

ADVOCACY PRACTICE ACTIVITY

PART 1

Successful advocacy endeavors have at least one thing in common: They are strategic! This activity will help you start thinking strategically about how to organize, plan, and implement your advocacy strategy.

QUESTIONS FRAME THE STRATEGY

Begin with this basic series of questions to help guide you and set you on the right track:

1. **What is the issue/problem?**

Describe it: What is it? Who does it affect, and how does it affect (you) (them)? What is the impact—so what? Why is a change needed?

2. **Where is the problem and Who has control over the issue?**

Understanding this will help you identify who you need to address the issue.

- Is it a state legislative issue? Federal?
- Is it a state regulation issue? Federal?
- Is it a city issue? Is it a neighborhood association issue?
- Who has authority? That is the person/agency/entity that you need to focus on and get a conversation going.

3. **What evidence do I have? What research is out there?**

- *YOUR STORY* is evidence! What is your story? What information do you have to back it up?
- Are there any recent studies, news stories, etc.? Remember, policymakers are not looking for a dissertation or a treatise, but be prepared and knowledgeable about your topic. You are not expected to be the topic expert, so don't set the bar too high. Remember, the most important knowledge is your story!

4. **Who else is working on this issue?**

- Are there any other organizations or advocacy groups (local, state, or national) working on issues like yours? What do they know? What do they know that you don't? What can you learn from and teach to them? How can you assist their effort, and how can they assist yours?
- What other individuals, families, etc. have stories to tell or experiences to share? Can you get them to advocate or at least use their story (within reason and with permission)? Willing to help you out with your effort?

5. **What are potential solutions?**

What do you want to do about this? What are you most comfortable with doing? Remember, there are a variety of techniques to raise awareness of a problem and solutions!

- Use your story and your experience
- Use your research
- “There is no easy solution” is not an excuse—sometimes you are not meant to present the ideal solution but the solution comes out of working together using communication, dialogue, and “story telling”

6. **Who or what entities do you think you need to reach out to for action?**

- Depends on solutions
- Depends on who has authority
- Depends on who is working on this issue, etc. (see #4)

7. **When are your meetings?**

- Organize your message, argument, people to meet with
- Set up meetings

Advocacy Practice Activity

PART 2

Exercise: *Fill in the blanks*

1. What is the issue/problem?
2. Where is the problem and Who has control/authority over the issue?
3. What evidence do I have or what research is out there?
4. Who else is working on this issue?
5. What are potential solutions?
6. What entities do you need to reach out to for action, assistance, or alliance?

Key players- *Who will be involved (internal/ external)?*

Communication- *Who should know what and how will they find out?*

Celebration- *How will you acknowledge progress and success?*

Evaluation- *How will you know you are successful?*

Other notes