

Public Policy Advocacy

A Best Practice
Guide by the
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Key Principles:

1. Acknowledge that there is no magic formula
2. Acknowledge the luck in having the right people, at the right place at the right time in government, and be prepared to capitalize on opportunities that come up
3. Be patient, as change happens slowly. Policy change can require persistence and a lot of hard work
4. Cultivate positive relationships

Three Steps:

1. **Research** the political and public policy context within which your issue fits
 - What jurisdiction are you targeting? (e.g. federal, provincial, municipal)
 - What/who are the key decision-makers? (e.g. minister, department, premier, cabinet)
 - What processes are involved and what timelines are associated with them? (e.g. legislative, budgetary)
 - What are the politics around your issue? (e.g. does your issue poll well with voters? is your issue associated with an opposing political party?)
 - What is the level of political will associated with your issue? (e.g. are key decision-makers willing to support your issue?)
 - What incentives will generate political will? (e.g. can you demonstrate that other jurisdictions have implemented your policy change? can you demonstrate that your policy change will save the government money?)
 - What is a realistic 'ask?' (e.g. what is your ideal outcome, and if achieving that is unrealistic, what outcome would you be willing to settle for?)
 - What kind of support do you need to demonstrate? (e.g. specific constituencies, general public)

2. Preparation: Use the information gathered in step one to do the following:

- Establish your 'ask'
- Identify champions in government, other allies, potential allies, and opposition
- Really get to know your issue (e.g. arguments for and against, supporting evidence)
- Develop your message using the language of your target audience
- Identify the face of your campaign

3. Action: Schedule an action plan that takes into consideration all the information you have gathered during research and preparation (steps 1 and 2). Action plans might outline:

- A description of actions to be taken (e.g. recruiting supporters, organizing a letter writing campaign, issuing press releases and holding media events, organizing public rallies, or meeting with decision-makers)
- A list of who will do what
- A timeline for actions
- The desired results from each action
- A mechanism to ensure that the action plan is implemented

For more information or to arrange a presentation on public policy advocacy contact:

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