Welcome!

Advocacy Workshop
OACBHA
Recovery Conference

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Introductions

• Jenny Camper
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What is advocacy?

• Supporting a project or an issue that is important to you.

• Taking action to tell others of your support and why the project or issue needs attention.
Your voice is needed

You can help shape better public policy

- Personal experience
- A story to tell
- First-hand expertise
Your story is powerful

• Elected officials need to hear from constituents

• Elected officials need and want education on particular issues, and real-life examples

• Your story is important to elected leaders and other influencers
Do a little homework first

Always learn as much as you can about an issue before taking action as an advocate.

Good questions to ask as you research an issue are:

- What are the pros and cons of the action you are supporting/opposing?
- How will change affect you, your community or others?
- What possible actions could be taken to make improvement?
- Who else cares about this issue and how might they respond?
- Have other states/cities/counties passed or defeated similar actions?
- Who might support your point of view?
- Who might oppose your point of view?
- What is the cost of doing nothing?
Build a network

Connect with others to:
• Raise the profile of your issue
• Build a base of support
• Maximize resources
• Provide third-party credibility
Set clear goals and expectations

- Make a plan
- Divide the effort into mini-goals
- Know your representatives and officials
- Keep up with news about your issue
- Attend meetings, rallies, etc.
- Follow social media sites
- Recruit others to help

Write down your story
Build professional relationships

- Get to know local officials, legislators and Congressional reps
- Start early!
- Know your key messages
Share your story

Communicate through a variety of channels

- Email/letter
- Meeting
- Policy brief/position paper
- Rally or briefing event
- Social media
- Telephone call
- Testimony
Email, social media, phone calls

To be effective, use this checklist:

✓ Be courteous & respectful
✓ State you are a constituent
✓ Name bill number
✓ State position early
✓ Be brief
✓ Provide background information
✓ Include your contact information
✓ Ask politely
✓ Say thanks and restate
✓ Post and share
Meeting and visits

- Request an appointment
- Dress professionally
- Prepare in advance
- Start and end on time
- Use leave-behind materials thoughtfully
- Always send a thank you email
Avoid the most common pitfalls

You’ve got the basic tips and tactics to be an effective advocate.
Here are just a few common mistakes to avoid that will help ensure your success:

BAD INFORMATION
Make sure you have correct and verified facts.

FAIL TO FOLLOW UP
Always reconnect after any meeting, call or email.

DISRESPECT
Maintain a courteous and respectful relationship. Avoid negative and divisive language and actions.

ASKING TOO MUCH
Make your request reasonable and doable.

DISENGAGING
Stay active in the process and stay engaged with your legislative contacts and your network of allies.
Thank you!

Your strongest assets are your expertise, passion and credibility. Use them to improve public policy through advocacy. Your voice can make a difference.
Questions?