



CONNECTING WITH POLICYMAKERS:

Resources and Tips for Connecticut Researchers

In early 2022, the UConn Collaboratory on School and Child Health and the Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention and Policy hosted a panel discussion, *Whole Child Well-Being: Advancing Research Dissemination in Policy and Practice*.¹ This tip sheet summarizes some of the suggestions panelists mentioned during the event. To watch a recording, scan the QR code.



Tips for Researchers

Keep your webpage and online presence updated. In addition to making certain that your CV is up to date, you should make sure that you have a short bio on your page written in plain language so that your research is understandable. Incorporate search terms that would make you easy to find in a web search. If you have online profiles with other research centers make sure to update them on a regular basis.

Ensure that your college/university government relations office knows who you are and what you do. Government relations offices might be the first point of contact for legislators looking for researchers in a policy area. Introduce yourself with your short bio.

Get to know the legislative procedures and people.

- Know the structure. Connecticut legislators work part-time. In odd-numbered years, the assembly meets from early January to early June. In even-numbered years it meets from early February through early May and focuses on budgetary, revenue and financial matters (but also considers bills/resolutions raised by assembly committees and emergent issues). Get to know the legislative committees.
- Know what's coming. Search the CT General Assembly page for key words and then register to track relevant bills. The current schedule and events section on the CGA homepage provides links to livestreams of meetings and hearings. Members of the public are allowed to testify at hearings. Details of legislative hearings (where to submit testimony and deadlines) are part of the daily Legislative Bulletin.
- Know when to approach policymakers. Contact busy legislators on your committees of interest during the off session to introduce yourself and your research. Some of the committees have YouTube channels where you can watch previous meetings.
- Know the commissions. The General Assembly houses several commissions. The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity has several sub-commissions that might align with your research interest. In addition, the assembly often forms task forces to research or work on various issues. Speaking with legislators, commission members or searching the CGA website can yield information.

Get to know the executive branch. The Governor's office sponsors [working groups](#) and promotes its own [legislative proposals](#) that may provide opportunities for you to stay informed and actively participate.

Map your network. Look into [state agencies](#), media, foundations, national and state civic organizations/leaders, and other researchers with interests that overlap with yours. Think about how you can connect. Update your LinkedIn account and look for people working in your area.

Begin the practice of synthesizing your research. Write short briefs (no more than 2 pages) and include a short implications section. Legislators rely on local news publications for information. Write a local opinion piece for *the CT Mirror* or *the Hartford Courant*. Need help? Talk to your school's Communications Office, [check resources from your professional association](#) or register for a virtual [Op Ed project workshop](#).

Research local journalists/media. Look for journalists who have covered your topic in the past. When writing an opinion piece, name a legislator to thank them or ask for support. Their staff will likely have google alerts set up and see your writing.

Think about timing and windows of opportunity. Keep on top of the news and relevant policies. If you have your research ready in plain language, you can send someone a research brief, write an op ed, or give testimony at a legislative hearing exactly when it is needed.

Additional Resources

[About the CT General Assembly](#)

Includes FAQs about the assembly and helpful links.

[CT Office of Legislative Research](#)

This is the research arm of the legislature. They do conduct research on behalf of state legislators and also summarize legislation in plain language.

[Scholars Strategy Network](#)

Offers written resources and trainings for scholars interested in having their research inform policy.

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¹ The panel discussion event took place on February 28, 2022. Panelists included Connecticut State Representative Jaime Foster; Preston Britner, Professor and Associate Department Head for Graduate Studies, UConn Human Development and Family Sciences; and Sally Mancini, Director of Advocacy Resources, UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health. It was moderated by CSCH Co-Director Beth Russell, Associate Professor in UConn Human Development and Family Sciences and Director of the Center for Applied Research in Human Development.