



4. Campaigns

Planning is Needed for Successful Advocacy Work

Advocacy is most often a long-term effort; it takes intentionality, time, focus and follow through.

Advocacy for change centers on addressing issues, positive social impact, solutions, and partnerships over an agency-only approach. This is how to build awareness and funding to support your mission, advance systemic change, and foster respect as a sought-after community partner.

Establish a Specific Goal

Have a clear idea of your campaign's goal(s) when reaching out to supporters.

In some cases, you may only be able to determine the scale your campaign and additional goals after recruiting supporters.

Craft a Message

Know Your Audience and Keep Them Engaged

An advocacy plan should be audience focused. Determining who your audience is will help you decide the best messages and tactics to implement. There may be multiple audiences or just one, and it may change over time.

Your base message will need to be specific (but not overly specific) to allow potential advocates to understand your goal(s) and what success will look like for your campaign. This base messaging will keep you focused and can serve as a template for additional audiences, future responses and communications.

What story is your advocacy campaign telling?

People rarely make decisions based on facts and statistics alone.

[Effective storytelling](#) has the potential to keep your audience invested in your advocacy and will give your advocates additional tools to tell the story of your campaign.

Build a Support Base and Engage Community

Advocacy campaigns require considerable outreach and take months or even years. A core and committed support base is essential for the success of any campaign.

Working in coalition will greatly increase impact and reach. Having clear roles and responsibilities, direction and vision for coalition efforts is key to building power and staying focused.

Do Not Silo Your Advocacy Work/Join Allies

Before you begin advocacy or lobbying, learn what you may not know. Welcome new information and diverse perspectives to deepen your understanding, reach and effectiveness. Reach out to other nonprofits and other stakeholders that provide similar services and may already be advocating and/or lobbying for the same or similar issues. Ask to join existing coalitions and/or establish partnership with other organizations not currently advocating. The more voices involved, the stronger the message.

Regardless of the size or scope of your campaign, the larger your supporter base, the better. In massive numbers, constituents contacting their representatives cannot be ignored.

Create an Action Plan

Determine your capacity: Establish an initial plan based on current needs, finances, resources, operating capacity, goal(s) and measurable objectives/actions that relate to the goal(s).

A mix of strategies - hashtags, digital advocacy, community educational forums, face to face meetings with elected officials can help to create a comprehensive campaign that reaches diverse and intersecting audiences.

Make your Work Time Bound

Advocacy *and* lobbying require flexibility and the implementation of a timeline.

Task assignments, benchmarks and deadlines help track progress and hold people and organizations accountable.

Many campaigns are dependent on when specific legislation comes to a vote. Plan based on this timing to build momentum, foster participation, and achieve the change your campaign seeks to advance.