

ADVOCACY HUB



 Regional Arts &
Culture Council

Working with Public Officials

Goals, tips, and how-to's for effectively working with public officials.

SAMPLE AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Thank them for past support
3. Update on what we're doing
4. Feedback from decision maker on our work
5. Context for our current campaign
6. Request for support/commitment
7. Learn about decision maker – ask about their current priorities
8. Follow-up plan – invite them to an event, etc..
9. Reinforce commitment
10. Get their information for follow-up
11. Ask when they will have their next town hall/meeting you can attend
12. Thank you

DEFINING ADVOCACY

- Advocacy is defined as the active support of an idea or cause, including the act of informing an individual, group, or body about an issue.
- **Advocacy is not the same as lobbying.** Lobbying is defined as a direct communication with a public official in reference to a specific piece of legislation, with a request to support or oppose that legislation.
- Effective advocacy is always POSITIVE!
- Telling our story. Telling your story.

TIPS FOR STRONG ADVOCACY

- It's all about building relationships and thinking long term. It's not just about this campaign or initiative, but any/all campaigns and initiatives in the future.
- If you are an advocate, you are a leader, and you are a part of a collective group of leaders with a shared vision
- Have one, strong, clear ASK. The ASK must be consistent and cohesive with your messaging and overall campaign. Make sure the official knows exactly what you are asking for

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- You should have no longer than a 5 minute version of your campaign story, including the ASK, for any interaction. Keep it concise
- Know your issue inside and out, and think big – who will it benefit, what resources will it take, how will it happen.
- Know all sides of the story and be ready to “steal thunder”
- Put yourself in the shoes of your target. *What does official X care about? What are his/her priorities? How does your ASK fit into that?*
- Understand the political spectrum – federal, state, county, municipal – how does your official fit into the bigger picture?
- If you are meeting with your official in person, don’t overwhelm them by bringing too many people. 4 people tops.
- Be professional and respectful. They need to see you as someone they want to work with.
- Again, building relationships is the MOST important thing. Keep in touch after the meeting – send a thank you note, invite them to events, send them updates of your work, put them on our mailing list, etc.

WAYS TO BUILD POWER WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

- Invite them to speak at an event (and put it on well)
- Generate letters-to-the-editors/Op-Eds on your issue in the official’s local paper
- Invite them to speak at a press conference
- Do a postcard/petition signing campaign addressed to that official – this doesn’t have to be and in most cases shouldn’t be confrontational
- Schedule a lobby meeting with them and bring a diverse group of stakeholders (no more than 4 total)
- Go to candidate’s/decision-maker’s events
- Hold a thank-you campaign when they do something in our interest. i.e. phone calls, postcards, or emails
- Send them periodic reports on your work/org, and/or press clips

HOW TO PRESENT AT A BOARD MEETING

Most public meetings have a public comment period, with presentations often limited to 2 to 3 minutes each. This short time is your opportunity to give the Board a unique perspective on your issue and ask for/affirm their support.

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HOW-TO

- Often you'll need to sign up beforehand with your name and address. Look for the secretary when you get to the meeting. You can usually find them at a table to the side of the Board.
 - [City of Portland](#)
 - [Clackamas County](#)
 - [Multnomah County](#)
 - [Washington County](#)
- Make sure you register with the Clerk and they know how to announce your name.
- Let them know if you need any accessible accommodations.
- Provide a printed copy of your remarks for public record. Make sure you have one for yourself (larger print)
- Introduce yourself and give your pronoun.
- Begin your remarks by acknowledging the Board and thanking them for the opportunity to speak. If they have been good on our issue in the past, acknowledge and thank them for their leadership.
- Keep it short. You want to be as effective in your 2 minutes as possible
- Practice your presentation beforehand so that you can focus on conveying your passion instead of just saying the words.
- Tell your unique personal story. What is your perspective? Parent? Teacher? Student? Artist?
- End with a clear ask and make sure that it is solution-oriented and POSITIVE.
- Thank them again.

LOBBYING

GOALS

- To convince the target to support our position (short term)
- To build access and credibility (long term)
- To educate the target about our issue and our group (both)

TOOLS

When lobbying, there are a few key opportunities we have to realize our goals.

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- To provide information – documentation of the problem, proposals for the solution, info on what different groups are doing, etc
- To gather information – what else they are hearing, competing priorities, opposition (likely irrelevant for Arts Ed)
- To provide hero opportunities – give them a chance to be a leader on the issue, to get credit for doing the right thing

KEEP IN MIND...

- Public officials are in positions of power. Even if they aren't taking the position we want on our issue, always treat them with respect
- School Board members are elected by their constituents. Even though we should be confident that there is broad support for Arts Ed, we don't want to sound threatening about who we represent

GENERAL TIPS

- Bring materials – fact sheets, reports, organization info
- Learn as much about the decision maker as possible beforehand
- Know your issue inside and out – have stats and facts to back it up
- Have a clear goal
- Listen more than you speak
- Take notes
- It's about building relationships, so schmoozing is just as important as presenting info
- All persuasion is self-persuasion. They have to believe that what we're asking them to do is the right thing to do
- If you don't know an answer, just say so. Don't make anything up or make any false promises
- Follow up!

(RACC acknowledges much of this Advocacy Tool Kit and information is inspired from Arts for LA)

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[Washington County](#)

Advocacy 2023- list of Oregon Legislators [\(downloadable\)](#)