

advocacy

PLAYBOOK



The **W**OMEN'S FUND
of WINSTON-SALEM



ABOUT THE PLAYBOOK

Learn what advocacy is and how you can do it.

In this playbook, we look at different forms of advocacy and why they matter. We also offer tools to help you identify which issues are important to you and how you can take action to support them.



WHAT'S ADVOCACY?

Simply put, advocacy is taking action to support a cause. It can be done in many ways. Your goal, your audience, your community and resources can influence which action you take to advance an issue important to you.

WHO CAN DO IT?

Everyone! We all have issues that impact our lives and our communities. We can all be advocates, from schoolchildren to aging adults.

WHY DO IT?

Because your voice matters and it is a powerful tool for change. Leaders in government, schools, civic, and social organizations have their own sense of what's important -- and their views may or may not reflect your experiences and concerns. Folks in your wider community may not understand what is important to your neighborhood and why, so you need to let them know. Advocacy can be your contribution to a community conversation. It is an opportunity to help create the change you want to see.



IS IT POLITICAL?

It's engagement. Advocacy is an action that shows you're invested in an issue and its outcome. Advocacy is not specific to partisan political activism. It has multiple applications.

SOME APPROACHES TO ADVOCACY and when they can be most useful

LEGISLATIVE

calling, writing, or visiting your elected officials to educate them on an issue important to your community and asking them to take action for change.

great when: you want to see a policy change or you want your elected official to publicly support a specific initiative



Credit: Jorge Valencia/WUNC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/ MEDIA SUBMISSIONS

sharing your story or perspective with a media outlet/ online platform to educate community members about an important issue and call for change

great when: you want to shape public opinion, when you want to urge others to action, or you want to shine light on an issue not receiving much attention



PUBLIC ACTIONS

organizing/participating in public actions including marches, protests, fundraisers to raise awareness of an issue/cause and increase community engagement

great when: you want to make a visible statement, engage supporters and allies, and draw media attention



Credit: Bethany Chafin/WFDD

Grassroots

ADVOCACY

Educate, Engage, and Mobilize

THE EXPERTISE IS IN YOUR
COMMUNITY

SHARE AND LISTEN TO LEARN

ASK: WHOSE VOICES ARE MISSING?

CONTINUE OUTREACH, CONTINUE LEARNING

DECIDE ON GOALS, AUDIENCE, METHODS

TAKE ACTION

FOLLOW UP

The experts on issues important to your community are the people in your community. When you come together with others, you learn more about your shared concerns. When you take action as a group, it can be really powerful.

Connect with others in your community who you think might share your concern. Ask your friends and family. Ask at faith organizations, community organizations, and schools. Host/attend an interest meeting. Use social media to spread the word. Listen and learn from each other. Ask if you're hearing a diversity of perspectives? Are there people in your community being affected by an issue who aren't part of the conversation? How can you include them in your advocacy?

When you are ready to take action, you will need to decide on your goals, audience, and methods. Do you want to change a law or policy? To raise awareness among your neighbors about a change in your community? Here are some suggestions:

- share your stories with organizations (faith groups, nonprofits), elected officials, and/or the media
- help collect information about what's going on in your neighborhood
- organize public actions

YOU CAN CHANGE IT

RULES, POLICIES, AND LAWS CAN CHANGE!



WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

When something isn't working for you and your community, here's a few questions to ask yourself and others:

1. What are the rules, policies, and laws that are creating this situation?
2. Which rules, policies, and laws are missing that allow this situation to occur?

GET THEM CHANGED

You can act on your own and with others to get rules, policies, and laws changed -- or created!

EXAMPLES

- schedule a visit or drop by the office of your elected official and let them know which policy matters to you and why. let them know what change you want to see
- find out which bills or measures are being considered right now and write a letter letting the committee know what you think about it
- if you can, attend a committee hearing and testify
- continue to call your to ask about progress
- connect with individuals and organizations interested in the issue and build a coalition of stakeholders
- help write position papers with organizations or your coalition and educate your elected officials

WHO ARE MY ELECTED OFFICIALS?

Find out who your elected officials are and how to contact them at: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>



Credit: David Rolfe/Winston-Salem Journal

ONLINE ADVOCACY

SOCIAL MEDIA & BEYOND



WHAT'S YOUR MESSAGE?

You can use your online network to expand the reach of your advocacy.

1. Who is your audience for each of your online platforms (e.g., website, Facebook, Twitter)?
2. What do you want them to know?
3. Is your message clear?

A POWERFUL TOOL

Online platforms have helped to build social movements and have changed the world. They're an easy, inexpensive way to connect with your community.

THINGS YOU CAN TRY

- start a blog or contribute to an existing blog site dedicated to an issue you care about; follow blogs with similar goals to expand your reach
- start a YouTube channel or subscribe to channels that educate the public about an issue important to you; link these videos to your other online platforms
- use Instagram to catalog media relevant to your chosen issue; follow similarly-themed users
- build and maintain your organization's website with relevant, up to date information; provide a way for interested folks to support/join your work

EXPLORE SOME MODELS

The Women AdvanCe website (womenadvancenc.org) features original reporting that makes clear how legislation, inequality, and the broader political landscape impact the daily lives of women and their families. The site also links to the organization's podcast, social media, and its upcoming events so you know how you can engage.

Women AdvanCe
Connect • Inform • Engage

SEARCH

HOME NC WOMEN'S SUMMIT ARTICLES ABOUT WOMEN ADVANCE OUR IMPACT CON

Blog Talk Radio Show

Stand with Women and Families Women's Equality Day March

Join host Naomi Randolph and organizers of the Stand with Women and Families Women's Equality Day March – Tara Romano and Gloria De Los Santos – while they discuss the upcoming St and with Women and Families Women's Equality Day March. Find out what issues they're marching for and how you can get involved!

THOUGHTFUL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

educate yourself on the authenticity of stories in your news feed; read multiple credible news sources to gain a robust perspective of an issue; share select pieces with your networks

YOUR WEBSITE IS AN ADVOCACY TOOL

some strategies to consider

Your website is a powerful tool to educate visitors about the issues that impact your organization and its ability to fulfill its mission.

Your website can include:

- News on policy issue/s
- Online press room
- Media kits
- Grassroots activist kits
- History of organization
- Mission statement
- Frequently asked questions
- Press releases
- Policy papers
- Fact sheets
- Organizational biographies
- Calendar of upcoming events
- Downloadable organization publication
- Downloadable video and/or audio files
- Downloadable graphics
- List of experts and contact e-mail
- Coalition information and links
- Request information link
- Leave feedback
- Online forums
- Organization-managed blog
- Connections to active social media

Your website doesn't have to do it all! Each issue, community, and organization is different -- and so are its needs. Ask what's important to your mission. Does your website seek to educate or engage visitors to act? Is your website trying to communicate with core constituents or a broader public? Knowing these answers will help you identify which site features will help you reach your advocacy goals.

EXPLORE SOME MODELS

The African American Policy Forum (aapf.org) connects mission, research, and engagement across its key initiatives in multiple media-savvy formats.



Exemplified by the campaign #BlackGirlsMatter, the AAPF provides infographics, images, talking points, and Tweets visitors can share on different social media platforms.

The American Association of University Women's website (aauw.org) provides members with the latest data concerning key policy priorities, emails members to let them know when their action is needed, and offers an online platform for members to contact their elected officials.



Site includes research on the status of women; toolkits for translating research to local action; and a current events blog.



HOW DO I START?

PERSONAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

What issues motivate me? What makes me say,
"I want to be Involved?"

What skills, networks, and/or perspectives do I have
that I can use in my advocacy?

What do I want to see happen as a result of my
advocacy on this issue?



(CONTINUED)

PERSONAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

Who is the target audience for my advocacy?

Who are potential stakeholders I can partner with?
Individuals, communities, and/or organizations?

How does my advocacy lift up the voices and experiences
of marginalized individuals and communities?



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PERSONAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

What action will I take?
Alone and in partnership with others?

How am I taking care of myself so I can remain engaged
for the long haul?

Notes

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INFORMATION

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