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.
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