



Basic Steps to Effective Advocacy

1 Make Friends in High Places

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

2 Set Priorities

- Use data to justify which issues are a 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 evidence-based interventions exist?

3 Get Organized

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

4

Contact Policymakers

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

5

Follow-Up

- Send thank-you notes.
- Always respond to requests for additional information.
- Monitor legislative actions.
- Thank them—publicly—for their support and initiatives.
- Encourage your allies to meet with receptive policymakers.

6

Conduct an Organized Media Campaign

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

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 leads to bigger successes.