

WELCOME TO THE



**Michigan
Municipal
Executives**

2025 Winter Institute

Strategic Relationship Management:

Harnessing your Inner
Leslie Knope



How did I get into local government?







'I am big
enough to
admit I am
often
inspired
by myself'

BE AUTHENTIC.





Lansing



Samantha Harkins

Chief of Staff
Lansing, MI, United States

I grew up in a small town (400 people) in West Virginia. There were 35 people in my public school graduating class. I went to West Virginia University for undergrad (B.A. Political Science) and law school, although I visited my third year of law school at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. My first job out of law school was working as the Executive Assistant to the Mayor of Norfolk, Virginia. This small town girl grew to love big cities. I moved north to Michigan to work on local government policy in the Michigan House of Representatives. After a brief stint at the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce I spent 8½ years at the Michigan Municipal League. I was a legislative associate (lobbyist) for four years, was promoted to the Director of State Affairs for three years and further promoted to President of the Michigan Municipal League Foundation. I transitioned to the private sector as VP of Government Relations at Munetrix, a data company working with schools and local governments before joining Mayor Schor's team as Chief of Staff in January. I live in a renovated 1884 Victorian (read \$\$\$) in Downtown Lansing with my husband Chris, my 3½ year old son Will, our 100 pound Portuguese Water Dog/Poodle mix Izzy and two cats, Ellie and Archie. I'm an avid runner, reader and writer (check out my blog: <http://irunthesetowns.blogspot.com/>). I love food and cocktails (gin in the summer, bourbon in the winter and wine year round.)

BE INTENTIONAL

- Handwritten notes
- Holiday cards
- Deliberately thinking of others

How much time does the average person spend on their phone each day?



1 hour

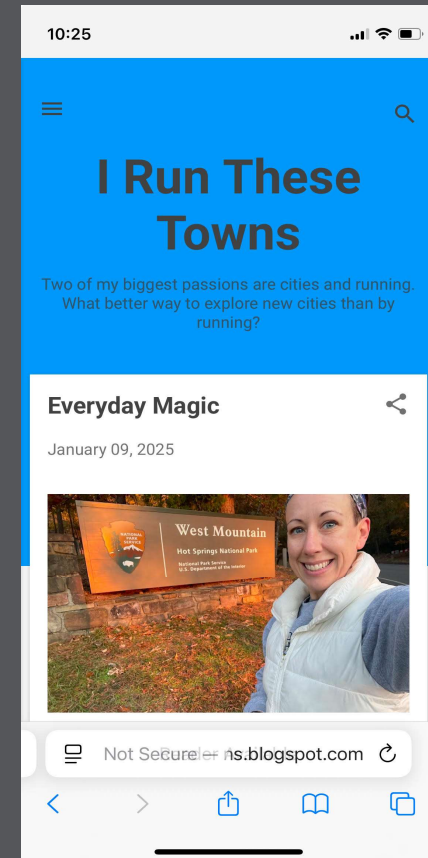
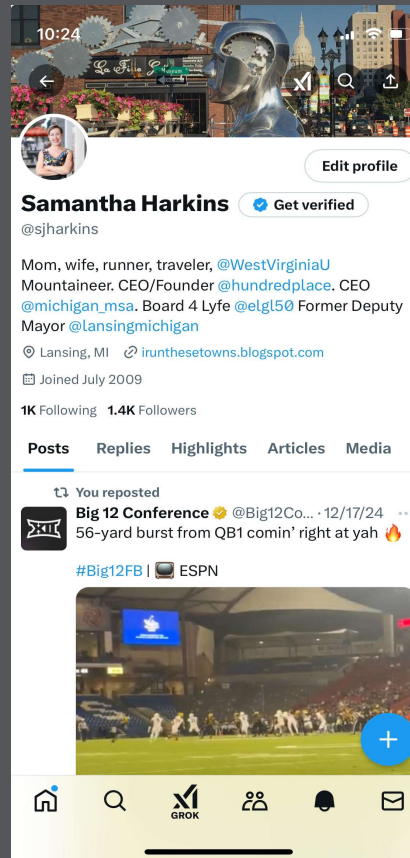
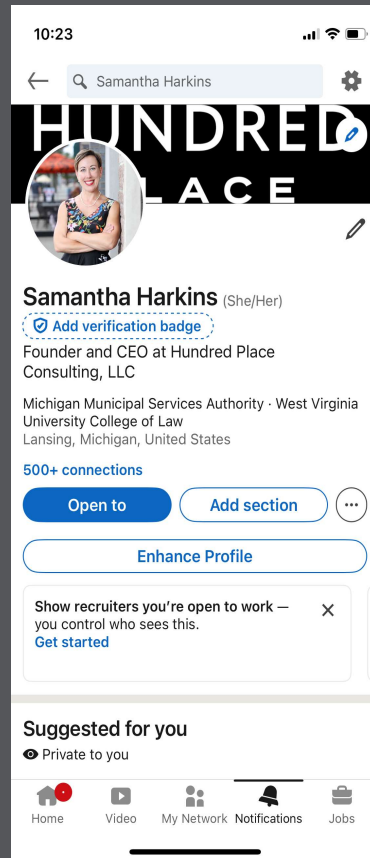
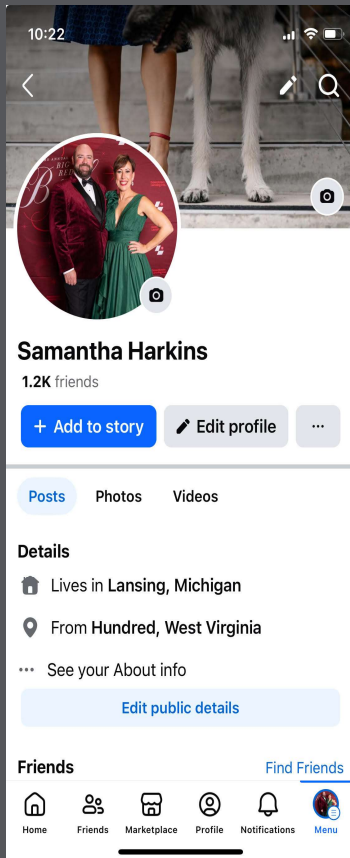
2 hours

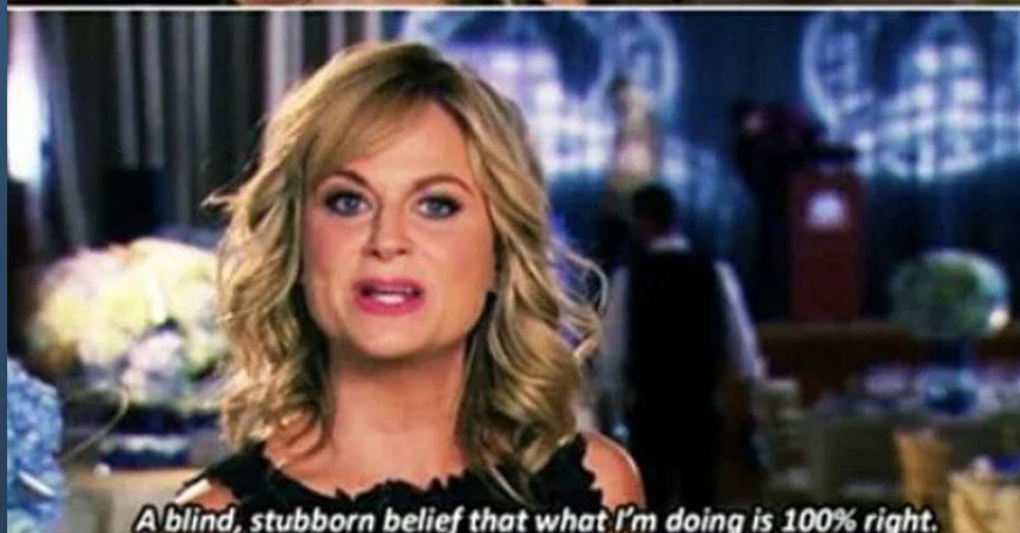
3 hours

4 hours



Use social media effectively







What motivates you professionally?

Personal and
professional
growth

Money

Making your
community
better

Interesting
work

Other

Relationships
+ _____ =
Motivation

Level setting

Effective communication strategies

Hard conversations

Boundaries





*What I hear when
I'm being yelled at
is people caring
really loudly at me.*
- Leslie Knope





Be Our Neighbor



Lansing is known for its welcoming spirit – embracing all people and all backgrounds, no exceptions. That’s why we’re excited to share what our region has to offer on a national scale with a new talent attraction campaign, “Lansing: Be our neighbor.”

Through this campaign, we aim to inspire people to consider Lansing as a potential place to live, work, or open a business. In the long-run, this will help boost our local economies and bring new perspectives to the region. And we’re spreading the word at home, too – local outreach will stir up community pride for those already living in the region, shifting the way we think about all of the opportunities and amenities our home has to offer.

We know Lansing is the place to be. Let’s spread the word, and welcome everyone with open arms.

Talent Attraction Campaign Sponsors





**"One person's annoying is another's
inspiring and heroic."**



Key Take Aways:

- Be Authentic
- Be intentional
- Be enthusiastic
- Remember your motivation



**BE THE
LESLIE KNOPE
OF
WHATEVER
YOU DO.**

