6. Expect ambiguity
7. Be accountable

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## Power is foundational to health



University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute Model of Health © 2025

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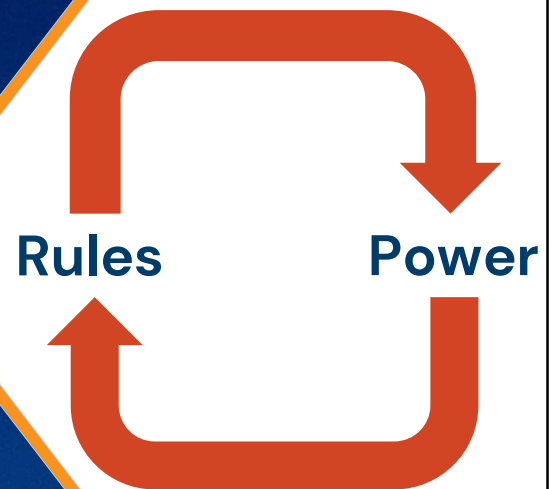




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## Reciprocal relationship

- ✓ Those with more power create the rules.
- ✓ Rules reinforce power.



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## Build relationships



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## Bridging

To understand and  
be understood



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## Welcome



**Allyson Frazier**

National senior director  
Voices for Healthy Kids



**Biz Harris**

Executive director  
MS Early Learning Alliance

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## Discussion group

**When:** Following the webinar

**What:** Share ideas, ask questions

**How:** Zoom

**Why:** Deepen learning



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## Resource guide

Coming to your inbox soon



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### WEBINAR RESOURCE GUIDE

*Community-driven strategies to address  
persistent poverty in rural areas*

June 18, 2024

#### CHR&R Tools and Resources

- Explore our website:
  - [What Works for Health](#): Searchable database of evidence-informed strategies, policies, programs and systems changes.
  - [Webinars](#): Live, monthly presentations showcasing equity-centered approaches and examples with a post-webinar discussion group. Available on demand.
  - ["In Solidarity" Podcast](#): Conversations with some of our nation's brightest minds connecting power, place and health.
- Stay in touch:
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#### Guest Resources

Emily Burleson, senior manager of advocacy and research, [Partners for Rural Transformation](#) works across geographies and cultures to influence policy and lead individual and community solutions to poverty.

[DreamBuild](#) is a solution to the sometimes-overwhelming process of building and financing a safe, affordable and quality-built home.

Lisse Regehr, president and CEO, Thrive Allen County

[Thrive Allen County](#) provides a model for rural revitalization to harness the strengths of local residents in building healthier, more vibrant communities.

#### Highlighted Guidance

Check out the first webinar in this series, [Identifying the forces behind persistent poverty](#). Poverty researcher H. Luke Shaeffer shares strategies rooted in community expertise and cultural traditions to improve wealth and engagement in rural areas.

Learn more about the evidence behind [Community Development Financial Institutions](#).

Explore measures of poverty in your community:

- [Children in Poverty](#)
- [Income Inequality](#)
- [Unpaid Wage](#)

Learn more from Partners for Rural Transformation:

- [Stories of Rural America](#)
- [How community development financial institutions drive economic resiliency](#)




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“Voices for Healthy Kids works to improve and advance equitable policies that make the places where kids and their families live, learn, and play healthier.”

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NCIT



## Finding Commonalities and Solutions with Decision Makers

Finding common ground and win-win solutions in policy negotiation is an art that blends close listening, two-way conversations and meaningful relationships of trust built over time.

Voices for Healthy Kids offers this resource as part of the services we provide to empower advocates and drive for meaningful policy change in every state. We hope it helps open the space to advance a variety of policies that benefit all communities, families, babies and toddlers, children and young adults.

[voicesforhealthykids.org/guides/finding-commonalities-and-solutions-with-decision-makers/introduction](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/guides/finding-commonalities-and-solutions-with-decision-makers/introduction)

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## Archetypes, not stereotypes

### Archetype

*Typical example of a person*



Can share insights about people who hold similar views and values



Can increase understanding.

### Stereotype

*Widely held, fixed, oversimplified image of a person*



Can reduce people to a simplistic idea.



Can shut down curiosity and openness.

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## The Archetypes

**Church & Country**



**Economic Influenced**



**Legacy Republican**



**Populist-Aligned**



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## Church & Country



**Loyal to chosen leaders**  
**Hold conservative Christian values**  
**Take pride in position earned**

- Values: Faith, authority, tradition, control, care
- PN-3: Mom + Dad = family, Mom stays home, education is solution
- Trust: Faith leaders, doctors, small business



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## Economic Influenced



**Highly educated and financially secure**  
**Prioritize economy and business**  
**Dig into policy details**  
**Favor limited government**

- Values: Freedom, individual choice, control
- PN-3: Data Driven, ROI
- Trust: Free Market advocates, data, select mainstream media

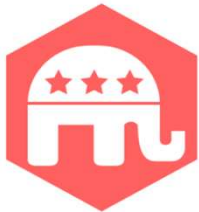


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## Legacy Republican



**Value debate**  
**Interested in other points of view**  
**Open to stepping out of party**  
**Passionate about policy details**

- Values: Diligence, care, service, leadership
- PN-3: Early intervention, limited government role
- Trust: Experts, data, mainstream media, professionals



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## Populist Aligned



**Distrust of Institutions and experts**  
**Led by constitutional ideals**  
**Value individual efforts**

- Values: Loyalty to America, Diligence, Freedom
- PN-3: No government role
- Trust: Their own research and individuals from their community, deep distrust of data, experts and media



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## Shared beliefs

- Hold freedom as a core value
- Prioritize individual responsibility
- Feel judged and villainized by progressives
- May reject arguments that start with structural racism
- See K-12 as great equalizer
- Favor policies that help every child and show ROI



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## The Archetypes + Dials

**Church & State**



**Economic Influenced**



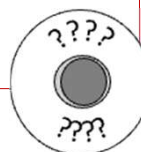
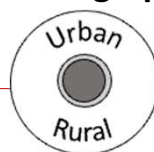
**Legacy Republican**



**Populist-Aligned**



**Dials: Geography, Age, Other**



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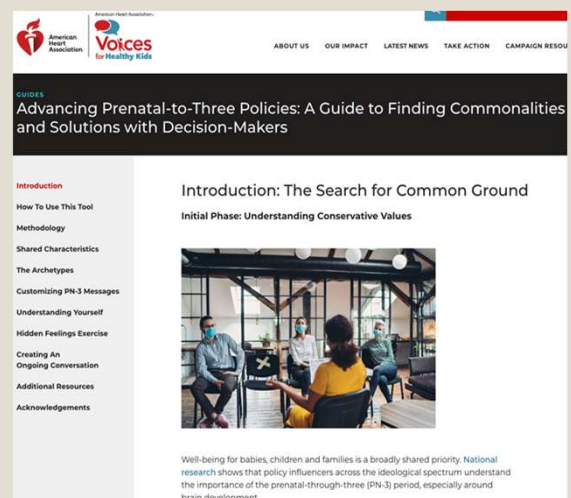


# Finding Common Ground

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## Full Set of Resources

- Online Guide
- Full Web-based Training Modules
- Consultation from Voices for Healthy Kids
- Trainings



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## WHAT WE DO



### OUR MISSION:

MELA exists to build, strengthen, and support coalitions to advocate for systems change to improve early learning and child development outcomes in our state.

### OUR STRATEGIES

- We champion shared policies,
- We promote innovative and evidence-based practices,
- We support the collaborative design of solutions and collective action,
- We elevate the voices and experiences of individuals who work in the field of early care and education and parents of Mississippi children most impacted by racial and economic inequality.

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## Recent Success



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## Continuing to Move



Still, we are ranked 48<sup>th</sup> overall for children's health, education, and wellbeing.

**MELA believes that if we can start even earlier-- by changing outcomes for the first five years of life for Mississippi's children, we can change everything.**

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# OUR CHILD CARE MESSAGING WHEEL

## USING THE MISSISSIPPI CHILD CARE MESSAGING WHEEL

### Using a Message Wheel to Keep Conversations on Track

A message wheel is a powerful tool for communicating key messages about child care. At the center of the wheel is our key message—the essential idea we always want to reinforce. Surrounding it, like spokes, are supporting messages that explain the issue, highlight solutions, and provide compelling reasons for action.

#### Why This? Why Now?

When we speak with one voice, our advocacy becomes more effective. Policymakers, business leaders, and community members are more likely to take notice and engage with us when we present a consistent, compelling message. The message wheel helps ensure that every conversation, whether it's with a legislator, a business owner, or a parent, reinforces our core priorities: affordable, accessible, quality child care for all Mississippi families.

#### How to Use the Message Wheel

Every time we communicate about child care—whether in a legislative meeting, a media interview, or a community forum—we should lead with our core message and use the supporting statements to strengthen and expand upon it. For example:

- **No matter who you are talking to, begin with the **KEY MESSAGE** in the center.** This is the MOST important thing that we ALL want to hammer home.
- **Then, based on what the person you are talking to says, choose the **SUPPORTING POINT** that aligns to their comment or question.**
  - For instance, if they say something like, "If parents are working, then they should be able to afford child care. Why does the government need to be involved?" use **SUPPORTING POINT B**—and if you need additional data or info, use the bullets below it!
  - Or if they say "I get that child care is important for babies and their education, but child care doesn't have anything to do with the economy or Mississippi Business?" Then you'll want to go to **SUPPORTING POINT A**, and go from there to explain how child care is definitely related to the economy.
- **Make sure you end with **THE ASK****—at the very bottom.

**NOTE:** You don't have to use every supporting message in every conversation. Instead, choose the points that will resonate most with your audience and add real-life examples and stories to bring the message to life.

#### Making the Message Personal and Impactful

- To maximize the effectiveness of this tool:
- Personalize the message with stories from parents, child care providers, and businesses affected by the child care crisis.
- Anticipate counterarguments and prepare responses that connect back to the key message.
- Practice using the message wheel in different scenarios.
- By using the message wheel effectively, we can ensure that every conversation about child care moves the issue forward—building momentum for policies that increase access to affordable child care for families and strengthen Mississippi's economy.

## MISSISSIPPI CHILD CARE MESSAGING WHEEL

### SUPPORTING POINT A: Child Care isn't just a family issue. It's a critical piece of economic infrastructure with economic implications.

- Mississippi's governor and legislature have done great work bringing in new corporations offering high-paying jobs. Now we need to ensure that Mississippi attracts high-skills workers and retains child care during all working hours so that we can fill those jobs.
- Mississippi has a critical labor force participation issue: out of the current labor force are parents who are underemployed or not employed because of family caregiving responsibilities.
- If 7% of Mississippi's parent population currently not working, entered the workforce Mississippi stands to make an estimated \$1.3 billion dollars a year.
- Unlike many other goods or services, however, child care is not a luxury that families can choose not to buy. When child care is unavailable, parents lose out on job and training opportunities, or choose to leave the workforce entirely or find ways to cut costs through inconsistent care.

### SUPPORTING POINT B: Child care is necessary and yet too expensive for most families.

- While there may be a preference for mothers to remain at home with their young children to educate and care for them, many more in Mississippi have to work.
- As single parents they have to support their families. In fact, 46% of children in Mississippi live in single-parent homes, and a lot of those homes are led by women. To be able to work and provide for their families, these women need affordable and accessible child care for their kids. They must have child care to remain working to support their families, but often struggle to cover the expenses because the price for child care is so high. This puts them in a difficult situation of trying to keep their jobs for their children, and make ends meet.
- For families with low children living in Mississippi, child care is often the most expensive item in their budget—nearly the same cost as housing.
- There is an affordability issue. Child care annual tuition for an infant is higher than that of many community colleges in Mississippi.

### KEY MESSAGE Mississippi's economic growth depends on parents' access to child care that supports children's health, education, and development.

### SUPPORTING POINT C: There is a shortage of care that meets families' needs, especially for babies and toddlers.

- There is a licensed child care supply issue. Mississippi only has enough licensed child care seats for 2/3 of children.
- Not all centers offer infant/toddler care, so even if a county has an adequate number of slots based on the under-age 3 child population, that does not mean it has availability for all children who need care.
- According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, there are small business and center-based care options.
- As small business owners, licensed child care programs have to make hard decisions about what services to offer their customers in order to stay solvent. They may have to make the difficult choice to close infant and toddler classrooms because they typically lose money due to high staffing needs. Because babies and toddlers need the attention of focused and nurturing staff, there are state-mandated staff-to-child ratios, vs. for infants in Mississippi and for toddlers. The ratios because each child needs adequate attention and care, but also means that infant and toddler care costs more to run than preschool care. As a result, child care programs tend to reduce offerings for infant and toddler care, making care difficult to access for parents of the very young.
- Another difficult decision child care programs make is what business hours to choose. Often, in order to stay solvent, they cater to the market majority (parents working traditional hours, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM or 6:00 PM). This makes child care difficult to access for parents working nontraditional hours (evenings, shift work, and weekends).

**Support Mississippi's economy and businesses with affordable, accessible child care for their workers.**

**MISSISSIPPI FORUM FOR THE FUTURE**

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# ENGAGING WITH DECISIONMAKERS



**MISSISSIPPI FORUM FOR THE FUTURE**

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# Questions?



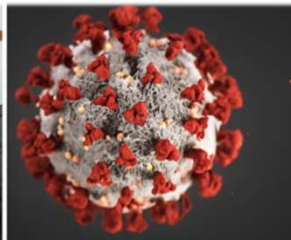
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# Join us!

Three-part summer  
series



## MEETING THE MOMENT



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## Upcoming webinar:

July 15, 2025

**Meeting the moment:  
Navigating a quickly changing  
public health landscape**



**Susan Polan, PhD**

Associate executive director for  
public affairs and advocacy  
American Public Health Association

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**Click on  
survey in  
the chat**



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## Discussion group

**When:** Following the webinar

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