

Developing an Advocacy Plan to Use before Policymakers

What is Advocacy: Advocacy is bringing your influence to bear to win change, by speaking up/pleading a case, and championing a cause. Advocacy is critical for the children, youth and families you serve. It is also central to democracy. To advocate for policy change, we communicate with decision-makers, educate the public about issues, and inform the public of decision-makers' views and positions.

Three Kinds of Public Policy Decisions: 1. Laws, ordinances or resolutions. Approximately 10 percent of bills become law. 2. Without Appropriations, laws are meaningless. 3. Rules and regulations: They define the terms of the laws.

Advocating before Policymakers: An Outline in 5 Steps

Step 1: Define the Issue

- What is the issue/problem you're trying to solve?
- Who's affected by it? These people, whether they administer or experience the issue, may be key allies in your advocacy strategy.
- Is this a local, regional, statewide, or federal issue?

Step 2: Identify and Prioritize the Work that needs to be done on this Issue.

- Create a list of needed steps. Brainstorm with your team. Strategize based on opportunities before you, and what is do-able now and later.
- After identifying the changes that need to be made, prioritize where you'd like to start, and your budget 'ask.'

Step 3: Identify your Advocacy Target

- Which level of government, agency, elected or appointed policymaker has the authority/responsibility to make the change or provide the funding you seek? Understand what policymakers at each level – local, state and federal – are responsible for. Are the changes made at the administrative or legislative level?
- Know the values and priorities of policymakers. This knowledge will help you , frame (structure or present) your issue.

Step 4: Gather the facts

- Assemble the facts, statistics, anecdotes, stories to demonstrate the need for this work. Consider the information that is most relevant, resonates with the audience or decision-maker you are speaking to.

Step 5: Putting it All Together

- Create a concise list of your Advocacy Goals.
- Review the steps needed to accomplish these Advocacy Goals.
- Who can partner with you on your Advocacy Goals?
- Keep track of the outcomes.

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