Basic Steps to Effective Advocacy

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| 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 in 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. |