

BASIC STEPS TO EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Step 1: Make Friends in High Places

- Visit with policymakers
- Invite policymakers to events and meetings
- Put policymakers to serve as honorary chairs
- Establish relationships before specific intervention is needed

Step 2: Set Priorities

- Use data to justify which issues are high priority
- Consider the political environment
- Has there been a high profile tragedy which has galvanized the community behind a particular issue?
- Make sure you have the resources
- Do proven interventions exist?

Step 3: Organize Yourself

- Do your homework
- Develop an action plan
- Identify key policymakers
- Develop a media strategy
- Learn your legislative calendar

Step 4: Contact the Policymakers

- Arrange meetings with policymakers.
- Have a concise, accurate message.
- Be specific in what you ask for.
- Research your policymaker
- Respect their limited time
- Always highlight the cost-effectiveness of prevention

Step 5: Follow Up

- Send thank you notes
- Always respond to requests for additional information
- Monitor their legislative actions
- Thank them for their support and good work in your newsletter
- Encourage your allies to meet with receptive policymakers

Step 6: Conduct an Organized Media Campaign

- Be proactive
- Establish and foster good relationships with media contacts
- Use as many mediums as possible – TV, newspaper, magazines, radio, billboards, etc...
- Encourage policymakers to write op-eds (opposite editorials) to present opposing viewpoints.

Step 7: Evaluate the Outcome

- What methods were effective/ineffective?
- Did you create the perception of need?
- Did you monitor the issue closely enough?
- What effect did the political climate have on the ultimate outcome?
- Foster relationships with your allies.
- Learn more about your opponents' concerns and try to appease them.
- Always remember that a series of small successes lead to bigger successes.