

Advocacy 101

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Public Policy

“The set of decisions that we make as a society about how we will care for one another, our communities, and the land.”

--Marcia Avner, MN Council of Nonprofits

Advocacy

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- How is it different from lobbying?

Advocacy vs. lobbying

- Advocacy: the general promotion of an idea or cause through education, outreach, and grassroots organizing.
- Lobbying: asking an elected official to take a particular position or vote a certain way on a specific piece of legislation or rule.

Avenues for Advocacy

- Contact an elected official
- Hold a press conference
- Host a rally
- Provide testimony at public hearings
- Hold an “awareness” event

Contacting elected officials

- Write
- Email
- Call
- Visit face-to-face
- Invite them to do a site visit at your organization/program.

Defining your message

- Key questions:
 - What is the problem?
 - What *specifically* do you want to have happen/change?
 - Who decides?
 - How will you persuade them?

Refining your message

- Who is your target audience?
- What do you know about them?
- What do they know about you?
- What do they know about your issue?

Making your case

- Know the facts: use current data to discuss your issue.
- Tell stories: Stories are powerful and persuasive!

Making your case *cont.*

- Use positive language: give people something to be FOR, not against.
- Be mindful of timing: pay attention to current news events, lawmakers' schedules, etc.

Adolescent health issues

- Minor's right to consent for health care
- Comprehensive Sex Education
- Family planning funding
- Adolescent parent services

“People who think one small creature cannot make a difference have never slept with a fly”

--Quote from Lynn's head