



HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR THE ISSUES YOU CARE ABOUT IN SIX STEPS

1. TAKE THE TIME TO RESEARCH AND UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

To effectively advocate for a cause you care about, you'll need to take some time and research the different sides of an issue. Where, how, and why did a problem begin? How has the problem evolved? Who is affected by it? Can you find data, news stories, or public records to back up your assertion that there's a problem?

Check out MASSCreative's Cultural Policy and Advocacy Group Directory to help kick-start your research.

Research isn't just about internet digging. Talk with people in your community or in other parts of the state and learn about their perspectives or experiences.

2. COMPARE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED WITH THE PERSPECTIVES OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT AND OPPOSE THE ISSUE

As you continue your research and story gathering, continuously check in on your own positions and biases. You're going to hear stories that support and challenge your initial position on an issue. Try to understand why others support or oppose the thing you care about and weigh their reasons against your own.

3. REMEMBER YOUR "WHY"

Advocacy campaigns take time and have to adapt to the needs of your community and developing events. It's important to be clear about your "Why" and keep that at the center of your movement. As you do more research and gain a deeper understanding of the issue, continue to reflect on your personal and collective connections to the cause. What about this is motivating you to act and why?

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4. BUILD YOUR COALITION

Once you're sure of where you stand on an issue and have a firm grasp on your "Why," you'll need to build a coalition of allies. Movement building requires surrounding yourself with other people who are committed to addressing the same issue you care about and sustainable movements have to be greater than any one individual. Do some mapping to figure out who all the stakeholders are, who would readily join the coalition, who might need convincing, and who will likely oppose.

Remember that stronger coalitions often include unlikely allies! Don't count out certain individuals or groups strictly because you've disagreed with them about other issues in the past.

5. MAKE A PLAN AND GET ORGANIZED

Your advocacy movement is only as good as the people you ally yourself with and the plans you make. Now that you understand more about the issue, it's time to get planning. Stay imaginative and ambitious with your goals, while being realistic about capacity and limitations.

Consider both short-term and long-term planning. What are action steps you could take immediately and perform on your own or in a smaller group? What kind of resources do you need to pull off a longer campaign? If a long-term campaign is what you're gearing up for, you'll need to strengthen and define some infrastructure for your coalition and consider shared responsibilities, delegation, leadership, regular time meetings, and note sharing and taking.

6. TAKE ACTION

Think through and organize clear action steps. Is it writing or calling your elected officials? Organizing a town hall? Be strategic and give your coalition actionable goals.