A GUIDE TO

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

for **Youth With Disabilities**

Nothing about YWD without YWD

National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth

NCLD Youth

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REBECCA HARE
NCLD Youth

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National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth

NCLD Youth

The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth (NCLD-Youth) is a youth-led resource, information, and training center run for and led by youth and emerging leaders with developmental disabilities. The program is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth is one of 15 Youth Resource, Information, and Training Centers focused on empowering youth and emerging leaders with developmental disabilities. We are a youth-led center with partners in the District of Columbia as well as in the states of Florida and New Hampshire. NCLD-Youth strives to support and promote the next generation of leaders in the disability community through the following three objectives:

- Identify and develop high quality, disability specific curricula around the five areas of youth development and leadership
- Test, refine, and disseminate instructional materials throughout a variety of states to build networks of national, state, and local level partnerships of peer mentors, adult advisors and councils of youth and emerging leaders
- Develop, train, and mentor youth and emerging young leaders with developmental disabilities in each of the three partner states to influence state and local-level youth development and leadership public policy.

This guide is designed to help youth with disabilities become stronger advocates. This encompasses a wide array of issues including the basics of how a bill becomes a law, how to educate yourself on the issues that are important to you, and how to use that information in talking with your legislator. This is developed for and by young people with disabilities to be used in classroom settings, in trainings, and to better prepare young people to advocate for themselves.

Acknowledgments

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Unit I

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Many times when we talk about *advocacy* in the disability community, we're really talking about *self advocacy. Legislative advocacy* goes beyond that.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Unit 1 are to:

- Define what legislative advocacy is and why it is important
- Define what it means to be a legislative advocate with a disability
- Assist youth with disabilities in determining what issues in their own lives may be impacted by legislative advocacy

What is *legislative advocacy?*

"*Self advocacy* is deciding what you want, finding out how to get what you want, developing a plan, and carrying out that plan" (Protection and Advocacy, 1990). *Legislative advocacy* is being able to communicate about the importance of a policy issue or law to people who are in a position to change it. This can be talking to a city council member, a school board representative, your state representative or senator, your Governor, or the member of the U.S. Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives who represents you in Washington, DC.

What does it mean to be a legislative advocate?

Being an effective legislative advocate does not mean you have to live in your state capital or go to Washington DC. Legislators and representatives often have local or district offices that may be closer to where you live. Once you identify a nearby office, you can visit, schedule meetings, and talk to your representative about the issues you find important. Often, it's even more helpful to build relationships with the staff people at local offices. They have more time to work on local issues and are often very interested in what's going on in their own backyards. These relationships will be a great resource in getting through to the representative.

Why is it different to be a legislative advocate with a disability?

Sometimes it's difficult to be taken seriously when you're a person with a disability. It's even harder when you're a young person with a disability. People think that they need to take care of you or are unaware that youth with disabilities know their needs and most often can express them to others.

People with disabilities face many barriers and like many minority groups, they have fought for equal access "to education, to employment, to public facilities and services, to transportation, to housing, and to other resources needed to more fully realize their rights as citizens" (Tan, 1995).

The major challenges to success for people with disabilities in our society are the attitudinal ones. People without disabilities rely on stereotypical thinking, and assumptions about what people can and cannot do. Stereotypes make it that much harder to succeed because they cause people to think that you can't do what you know you can. The truth is that the range of abilities of persons within any disability group is enormous.

> Attitudinal barriers are ideas, fears, and assumptions that impede meaningful communication between people with and without disabilities and prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in society. Most attitudinal barriers are passively learned; unlearning them takes effort and interaction (Miller, n.d.).

With the rise of the Disability Rights movement and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), feelings associated with the word "disability" have moved from a focus on the disability being bad and the individual with a disability needing to be "fixed," to a view that includes disability as a part of diversity. After the ADA was passed, people with disabilities kept pushing and are still pushing to make sure that we get a seat at the table, vote on important issues, and have our voices heard. What this all means is that, as people with disabilities, we have come a long way, but there are still times when we need to educate others about our issues.

Being a legislative advocate with a disability and being educated in disability policy makes you an expert, regardless of your age! You are an expert on your personal experiences and how laws and policies shape and affect those experiences. Some of those issues belong to self-advocacy (e.g., deciding what clothes to wear or where to work) and some fall under the category of legislative advocacy. These are issues directly related to rights and responsibilities given to you through existing laws.

Worksheet 1 highlights some scenarios for legislative advocacy and helps you identify issues in your experiences that may call for legislative advocacy.

Legislative Advocacy

How does legislative advocacy relate to me?

Here's some examples to show how your personal experiences might relate to legislative advocacy:

- If you feel you should be involved in your Individualized Education Plan/Program (IEP) before the age of 16, a legislative advocate would push to make changes to IDEA—the education law for students with disabilities.
- If you want to keep your Social Security benefits while working at a paid job, a legislative advocate would encourage changes in the Social Security system.
- If your voting location is not accessible, a legislative advocate would encourage changes under the requirements of the Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA).

List some of your experiences that call for legislative advocacy:

Why are these issues important to you as a person with a disability?

How do you find out who represents you?

Taking the time to find out who represents you can be time-consuming. The information you collect, however, will become a valuable resource. Use your research skills at the library or on the Internet to compile your own legislative advocacy directory or collaborate with local peers and share each others' results. Look up as many names as you can find and record their contact information in the worksheet that follows (Worksheet 2) to create your own directory of legislative contacts and other representatives.

Local Representatives

All contact information for local representatives is available in the front of your telephone book. If you have Internet access, you can find even more information on the city's website.

Mayor and City Council Members
If your issue affects people on a local level, you need to identify the mayor of your town as well as the city council members.

School Board
As a young person, it's quite possible that the issue you're dealing with has to do with your school board. If so, fill in the name and contact information for your school board members in the directory worksheet.

State Representatives

Sometimes the issues you're advocating for affect more people than just those in your local area. Sometimes they affect people throughout your whole state. In this case, you need to find out who your State Senators and State Representatives are. They represent the issues of people in your state, in the state capitol.

Finding out who you need to advocate to in state government is the next step in completing your legislative directory.

National Representatives

Three individuals advocate on behalf of people in your state on a national level—two Senators and one Congressional Representative. If the issue you're working on affects people all over the country, Congressional Representatives and Senators are the people you want to talk to. They can take your concerns on a local level and address them on a national level.

To find this contact information, you have multiple options. First, you can look in the front section of your local phone book, often called the "Government Pages." Here you can find information for both your state and federal representatives as well as local government officials.

Contact information for your representatives in both on the House and Senate can be found on two very informative websites. Since Members of Congress, both on the House and Senate side, often have multiple offices, it may be useful to write down the contact information for both their local (or district) office as well as their national office. Both listings can be found at the websites below:

U.S. House of Representatives: *http://www.house.gov*
U.S. Senate: *http://www.senate.gov*.

Senators
Senators represent the views and issues important to your entire state in the U.S. Senate in Washington, DC.

Representatives
Congressional Representatives represent the views and issues important to your district in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC. Districts are defined as an area established by law for the election of representatives to the U.S. Congress. In the United States every person has a Congressional Representative, or someone who advocates to the United States Congress for the issues important to your community. Representatives have offices in both the districts that they represent and in Washington, DC.

Congressional Committees
Sometimes the person you're going to meet is not the Representative or Senator from your area or state, but someone who holds a position on a congressional committee that deals with a particular issue that you're interested in. Committees are groups of Representatives and Senators who are selected to serve on issue-related groups—such as Budget, Education, or Labor—in the House or the Senate.

How does a bill become a law?

A bill starts by a legislative advocate talking to their Member of the House or the Senate. As this bill gets shared with other people, and it starts to gain more and support, it eventually gets to a Congressional Representative or Senator, which is where the formal process starts. If that Representative or Senator thinks the bill has a good chance of becoming a law, then he or she can carry it to Congress.

Exhibit 1 (on page 11) provides a step-by-step overview of the law-making process from the introduction of a bill to passage of a final law.

How are laws made?

The Kids in the House website for the Office of the Clerk for the United States Capitol created the information in Exhibit 2 (on page 12) to further describe and explain the process by which laws are made.

My Legislative Directory

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Mayor

Name: ____________________

Address: ____________________

____

Phone: ____________________

E-mail: ____________________

City Council Members

Name: ____________________

Address: ____________________

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Phone: ____________________

E-mail: ____________________

Name: ____________________

Address: ____________________

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Phone: ____________________

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Phone: ____________________

E-mail: ____________________

School Board Members

Name: ____________________

Address: ____________________

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Phone: ____________________

E-mail: ____________________

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Address: ____________________

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Address: ______________________________

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Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

State Senator:

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

State Representative:

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. Senator 1:

Name: ______________________________

LOCAL OFFICE:

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

U.S. Senator 2:

Name: ______________________________

LOCAL OFFICE:

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

U.S. Representative:

Name: ______________________________

LOCAL OFFICE:

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:

Address: ______________________________

____

Phone: ______________________________

E-mail: ______________________________

Congressional Committees

Senate Committee

Committee Name: ________________________________

____

U.S. Senator Name: ________________________________

____

Address: ________________________________

____

Phone: ________________________________

E-mail: ________________________________

House Committee

Committee Name: ________________________________

____

U.S. Representative Name: ________________________________

____

Address: ________________________________

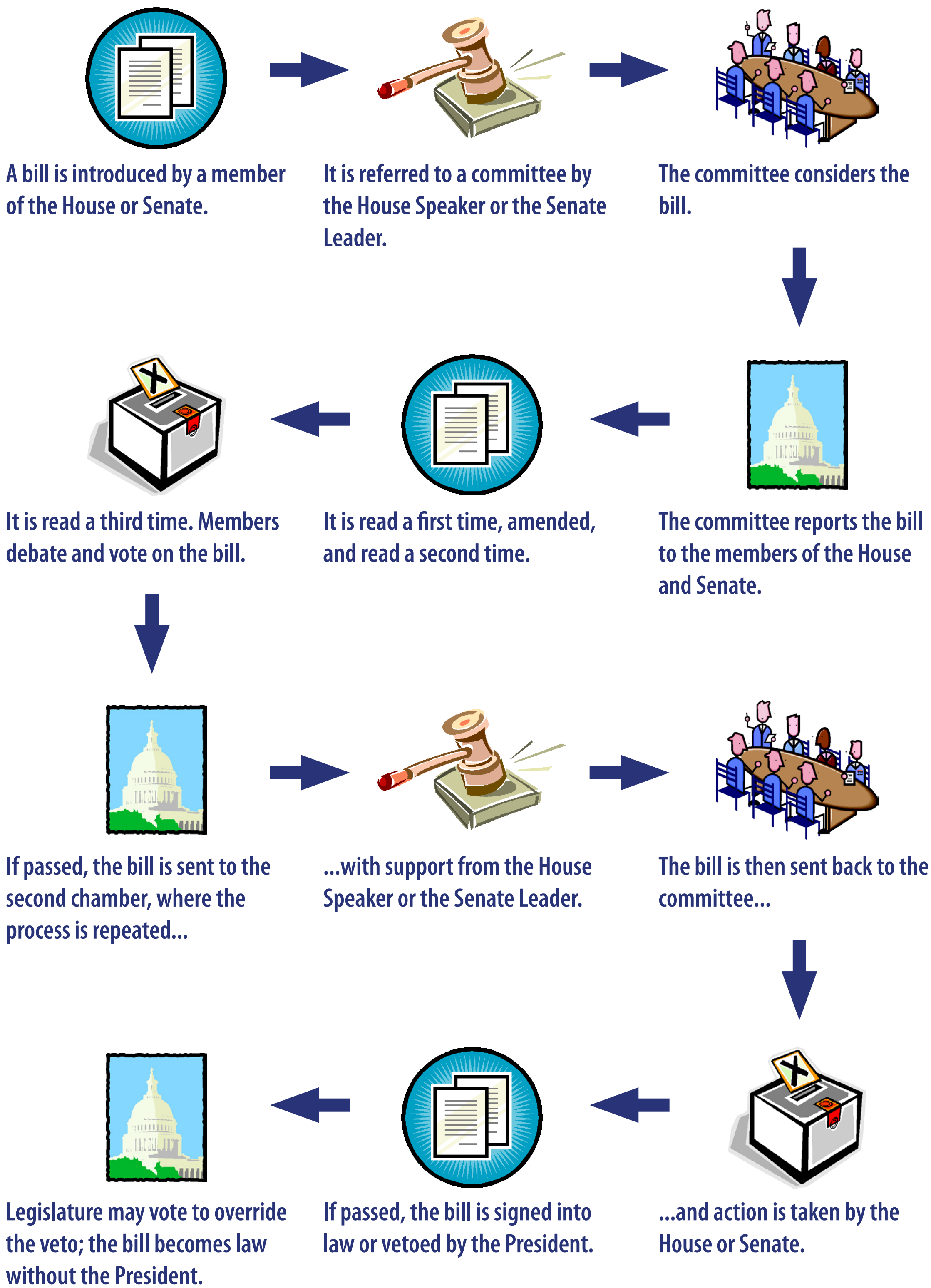
____

Phone: ________________________________

E-mail: ________________________________

NOTES:

EXHIBIT 1. How does a bill become a law?



The information in this diagram can be found in a video format at *http://www.school-house-rock.com/Bill.html*.

EXHIBIT 2. How laws are made.

How Laws Are Made

Beginning of a Bill

- An idea for a bill may come from anybody, however only Members of Congress can introduce a bill in Congress. Bills can be introduced at any time the House is in session.
- There are four basic types of legislation: bills; joint resolutions; concurrent resolutions; and simple resolutions.
- A bill's type must be determined. A private bill affects a specific person or organization rather than the population at large. A public bill is one that affects the general public.

Proposal of a Bill

- After the idea for a bill is developed and the text of the bill is written, a Member of Congress must officially introduce the bill in Congress by becoming the bill's sponsor.
- Representatives usually sponsor bills that are important to them and their constituents.
- Representatives who sponsor bills will try to gain support for them, in hopes that they will become laws.
- Two or more sponsors for the same bill are called co-sponsors.

Introduction of a Bill

- Bills can be introduced whenever the House is in session.
- In the House, bills are officially introduced by placing them in a special box known as the hopper, which is located at the rostrum, or Speaker's platform. In the Senate, a bill is introduced by placing it on the presiding officer's desk or by formally introducing it on the Senate Floor.
- In the House, a bill clerk assigns the bill a number. House bills begin with "H.R." Resolutions begin with "H. Res.," "H. Con. Res.," or "H. J. Res," depending what type they are. Senate bills begin with "S."
- The first reading of a bill means the bill's title is read on the House Floor. The bill is then referred to a committee for markup.
- The Library of Congress then receives an electronic copy of the bill and posts the bill and its status on THOMAS, a public website (http://thomas.loc.gov/).

Committee Action

- The bill is referred to the appropriate committee. The 19 House standing committees and 16 Senate committees each have jurisdiction over different areas of public policy, such as agriculture, education and the workforce, and international relations.
- The bill is placed on the committee's calendar.
- The committee debates on and marks up the proposed bill, and may or may not make changes to it.
- Committee members vote to accept or reject the changes made during the markup session.
- If a bill includes many amendments, the committee may decide to introduce a "clean bill" with a new number.
- The committee votes on the bill after it has been debated and/or amended.
- A committee may stop action, or "table" a bill it deems unwise or unnecessary.
- THOMAS, a Library of Congress website, posts the status of the bill and updates on major action taken on the bill. Each version of the text of a bill is posted on THOMAS, under Text of Legislation.
- If the bill is not tabled, it will be sent either to a subcommittee for intensive study, or reported back to the House Floor.

Subcommittee Action

- The bill is referred to a subcommittee, and placed on its calendar.
- The bill is carefully studied. The subcommittee may hold hearings to obtain the views of experts, supporters, and opponents.
- The bill is tabled when the subcommittee deems it unwise or unnecessary.
- If changes are needed, the subcommittee will meet to mark up the bill.
- Subcommittee members vote to accept or reject the changes.
- If the subcommittee accepts the bill, the bill is sent back to the full committee for approval or rejection.
- THOMAS, from the Library of Congress website, receives updates on the status of the bill from the subcommittee and posts the most recent major action on the bill.

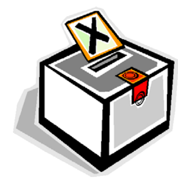
The Bill is Reported

- The bill is released from the committee, along with a report explaining the provisions of the bill, and is thus ordered reported.
- The reported bill is put on one of five House calendars, the Union Calendar and the House Calendar being the most commonly used.
- The bill is sent to the House Floor for consideration.
- THOMAS, a Library of Congress website, receives updates on the status of the bill from the committee and posts the most recent major action.

The Bill is Considered on the House Floor

- A bill can come to the House Floor for consideration in a variety of ways. Many House bills are debated through a parliamentary device known as the Committee of the Whole, which is a mechanism that permits faster consideration.
- Floor action begins and Members debate the bill.
- The conduct of debate is dictated by the Rules of the House generally, and may also be governed by a special rule granted specifically for the bill under consideration.
- Following debate, the second reading of the bill begins in a section-by-section manner, during which amendments may be offered.
- At the conclusion of all amendment debate, the bill is read a third time.
- Next, the House is ready to vote on the bill.
- Current Floor Proceedings, including major actions on bills, are posted for public view on the website of the Clerk of the House (http://clerk.house.gov).
- The THOMAS website by the Library of Congress receives an electronic copy of the debate as it appears in the Congressional Record, prepared by the Clerk of the House. The latest major action on a bill is posted on the THOMAS website.

The Bill is Put to a Vote



- The bill is read by title only and put to a vote.
- Members in attendance will vote to pass or not to pass the bill.
- Members most often vote electronically in the House Chamber using the Electronic Voting System. Members of the Senate cast their votes by non-electronic means.
- Roll Call votes cast by the U.S. House of Representatives are recorded in the House Journal, the Congressional Record, and posted on the website of the Clerk of the House.
- Members may vote "Yea" for approval, "Nay" for disapproval, or "Present" to record that they were in attendance but chose not to vote.
- If a majority of the House votes to pass the bill, the bill is then referred to the Senate to undergo a similar process of approval.
- The THOMAS website logs the Roll Number for a vote under "Bill Status."

The Bill is Referred to the Senate

- When a bill passes in the House, it must also pass in the Senate in order to become a law. The two houses of Congress make up the bicameral legislature, part of a system of checks and balances that ensures that laws are created democratically.
- Once the bill and its amendments has been officially passed by the House and certified by the Clerk, it is said to be "engrossed."
- In the Senate, the bill again may be sent to a committee for study or markup.

- Members may choose to ignore the bill and continue to work on their own legislation.
- Members may vote to pass or not to pass the bill.
- If the bill passes with different language, it must be sent for review to a conference committee, which is a committee made up of Members from both the House and the Senate.
- Differences must be agreed upon before the bill is sent to the President for signature. At this point the bill is "enrolled."
- The THOMAS website logs the latest major action on the bill under "Bill Status."

The Bill is sent to the President

- When a bill passes in the House and Senate and is sent to the President for a signature, it is said to be enrolled.
- The President can take one of several possible actions:
- The President may take no action. If Congress is in session, the bill automatically becomes law after ten days.
- A pocket veto occurs when the President takes no action and Congress has adjourned its session. In this case, the bill dies and does not become a law.
- The President may decide that the bill is unwise or unnecessary and veto the bill.
- The President may sign the bill, and the bill becomes law.
- The THOMAS website indicates when a bill is sent to the President and whether it becomes law.

The Bill Becomes a Law

- If the President signs the bill, or takes no action while Congress is in session, then the bill becomes a law.
- If Congress overrides a presidential veto, the bill becomes a law.
- New public and private laws are prepared and published by the Office of the Federal Register (OFR) of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- THOMAS lists public laws by law number.

The Bill is Vetoed

- If the President decides a bill is unwise or unnecessary, the President does not sign the bill, but issues an official statement of objections to the bill called a veto.
- The President can veto a bill indirectly by withholding approval of the bill until Congress has adjourned sine die. This informal way of preventing a bill from becoming a law is called a pocket veto.
- When the President issues a veto, the bill returns to its House of origin.

- Objections to the veto are read and debated on the House Floor.
- If there are enough objections in the House to the presidential veto, a vote is taken to *override,* or overrule, the veto.
- If the House does not vote on a veto override, the bill is stalled and does not become a law.
- A tally of presidential vetoes and pocket vetoes is available on the Clerk's website in Historical Highlights.

The Veto is Overridden

- If enough Members object to the presidential veto, a vote is taken to override, or overrule the veto.
- A two-thirds vote or greater is needed in both the House and the Senate to override the President's veto. If two-thirds of both houses of Congress vote successfully to override the veto, the bill becomes a law.
- If the House and Senate do not override the veto, the bill "dies" and does not become a law.
- A tally of presidential vetoes that have been overridden is available on the Clerk's website under Historical Highlights.

Unit II

SETTING THE STAGE

To work effectively, legislative advocacy requires just as much time spent preparing as it requires actual time spent advocating. Remember, it's just as important make sure the right information is in the right hands at the right time, as it is for you to get that information into the hands of the policymakers. The first step is choosing good issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- Discuss how to pick good issues
- Determine who the appropriate audience is for your issue
- Focus your strategy for getting what you want

What is a good issue?

Citizen Action of New York uses a set of criteria to evaluate the characteristics that make for good issues. Whether or not your issue meets a majority of the these criteria may help you decide if your issue is a good one or not. Complete the Issue Checklist in Worksheet 3 for each issue you identify to help decide which one is the best for legislative advocacy. This checklist and more resources like it can be found via the Midwest Academy for Social Change at http://www.midwestacademy.com.

How do I determine the best audience?

Figuring out who is the right audience for your issue is important. You wouldn't talk to your school board about whether or not your polling place is accessible, would you? So before you start figuring out what you want to say, you need to figure out who is the right person to address your issue.

If your issue is about a local policy, your best audience is a person in local government. If your issue is about a state-wide problem, you may want to talk to your representative in the state assembly or legislature. If your problem has a national impact, you're going to want to direct your efforts towards someone on a national level, like your representative from the U.S. House of Representatives or Senate.

Unit II: Worksheet 3

Issue Checklist

What issues am I concerned about?

____

____

____

____

Which issues meet the most criteria?

____

____

____

____

Issue Checklist

Check yes, if your issue meets a criterion. Check no, if it doesn't.

YES	NO	*Does my issue...?*
_____	_____	Win real victories that improve people's lives?
_____	_____	Make people aware of their own power?
_____	_____	Alter the relationships of power?
_____	_____	Have clear targets?
_____	_____	Have clear time frames?
_____	_____	Build leadership?
_____	_____	Set me up for the next issue?
_____	_____	Help raise money?

YES	NO	*Is my issue...?*
_____	_____	Worthwhile?
_____	_____	Winnable.?
_____	_____	Widely felt?
_____	_____	Deeply felt?
_____	_____	Easy to understand?
_____	_____	Non-divisive within my group?
_____	_____	Consistent with my values and vision?

YES	NO	*Does this issue...?*
_____	_____	Build the organization?
_____	_____	Unite people?
_____	_____	Involve a lot of people?
_____	_____	Serve the organization's broader goals?
_____	_____	Make a difference?
_____	_____	Draw attention?
_____	_____	Bring in new members?
_____	_____	Strengthen our power base?

YES	NO	*Finally, does the organization...*
_____	_____	Have the resources to see this issue through?

SOURCE: Midwest Academy for Social Change.
http://www.midwestacademy.com

How do I define and focus my strategy?

Now that you know what your best issues are, you need to figure out your strategy. A *strategy* is a way to plan out the steps you need to take to get to your goal. There are a couple different ways to do this, but we have included the Midwest Academy Strategy Chart (Exhibit 3), a table you can use to figure out your plan by answering a series of questions that help you focus on how you will achieve your goal.

Organize your ideas using a strategy chart

First off, don't be scared by the strategy chart. It looks big, and it holds a lot of information. Just think of it as a place to store all the important information you'll need to meet your goal.

If you're working by yourself, one chart is fine. If you're working with a group or a team of people, you're going to want to give everyone their own copy. Be sure to create an extra copy to post as a final, master chart in a central location.

If you're working together as a group, create one large template on butcher paper or a chalkboard so that everyone can work on the same document. Even if everyone has their own individual strategy chart, it helps to have one big working document for the group on which to make changes, add new information, or make other edits.

Once you have a final version, keep your strategy chart handy throughout the process, so that if you get stuck on something along the way, you can go back to it to figure out potential solutions, next steps, and new ideas that will help you reach your goal. Also make sure that your chart is written in such a way that each step is clear and everyone understands the words you use.

If ideas come up that don't fit in with what you want to do right now, you may want to put them on sticky notes and attach them to the outer edge of the chart, or create a parking lot for new ideas.

Complete the strategy chart one step at a time

To get started, the first thing you want to discuss is the first column on short-term and long-term goals. If you're working in a group, you'll want to do this with everyone present and working together. It's important to involve everyone in this initial process because all the other columns on the chart depend on what is inside of the first column.

After determining your goals, the rest of the chart can still look kind of intimidating. So while you're working on it, feel free to break out the individual columns one at a time and work on answers to the questions in each. If you're working with a large group, you may want to divide up your group once you get your goals worked out, so that 2 or 3 people work on each of the different columns.

At the end of the day, remember, to make sure all the information from your group is tallied in the large chart. This way everyone can look at the work you're doing and be on the same page about what tasks need to get done to achieve your goal.

EXHIBIT 3. Sample Strategy Chart

Midwest Academy Strategy Chart: Page 1/2			
GOALS	**ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**	**CONSTITUENTS, ALLIES, AND OPPONENTS**	**TARGETS**
1. List your long-term goals.	1. List all resources that your group brings to the campaign. Include money, staff, facilities, expertise, reputation, etc. Prepare a budget that includes in-kind contributions. What are the anticipated costs for this campaign?	1. Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization? • Whose problem is it? • What do they gain if they win? • What risks are they taking? • What power do they have over the target? • Into what groups are they organized?	1. Identify Primary Targets A target is always a person. It is never an institution or elected body. • Who has the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them?
2. State intermediate goals. How will the campaign: • Improve people's lives? • Give people a sense of their own power? • Alter the relations of power?	2. List specific ways in which you want your organization to be improved by this campaign. Fill in numbers for each: Examples: • Expand leadership group • Increase experience of existing leadership • Build membership base • Expand into new constituencies • Raise more money	2. Who are your opponents? • What will your victory cost them? • What will they do/spend to oppose you? • How strong are they? • How are they organized?	2. Identify Secondary Targets • Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them?
3. What short-term or partial goals can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?	3. List problems inside of your group that have to be considered if your group is to succeed.		

EXHIBIT 3. Sample Strategy Chart (continued)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Midwest Academy Strategy Chart: Page 2/2</th></tr>
<tr><th>TACTICS</th><th>RESEARCH NEEDS AND IDEAS</th><th>MESSAGE</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. For each target, list tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt.

Tactics must be:
• In context
• Flexible and creative
• Directed at a specific target
• Make sense to members
• Be backed up by a specific form of power.

Tactics include:
• Media events
• Actions for information and demands
• Public hearings
• Strikes
• Voter registration/education
• Lawsuits
• Accountability sessions
• Elections
• Negotiations</td><td>1. What do you need to know about your issue, that you don't know now?

How will you find out the information?

Who can help you find it?</td><td>1. How will you describe the problem you are seeking to address in the media and to the general public?

What phrases will you use?</td></tr>
<tr><td>2. What kind of research/information would help to:

• Bolster your case to the media and general public?
• Call attention to the severity of the problem?
• Undermine the credibility of your target or other opponents?</td><td>2. What kind of research/information would help to:

• Bolster your case to the media and general public?
• Call attention to the severity of the problem
• Undermine the credibility of your target or other opponents?</td><td>2. How will you talk about your solution in the media and to the general public?

What phrases will you use?</td></tr>
</table>

What are my short-term and long-term goals?

Your goals are the things you want to achieve through your work. They can be long-term, like changing a state law or policy that you think is unfair, or short term, like changing similar laws on a local level.

Inside the goals column, define your **long-term goal**, your **intermediate goals**, and your **short-term goals**. Both your intermediate goals and your short-term goals should be steps on the path toward achieving your long-term goal.

What are my organizational considerations?

This column highlights the things you need to think about within your group. It's a way to lay out the abilities and challenges of your particular group or organization before you start advocating.

List all the resources your group brings to the campaign.

This column gives you and your group an opportunity to lay out what resources you bring to the table. Identify all the resources (e.g., time, people, expertise) you have that makes you or your group a good representative on this issue. Include **money, staff, facilities, expertise, reputation,** and so on.

Establish a budget, including in-kind contributions, for the campaign.

First, don't worry if you don't have a lot of money. Many successful issues have been won by volunteers using what resources they had. But, it is good to know whether you will to need to buy things like supplies (e.g., printer paper for flyers, letterhead for your group) and to know from the beginning about how much they will cost.

List any internal problems your group needs to address in order to succeed.

Sometimes this is a difficult conversation to have, but it's important to handle early on instead of waiting until a problem arises. This also means identifying and thinking about any challenges facing your group or community that need to be dealt with or considered before you move ahead.

Who are my constituents, allies, and opponents?

This column refers to the people you need to get to know who have an interest in your particular issue. They might be supporters or they might be people who do not understand your perspective or who disagree with it.

Constituents are people who will be affected by the change you're trying to make. **Allies** are people who are supportive of the change you're trying to make **Opponents** are people who don't agree with the change you're trying to make.

When you're thinking about allies, it helps if you use the following questions to figure out who you're talking about.

- Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization?
- Whose problem is it?
- What do they gain if they win?
- What risks are they taking?
- What power do they have over the target?
- Into what groups are they organized?

For organizing your thinking around your opponents, use these questions to help guide your discussion.

- What will your victory cost them?
- What will they do/spend to oppose you?
- How strong are they?
- How are they organized?

Who are my targets?

Your targets are those specific people that your group or organization may want to connect with to achieve what you desire. They might include a policymaker, a staff person who's connected to your issue, or a well-known leader or advocate in the community.

Primary targets are always a single person (e.g., your Congressional Representative or your school principal) who has the power to make the changes that you want. It wouldn't be the entire U.S. Congress or your school system.

Secondary targets are the people who have power over people in power. In the example of your school, secondary targets might be your superintendent, the PTA, or other people or groups who can have an impact on how your Primary Target does his or her job.

What are my tactics?

Tactics are what you will use to get the attention and support of your targets. Remember, your tactics should be realistic. For example, if you don't drive or have access to public transportation, it may not be realistic to plan on going door to door through your entire town to talk to people about the issue.

What are my research needs and ideas?

This column refers to the "what" of your campaign. What information do you need to know and what information would be helpful to achieve your goal? Sometimes it's quantitative (e.g., numbers), such as knowing how many people are affected by your issue. Or it could also be qualitative (e.g., stories), telling how people are affected by your issue.

What is my message?

This is the "packaging" piece. Your message is how you present your issue— how you feel about it and your reasons for wanting a change. Remember, sometimes you'll have different messages for different groups, depending on who they are or what they feel about your issue.

Unit III

LETTER CAMPAIGNS

Legislative advocacy does not only happen on Capitol Hill or at the statehouse. Legislative advocacy can also take the form of an effective and well-organized letter-writing campaign. If you've decided based on your strategy, that a letter-writing campaign is a tactic you want to use, then this unit is for you! Letter writing is a great idea for drumming up support for an issue and can be done from the comfort of your own home. Letter-writing campaigns are a great way to make your issues a priority for legislative representatives by making others aware. To a legislator, one letter from a well-informed person in their district can represent the opinions of a number of voters. Letter campaigns are also great tool for developing personal relationships with policymakers by letting them know that you and your group are a "go to" resource for information on a particular issue.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- Discuss how a letter writing campaign works
- Assist youth in developing a strategy for an effective letter writing campaign
- Assist youth with disabilities in determining what issues in their own lives may be impacted by legislative advocacy

Who needs to be involved?

Figuring out who you need to contact is about as important as figuring out what you want to say. Start thinking about who will be impacted by your issue, your stakeholders, as well as which additional groups of people would benefit from being involved in your campaign.

Here's some groups that are helpful to think about when getting the word out:

- **Key stakeholders:** People who are directly impacted by this issue are the first group you should identify.
- **Personal networks:** Engage friends and family members who share your concern for your particular issues to write letters.
- **Professional networks:** Ask to attend membership or board meetings of local organizations or agencies that are or could be impacted by your particular issue, and ask if you would be able to share some information about your letter writing campaign.
- **Media:** Contact local newspapers by using press releases or letters to the editor that let your community know what issues you plan to address.

How do I set up a timeline?

Don't wait to organize a letter writing campaign until the last minute. If you know a particular issue may come up in that legislative session, start as soon as possible to get a jump on organizing. Develop a timeline to get the campaign rolling and allow yourself enough time to do what you need to do. It's best sometimes to start from when you believe a bill is going to be introduced and work backwards and forwards from there.

Timelines help you organize what you need to do by a certain time. Construct the type of timeline that works best for you. Exhibit 4 using a table format to combine a to do list with specific calendar dates. Use it as a template!

EXHIBIT 4. Sample Timeline

TASKS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Training on Issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Organizer Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Draft Letter	X	X									
Final Letter			X	X							
Individual Mailing				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Group Presentations			X	X		X		X		X	
Group Mailing					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
City Council Meetings				X		X		X		X	
Campus Mailings								X	X	X	
Comunity Center Mailings				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Other											
Other											
Key Date:	The bill is presented November 14!!!!!!										

What should the letters look like?

Exhibit 5 provides a sample letter you can use when developing yours. Remember, most times one letter will not get you the results you want, so be persistent and consistent in your message.

Form letters

WARNING! Often times it seems easier to just develop a "form" letter or a standard layout and content for the letter. Although this does cut down on time, it doesn't allow you to tell your personal story about why the issue is important to you. This is one of the key things that sticks with policymakers and makes your letter stand out among the hundreds received in their office. While it is good to have a set of key points with which to build all your letters around, it is just as important that each

EXHIBIT 5. Sample Letter

Congressman/woman (or Senator)____________,
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear C/S ___________________,

My name is ___________. I am (a sentence describing who you are) and I am writing to ask you to support/oppose (the bill or issue you'd like them to respond to).

As part of (describe the population/group you represent) I am very knowledgeable about (describe the issue). (Describe your reasons for supporting or opposing the issue and focus on how you and your community will be affected by it.)

I would like to see you (describe how you would like your legislator to respond to the issue).

Additionally, I would like to offer my assistance in providing you with further information on this particular issue by (describe how you can offer them assistance/your expertise on the issue).

Sincerely,

(sign here)

Joe Smith
Anytown College Student Body President
5555 X Street
Anytown, US 55555
(555) 555-1212

letter remain unique and personalized. Remember, **your story IS your key** into the legislator/staffer's memory. Do not feel that they will be bored or overlook why it is you feel passionate about something.

Letters should be neatly handwritten or typed with your address clearly legible. Try not to go over a page in length but if you feel that sticking to a one-page limit cuts off valuable information, then two pages are OK. Keep in mind, though, that legislators receive hundreds of letters each month and the quicker they can read yours, the quicker they can respond.

Group mailings

Setting up places in the community where your stakeholders can meet up and work on letters together is a great idea for not only building your network but making sure that the letters go out in the mail together.

If you do not have an office, or even if you do, take some time to think of some places in your community where people who are concerned about the same issues that you are, can meet and work together. Setting up letter writing tables at your local public library or community center is a good idea. Libraries are also good because if they have computer labs people can type their letters and create multiple letters, each of them different, to mail over time. If you're in college, finding a table in your student center, disability student services office, or setting up a table in the quad are also great ideas.

When setting up these group mailing sessions, make sure you have the following things handy:

- Paper and writing utensils
- A sample letter
- A breakdown/fact sheet of the issue(s)
- Mailing addresses
- Stamps
- Pre-addressed and postmarked envelopes (if possible).

At the end of each session collect all the letters and put them in the mail.

The layout

Remember the layout of your letter is almost as important as the words you put in it. Here is an outline of a layout that may be useful to you.

- Paragraph 1: Who you are.
- Paragraph 2: Who you represent.
- Paragraph 3: The issue that you're writing about.
- Paragraph 4: What you want them to do about the issue.
- Paragraph 5: How you can help them with this issue and additional follow up.

Remember, most times one letter will not get you the results you want, so be **persistent and consistent** in your message.

Unit IV

PHONE CAMPAIGNS

Phone campaigns are also effective, especially when you have a large number of people that are passionate about the issues. Make sure that the group of people making the phone calls represents the community you are organizing. Include people of diverse cultures and involve individuals who speak languages other than English so that you are not neglecting a key group of people. Also remember to use text messaging, instant messaging, and TTY machines for outreach to the deaf and nonverbal communities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- Learn how to organize effective phone campaigns
- Learn how to create short and concise phone scripts for your organizers to use

What should I do before making any calls?

Develop short **fact-sheets** about the issue that callers can keep handy when phone banking, or that you and others can hand out to potential callers. Make sure that it includes contact information for your representative.

When in a campus or a community, starting up a **phone tree** is easy. Begin with a core group of people and ask each of them to call three to five people. Then each of those three to five people are responsible for calling three to five more people. Before you know it, you've called a lot of people in your community without it taking a lot of time.

Wondering who to call? Use the directory you filled out the beginning of this workbook (Unit 1) to create a **call list.** Participants in your phone campaign should contact legislators at their capitol offices, whether in your state capital or in Washington DC. If participants in your phone tree are uncomfortable calling long distance, have them call your legislator's local office. Just make sure calls are made consistently so that the message gets carried to the main office.

Before you start calling people, make sure that you prepare a script. Typing up your script on 3 x 5 cards that can be distributed to your callers along with the fact sheet mentioned above is a great way to orient your volunteers to the process. Exhibit 6 provides a sample call script to help you out. Be sure to outline the following:

- What you're going to say
- How it should be said
- Why this issue is important..

EXHIBIT 6. Sample Call Script

CARD 1

Hi, my name is ___________________. I am a (describe who you are, student, person w/a disability, staff, family members, etc.) from (describe your area). We need you to phone Congressman/Senator ________ and ask him/her to support or prevent the (bill or issue). We need your help if we're going to achieve what we need to on this issue. Do you have a moment?

CARD 2

All we ask you to do is take a moment, and call your legisltator and leave a message about (bill number or particular issue, one to two sentences supporting or opposing the legislator's position on it).

Here is the phone number for Congressperson/Senator at the Capitol ______________.

CARD 3

Are you passionate about this issue? If so, we'd like to ask you to phone at least two other people to let them know about how important it is to get involved and contact your legislators about this critical issue.

Thank you for your time. If you need any other information or would like to volunteer, please feel free to call (contact person and phone number).

Unit V

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Adapted from *High School/High Tech Program Manual.*

> **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
>
> The objectives of this Unit are to:
>
> - Teach you the advantages of working with the media on your issue.
> - Help you think about different types of communication strategies to achieve your goal.
> - Give you resources to use to make contacting the media easier.

Conduct a Google or Amazon search or take a trip to your local library or bookstore and you'll find an overwhelming selection of books and other materials on the subject of marketing. Most resources offer excellent information about marketing methods and tools, but none will offer advice directly applicable to an advocacy campaign. This section covers the basic information you need to know, on how to market your campaign and get connected with the media, plus strategy ideas that can help your advocacy campaign get the attention it needs.

Why should I work with the media?

An advocacy campaign can offer tremendous media potential when it combines the following elements:

- A story of national impact with activities taking place in states and localities throughout the country
- Local human interest stories well-suited to local coverage
- Great facts and statistics about the issues important to you
- The opportunity to highlight an untapped source of information (e.g., youth and adults with disabilities).

Getting media attention and coverage is the challenge. Your ability to attract coverage will increase as the number of people involved or interested in your work grows. Over time, forming good relationships with local media will aid you in securing more and better coverage.

How do I attract media coverage?

The more special and specific you make your events, the more likely it is to attract media coverage. Try to arrange for a local VIP or public figure to speak or attend

*Note: This section was adapted from the following sources: The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, *High School/High Tech Program Manual,* 2007. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership and the *Florida HS/HT Public Relations Toolkit,* sponsored by The Able Trust, Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities.

the event. Consider partnering with a well-known organization or planning your event as part of a special day that is already celebrated. Remember, reporters look for certain "news values" when deciding what stories to cover, including timeliness, importance, proximity, significance, unusualness, human interest, and newness.

While you might have one person doing a majority of the work communicating with the media, everyone working on your issue can have a role. Local people may be better prepared to develop a locally targeted media release and local press list, to call local reporters and pitch the importance of your issue, or to prepare a targeted press release for the day of the event. A local person may want to approach a local public relations firm or the media relations department of a university or corporation to see whether they would be willing to provide pro bono assistance or be a local sponsor for your cause.

Writing a news release

The news release is often viewed as the bread and butter of the public relations world. Since reporters receive hundreds of news releases every day, you must make sure yours stands out. Your news release should highlight the core points of your story and be written to attract the editor's interest. Reporters' most common criticism about news releases is that they lack news. See Exhibit 7 for a sample template of a news release.

When you write your news release, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this newsworthy?
- What are the important points?
- Is there any new data or statistics to substantiate the claim?
- Is new information being presented?
- Are well-known experts involved who might be willing to provide a quote that would reinforce the main message being communicated?

Media advisory or media alert

A media advisory, also known as a media alert, is a variation of a news release. It notifies assignment editors of a press conference or any other event that you believe will generate news for the media to cover. It is always one page, brief but passionate about your issue, and it should give enough information to get people's attention without giving away the whole story. Make it clear that there are visual opportunities on a newsworthy topic for cameras and print photographers. Since timing is important, a media advisory or media alert must be distributed far enough in advance to get the media to the event. Exhibit 8 contains a sample media advisory template.

Public service announcement

Various media outlets will broadcast or print your public service announcements (PSAs) for free if events benefit the public. See Exhibit 9 for an sample PSA format.

EXHIBIT 7. Sample News Release Template

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Month, Day, Year

CONTACT: CONTACT NAME IN CAPS
NAME OF ORGANIZATION/COMPANY
(if not on letterhead)
PHONE: (XXX) XXX-XXXX or e-mail address

TITLE OF RELEASE SHOULD SUMMARIZE CONTENT OF RELEASE IN ONE LINE AND SHOULD BE IN CAPS, BOLD, AND CENTERED

(MONTH, DAY, YEAR - NAME OF CITY IN CAPS AND BOLD) In the first paragraph of a news release, state the basic who, what, where, when, and why information. A release should lead with the most important information and end with the least important. As a general rule, news releases should be no longer than two pages.

Indent all new paragraphs. Paragraphs should consist of approximately 3 – 4 concise sentences. The body of a news release should be double-spaced, whereas the contact information should be single-spaced.

Print news releases on organization or company letterhead if available. Do not use bright colored paper for a news release Even though you want to get the reporter's attention, use neutral colored paper. Provide at least one-inch margins on each side of the paper if possible.

Use three number marks (###) centered on the bottom of the page to indicate the end of a release. If an additional page is necessary, indicate that the release continues onto the next page using the following, centered on the bottom of the first page: -more-.

-more-

If you must continue your release onto the next page, never break up a sentence. Simply begin the next page with the entire sentence. Do not indent this sentence unless you are beginning a new paragraph.

"Slugline" and date should be single-spaced. However, the remainder of the release body will be double-spaced.

There is no need to use letterhead for subsequent pages. Plain white paper is fine. The last paragraph should be separate and include your contact information in case the reader wants more information.

For more information, contact ________________, at _________________. You can include telephone, fax, e-mail or address.

About your organization/program. In this paragraph, you may choose to briefly describe your organization/program. What is its mission? When was it established? Why does it exist? Once again, this should be short and to the point. Random facts and information should not be included. It can be single-spaced and a smaller font if needed.

###

Source: The Able Trust - Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities.

EXHIBIT 8. Sample Media Advisory Template

CONTACT: CONTACT NAME IN CAPS
NAME OF ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM: IN CAPS
PHONE: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
E-MAIL ADDRESS: XXXXXX@XXX.XXX

MEDIA ADVISORY/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
(CENTERED IN BOLD, CAPS AND LARGER FONT SIZE)

WHO: Name of the organization/program hosting the event

WHAT: Name of event that is taking place

WHERE: Physical location - provide address

WHEN: Date and time of event

WHY: Purpose of event

You may choose to provide a brief summary underneath (1-2 paragraphs) with more detailed information on the event. Highlight particular aspects of the event that are newsworthy and not included in the basic who, what, where, when, and why, such as dignitaries attending, special awards or honors being presented, activities surrounding the event, or announcements being made.

For more information, contact ____________ at _____________.

###

Source: The Able Trust - Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities.

EXHIBIT 9. Public Service Announcement Template

TITLE OF PSA SPOT:
BROADCAST DATES:
SECOND PSA:
CONTACT: NAME OF CONTACT IN CAPS
PHONE: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
DATES: (MONTH & DAY)
FAX: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
E-MAIL ADDRESS: XXXXXX@XXX.XXX

ANNOUNCER: PSA COPY SHOULD BE TYPED ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF THE SHEET IN CAPITAL LETTERS. TRIPLE-SPACE THE COPY TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE ANNOUNCER TO READ. BE SURE TO LIST IF THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS A 60, 30 OR 10-SECOND SPOT IN THE TOP LEFT-HAND CORNER OF THE COPY. LIST THE DATES (MONTH, DAY THROUGH MONTH, DAY) YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO RUN. READ YOUR COPY OUT LOUD AND TIME YOURSELF TO ENSURE YOU ARE WITHIN THE APPROPRIATE TIME LIMITS. USE -30- TO INDICATE THE END OF THE COPY.

-30-

Source: The Able Trust - Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities.

What do I do after the release is written?

Once your news release and/or media advisory has been written, proofread, and approved, the next step is to send it out. Timeliness in sending out news releases and media advisories is the most critically important element.

Since reporters are not working for you, it is up to you to sell your story or event to them. The following general guidelines will help you generate news coverage for your advocacy campaign.

When to send the news release

If your news release tells about an event, you want to send it so that it will be received a couple days before the event takes place. You can also put the date of the event as the release date, but send it to the reporter a day or two early. It is just as important not to send your release too early—for reporters a week is too early. If the event is too far into the future, the release will get lost and your event will not get coverage.

How to send the news release

Releases can be sent to reporters through standard mail, fax, or e-mail. However, many reporters prefer e-mail. Faxes are also common, but many times the fax machine can get overloaded and your release could get lost. Do some research first (e.g., by checking the newspaper's website or calling their office) to determine the name of the reporter who would be most likely to cover the topic.

At your event, it is a good idea to have several copies of the news release available for the media representatives who are present.

When to send the media advisory

A media advisory should only be given out for an event you want the press to attend. You should send it out 24 hours prior to the event. If it is on the weekend or on a Monday, it is best to send it out on Friday. If it is scheduled on a Monday, it is advisable to send the media advisory again on Monday morning.

How to send the media advisory

Media advisories should only be sent through fax or e-mail because of time constraints. You will also want to distribute copies of the advisory at events where media representatives are likely to be present.

What should I know about media etiquette?

Demonstrating respect for the media is critically important for getting your story covered. Consider the following advice when interacting with the media:

- When calling reporters about your story, make sure you restate why the story should be covered, rather than merely asking whether they got your news release or advisory.
- Stick to the facts when writing your release or advisory. Many people use opinions that cannot be included in a media report. Make sure you can provide evidence of your program's excellence (e.g., use facts, statistics, or the personal experiences of past participants).
- Don't use a release that sounds like an advertisement.
- Target specific media outlets. Don't send your release to just anybody. Do your research to determine where it should go and to whom it should go.
- Proofread! Make sure you check for spelling or grammatical errors. Errors will turn off reporters and your release may end up in the trash can.
- KISS! Keep It Short and Simple.

Other written public relations tools

Media kits

Media kits are used by organizations to provide basic information about the organization, special events, news conferences and crises to the media. The shell for media kits is usually a basic folder that has the name and logo of the organization or program. In all cases, the kit should have a letter attached or enclosed addressed to the person who is going to use the information. The letter should explain why the kit is being sent, identify its contents, and list important dates and contacts (see ***Pitch letters***). Media kits are often distributed at press conferences and events.

A basic media kit generally includes the following:

- A fact sheet giving information about the organization, program, or event
- Biographical information on the people working on your issue
- A backgrounder that tells something about the character of the organization/program and the nature of what it does
- Photocopies of articles printed about the organization, program, or event in publications such as daily newspapers or monthly magazines
- Selected copies of any position papers prepared by the organization/ program
- Selected copies of any serial publications such as newsletters or magazines produced by the organization/program
- An annual report or informational brochure if available
- Logo in electronic or other formats
- Optional items: black and white glossy photographs (print media only), sound bytes on compact disk (electronic media only), and B-roll video footage (television media only).

Pitch letters

A pitch letter should accompany every media kit sent. It is designed to recruit help from an editor, reporter, or producer in providing coverage for your organization, program, or event. A pitch letter is a standard business letter (e.g., about four to five paragraphs for a maximum of one page) that includes the following information:

- Why you are writing them (e.g., you are announcing an event, new service or program, accomplishment, or news conference)
- Why they should read through the media kit
- Why the organization, program, or event is interesting and/or important
- A brief statement describing the organization or program and what it does
- A brief statement describing the event or issue, if appropriate
- Information on what the media kit contains
- A plea for support or explanation of what you would like them to do
- Contact information.

Fact sheets

Standard fact sheets present the fundamental facts about the organization, program, or event in an easy to read, bulleted format. Fact sheets should not be any longer than one page, and include the following information:

- Names of officers or of the leadership of your effort
- Office location(s) with address, phone number, fax numbers, and appropriate e-mail addresses
- Description of what the organization, program, or event is and/or does
- Historical milestones in the organization's/program's/event's history (e.g., when and where it was founded, when and where activities began)
- Major accomplishments
- Interesting facts and statistics
- Programs/services offered.

For fact sheets about events, you should also include the following information:

- Where and when the event is being held
- Any cost associated with the event, if applicable;
- Past benefits offered as a result of the event and who benefited
- Name of participants or type of people participating
- Goals of the event
- Names of the people and organizations sponsoring the event.

Backgrounder

Backgrounders provide a more comprehensive overview of an organization, program, event or issue than a fact sheet. Backgrounders are longer and give more in-depth content than a news release. For example, a two-page release announcing the merger of two organizations may not permit much description of the companies involved. A four or five-page background paper would provide more detailed information on the make-up, activities, and history of the companies that are merging. Representatives of the media seldom use all of the information provided in a background paper; rather they excerpt selected information. A background paper needs to include the latest research and information on outcomes (if available) in order to be effective.

Should I use a website to market my advocacy campaign

Most programs or campaigns maintain a website, which is a powerful tool for marketing your issues. A website provides access to information about the program twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It can be easily updated to address changes in information and to include new information. A website can be designed to provide basic information about your issues with icons and links that lead to more detailed information of interest to different target audiences. A website can be used to post information on upcoming events, to provide detailed descriptions of past events, and to highlight success stories from your work. A website can also be made interactive, providing an easy method of communicating with and getting feedback from students, family members, education personnel, employers, and others affected by what you're trying to do.

If your program decides to establish a website, it is important to make it simple to navigate and fully accessible for individuals with disabilities. The Bobby World Wide Web Accessibility Tool, *http://webxact.watchfire.com*, was designed to aid webmasters in creating standard, compliant websites and to increase the degree of accessibility to a website. Bobby tests web pages using the guidelines established by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Access Initiative, *http://www.w3.org/WAI/*, as well as Section 508 guidelines from the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) of the U.S. federal government. WAI guidelines are widely regarded as the international standard for web accessibility support materials in helping to understand and implement web accessibility resources, through international collaboration. It is also important to register your website with major search engines so people will be able to find it easily.

Other resources

Exhibit 10 contains loads of ideas you can use in planning media strategies and specific tactics that may increase your effectiveness in attracting media exposure for your organization, issue, or event.

EXHIBIT 10. Suggested Marketing Strategies and Tactics

Personal Contact

- Send personalized letters and your business card to selected employers or others in the community to let them know about your program and invite their participation in the program or in a specific event. When sending letters, be sure to follow up with a phone call to confirm receipt and answer any questions.
- Call or send e-mail messages to people with whom you have an existing relationship to let them know about your issue and invite their participation. Before making contact, know what you want to communicate and what you are going to ask them to do.
- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to get information on local businesses, particularly those that could be impacted by what you're trying to do and other technology-related professions.
- Ask to speak during regularly scheduled meetings of your local Lion's Club, Kiwanis Club, etc. Use these opportunities to inform professional members of the business community about your campaign and explain how they can get involved.
- Educate others at your school or organization about the goals and activities of your advocacy work.
- Represent your program at community, business, and professional events as a speaker, host, or exhibitor.
- Network at professional conferences, in classes you may be taking, or through your involvement in church, community events, or volunteer activities.
- Volunteer to serve on boards or committees of organizations that represent people who will be affected by the work you're doing.
- Arrange for booth space at conferences attended by youth with disabilities or their families, local employers, service providers, and community-based organizations.
- Invite target market representatives to become a part of your state/local advisory body.
- Follow up after each contact by sending a letter or by calling with additional information.
- Begin by focusing on building long-term mutually beneficial relationships, rather than asking for financial support up front. Such relationships often evolve into financial support.

Advantages

Allows greater control of results, requires few material resources, and allows you to use your interpersonal skills and known contacts.

Disadvantages

Can involve significant time and offers limited reach.

Print Communications

- Develop a brochure or fact sheet to mail with letters, disseminate at meetings or workshops, or post in targeted locations such as high schools.
- Create an inexpensive newsletter that periodically updates people about your advocacy work. Produce the newsletter in a print format, distribute it by e-mail, and post it on your website.
- Design and print business cards and stationery that convey a professional, consistent program image. Be sure that the business card includes your telephone and fax numbers, mailing address, and e-mail and website addresses. Carry business cards with you at all times.
- Develop program progress reports or an annual report to update interested people about program activities and accomplishments.
- Make copies of articles that have been published about your program and share them with potential partners.

Advantages

Lets you control the messages and timing; allows you to target specific audiences.

Disadvantages

Requires funds for reproduction; can involve significant time for writing and layout; and requires lead time to develop materials

Electronic Communications

- Create an accessible website that informs targeted markets about your program and provides your contact information. Be sure to keep the website current and add new material to encourage viewers to return to it.
- Register your website with search engines to improve the chances of the site being found when web users conduct a search. Register for free on search engines' websites (e.g., www.google.com) or pay to use a search engine registration service.
- Disseminate program updates, event invitations, and other information by e-mail and place it on your website.
- Create and send periodic e-mail newsletters.
- Create a video or CD-ROM that explains the goals, activities, and successes of your campaign.
- Participate in online communities such as electronic bulletin boards and listservs used by local high-tech business leaders, workforce development representatives, or disability employment professionals.
- Include your program contact information and website address on your e-mail address block.

Advantages

Lets you control the messages and timing; allows instant, low-cost dissemination of messages and information; allows you to target specific audiences as needed (e.g., through targeted e-mails); and facilitates interactive, around-the-clock communications with known contacts.

Disadvantages

Requires expertise, technology, and time to develop, launch, and maintain a website; and requires staff time to keep the information up-to-date, respond to e-mail inquiries, manage listservs, etc.

Media Relations

- Create news by "pitching" story ideas to local media representatives. Suggest interesting angles for covering your program, the accomplishments of participating youth, or collaborations with others.
- Mail, fax, or e-mail news releases or media advisories to reporters, editors, or producers at local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations to inform them of program events and activities. Be sure to use the proper format and always include your telephone number and e-mail address for any questions the recipient might have.
- Write articles about activities for placement in local newspapers, trade publications, employers' in-house or external newsletters, or school system publications. Before writing an article, contact the publication to determine the editor's interest in a particular story line.
- Use – but don't abuse – any connections you may have with local reporters, editors, or producers.
- Develop and use a database of media contacts.
- Tap into the expertise of media relations experts within your school system or ask your partners if their public relations staff can advise you on media relations.
- Invite media representatives to become a part of your state/local advisory body.
- Invite reporters to attend your program events.
- Make yourself and your program participants available for media interviews.
- Talk with representatives at your local public access cable television station about being included in their programming (e.g., in a panel discussion about youth with disabilities and employment).

Advantages

Often allows rapid dissemination of messages; involves few or no material costs; and allows you to reach a broad audience.

Disadvantages

Provides limited control of messages or timing of message release, takes time to develop a story, requires sustained work to maintain relationships with reporters and other media representatives, and requires time to communicate and follow-up with reporters and others

Public Service Advertising

- Submit announcements about events, need for volunteers, and need for partner organizations to local newspapers, radio stations, and broadcast and cable television stations.
- Work with program partners (e.g., employers) to develop issue-oriented print or broadcast public services announcements (PSAs).
- Use the proper format for the media outlet you are targeting. Try to limit PSAs for television and radio to 30 seconds and indicate the running time on the announcement.

Advantages

Offers free air time or print space and can offer wide reach.

Disadvantages

Offers little control over timing and editing of messages and can involve costs to develop print or broadcast ads

Paid Advertising

- Examine how expensive paid advertising can or will be for your campaign. Find out circulation numbers, who the readers/viewers are, and other relevant information. (Which TV channel has the most viewers among your target audience(s)? Should you run your display ad in the sports section, business section, or near the education columnist in the newspaper? What day of the week would be best from an optimal exposure and impact standpoint?)
- Develop a template or "look" for your print advertisement working with a graphic designer.
- When looking for employer partners, place paid advertising in local newspapers and on radio, broadcast television, or cable television.
- Place ads in local business magazines, newsletters, and directories.

Advantages

Lets you control the content of the message, lets you control where and when messages are disseminated, and can offer targeted or wide reach.

Disadvantages

Involve costs to create and place ads and requires repeated ad placement to achieve the greatest impact.

Specialty Advertising

- Create T-shirts, mugs, magnets, bookmarks, mouse pads, pens, or other giveaways bearing your program's logo or slogan. Distribute these items at events, when you meet employers or have other contact with representatives of your target audiences.
- Include participants in the design and creation of products and materials.
- Consider selling specialty advertising items to raise funds for your program.

Advantages

Offers low-cost program visibility and control over product design and distribution.

Disadvantages

Requires funds for product design and production and staff time to oversee item production, distribution, and inventory.

Special Event Sponsorship

- Invite representatives of business and industry, employment service agencies, schools, and prospective or current funding organizations to an annual informational meeting or kick-off event.
- Hold an annual volunteer recognition event, or present awards to partners, youth participants, and other stakeholders at an annual conference or program banquet.
- Create an annual, issue-oriented awareness event that involves program stakeholders.

Advantages

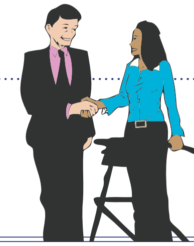
Provides visibility in the community or targeted communities; offers opportunities to recognize and solidify support of program stakeholders and to make new contacts.

Disadvantages

Can require funds to rent event space, produce materials, and provide refreshments; requires significant staff time for planning, logistics, and follow-up; and can be negatively impacted by weather, traffic, and other problems.

Unit VI

FACE-TO-FACE VISITS



Brainstorming is very important when preparing for a visit with a representative. You want to go into a meeting prepared with the information that you need, when you need it. In Unit I, you completed the worksheet about what sorts of things in your life (e.g., experiences, encounters) call for legislative advocacy. The worksheet that follows will help you take those experiences and clearly define them as issues. Answering the questions will also help you think about what sorts of challenges or obstacles you can expect.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- Help you identify what your issues are, some potential solutions, and guide you in researching the experience/background your representative has with the issues you identify.
- Assist you in developing/collecting materials to bring to your visit
- Guide you in setting up your meeting

How do I prepare for my visit?

Research

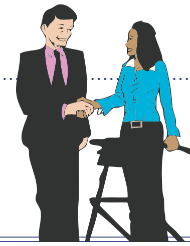
It's important to do your research!! Be sure to do your homework on your representative too! Learn what your representative's history on an issue is. It's also important that you know the context for your issue. Researching the people, places, and things that are directly and indirectly affected by your issue can help you become stronger in what you want to talk about. Here's some resources you can check out.

Text of laws and bills can be found at *http://thomas.loc.gov*

Organizations run for and by people with disabilities often will make statements or have articles and publications about specific issues. Below are several national organizations that have websites with online archives of materials and research that may be helpful while doing your work.

- National Council on Disability (NCD): *http://www.ncd.gov*
- American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD): *http://www.aapd-dc.org*
- Disability Rights and Education Defense Fund (DREDF): *http://www.dredf.org*
- National Council on Independent Living (NCIL): *http://www.ncil.org*
- ADA WATCH: *http://www.adawatch.org*
- National Organization on Disability (NOD): *http://www.nod.org*

Issue/Context Research



List the top three issues you want to address in your meeting.

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Why are each of these issues important (as described in Unit II)?

Why are you the best person to talk about these issues?

What groups of people do your issues impact?

List other sources of information you will use to do your research.

Key points from your research

List key points you learned from your research here. You may need to keep them handy for your visit. Remember to write down the citations (e.g., where you got the information) too, just in case your legislator wants to read more.

For each issue, outline the major concerns you/your group has and what you'd like to see your representative do about it.

Now that you've done your homework, it's time to outline your issues and make suggestions as to what you think your representative should do about it.

Issue1: ______________________________

____

____

____

What do you want your representative to do about it?: ______________________________

____

____

Issue 2: ______________________________

____

____

____

What do you want your representative to do about it?: ______________________________

____

____

Issue 3: ______________________________

____

____

____

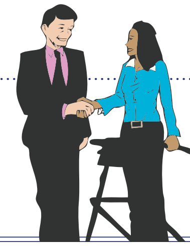
What do you want your representative to do about it?: ______________________________

____

____

____

Representative Research



What kind of experience (e.g., personal, professional, or other) and/or voting background does your representative have for each issue you've described?

Educate yourself ahead of time about how your representative's background, voting record, or pet projects might relate to your particular issue. This information may be valuable as you start to develop a plan of action for your meeting. Your representative will also know that you did your homework *before* setting up your meeting!

Issue 1: ______________________________

____

Issue 2: ______________________________

____

Issue 3: ______________________________

____

If your representative has little/no experience on your issues, how will you educate him or her?

____

____

____

What do you think the biggest challenges will be in talking about these issues to your representative? What can you/your group do to make it easier?

____

____

____

What materials should I prepare to bring with me?

When preparing materials to bring to a visit with a legislator or a staff person, it is important to supply them with necessary information, details, and research regarding your particular issues. However, bear in mind that many legislators do not have time to read 40-50 page research papers. Instead, develop briefs or summaries of these longer documents that highlight the important points. (You can always send them the longer document later, as part of your follow up.) Develop your talking points around these documents so that as you make your presentation, you can pass out the documents either ahead of time—so the person you're meeting with can follow along—or throughout the presentation. Documents that are one page or less are ideal! Stick to the **KISS rule: <u>K</u>eep <u>I</u>t <u>S</u>uper <u>S</u>imple**

- A brochure/pamphlet about your group/organization
- A sample of a product or document
- Articles that may have been written about you/your work
- A document summarizing your key points and recommendations.

It's also smart to bring about three copies of each, in case you are meeting with multiple people. A lot of times additional staff personnel, interns, or advisors may be present for your meeting. When scheduling your meeting, remember to ask ahead of time if individuals need materials prepared in alternative formats (e.g., large print, brailled, on CD-ROM, etc.).

If you're not going with a group, bring a resume so you can give the representative something to remember you by (as a person). Make sure you also bring business cards by to leave with the representative and give them multiple ways to get in touch with you (e.g., phone, fax, e-mail). Many times representatives have a short turn-around time for information, so giving them a couple different ways to reach you for feedback is a good idea.

How do I set up the visit?

Once you are all prepared, you're to make the connection with your representative to set up an appointment. Most often this will involve speaking with a scheduler or staff person. Here's a sample script you can use to practice making your call.

Sample Phone Script for Calling Your Legislator To Make an Appointment

Intern: Hello, Congressperson/Senator __________'s office.

You: May I please speak to the Senator's scheduler?

Scheduler: Yes?

You: Hello, my name is (state your name) and I am calling today to make an appointment with Congressperson/Senator __________. I am calling today because we would like to schedule a meeting with the him/her or a key staff person to discuss (name the bill or describe the issue you would like to discuss).

Or you may want to send a letter prior to your call (see Exhibit 11) so that your call will be a natural follow up to your previous correspondence.

When you call, the scheduler will tell you what the protocol is for that particular legislator's office. Remember to be brief and polite and that your task is to make an appointment, not inform the staff about your issue.

Once a meeting is scheduled, remember to follow up with a phone call within one to two weeks of the date to confirm your appointment.

Accommodations

Not all people with disabilities have disabilities that you can tell from just looking at them. Many youth have hidden disabilities and sometimes, for a number of reasons (including getting accommodations) they may need to talk about their disability to others (such as teachers, friends, or service providers). When talking to your representative you may choose to disclose your disability. Remember, this is your choice and not something you have to do. Disability is a part of life and chances are your representative may have a relative or a friend who has a disability—or may even have a disability himself/herself. Often times, talking about disability related issues and how it affects you as person with a disability gives you a sort of credibility, or a value to make people more likely to listen to what you're saying. But remember, disclosure is your choice. If you are planning on having more than one visit with a representative, you may choose to disclose later, if at all. It's up to you.

If you are going to need accommodations for a meeting with a representative, it is usually best to notify them within 2–3 weeks of your meeting. Many state and federal offices only have a set number of interpreters, translators, or pieces of assistive technology so it is typically first come, first serve. The sooner you notify your representative or their staff person of your needs, the better they will be able to accommodate you.

Also, if it would be helpful for you to get a better idea of the layout of an office, public officials offices are open to the public. Feel free to call before going in for your "official" visit and ask a staff person for a tour. This way you can be proactive to any accommodation needs and also get a sneak peek at where you will be meeting.

Outline your presentation

When setting up a meeting with a legislator, or with anyone for that matter, it's important to have a clear idea what you're going to say, and if you're going with a group, who is going to say it.

- Introductions (e.g., who you are, what groups you represent)
- Why you scheduled a visit
- How you can be a resource for your legislator
- What you want your legislator to do
- Follow-up

EXHIBIT 11. Sample Letter To Request a Meeting with Your Legislator

Congressman/woman (or Senator)____________,
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear C/S ___________________,

I am writing on behalf of ____________________ ___________. I am (write something here about you as a person with a disability or the group that you're representing) . I/We would like to meet with you on (insert date) at your office in (insert city).

I/We am/are concerned about the _____(list issue here)___________________. As you are on the (title of committee) committee in the House of Representatives/Senate or my local representative I believe that you could make a difference in the issues.

Included in the meeting will be (name all who will be joining you). If it is convenient for you, we would like to meet in the later afternoon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(sign here)

Joe Smith
Anytown College Student Body President
5555 X Street
Anytown, US 55555
(555) 555-1212

It's good to identify two or three key points under each category so that everyone involved in the presentation refers to the same key points. Additional information can be used to build on those points, such as giving personal testimony, leaving handouts, and summarizing any important research that's relevant to what you're trying to achieve.

Role play to rehearse for your meeting

Doing a role play activity before your actual meeting is a great way to get to rehearse your ideas. Take advantage of getting some outside input, such as having a mentor or an advisor serve in the role of the legislator/legislative staff person and also having someone serve as an outside observer. These individuals can help you think about what potential questions could come up and observe things such as body language, the tone of voice you use, and other verbal and non-verbal behaviors that can have an impact on your presentation.

Body language tips

Avoid standing/sitting with your arms crossed. It tends to look defensive. Instead, grab a paperclip to bend or play with underneath the table.

Identify assignments for presenters

Create assignments for all involved, both for the role play *and* the actual visit. When assigning roles for people in your group, or just yourself, it's good to think about it in terms of tasks. This does not mean that only one person is going to do the talking, but it does mean that individual group members each have a responsibility to make sure that the group gets the job done well. Some tasks are things that everyone should do, such as taking notes and telling your stories, but it helpful to have one person specifically assigned to these tasks, so that they do not fall to the wayside.

Here are a few roles and tasks you can use as an example when identifying assignments for each of your group members:

- **Facilitator:** Keeps the group on task
- **Recorder:** Takes notes throughout the presentation
- **Supplier:** Keeps track of the handouts or documents you may decide to leave with the legislator/staff.
- **Testifier:** Has a prepared personal story to tell that relates to the issue at hand.

The day of the visit

It's okay to be nervous before you meet with your legislator. Find something that helps you "get into the zone" to get down to business, such as making a CD or play list of music that gets you focused and pumped up to feel confident about the task at hand. Maybe try a group chant in the car

Top Ten Tips for your visit

- Be on time, if not a few minutes early
- Want to be professional? Dress professional
- Be very courteous to the office staff/receptionist
- Always introduce yourself and those that you're with (use this time to explain any accommodations you may be using to help with the visit); give out business cards or contact information at the beginning AND end of the meeting.
- Thank him or her for their previous support
- Get down to business quickly
- Build on what each other says (think of it like building a house, it needs a strong foundation)
- Continually suggest how you can help him or her in this particular field
- Always tie it back to the subject at hand (keep on task)
- Thank them for the meeting.

Top Tip for after your visit:

Send a thank you note!!!!!

Unit VII

REFLECTION

In order to learn from the meeting with the legislative member/staff person and to identify the logical next steps, members of the group need an opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts about the meeting.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- Help you reflect on the positives and negatives from your meeting.
- Determine next steps to achieving your goal
- Think about how you will follow-up on your meeting with your legislator or their staff person

What should I do after the meeting?

Schedule a debriefing meeting

Set up a debriefing meeting shortly after your visit/letter campaign/phone campaign while everything is fresh in your mind. Use the following worksheets to give everyone a chance to express themselves and to decide about the next actions.

Develop an ongoing relationship with your legislator

Developing a relationship with a legislator is an important piece of legislative advocacy. Your work as an advocate doesn't end when you walk out the door of your legislator's office, in fact, in a lot of ways it's just beginning. Serving as a resource to your legislator offers you a unique opportunity to use your experience to help policymakers make wise decisions that could have an impact on you and the community you may represent.

There are different things you can do to stay within the radar of your legislator, but the most important thing is to keep the lines of communication open. Inform yourself of your legislator's other key issues and become a regular fixture at events or community meetings that they are present at.

After sending a thank you letter to your legislator after your visit, here are some other things you can do to develop a relationship with him or her.

- Follow up on your issue, as long as it is relevant, every six to eight weeks .
- Sign up for a member's e-newsletter or listserve to keep appraised on what issues they're working on.
- Send additional information to your legislator.
- Ask questions.

Adapted from Tell it to Ottawa Legislative Workshop.

Plan your next steps

Here are a few examples of next steps for you or your group to consider:

- Schedule a follow-up meeting with the member to discuss what s/he was going to do for you.
- Organize a visit to the member by other citizens.
- Initiate a press story about this visit.
- Conduct a letter-writing campaign.
- Invite the member to meet with your group or a district group that may have more influence with him/her.
- Meet with local party leaders to discuss the member's position.
- Invite the member to visit your school or program.
- Consider other options.

Debriefing Your Meeting

What went well?

Make a list together. No negative comments!

"What would you do differently next time?"

What didn't work? How will you adapt your presentation the next time you give it?

How did the member/staff person respond to the group?

Bored, hostile, encouraging, non-committal, distracted, uncomfortable? Did different people have different observations?

What did you learn about the member?

Any insights into character, "world view"/philosophy, motivation to be in politics, areas where s/he feels vulnerable, areas where s/he feels confident, how much s/he relies on staff for information, or how s/he tries to "manage" meetings with constituents? Does the member or staff person have a relative or friend with a disability? If you met with the staff person, did they give you any insights into the member?

Who will draft a letter to the member/staff person thanking him/her for the meeting (or action) and restating key points?

What should the next step(s) be?

What actions will help you develop your relationship with the member/staff person?

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NCLD Youth

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