

SMART COMMUNITIES SEMINARS

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does it cost?

Seminars range from \$10,000—\$15,000 plus expenses for the full day event, preparation, and community research. The variance in the fee is based largely on the time we expect Dr. Morse to spend in a particular community as well as necessary travel time. Thus, geographic location plays a significant role in determining the final fee structure. Communities located west of the Mississippi River or outside the continental United States will likely incur a higher fee.

Who are typical seminar participants and how many are in attendance?

Most communities use Smart Communities seminars to bring committed civic leaders to the table and get them talking about what is working for the community but also how to strategically organize their efforts to be more successful. As a result seminars are of interest to elected officials, city/county managers, civically-minded executives from private industry, and representatives from civic organizations, nonprofits, foundations, economic development groups, higher education institutions, leadership groups, private industry, cooperative extension, municipal leagues, regional, county, and city governments, chambers of commerce... the list can be as extensive and diverse as the civic leadership in your community.

The total number of participants is ultimately your decision but we have found that the maximum number that can be accommodated in an effective seminar is approximately 50 persons. It is difficult to develop an interactive format with a larger number of participants.

What are some of the topics covered? What are Dr. Morse's areas of expertise?

While each community faces unique challenges there are some that every community must confront as they capitalize on the global economy. One topic covered in all seminars is workforce development. A well-prepared workforce drives the economy and quality of life in a community in untold ways. A data-driven model introduced in the seminar demonstrates how these critical parts are interrelated. Morse uses specific community data to illustrate strengths and opportunities for community success.

Untying this knot of social and economic factors requires the experience of having worked with literally hundreds of communities over the last 15 years. A large part of the expertise Dr. Morse brings to the table is based in her work with communities but part of it is the “message.” Community and regional development is a daunting task but Dr. Morse’s message is a positive one—there is work to be done but the tools, and solutions, are within your reach.

How long is a “full day seminar” and what happens during the event?

Seminars run approximately seven hours in length including a working lunch. In the morning session, Dr. Morse provides an overview of the community development principles introduced in *Smart Communities: How Citizens and Local Leaders Can Use Strategic Thinking to Build a Brighter Future* as well as their application. Topics such as community priorities and investments, cross-sector collaboration, and high-value leveraging of assets are discussed with an emphasis on improving how a community positions itself for success. The morning concludes with participants completing scorecards that rate the way their community works.

In the afternoon session, Dr. Morse introduces empirical analysis comparing the host community with the communities nationwide that exhibit a high quality of life matched with strong economic development. Participants benchmark their community using economic and quality-of-life measures and then transition to a broader discussion of the community’s strategic development. This discussion starts with macro-level topics like the community “brand”, the opportunities that will drive the local or regional economy in coming decades, and based on the data, the strategic investments that must be made to insure a viable economy. The seminar concludes with a discussion of the practices at the micro-level that will support and animate macro-level strategic development plans. These micro-level practices are the “next steps” that participants can use to begin important developmental work in their community.

What are some expected outcomes? What have other communities expected to achieve as the result of hosting a seminar?

- A benchmarking process and access to quantitative analysis that will identify where assets may be hidden, where challenges lie, and where small efforts can make a big difference.
- Communities in the early stages of new strategic development can use the seminars as a way to organize and guide their efforts.
- Communities with existing strategic efforts have used the seminars as a sort of independent review of the research used to inform their existing efforts.
- Regions have incorporated Smart Communities into their regional development efforts to bring all the players together.
- Seminars inform existing efforts but also suggest new avenues for engagement. The seminars rely heavily on ways to meet challenges through collaboration and new partnerships, innovative ways to identify and use existing assets, and the types of investments in the community that will have the greatest return.
- In all cases, seminars build a sense of hope and possibility for the future.

Please contact the Pew Partnership for Civic Change by phone (434-971-2073) or e-mail (mail@pew-partnership.org) to arrange a seminar in your community.