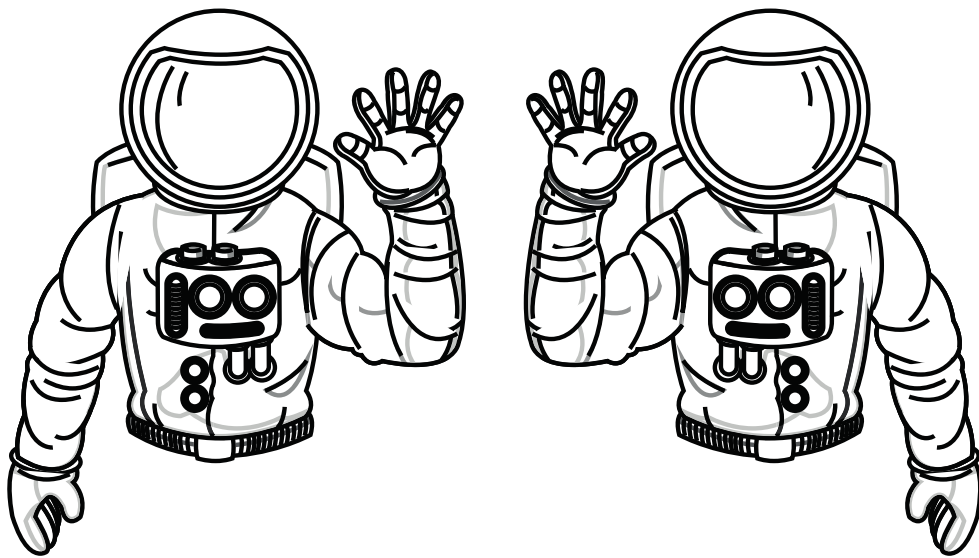
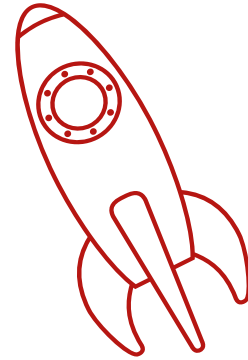
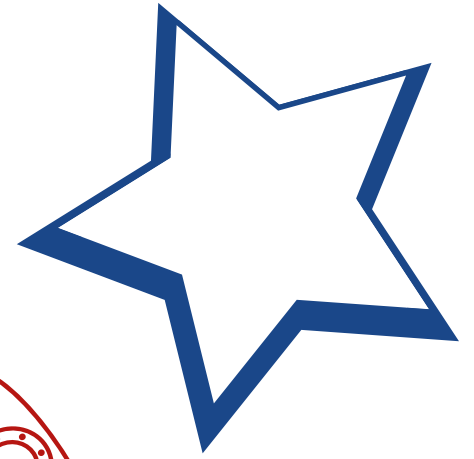


Countdown: 10 Types of Policy Advocacy

Launching the Right Strategies
to Meet Your Goals



September 2019

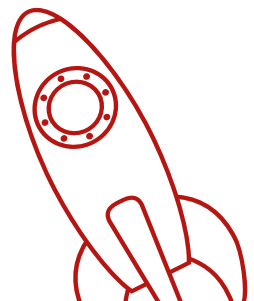
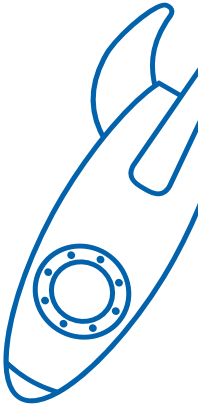




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Prepared by: Rebecca Zimmermann
Outreach Director
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families





Prepare for Liftoff

When Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) meets with people around the state, we hear similar stories: in El Dorado and Jonesboro, we hear about the negative impact of unfair rental laws on children's health. In Springdale and Little Rock, we're told of the ability of early childhood education to ensure kids' long-term success. In Russellville and Fort Smith, we learn about the damage done to families because of drug addiction. Statewide solutions are needed for many problems facing kids.

Public policy has the power to improve the lives of some 700,000 kids who call Arkansas home. If we want to solve problems and protect solutions, advocacy is the best tool for creating significant and lasting change to make Arkansas a great place for children and families. And kids are counting on us to use our voices to speak up for them when important decisions are being made at the local, state, and federal level.

AACF has created this advocacy handbook to help you in your policy advocacy efforts by providing tools and tips we have learned in our more than 40 years of advocacy for our state's kids. We hope this book will prove useful in helping you become a strong advocate and voice for Arkansas's kids.



10! Social Media Advocacy

Overview: Social media advocacy is likely the most common type of advocacy, but it can be very difficult. People are saturated with messages online. Making your message stand out among the noise takes thoughtful planning.

When to use: To reach a wide audience. To advocate when you have a small budget. To publicly engage with decision makers. To make viral campaigns.

Ways to use:

- Educate — to teach people about the problem you are trying to address and the solution you are trying to address it with.
- Fundraise — to encourage individuals to donate to the solution you are supporting.
- Interact with decision makers — respectfully, ask legislators to vote a certain way, share information that will help them decide, ask them why they voted a certain way.
- Keep up with the conversation — learn what the public, the press, and decision makers are saying about your issue.
- Share updates — to keep your followers informed on the progress you are making on your issue.
- Activate/Motivate — to inspire individuals to take action on your issue by contacting a legislator, volunteering, donating, etc. Note: to boost Facebook ads that call people to action, you have to go through an authentication process with Facebook.



Social Media Advocacy, ctd.

Tips:

1

Mix messaging — keep people interested and engaged by mixing up messages between education, activation, updates, etc.

2

Don't let someone without knowledge or experience plan your social media strategy. Effective social media advocacy takes strategic thinking. You create the plan — let the intern implement it.

3

Look at what organizations with messages that you have responded to are doing online. What made you respond? What techniques can you adopt?

4

Use images — social media posts with images are more likely to be shown in someone's social media feed and more likely to get people's attention.

ADVOCACY ADS ON FACEBOOK

To run ads related to politics on your Facebook Page, you have to go through several steps. Only Page administrators can go through the process. First, Facebook confirms the identity and location of the admin. You'll have to provide a US driver's license, state ID card or passport, along with a US-based residential mailing address. Then you have to link your ad account(s) to your Page and enter a "Paid for by" disclaimer. This process can take two weeks or longer, so be sure to complete it well in advance of any Facebook campaign you plan to do, if it's even remotely related to politics. Search the Facebook Business Ads Help Center for "ads about social issues, elections or politics" for the full details.



9! Media Advocacy

Overview: Traditional media is not dead. Many people still rely on digital publications and televised news for information. Educating and activating through traditional media sources can still be useful.

When to use: To educate and activate individuals outside of your current network. To increase the likelihood of your messages being seen by decision makers and community influencers.

Ways to use:

- Create news — send press releases when you publish new research; invite press to demonstrations and community meetings.
- Capitalize off breaking news — if you can act quickly enough, release a statement to the press related to a current news story
- Cultivate relationships — Send reporters data, tips, and research; and submit opinion pieces and letters to the editor.
- Train a spokesperson — Have at least one staff person or volunteer who is comfortable taking interviews, and keep them prepared with relevant talking points.

Tips:

1

Read through op-eds, watch human interest stories, etc. and identify what types of information the media is looking for and who they are getting it from.

2

If you are going to talk about a problem, be sure to have recommended solutions prepared.



8! Election Advocacy

Overview: Nonprofits CAN participate in election advocacy. But laws and restrictions apply! (Refer to Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, the Arkansas Ethics Commission, and the IRS for information on rules and regulations).

When to use: If your mission and issue are affected by decisions made by elected officials. If you have a large base of supporters you want to engage. If you want to ensure your issue is being discussed by candidates.

Ways to use:

- Host/attend a candidate forum — hosting candidate forums are a great way to make issues you care about part of the conversation during the election.
- Create a Voters' Guide — Handing voters' guides out to the general public increases the likelihood of your issues being discussed at a range of election events.
- Propose a ballot initiative — instead of trying to get a specific piece of legislation passed through the legislature, you can petition to have an initiative added to the ballot that would leave it to the voters to decide on. These efforts can be very expensive though. So, if another group is leading efforts on an initiative that you support, consider connecting with them and ask how you can help.
- Actions you can take as an individual (but not as a 501(c)3 nonprofit):
 - Run for office
 - Volunteer on a campaign
 - Endorse a candidate
 - Donate to a campaign or party



Election Advocacy, ctd.

CONSIDER THIS:

Running a ballot initiative campaign is very time consuming and expensive. Depending on whether you are proposing a constitutional amendment or an initiated act you must gather either 84,859 or 67,887 signatures respectively to get the measure on the ballot. That takes a lot of people power and money. Then promoting the initiative throughout the state and gaining support can be equally challenge. If this is a route you would like to take, consider partnering with like-minded organizations that may have funded initiatives similar to yours. See the Arkansas Secretary of State's Office for information on [the laws regarding ballot initiatives](#).

Resources from Bolder Advocacy (<https://bolderadvocacy.org>):

- 1 Comparison of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) permissible activities
- 2 Commenting on Candidates and Campaigns
- 3 Election Checklist for 501(c)(3) Public Charities: Ensuring Election Year Advocacy Efforts Remain Nonpartisan
- 4 The Rules of the Game: A Guide to Election-Related Activities for 501(c)(3) Organizations



7! Administrative Advocacy

Overview: Passing a law is only the first step. Generally, after the governor signs a bill into law, it is sent to the relevant department where the rules will be promulgated, or, in other words, where the ins-and-outs of implementation will be decided.

When to use: To ensure that a law best assists the people it is meant to serve. To ensure a bad law doesn't get worse in implementation.

Ways to use:

- Provide public comments — give your written input on how the law should be implemented
- Meet with relevant department heads — share information, data, and stories about your issue that can help them in the rule-making process
- Attend public rule-making hearings- provide testimony on how the law should be implemented through data and stories

Tips:



1

Get in the weeds! This is the time to really get in the weeds and nail down exactly how a law will be implemented. What are the on-the-ground details that will affect implementation that might be overlooked?



2

Create on-going relationships with relevant department heads. If you already have a relationship, they are more likely to turn to you for insight when a new law comes up in your issue area.



3

Don't be intimidated. You are an expert in your field and decision makers need to hear from you. From their position, there are a lot of important details that can be missed. You can fill-in those gaps.



6! Legislative Advocacy

Overview: Legislators hear from many voices when they create a law. They listen to lobbyists, campaign contributors, and their constituents. They get data from experts. They get information from people claiming to be experts. They speak with colleagues, attend committee hearings, and debate bills on the floor. There are plenty of opportunities to advocate and lobby.

When to use: If there is legislation you want proposed. If there is a bill that has been filed that helps your issue. If there is a bill that has been filed that will harm your issue.

Ways to use:

- Lobby — ask a legislator to vote a certain way on a specific piece of legislation or propose certain legislation. Laws apply! (Refer to Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, the Arkansas Ethics Commission, and the IRS for information on rules and regulations.)
- Advocate — if you don't want to tell legislators they should vote a certain way, but just want to educate them on your issue, you can do that, too. Or you can do both. Educate them, then lobby them. (Remember laws apply! See above.)

See Bolder Advocacy's worksheet online [Public Charities Can Lobby](#)





Legislative Advocacy, ctd.

Tips:

1

Meet with legislators out of session, as this may allow you more time to educate a legislator about your issue and help create a trusting relationship between the two of you regarding your subject matter. As a result, the legislator may turn to you for insight and advice when a bill comes up in your issue area.

2

Learn where legislators stand on your issue through social media, attending committee meetings, and asking colleagues. This can help you determine who still needs to be persuaded and who can be a champion for your cause.

3

Be respectful. It can be frustrating to hear some of the opinions legislators have, but being disrespectful won't get you anywhere.

4

Stay on top of what is happening at the Capitol. Things can move quickly so follow what is happening on Twitter (follow #arpx and #arleg), sign up for bill tracking on the General Assembly's website, and sign up for alerts on AACF's website.

5

Stay focused on your mission. Create an agenda of what policy or policies you want to work on before you start advocating during the session, to keep you focused and on track. The agenda can be used to guide all of your advocacy efforts.

6

Make sure to follow up and thank legislators for taking action on behalf of your cause.



5! Financial Advocacy

Overview: Where you spend your money is an indication of what you value. Making campaign contributions or donating to nonprofits can be effective ways to advance your issue.

When to use: To support a candidate or party (not as a nonprofit, only as an individual). To support a cause.

Ways to use, as an individual:

- Donate to a political party.
- Donate to a candidate.
- Donate to a Political Action Committee (PAC).
- Donate to a nonprofit.

CONSIDER THIS:

You worked hard for your money! There are many places where you can invest. Be thoughtful about which donations and campaign contributions can really move your issue forward.



4! Research Advocacy

Overview: Knowledge is power. Ensuring the accuracy of information is important to advocacy because it's what advocates use to ask decision makers and stakeholders to support or oppose an issue.


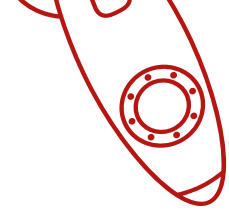

When to use: If information is not currently available on your issue area. If information in your issue area needs to be updated. If conclusions drawn by current research are inaccurate or the current research itself is inaccurate. If current research is incomplete. If the use of data will help you move your issue forward.

Ways to use:

- Conduct your own research from scratch — if there are no data in your issue area or if the data are not specific to your region or state, you may want to consider conducting a full-scale research project. This can take years depending on the data being collected and whether or not you will analyze and publish the data.
- Analyze data sets that already exist — several public institutions house raw data and make it publicly available. However, the data must be analyzed to relay compelling stories. You can pull and analyze the data relevant to your issue to draw conclusions on the need.
- Fill-in the gaps — if some research exists for your issue area but certain points are missing, conduct additional research to deepen the scope
- Create publications or fact sheets so your findings can be used by others.

CONSIDER THIS:

You may need different levels of specialized knowledge for your research. Contact local college or university professors or hire experts to help you conduct the research.



3! Grassroots Advocacy

Overview: There is strength in numbers. And grassroots advocacy is probably the most powerful form of advocacy because it brings together so many voices. It is also the most diverse and complex form of advocacy because of the many methods you can use.

When to use: If you wish to engage a large number of people. If you want decision-makers to see the wide support for your issue and solution. If you want decision makers to see the wide opposition for a current law or proposed law. If the problem you want to solve is big.

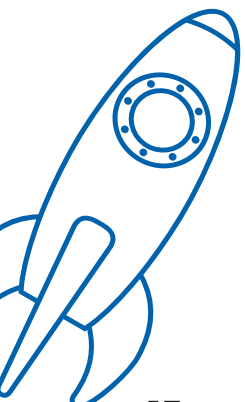
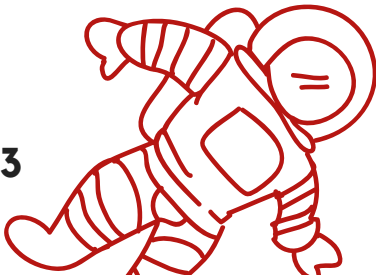
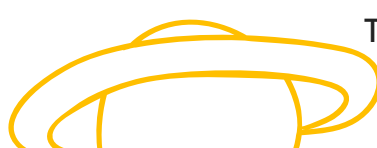

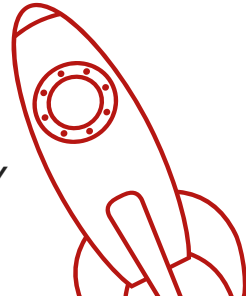
CONSIDER THIS:

Plan, plan, plan. There are often intermediate and short-term goals for grassroots campaigns. But grassroots movements are about the long game. Decide on a goal and create a strategy to achieve it. Waiting till down the road will likely cause division among your supporters.



Grassroots Advocacy, ctd.

Ways to use:

- Petitions — if you have a large network, petitions, particularly online versions, can be an easy way to gather voices in support of or opposition to a current law or proposal.
 - Letters of support — usually signed by representatives of organizations, letters of support are a great way to illustrate support for current laws under threat or support for proposed laws.
 - Days at the Capitol — hosting a gathering of your members or supporters at the state or nation’s Capitol can be a great way to engage your followers, get them excited about advocating, and get them more comfortable with the legislative process. It also helps increase awareness about your issue(s) with lawmakers.
 - Art — community art projects can be a fun, “out-of-the-box” way to raise awareness about your issue. You can host a concert with songs about your issue or have an art contest with images that raise awareness about your issue.
 - Letter writing campaigns — lawmakers pay attention to the feedback they get from their constituents. Encouraging your supporters to write to or call their legislators can have a big impact.
 - Marches — can create a powerful visual image about the support for your issue. They will likely be picked up by the media and seen by a wide audience.
 - Coalitions — connecting with like-minded individuals who share the same goal as you can increase the number of people and voices supporting your cause, as well as the amount of resources dedicated to achieving your goal.
- 
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2! Legal Advocacy

Overview: After a law passes and/or is implemented, legal advocacy can be a last resort option to repeal a law or prevent a law from being enacted.

When to use: If you want to repeal a current law. If you want to prevent a law from being enacted. If you believe a current law is not being properly implemented or enforced.

Ways to use:

- File suit — this takes money and legal experts, but you can file a lawsuit against the relevant government entity.
- Write an amicus brief — if you have legal experts on your staff or can hire legal experts, but you don't want to file a lawsuit yourself, your legal experts can write a legal opinion supporting a suit that has been filed by others.

Tips:

1

If you want to file suit, make sure you have enough money. This type of litigation can take years and significant financial investment. You may also consider jointly suing with other organizations so you can gain more resources for the suit.

2

Make sure you hire the right legal expert. Lawyers are like doctors. They specialize in certain areas of the law. And just like you wouldn't want your dentist to conduct your heart surgery, you don't want a Human Resource attorney to lead your suit about water pollution laws not being enforced.



1! Peer-to-Peer Advocacy

Overview: Where is the easiest place to start your advocacy? Your current network! People are much more likely to get involved and take action on an issue if someone they know and trust asks them to versus a generic request from a person or organization they don't know.

When to use: When you want to activate your friend, family and professional networks to support and take action for your cause.

Ways to use:

- Get coffee — just like fundraising, advocacy is about relationships. Grab coffee with a friend, ask them what issues they care about and tell them about the issue you are working on. Give them a one-pager and ideas on ways they can connect with your advocacy.
- Host a party — throw a house party with your friends, colleagues, and your friend's friends. Take a few minutes once most people have arrived to talk about your issue and give them an opportunity to meet with current advocates at the party to learn more and find out ways they can take action.
- Call, text, or email — for those friends that you know won't take a lot of convincing — just give them a quick overview of the issue you are advocating on and how they can help.



Peer-to-Peer Advocacy, ctd.

Tips:

1

Share updates with the people who have helped in your advocacy, so they can know if more help is needed and the impact their efforts have had.

2

Don't forget to tell your network thank you! Send a thank you to everyone who contacted legislators, shared information on Facebook, volunteered, or attended an event.




How a Bill Becomes a Law in Arkansas (With Your Help)

1. Recruit Bill Sponsor. Take your idea to your legislator or a legislator you think may be passionate about your issue. Have stories and data about the problem and your proposed solution/idea for a bill. Do this as far in advance of the legislative session as possible. If one legislator declines, that is OK. Reach out until you find a legislator who connects with the purpose of the bill and the people it is meant to serve.

2. Stay in Touch. If the legislator is willing to file a bill, keep in touch and ask how you can help. Do you need to reach out to other legislators to ask that they co-sponsor? Does the legislator need additional data to file the bill?

3. The Bill is Filed. The fall before the legislative session begins, or during the session, the legislator officially files the bill. Ask the legislator about the timeline for the bill. Often, even though a bill is filed, it will not immediately be considered by the General Assembly.

4. The Bill is Considered by the First of Two Committees. The bill is heard in the relevant committee and on the side of the chamber that the bill sponsor is part of. So if the bill sponsor is a House member, it will be heard on the House side. Again, make sure to confirm the timeline of the bill with your bill sponsor. Just because it is on the agenda to be heard by a committee does not mean it will be. Ask your bill sponsor how you can help. They will have the best idea of what is needed, or not needed, to move the bill forward. Do you need to recruit people to testify on behalf of the bill? Do you need to create a one-pager for the bill? Do you need to send an alert for people to call committee members?





How a Bill Becomes a Law (With Your Help), ctd.




5. The Bill is Considered by the First of Two Chambers. If the bill passes out of committee, it will move to the full Chamber of the House or Senate for a vote. Ask the bill sponsor how you can help.

6. The Bill is Considered by the Final of Two Committees. The bill will then move to a committee in the opposite chamber. Usually it will be in a corresponding committee. For instance, if it is heard in the House Education Committee, it will be heard in the Senate Education Committee. But there are rare exceptions. Check with the bill sponsor about which committee it will be heard in, and ask the bill sponsor how you can help.

7. The Bill is Considered by the Final of Two Chambers. If the bill passes out of the second committee, it will go to the final chamber. Ask the bill sponsor how you can help. Even if there is nothing directly you can do to help and you think it is likely to pass, it is always nice to invite supporters of your bill to watch the final vote in person or online to celebrate. If the bill was amended in this chamber, it will then go back to steps 4 and 5 to be heard by the first chamber again, as amended.

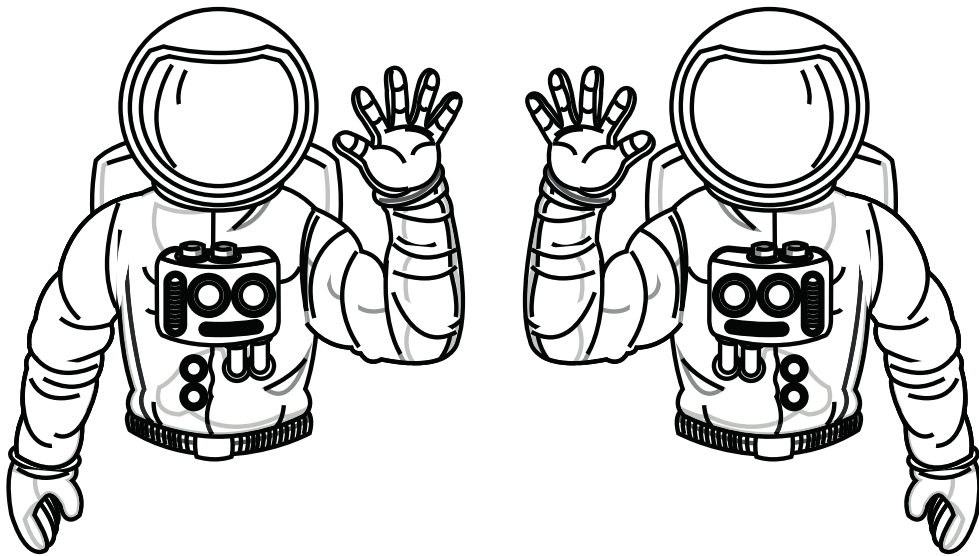
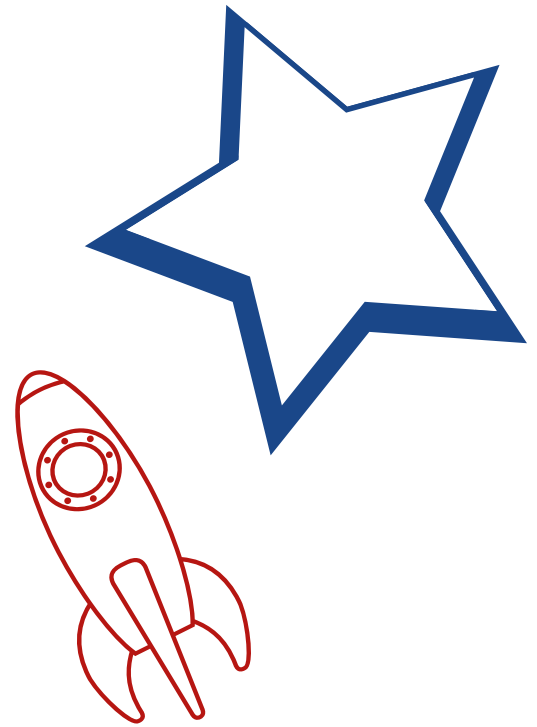
8. The Bill is Signed Into Law by the Governor. If the bill passes both committees and chambers, it will go to the Governor's desk for her/his/their signature. It is very rare that a bill passes through the General Assembly and does not get signed by the Governor. So the bill sponsor would most likely not need help at this stage. Confirm with the bill sponsor when the bill will be signed by the Governor, and ask if you can invite your fellow advocates and the press to celebrate!



9. You Thank Legislators. Make sure to personally and publicly thank the legislator(s) who sponsored the bill, and ask others in your network to thank the bill sponsor(s), too.

It's not Rocket Science!

Policy Advocacy Campaign
Plan Workbook



September 2019

Prepared by: Rebecca Zimmermann
Outreach Director
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families





Advocacy Campaign Template

I. Problem Statement and Solution (What specific problem are you trying to address and what specific solution are you proposing? And if funding is required, how specifically it will be paid for?)

a. Problem:

b. Solution:

II. Goals (Besides getting legislation passed or bad legislation thwarted, what other goals do you have for your campaign? Raise awareness about your issue? Have a certain number of people call legislators? Get a certain amount of news organizations to write about your issue?)

a. Primary:

b. Secondary:



Advocacy Campaign Template, ctd.

III. Allies, Opposition, Targets

a. Active Allies (Who are people or organizations that will actively help with your campaign? And how will they help – by educating/lobbying legislators, hosting events, sending alerts, etc.?)

- i.
- ii.
- iii.


b. Passive Allies (Who are people or organizations who are supportive of your goal, but for whatever reason cannot or will not put resources behind supporting it?)

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

c. Active Opposition (Who are people or organizations who do not want to see your goal achieved and will put resources behind stopping it?)

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

d. Uncommitted (Who are people or organization that you would like to engage on your goal but have not decided if they will?)

- i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
- 



Advocacy Campaign Template, ctd.

IV. Legislative Strategy


- a. Background (What is the overall reasoning for the strategy you have chosen?)

 - b. Potential Champions (Who are legislators likely to sponsor and/or champion legislation in both chambers and could move the legislation through the General Assembly?)

 - c. Potential Opposition (Who are legislators that are likely to oppose the legislation? And will they do so actively – meaning will they try to get colleagues to also oppose the legislation?)

 - d. Targets (Who are specific legislators who are on the fence that need additional advocacy? Which committees will the bill be heard in, and who are the committee members?)

 - e. Influencers (Who are other legislators or community/business leaders who might be influential in moving or hindering the legislation?)

 - f. Whose responsibility is it to educate/lobby legislators and the Governor's office?
- 



Advocacy Campaign Template, ctd.

V. Communications Plan

a. Core Messages

b. Key Facts/Data Points

c. Audiences

d. Messengers

e. Platforms/Media

f. Who is responsible for communications?





Advocacy Campaign Template, ctd.

VI. Outreach Plan

a. Targets (Who do you want to activate to contact legislators about your goal? Specific types of people, like moms? Specific networks of people, like a doctor's association? People in specific parts of the state?)

i.

ii.

iii.

b. Mobilization/Engagement (How will you activate them – create a coalition, outreach events, legislative alerts, partner networks, direct requests, etc.? How will you make sure everyone stays on message?)

i.

ii.

iii.

c. Who is responsible for outreach?





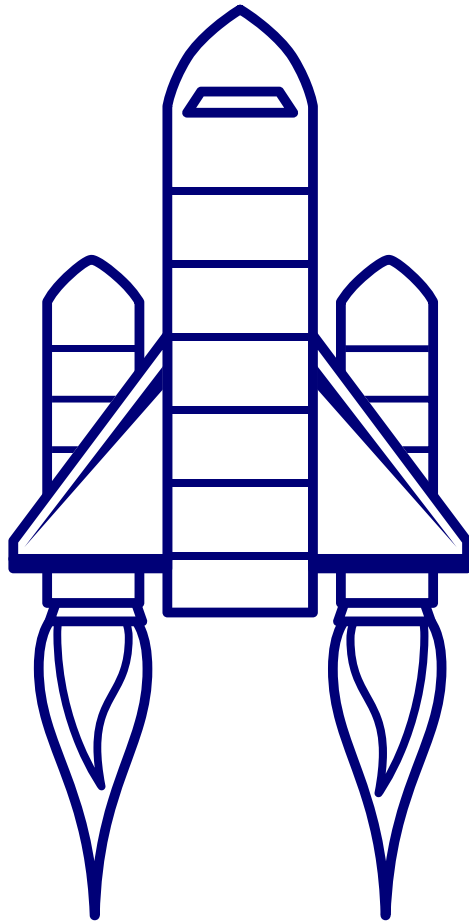
Advocacy Campaign Template, ctd.

VII. Timeline: Activities and Reports (Timeline of publications, articles, outreach events, lobbying efforts, etc. Tip: start your activities as far in advance as possible, a lot of decisions about legislation are already made before the General Assembly convenes).

VIII. Budget

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