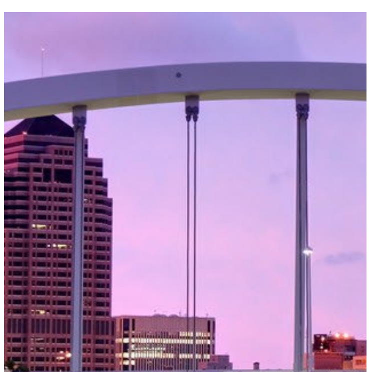
NYU WAGNER

Ohio Domestic Violence Network ODVN

# THE ADVOCATE'S TOOLKIT

Strategies and Skills for Change



Explore More

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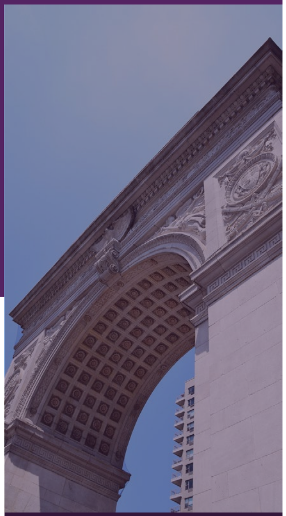


# WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Reader,
We wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the amazing work ODVN members do day in and day out. Whether it's venturing out to the frontlines to offer services, working behind the scenes to create effective programs, or managing ever-growing organizations, we understand that supporting survivors takes a lot of time, energy, and effort. The work you do undoubtedly brings hope and relief to countless individuals seeking reprieve from the harm they have had to endure.

We also understand that the success of your work requires your clients to demonstrate strength and fortitude as they endeavor to rebuild their lives. While there are many visible challenges impacting the communities we serve, domestic violence is uniquely insidious because it requires survivors to shed light on an issue that is hidden within private spaces and personal relationships. Asking for help is never easy and, in this context, doing so requires constant acts of bravery. At times this strength will ebb and flow. At other times, it will feel like the most frustrating and lonely task. However, as evidenced by the healthy lives many survivors have been able to live, this challenge is indeed surmountable. With the proper guidance and support, speaking truth to power is not only possible; it's absolutely necessary to begin the journey toward healing and restoration.

We believe that government advocacy follows a similar pattern. Advocating in the halls of power for the powerless can be difficult and infuriating. But we hope you will channel the same bravery your clients do as you fight on their behalf for the services and protections they require to thrive. Domestic violence is a personal issue and we need individuals like yourselves, who are close to the issue or directly impacted, to share your perspective with legislators and policymakers. The same advice you give your clients applies to yourself: your voice matters and the world needs to hear it. We know through this work that you have learned to listen to survivors with compassion and humility. Now, in the face of regressive laws and ignorance about domestic violence, they need you to speak up with conviction and confidence.

This toolkit will hopefully provide the guidance and support YOU require to be an effective, persuasive, and strategic advocate. Much of the information in it comes directly from our own experiences fighting for immigration reform, equitable healthcare, affordable housing, and a fair democracy. We hope these insights will serve you well as you push our society towards a more just and safe future.

In Solidarity,

The NYU Capstone Team

## About NYU Wagner Capstone Team

Our team comprises four graduate students from NYU Wagner with diverse backgrounds and skill sets, united in our mission to develop this advocacy toolkit. As part of our Master's program, completing a capstone project is a crucial learning experience and an opportunity to give back to the community. At NYU Wagner, we believe in learning through action, and our team has put that philosophy into practice with this toolkit.

## About Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN)

ODVN's purpose is to support and strengthen Ohio's response to domestic violence through training, public awareness, and technical assistance and to promote social change through the implementation of public policy. As a membership-based organization, ODVN recognized the need to restructure their policy approach to better support their member programs.

We hope that the advocacy toolkit we created for ODVN will serve as a valuable resource in empowering their member programs to build stronger relationships with state legislators.

## How To Use This Toolkit

The toolkit is divided into three main sections: Educational Strategy, Relationship Building, and Advocacy Skills. Each section offers unique insights and tools to help you develop and hone your advocacy skills. With this toolkit, we hope to equip you with the knowledge and skills you need to make a difference in your community and beyond.

To make the most of this toolkit, we encourage you to explore the different sections in the table of contents and jump around as needed. Think of it as a "choose your own adventure" guide to advocacy. While the sections are organized intentionally, you can choose the topic that interests you most and dive right in.

Part 1

# EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY

# Civic 101 at the State Level

# 06

In this section, we will explore the branches of Government in the state of Ohio. Here we will cover the importance and powers of each branch and delve into the legislative process.

## The Role of Government

So, you're probably wondering what Ohio's state government is all about. Well, it's pretty simple - their main goal is to make sure things are running smoothly for all its residents. They're in charge of maintaining law and order, providing public education, administering healthcare and social welfare programs, overseeing transportation and infrastructure, regulating business and commerce, collecting taxes, and more. And if you ever need help with something, like getting a driver's license, they've got your back.

Let's talk about Ohio's three branches of government in a way that's easy to understand.

1. **Legislative Branch**
2. **Executive Branch**
3. **Judicial Branch**

1

## Legislative Branch

First up, we've got the legislative branch. They're the ones who make the laws. The legislative branch consists of the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate, collectively called the General Assembly. The Ohio Senate is composed of 33 members who are to four-year terms, with a term limit of two consecutive four-year terms. The Ohio House of Representatives is comprised of 99 members who are elected to two-year terms, with a term limit of four consecutive two-year terms. The branch provides a forum for representation and decision-making on issues that affect Ohioans. It can impeach officials, override vetoes, and redistrict congressional and legislative districts. Overall, the purpose of Ohio's legislative branch is to provide a forum for the representation of the people of Ohio and to make decisions on issues that impact their lives.

2

## Executive Branch

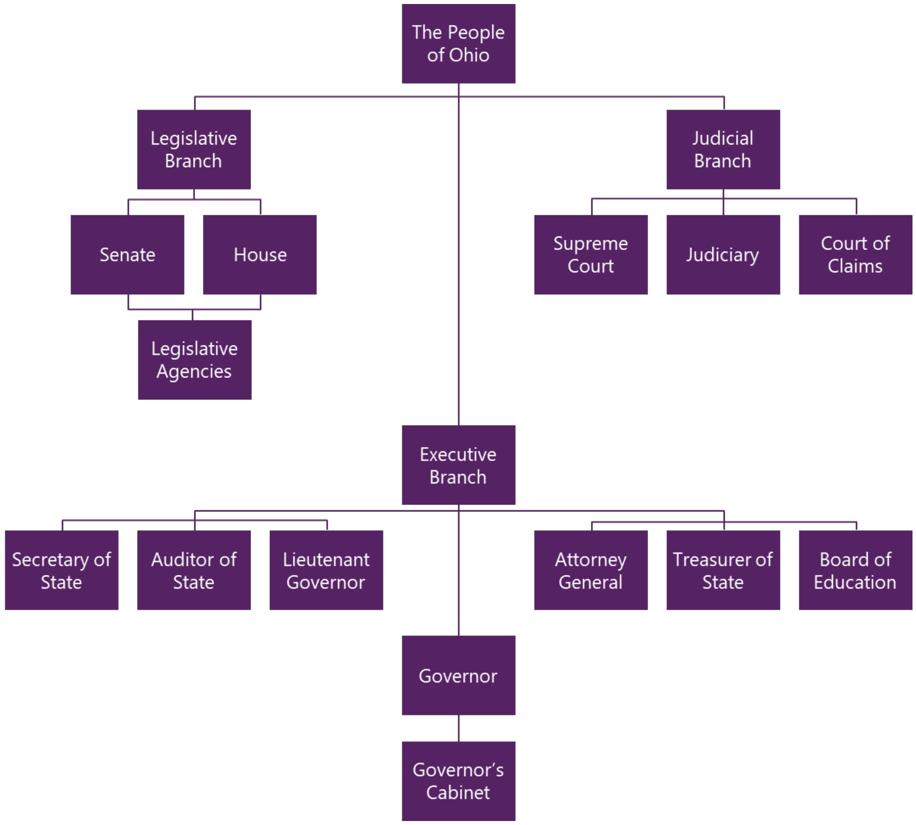
Next, we've got the executive branch. They're the ones responsible for enforcing the laws and administering the policies and programs that are created by the legislative branch. The Governor is the head honcho of this branch, who is elected to serve a four-year term and is limited to serving a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms. They're in charge of making sure the state is running smoothly and that everyone is following the laws. Overall, the purpose of Ohio's executive branch is to provide strong leadership and to ensure that the government operates efficiently and effectively. They also have a bunch of departments and agencies that help them do their job such as the Ohio Attorney General's Office, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Public Safety, and Ohio Department of Youth Services.

3

## Judicial Branch

Last but not least, we've got the judicial branch. The judicial branch of Ohio is responsible for interpreting laws and providing impartial and fair interpretation of Ohio's laws and constitution. It consists of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and trial courts working together to ensure justice is served consistently and equitably. This branch upholds the fundamental rights and freedoms of Ohio citizens, protecting them from unconstitutional actions by other branches. There is no term limit for judges, but they must be elected before the age of 70.

# State of Ohio Organizational Chart




So there you have it - the three branches of Ohio's government. It might seem a little confusing at first, but they all work together to make sure our state is running smoothly and that we're all playing by the rules.

You may want to take a look at this helpful diagram to visualize how these branches operate and interact with each other.

## How to Find Your State Representative

Knowing who your Ohio state representative is can be incredibly important for several reasons.

First and foremost, your state representative makes and passes laws that can have a direct impact on your life! It's crucial to know who's representing you and where they stand on important issues.

*For example, your state representative may be voting on issues related to healthcare, education, protections for survivors of domestic violence, or other critical areas. By knowing who your legislator is, you can stay informed and make your voice heard by contacting them to express your opinions and concerns.*

*continued on next page* →

Second, keep in mind that state representatives have the power to decide how funds are allocated for different projects and programs within their districts. So, if you know your legislator, you might be able to have a say in funding decisions for public schools, community programs, and infrastructure projects.

Third, your state representative can also serve as a valuable resource for you if you need help navigating state government agencies or accessing important resources. By connecting with your legislator's office, you might be able to get assistance with healthcare, unemployment, housing, and more. So, don't hesitate to reach out if you need a helping hand!

## How to Find Your State Representative

**Use the 'Find Your Elected Officials' button on the ODVN Public Policy Page**

**Ohio's House of Representatives has 99 members.**
*Ohio Legislature - House Directory*

**Ohio's Senate has 33 members.**
*Ohio Legislature - Senate Directory*

# How a Bill is Made in Ohio

The process of how a bill becomes a law at the state level in Ohio involves several lengthy steps. The following is an overview of the process of how a bill becomes law in Ohio:

Legislator becomes aware of need for legislation

Legislator requests LSC to draft a proposed bill or submits draft for review

LSC drafts proposed bill for introduction in either house

**HOUSE**
Bill filed with House Clerk, numbered, first consideration (read by title), referred to House Rules and Reference Committee

House Rules and Reference Committee reviews, recommends standing committee assignment

Second consideration, bill referred to standing committee

**SENATE**
Bill filed with Senate Clerk, numbered, first consideration (read by title), referred to Senate Reference Committee

*Senate Reference Committee reviews, recommends standing committee assignment

Second consideration, bill referred to standing committee

*Standing committee: holds public hearings; amends, combines, substitutes bill; refers to subcommittee; postpones; defeats or favorably reports bill. May be discharged of further consideration

*House Rules and Reference Committee or Senate Rules Committee: rerefers; takes no action; schedules bill for third consideration (floor action)

*Third consideration, debate on floor, and vote

If passed in first house, bill sent to second house where process is repeated

If passed in second house with no changes, bill goes to presiding officers for signature

If passed in second house with amendments, bill returns to first house for concurrence

If first house concurs, goes to presiding officers for signature

*If first house does not concur, conference committee may be appointed (three members from each house); makes changes; reports back to both houses

If both houses accept conference committee report, goes to presiding officers for signature

*If both houses do not accept report, bill dies

Signed by Speaker of House and President of Senate

Act presented to Governor

Signed by Governor

If Governor does not sign or veto within ten days after presentation (excluding Sundays), act becomes law without Governor's signature

*Vetoed by Governor, returned to originating house with veto message

Vote of 3/5 of members from each house necessary to override

Filed with Secretary of State for final enrollment; effective 91 days after filing.
Emergency, current appropriation, and tax legislation effective immediately

*Indicates where bill may die

# How a Bill is Made in Washington, D.C.

**1**

## Introduction of the Bill

Any member of the United States Congress may introduce a bill. A bill can be introduced in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Once introduced, the bill is assigned a number and referred to a committee for further consideration.

**2**

## Committee Consideration

The committee to which the bill has been referred will consider it in detail. The committee may hold hearings, gather testimony from experts, and make changes to the bill. If the committee approves the bill, it will be reported to the full House or Senate for consideration.

**3**

## Floor Action

The full House or Senate will debate and vote on the bill. If it is passed by one chamber, it will move to the other chamber for consideration.

**4**

## Conference Committee

If the House and Senate pass different versions of the bill, a conference committee will be appointed to reconcile the differences between the two versions. The conference committee is composed of members from both the House and Senate.

**5**

## Approval by Both Chambers

Once the conference committee has reconciled the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, the revised bill is sent back to both chambers for approval. If the bill is approved by both the House and Senate, it is sent to the President for his signature.

**6**

## Presidential Action

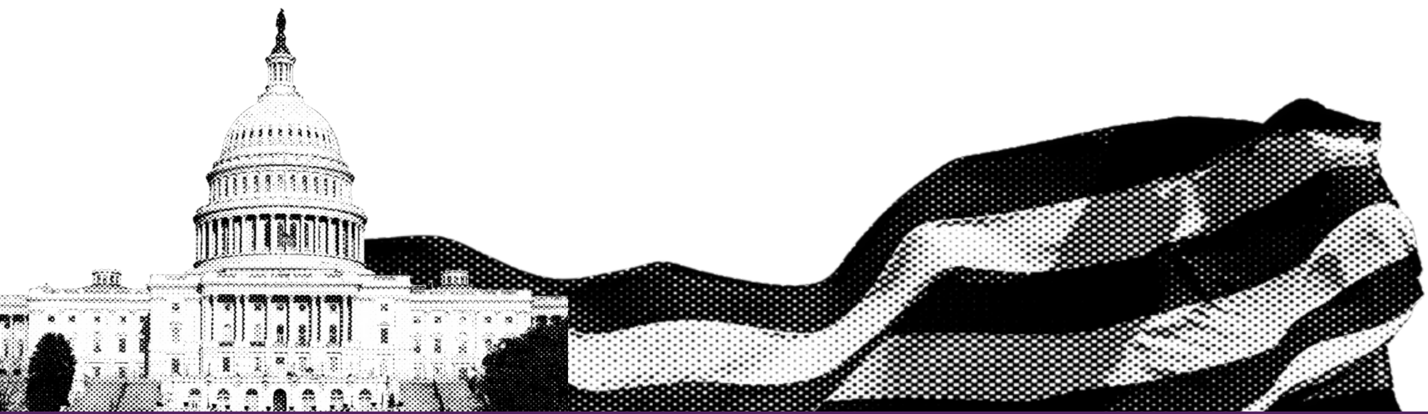
If the President signs the bill, it becomes law. If the President does not sign the bill, it may still become law if it is not vetoed within 10 days of being presented to the President. If the President vetoes the bill, it may still become law if two-thirds of both the House and Senate vote to override the veto.

**7**

## Implementation

Once a bill becomes law, the executive branch is responsible for implementing it. This may involve creating regulations, establishing new programs, or providing funding.

Just so you know, the process of how a bill becomes law can be pretty lengthy, and not all bills actually make it through the whole process. However, if a bill becomes law, it can have a significant impact on its people. The legislative process is designed to ensure that bills are thoroughly vetted and debated. It is a necessary part of our democratic system of government and ensures that laws are passed with the people's best interests in mind. So the next time you're chanting, "show me what democracy looks like," just know this is what democracy looks like.



# How to Find Your U.S. Representative

Knowing who your congressional representative is super important because they're the ones who are going to be making big decisions that affect your life on a national level. These representatives are part of the United States Congress, which is in charge of creating federal laws and overseeing the executive branch of the government.

While state representatives are important too, they work on a more local level, dealing with state-specific laws and issues. Congressional representatives have a wider reach, making decisions that impact the whole country. They're the ones who vote on major policies, like healthcare reform, immigration, taxes, and more.

**Ohio has 15 members in the United States House of Representatives.**
US House of Representatives - House Directory

**Ohio has 2 members in the United States Senate.**
US Senate - Senate Directory

**Use the 'Find Your Elected Officials' button on the ODVN Public Policy Page**

# What is Advocacy

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In this section, we will explore various types of advocacy, begin the roadmap to develop a theory of change, and distinguish between lobbying and other forms of advocacy.

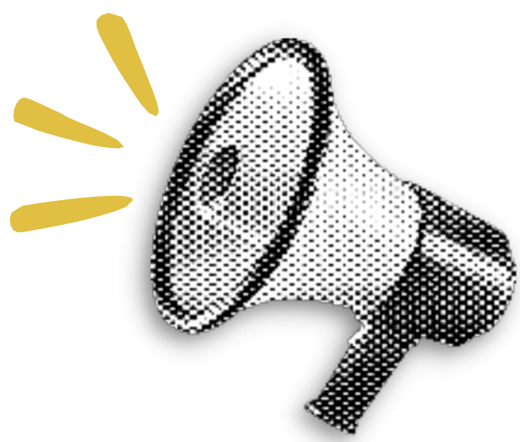
## What Does Advocacy Look Like for Service Providers

For service providers, advocacy is a two-pronged approach, where providing support and services to clients is just as important as educating and influencing those in power.

But how do you make an impact as an advocate? It starts with building relationships with decision-makers who have the power to make a change. This means working to ensure that the voices of clients are heard, and their needs are understood and considered. When advocacy is effective, it can result in securing funding and resources necessary to support clients. Let's take a closer look at Advocacy and its types!

There are three types of advocacy:

1. Self-advocacy
2. Individual advocacy
3. Systems advocacy



1

## Advocate for yourself.

Self-advocacy is the act of speaking up for yourself and advocating for your personal needs and desires. It involves finding your voice and understanding your strengths, needs, personal goals, legal rights and responsibilities and then effectively communicating these to others.

*"I spoke up for myself at work when I realized the workload was too much. I met with my supervisor, explained my strengths, and shared my concerns. Together, we came up with a plan that worked for both of us."*

2

## Advocate for others.

Individual advocacy is the act of speaking up for specific or a few individuals and advocating for their needs and rights. This type of advocacy can be informal or formal.

*For formal advocacy, an organization may employ an advocate to help a person with a disability navigate the healthcare system or to represent a group of immigrants seeking legal assistance.*

3

## Advocate for change.

Systems advocacy is the act of speaking up to reduce barriers for vulnerable individuals and advocating for policy changes. Instead of offering empty platitudes, it's time to take meaningful steps toward addressing the situation.

*In the context of domestic violence cases, systems advocacy can prevent the entry of flawed court orders and reduce the need for individual advocacy by educating judges, case workers, and Guardians ad Litem (GALs) on the lack of victim assessments.*

# Let's take a moment to reflect on your advocacy work. Think about each type of advocacy, and ask yourself…

How have I engaged in each of these types of advocacy?

What strategies have I used?

What have been my successes and challenges?

## Resources

- *Types of Advocacy*
- *Becoming a Line Item in an Existing Budget*

A Theory of Change is a roadmap for driving change. Effective advocacy depends on a clear understanding of the necessary outcomes and activities that lead to the outcomes you want. It explains how and why change can occur under certain conditions. While most organizations may know their mission and programs, a Theory of Change fills in the missing middle by defining the steps between engagement and desired outcomes.

Working backwards from the desired long-term goal to the specific steps needed to achieve it is an important approach for developing a clear and tangible strategy for societal change. Let's take a closer look at Theory of Change and its elements!

There are four elements of a theory of change:

1. **A long-term goal**
2. **Outcomes**
3. **Activities**
4. **Assumptions**

## A long-term goal.

The long-term goal is the ultimate change you hope to make by collaborating with other organizations or players in the field. It represents the final destination.

*To create a state where all Ohioans can live a life free from domestic violence.*

## Outcomes.

Outcomes are specific, desirable, and measurable results that are necessary to achieve the long-term goal. They include short-, mid-, and long-term objectives that create a pathway toward the desired change.

*Short-term: Increase awareness of domestic violence by launching a public awareness campaign on social media.*

*Mid-term: Increase the frequency and consistency of appropriate responses to domestic violence cases by law enforcement officers.*

*Long-term: Reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Ohio by 50% in the next 10 years.*

## Activities.

Activities are the necessary ACTIONS that must be taken to achieve each outcome. They are typically expressed through verbs, such as "offer," "focus," "provide," or "strengthen."

*Offer training and technical assistance to domestic violence programs and other allied professionals to improve the quality of services provided to survivors.*

*Focus on policy development and implementation to ensure that survivors have access to justice, safety, and resources.*

*Provide leadership and support to organizations working to end domestic violence through public awareness campaigns, education, and advocacy.*

*Strengthen collaborations between domestic violence programs, allied professionals, and community members to create a coordinated community response to domestic violence.*

## Assumptions.

Assumptions are the underlying conditions that must be present for the desired change to occur. They express our understanding of the landscape providers are operating, and organizations are operating in. While they are not directly influenced by the organization, they are essential for pursuing the Long-Term Goal through a targeted set of Activities and Outcomes.

*Collaboration and partnership with domestic violence programs, allied professionals, and community members is necessary for creating sustainable change.*

*Adequate funding and resources are essential for providing quality services to survivors and their families.*

*Strong policies and laws that protect the rights of survivors and hold offenders accountable are necessary to end domestic violence.*

*Continued public education and awareness-raising efforts are necessary to change societal attitudes and beliefs about domestic violence.*

The theory of change provides a framework for organizations to identify their long-term goals and plan the specific activities and outcomes needed to achieve them. As you develop your theory of change, it is important to understand what types of advocacy 501(c)(3) organizations can engage in. See the next section for more!

## Resources

- *Creating a Theory of Change: Everything Your Nonprofit Needs to Know*

# Advocacy as a 501(c)(3)

*While all lobbying is advocacy, not all advocacy is lobbying.*"
Alliance for Justice

You have the unique ability to influence public policy, educate the public, and provide direct services to those in need. All 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocacy groups can legally engage in advocacy to raise awareness and educate people (including government officials) about issues. Lobbying is a specific type of advocacy activity that aims to influence specific legislation by taking an explicit position, such as advocating for a law to be passed or removed.

501(c)(3) nonprofit advocacy groups like ODVN and its members are legally allowed to engage in lobbying activities supporting their charitable missions, as defined by the IRS. However, it is important to note that they cannot support specific candidates or political parties. Additionally, lobbying may not constitute a "substantial part" of the activities of the 501(c)(3) organization.

Let's take a closer look at some examples of actions:

| Action | Example | Type |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Educating Legislators | ODVN offers reports and fact sheets on its website for distribution to state legislators so that they will be aware of issues facing their constituents. | General Advocacy |
| Urging Legislators to Support Funding | During ODVN's Advocacy Day, advocates urged legislators to keep funding for domestic violence services in the budget. | Lobbying |

**Noncompliance with the legal restrictions on lobbying and political activity for 501(c)(3) organizations can result in financial penalties, loss of tax-exempt status, and damage to the organization's reputation. It is important for nonprofit organizations engaged in advocacy work to have a clear understanding of the rules and regulations governing their activities to avoid potential consequences.*

# Resources

- *What is Advocacy? Definitions and Examples*
- *What is Advocacy: HPIO*
- *Rules of 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Lobbying*

Advocacy Day 2023

# Coalition Organizing: A Quick Primer



In this section, we will be exploring how service providers can use coalition organizing to tap into this historical dynamic and change their communities for the better.

## Change is always a collective process

Behind every "great individual" were collectives of other actors, alignments of various interest groups, and communities working together to change the status quo.

**Civil Rights**
There is no story of Rosa Parks' historic bus protest without the joint organizing of the Women's Political Council of Montgomery and the NAACP. This coalition was inspired by young Claudette Colvin's own arrest for refusing to give up her bus seat.

**Revolutionary Politics**
One can't talk about Fred Hampton's revolutionary politics without recognizing the powerful role the Rainbow Coalition played in elevating the Blank Panther's advocacy into a multiracial struggle.

**Labor Rights**
While the press often contributes the immense successes of the Boston Miracle to criminologists like David Kennedy, the miracle was only possible because of the collective efforts of Black pastors in the Ten Points Coalition who did the difficult work of building relationships with the youth most at risk of committing and being victims of gun violence.

# What are Coalitions?

A coalition refers to an alliance between different persons, groups, and even nations with the express purpose of forwarding a common goal that benefits all its members. They are everywhere whether you have realized it or not: industries form coalitions to influence government regulations, political clubs join together to form political coalitions called parties, and even nations form coalitions to go to war as the US did in both Gulf Wars.

Common in all these examples: coalitions are used to develop a shared power base where the collective wields more power and influence than any one member ever could alone. Consider this example:

**50 gallon barrel of water spread over concrete evaporates without an impact. There is no power here.**

**The 50 gallon barrel of water concentrated through a pressure hose can break concrete. This is where all the power is.**

To build this power and ability to influence more effectively, coalition building requires its organizers to identify potential allies, build relationships, and work collaboratively towards a goal. So what does the structure for doing this look like? Regardless of what they are organizing for or how well organized they are, all coalitions tend to share some common attributes:

1. **They are formed for a specific purpose, typically around a specific issue.**
2. **They contain a group of interacting individuals.**
3. **Members act as a group while retaining their own organization's independence.**
4. **Perception of membership is mutual among members.**

## Why Should Service Providers Join a Coalition?

If you are reading this toolkit, your organization probably already has a good reason for joining a coalition like ODVN. Like a gym membership, coalition structures provide its members with various offerings they may not be entirely aware of but can surely benefit from.

# Benefits of Coalition Organizing

### Better Information Sharing:

Here are several sayings that will always hold true: "It's not what you know, it's who you know"... "Knowledge is power".... "Politics begins with knowing what is going on." Central to these platitudes is the recognition that the more information one has access to, the better off one will generally be. Coalitions are ideal structures for forming information networks that allow members to better understand what is going on in the halls of government power or the streets of the communities we serve. To stay well informed, take advantage of the different committee groups, newsletters, and listservs your coalition organizes.

### More Opportunities to Influence:

In addition to sharing information, members of coalitions can also leverage their shared network of contacts and relationships to influence government systems and actors. As a collective, coalitions can represent their member's needs and interests more cohesively and clearly to legislators. This is preferable for legislators as it allows them to better use their limited time communicating with one established body instead of each member individually. Furthermore, coalitions also have the ability to divide and conquer by having their members build more widespread connections. This combination of concentrated and dispersed influence is an extremely effective way to ensure a coalition's ideas are heard by representatives at various levels of government.

### Increased Legitimacy:

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, there are over 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States. With so many organizations competing for limited funding and resources, it can be difficult to explain to policymakers how your organization differs from the rest and why it should be taken seriously. Being a part of an effective coalition effort can help you show these policymakers that your organization is making concrete strides to address thorny root cause issues.

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## Increased Access to Resources:

In addition to bolstering individual members' grant applications and reputation, coalitions can submit applications as a group. This allows for further differentiation from the other 1.5 million nonprofits and, in the eyes of prospective funders, more bang for their buck. Furthermore, coalitions can pull together their collective resources, connections, and expertise and make them available to their general membership. This can create all kinds of new efficiencies! Smaller organizations can help provide outreach support to larger ones. Larger organizations can offer technical assistance and capacity-building support to the smaller ones in return. All organizations can partner to create brand-new services that better serve their clients. As more new members join the coalition, the opportunities to find new efficiencies also increase!

## The ODVN Method to Coalition Building

While a relatively new coalition, ODVN provides a variety of offerings to its members that actualize these coalition benefits. Let's review each of these benefits again through the lens of ODVN:

| Benefits | Example |
|---|---|
| Better Information Sharing | • ODVN's Legislative Newsletter offers its members updates on the happenings in Ohio State Government and opportunities for engagement<br>• ODVN also hosts two listservs for members to engage in more real-time information sharing. These include the Director Listserv and the DV Advocate Listserv<br>• ODVN hosts a series of different committees where members can engage with one another to share information and strategize collective efforts. |
| More Opportunities to Influence | • ODVN's Advocacy Days offer its members opportunities to meet state legislators with the support of coalition staff.<br>• Advocacy Day is a wonderful opportunity for members to cultivate relationships with elected officials that they can further nurture on their own.<br>• ODVN's staff frequently interfaces with state legislators to inform policy and budget decisions. Partnering with ODVN staff provides members another avenue to elevate ideas and important information to legislators. |

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| Benefits | Example |
|---|---|
| Increased Legitimacy | • ODVN's Advocacy Day efforts have put DV on the map for state legislators who have in turn responded by offering millions in unrestricted state funding to support ODVN's members. ODVN members have played an important role in securing this funding, and new members should consider taking part in this effort<br>• ODVN Staff also represents its member's interests in state government on other DV-related legislative issues by providing testimony at policy deliberations and legislative meetings |
| Increased Access to Resources | • ODVN offers a host of resources and opportunities to its members like free training, technical assistance, and links to grant programs<br>• ODVN also offers collective services that individual members can refer their clients to like its legal services, relocation assistance, and housing supports.<br>• ODVN is currently conducting an asset map better to understand the resources and expertise latent in its membership. |

A good coalition is constantly changing and growing, and ODVN is no exception. In the coming years, expect ODVN to provide even more offerings that better engage and support its membership.

## Resources

- *The Community Tool Box - Coalition Building*
- *Community Catalyst Incorporated - A Guide to Building Community Coalitions*

Part 2

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

# Understanding Your Political Landscape

27

As a domestic violence service provider, understanding the political landscape is crucial because policy decisions can affect the resources available to survivors. In this section, we will explore how power mapping helps advocates and organizations navigate complex political systems. Being aware of potential barriers like stigma and countermovements helps strategize and adapt advocacy efforts accordingly.

## Power Mapping: A Tool for Understanding Your Political Landscape

"Power mapping" is a visual tool used to identify key players, institutions, and interest groups that shape policy decisions and control access to resources. Power mapping helps advocates and organizations navigate complex political systems and make informed decisions about how to achieve their goals.

### How to Create a Power Map

1 **Define your focus:**
Before you begin, clarify what issue or area you want to analyze. This could be a specific policy area, a particular institution, or a broader political system.

2 **Identify key players:**
Create a list of all the individuals and groups that may be relevant to your focus. This can include elected officials, government agencies, interest groups, advocacy organizations, media outlets, and others.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *Who is responsible for creating the problem?*
- *Who has the power to solve this problem but is not doing so?*
- *Who has geographic authority or relevancy to the problem?*
- *Who is already working to solve the problem?*

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3

## Research key players:
Take time researching individuals and groups position on the problem, understand their position, and their track record.

- Ask yourself the following questions:
- *Can they be influenced to change their position?*
- *What methods/tactics would you use to influence them to change their position?*

4

## Determine power and influence:
Assess the relative power and influence of each actor. Consider factors such as their access to resources, their level of influence over decision-makers, and their ability to mobilize support.

Resources to consider:

*Legislative authority*
*Litigation*
*Financial resources*
*Donor base*
*Political influence*
*Grassroot and mobilization support*
*Access to important information*
*Communication*

5

## Analyze relationships:
Examine the relationships between different actors. Identify who is aligned with whom, who is in opposition, and who is neutral.

6

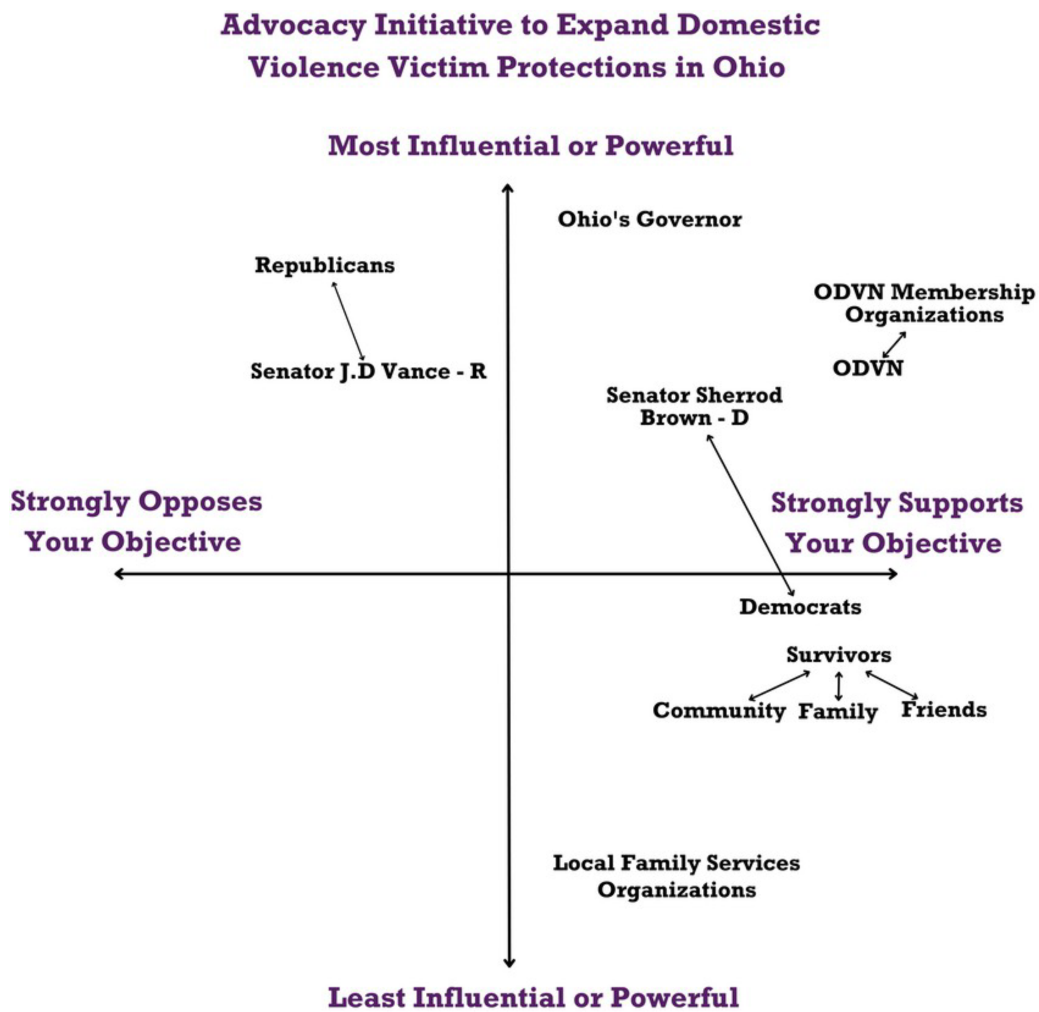
## Map it out:
Create a visual representation of the power dynamics using a diagram or chart. This can be done using pen and paper, or with software such as Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets.

7

## Analyze gaps and opportunities:
Use the power map to identify gaps in power and opportunities for advocacy. Look for areas where alliances can be formed, where resources can be leveraged, and where pressure can be applied to create change.

8

## Update and revise:
Power mapping is an ongoing process. Update your map regularly as power dynamics shift, new players emerge, and opportunities arise.




### *Keep your Power Map!*

This power map is a living, breathing resource. Power dynamics can shift unexpectedly, so revisiting your map can help you stay on top of changes, strategize and target your efforts more effectively, and identify who you need to build relationships with or pressure. Don't throw away your power map once you feel like you have a good grasp of the situation. Referring to your map and regularly updating it can make a big difference in your advocacy work.

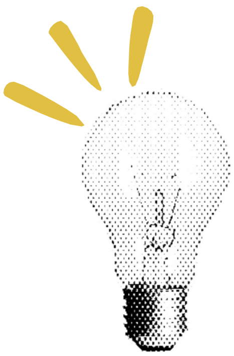
## Resources

These links provide a guide to another power mapping guide, to help you identify and analyze the relationships between different individuals and groups in a particular issue or campaign.

- *Move to Amend - A Guide to Power-Mapping*
- *Union of Concerned Scientists - Powering Mapping Your Way to Success*
- *Beautiful Trouble - Power Mapping*

# What it Means to Be a Legislator: 30

## Roles, Responsibilities, Challenges, and Incentives

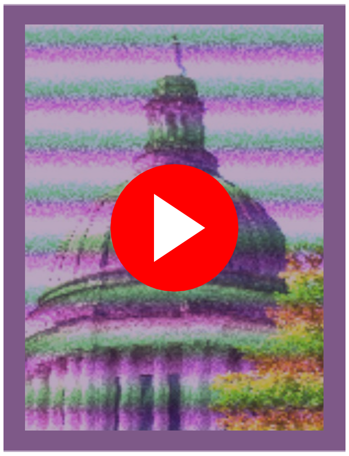


**How much does an Ohio House Representative make a year?***



Sometimes, it is easy to forget that legislators are not some imposing figures laying the law of the land. In reality, especially at the state level, legislators are just as overworked as MOST of us. They work long hours, come home to their families, and have to make some hard decisions that rarely make them any friends. To be an effective Ohio legislator, an individual has to lead multimillion-dollar campaigns, be a responsive and effective manager of legislative staff, and, most importantly, represent at least 110,000 people in each of their districts. And that is just the start of it.

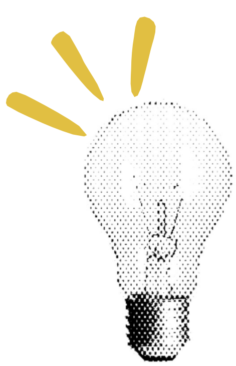
Every day the legislature is in session, a legislator treks to the Ohio capitol building in downtown Columbus. In some cases, the legislator may have to drive up to three hours to come to work in the mornings. Once they get to Columbus, people (from staff all the way to protestors) may already be waiting to talk to them before they enter the building. When they finally reach their office, they may have multiple scheduled meetings with stakeholders and constituents.



Every member of the legislature is assigned to a committee. Members are typically assigned to multiple committees based on their expertise, interests, and the legislative priorities of their party or constituency. These meetings are usually set in advance, and are at the discretion of Chamber Leadership and the chair of the committee. In these hearings, multiple bills are heard, constituents can make testimony on these bills, and if passed, can then move to the next step of the legislative process. On some days, numerous hearings take place at the same time. This may be the only chance a legislator can openly advocate for their bill with support from stakeholders. If a legislator wishes to pass a bill in one committee while serving in another, they rely on their staff to fill in and be their eyes and ears when they cannot simultaneously be at two, three, or six places. A legislator may not be able to leave their committee to see their own bill get a hearing, even if it is their legislative priority for the current session.

## Roles in Leadership

There are many reasons why a legislator may choose to pursue leadership positions. In some cases, to exert greater influence over the legislative agenda, have a more prominent role in shaping policy outcomes, or increase their visibility, prestige, and potential for future political advancement. A legislator's leadership position takes up much of their limited free time.



**Interactive: Who is the Speaker of the House?**



There are many leadership positions, all with a wide range of responsibilities and different levels of commitment—for example, the Speaker of the House. The Speaker is the most powerful member of the State House. They are also under constant scrutiny. They preside over the legislative processes, maintain the rules, and power the legislative priorities of the ruling party. Their time is limited, as they have to take care of district matters and, as Speaker, serve as their party leader and provide services to the entire state. Of all the members, the Speaker has the longest consecutive time on the house floor and must constantly answer to different stakeholders.

*With great power comes great responsibility."*

Uncle Ben, Spider-Man, 2002 Sam Raimi

## Incentives

When you serve in the legislature, you not only get the chance to make laws, but you also get the power to make changes to them. A legislator also has the power to propose articles of impeachment against the Governor, can influence the legislative priorities of a committee, and has input into state budget matters. In many ways, every legislator has a wide array of powers that they can use to better their communities. Because of this, members of the legislature have a great deal of sway as the people they represent put their faith in them to address their daily problems. This level of power brings a high level of influence in many circles. Additionally, members of the legislature will increase their local profile by participating in community events, such as ribbon cuttings, parades, football games, and town hall meetings, and are sometimes openly invited to weddings, parties, and local BBQs.

*When the whole world is watching you, they create stories and give you labels that have nothing to do with you. It's almost impossible for you not to explode!"*

Robert Pattinson

## Challenges

When you serve in the legislature, you not only get the chance to make laws, but you also get the power to make changes to them. A legislator also has the power to propose articles of impeachment against the Governor, can influence the legislative priorities of a committee, and has input into state budget matters. In many ways, every legislator has a wide array of powers that they can use to better their communities. Because of this, members of the legislature have a great deal of sway as the people they represent put their trust in them to address their daily problems. This level of power brings a high level of influence in many circles. Additionally, members of the legislature will increase their local profile by participating in community events, such as ribbon cuttings, parades, football games, and town hall meetings, and are sometimes openly invited to weddings, parties, and local BBQs.

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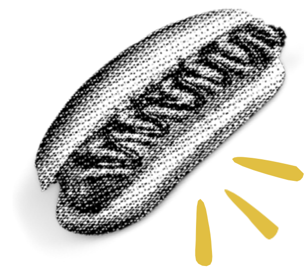
As the saying goes, there will always be haters. Even the most liked members of the legislature have a few haters— it's just a fact of political life. As a legislator, everything they do is scrutinized. From the car that they drive, to who their partner is, to where their kids go to school. Everything a member of the legislature does is watched, digested, and then expected to be an individual narrative.

*"Oh, that one state legislator ate a hotdog! They must be in the pockets of the big hotdog conglomerate corporations."*



When a legislator makes decisions on implemented laws, there are always stakeholders from each side providing 101 reasons for why a legislator has to say nay or yea. No matter what a legislator does, they will never make everyone happy. Even the smallest bill can have big consequences. A legislator does not want to go viral for the wrong reasons.

"*Because of a decision she made years back, my boss continued to receive threatening voicemails regarding a parody bill she introduced almost two years before I started working for her.*"
- Andrea Ramos, Legislative Analyst Texas 86th Legislative Session

Going viral is the least of some legislators' problems. In 2020, the Governor of Michigan faced a kidnapping attempt. That same year, U.S. District Judge Esther Salas had her child murdered in an assassination attempt. Here is a long list of attacks on lawmakers and legislators in the last few decades.

## Resources

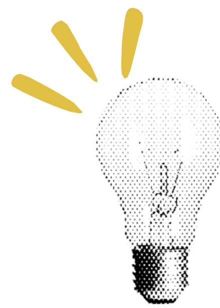
- *The Sheridan Press - A day in the life of a legislator*
- *Citizens Of Pawnee | Parks and Recreation*

# Personal Interests: The Difference Between Platforms, Statements, and Values

We all know that one person that will say a lot of things just to be liked. Legislators are the same. Reality is that unless you understand why people say certain things, you will never really know what their intentions are. In this section, we will look at the differences between values and statements, and how you can learn how to distinguish between talk and real action.

## Values

To put it simply, your values are the principles that guide your daily actions. They are the standards by which you evaluate whether or not your life is progressing in the direction you envision it going, and they are the basis for setting your goals. Similarly, political values are the convictions a group of people holds regarding the significance of particular political ends, ideals, and policies. These beliefs can be quite divisive in certain communities. Strong political values reveal one's opinion on the function of government in everyday life. To understand political values is to understand an individual.



**What Does Rep. Dontavius L. Jarrell's Biography Reveal About His Political Values?**

## Statements

A political statement can range from a large-scale protest to wearing a badge displaying a political slogan. When we look at legislators, we should ask, what are they actively displaying? What are they saying? Why are they choosing to say something? What is the difference between what people are saying and what their true intentions are? While we may not be able to fully understand all of the intentions behind a political statement, it is imperative to try to understand the basics. For Example:

*"Sharia law is coming to Cleveland!"*

'Luther the Anger Translator'
White House Correspondents' Dinner

*continued on next page*

# How to Communicate with Legislators

## Making Friends 101


Think back to high school, or even better, think back to kindergarten. How did you make friends during that time of your life? A minimal connection can bring people together in friendship. It is the same thing when navigating legislative circles. Find those similarities with one person. Hold to those similarities and build bridges.

When building relationships with legislators, remember they have little time during their day. This is why one should create a welcoming environment. Being kind can move mountains. When meeting with a legislator, ask them how their day is, if they have seen any good movies lately, and what their favorite item is at the legislative cafeteria. Open the door to a relationship with kindness, and then follow that up with any shared similarities. As you continue to see this legislator, bring up those similarities, recommend new things in the cafeteria, and remind them how friendly and nice you are.

# Resources

- *Ohio House Member Directory*
- *Ohio Senate Member Directory*

*continued on next page*

# Understanding Personal vs. Working Relationships at the Legislature

## How do these relationships differ?

Regarding working relationships, intimacy tends to be low, while professionalism is highly valued, often leading to a strict and polite demeanor. Conversely, personal relationships tend to involve higher levels of intimacy, as the impact of such relationships is often more significant. To effectively advocate for a cause and establish enduring relationships with legislators, finding a middle ground that does not venture into complete intimacy but remains polite and flexible is crucial.

1

## There are never permanent friends or permanent enemies regarding legislation.

2

## Research

Yes, you want to make friends, but you also want to move legislation! Always do your research when meeting with a member of the legislature. Here are some things to understand about your legislator:

- ✓ Catalog their public statements and actions.
- ✓ Research their legislative priorities.
- ✓ Research their Constituency.

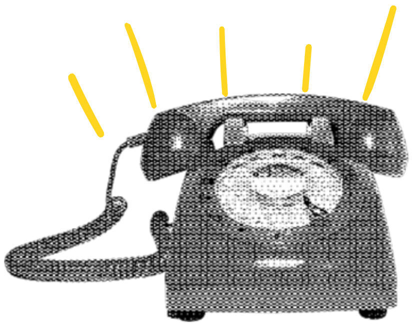
3

## Before you meet with a legislator, ask yourself:

- *What bills is the legislator championing?*
- *What bills are they co-sponsoring?*
- *Does the member belong to any other political party?*
- *If so, are they sponsoring legislation that aligns with a party platform?*
- *Does the legislator openly praise the legislative leadership?*
- *What policies were they proposing during the campaign trail?*
- *What do they say to their constituents regarding policy decisions?*
- *What do they say to you?*

## What is Legislative Outreach?

Outreach refers to the intentional actions taken by an organization or group members to establish connections between their ideas or practices and other organizations, groups, specific audiences, or the general public. Examples include:



1. **Letters, emails, and phone conversations.**
2. **Testimony is given in writing or in person at a committee hearing.**
3. **Reaching out to legislative offices to schedule meetings.**
4. **Speaking with members of the staff to discuss legislative priorities.**
5. **In-person meetings with the legislator in their district offices or at the capitol.**

## You reach out, what is next?

Think about the results you desire. What do you want your elected representative to do? Do you want them to introduce or co-sponsor legislation? Do you want them to include a specific line in the budget? The success of your meeting with a legislator can be measured by the request you make of your legislator. Asking a direct question and giving the legislator a specific task is a straightforward way to secure a commitment.

*Dealing with Rejection*

In the case of legislative action, a no is never a forever no. Just like previously stated, there are no permanent friends or enemies. There will be new opportunities to ensure what you want gets done. If you fail, try again later.

## You reach out, what is next?

Once you finish your interaction or meeting with a member, make it clear that this is not the only time that you will be seeing them. For example:

*Promise to bring more data, promise to send more information to the chief of staff or other members of the office, promise to follow up on the status of legislation, and finally set up a follow-up meeting.*

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# Be Strategic: How to Obtain Legislative Support

*Influencing Outside Targets & The Movers and Shakers*

A mover and a shaker is someone who has power and influence in a field or activity, accomplishes tasks, and gets things done. Understanding the outside forces that can move a legislator's support can be very hard. Yet it is always imperative to try to understand who can drive a legislator to act. Is it their partner? Is it their best friend from college? Is it their chief of staff? Who moves the members, and how do you create a relationship with them to create an opening to influence your priorities?

*Emotional Pleas Based on Your own expertise and constituency*

Emotional pleas are a type of discourse that aims to win over an audience by appealing to their emotions rather than their rationale. You, in your own right, are an expert on your own story. You know what the issues are that you want to be solved. There will never be a better advocate for the things in your life than yourself. In the case of domestic violence advocacy, if you work in the field, you have access to data and storytelling that can drive solutions at the legislative level.

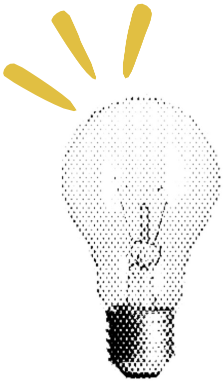
Emotional pleas can be extremely powerful and, when used correctly, can build bridges for long-lasting connections. The secret of successful advocacy is knowing when to use emotion.

## When to use emotional pleas?

Think about an emotional plea as a tool in your toolbox. It is a great tool, but should never be used alone. Emotional pleas work best when there is a clear ask on what you need and when there is data to support your view. Having a great story can only go a long way when you can prove that there is a need for action and that the action is possible.

## Example

Let's say you are trying to obtain more funding for your program. You will want to ensure that there is a person impacted by your work in the room when meeting with a legislator. You want them to share their story, talk about what their life looks like, and how their hardships have been resolved because of the great resources provided or exacerbated due to the lack of funding. Following this story, you or your staff as experts can provide data and statistics to paint the whole picture. How much money does it cost to feed a family of three in your shelters? How many families can you host? What are the limitations of the services that you provide? What else can you do if you were able to receive more funding? Or what is desperately needed in your shelter that could be solved with more funding? All of these questions provide the next steps and concrete steps for a solution.



## Important Tip:

Follow an emotional plea and data with a hard-ask and easy-to-follow solution for action. This will always make the job easier for a legislator. Therefore always prepare yourself with facts and data you can provide during these meetings.

## Bird-dogging

Have you ever voiced concern over a policy choice at a town hall meeting? Have you ever approached a representative and asked them to publicly endorse a stance on a budget item? If so, you might already be bird-dogging.

Bird-dogging entails attending public appearances of your target and soliciting their support for your political position. To get candidates and elected officials on the record about important issues, grassroots activists often employ a powerful strategy known as "bird-dogging." In a more formal interview setting, a representative might be less likely to disclose information that can be uncovered through bird-dogging. I'm not suggesting you interrupt your representative at their anniversary dinner, but if you see them strolling through the Capitol building, it might be an appropriate time to introduce yourself.

## Tips on Bird-dogging

**1**

### Look up in advance where the representative will be.

The House and Senate meeting schedule is just one click away!

**2**

### When in the Capitol, always be ready to potentially approach a legislator.

Keep one pagers and business cards handy!

**3**

### Try to remember their faces!

Ohio legislature has a great website with all of their headshots! If you can’t remember their name, call them “state representative.”

**4** **Always be polite, and ask if they have a second to chat.**

**5** **Don't follow them if they ask you to leave them alone.**

**6** **Remember the golden rule. Always thank them for their time.**

## Door A, Door B Approach

Red Cross Global Citizenship Hero, Joshua Hoyt, once told organizers in Chicago that you have to have guts to advocate for what you believe in. Hoyt believes that in order to create change, there has to be accountability with our elected leaders.

Here is where the Door A, Door B approach comes into play. The main basis behind this approach is letting the legislators choose how advocates interact with them. Door A - A cup of hot cocoa, or, Door B - a punch to the gut. It is as simple as that. This approach can help you set a precedent and create rapport with your member of the legislature. Door A is the reward for their actions, and Door B is the punishment.

### Rewards

- Advocate of the year award, or any other kind of award.
- A website feature.
- A social media post, or press release, or OP-ED piece praising the Representative for their work.

### Punishments

- Hold a Press Conference and "Call them out."*
- Social Media posts castigating the behavior of the Legislator.
- Meet with their number one opponent.

** This clip contains foul language*

# Practice Session:
## How well do you know the Majority Floor Leader of the Ohio House of Representatives?

Were they born in Ohio? If not, where?

Did they go to college? If so, which one?

What is their district?

Are they married? Do they have kids?

Are they on any boards or commissions?

What is their profession outside of the legislature?

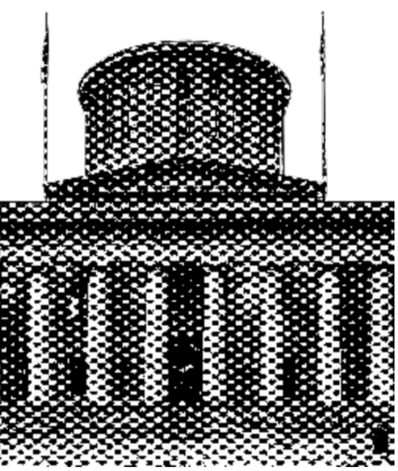
# Get to Know the Legislative Staff



A legislator's job is highly demanding, sometimes requiring them to be at multiple places simultaneously while engaging in multiple projects and duties. Simply put, such demands are impossible for any one person to fulfill.

Enter the legislative aide, the behind-the-scenes individuals doing the legwork. Whether they are drafting legislation, answering constituent concerns, writing press releases, making sure their principal votes on items, or simply accompanying their legislator at public events, these aides are the lifeblood of any elected official's office. If you've ever watched any kind of political drama like the West Wing or Veep, you may have seen how a legislator's aide is like an extension of the legislator themselves, at times directing or directly influencing what a legislator should say or do.

Anyone serious about influencing public policy would be wise to learn how to build relationships and partnerships with these workers. Knowing how to do so begins with understanding the following:



1. **How They Can Help Your Efforts?**
2. **Who Are These People?**
3. **The Structure of a Legislative Office**
4. **How to Engage Them**

*continued on next page* →

## How They Can Help Your Efforts

*Why build relationships with legislative aides in the first place? Here are some important reasons for advocates to consider:*

**1**

### They Control Access to the Legislator:

When in public, a common tactic that legislators use to end conversations politely is to have their aides whisper in their ears or draw them away. This practice, called "running interference," is just one instance of how legislative aides control how much time and access any one member of the public has with their principal. This gatekeeping extends to all functions of the legislative office. If you want to meet with a legislator or have a seat at a decision-making table, having a relationship with the staff is one of the best ways to make it happen.

**2**

### They Can Influence a Legislator's Decision-Making

All legislative offices hold staff meetings bound by items on an agenda. As you probably guessed by now, the legislative aides determine this agenda. If you want your interests considered by the legislator's team, finding a way to get on that agenda is critical. Furthermore, there are times when difficult decisions arise and legislators must activate the brain trust that is their team. In such times, you will want an aide or two advocating for your position!

**3**

### They Are Up-To-Date on the Legislative Process:

Policymaking, in general, is a dynamic and ever-changing process rife with procedural maneuvering and bureaucratic hurdles. While the public can try to keep up with what is happening via the media, understanding the nuances of how this process works along with the important day-to-day happenings is a labor-intensive activity. What service provider has time for all that? Instead, service providers interested in influencing policy should work to partner with aides to get the best updates on what is happening and how they may best support these efforts.

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## They May Know About Funding Opportunities

4

Many legislative offices are keenly aware of where funding opportunities may arise, whether it's through the general budget, discretionary funding streams, granting opportunities, or connections to foundations and philanthropy. Demonstrating meaningful partnerships with legislative offices may be the edge your organization needs to win certain funding opportunities connected to addressing systemic barriers and issues.

## Who are these people?

For this toolkit, legislative aides are any individuals working within a legislator's office. There are different titles within an office like chief of staff and policy director but, at the end of the day, they all fulfill the same basic function: they aid the legislator with their work!


Like one of the people in this video, several members of the NYU team writing this toolkit have worked as legislative aides, both at the municipal and state level. In that capacity, we have built relationships with various other aides and can confidently say this job attracts a wide variety of individuals that differ in age, ethnicity, and gender. However, we do think they share some common characteristics.

Drawing from our experience, here are some of our thoughts on the aspirations and challenges of the kinds of individuals drawn to this work:

1

## They are Motivated and Passionate People:

There is often a sentiment floating around that government workers don't like to work hard and are simply waiting around for retirement so they can enjoy their pensions. However, such a generalization about legislative aides couldn't be further from the truth. Considering that most legislative aides have contracts that allow them to be terminated at will and are at risk of losing their jobs every re-election cycle, legislative aides are typically highly motivated individuals that must work hard to keep their postings.

*continued on next page*

2

### They are Eager to Build the Right Connections:

Every good legislative aide understands that strong relationships are the key ingredient that enables a political office to do good and meaningful work. In this political profession, one's ideas are only as good as the partnerships one can build within and between different communities. As extensions of their legislators, these aides can help extend the reach of their political office to ensure their legislators have more information and a better understanding of their constituency. However, just like their legislator, there are limits to how many people one can functionally keep up with. This is why the key caveat of this statement is that aides are eager to build the RIGHT connections: if you can show a political office you are the proper representative of an important constituency they can partner with, they will WANT to connect with you.

3

### They May Have Political Aspirations:

If you look at the history of many elected officials, it's not uncommon to see that they may have served as a legislative aide at some time in their past. While the majority of aides will not go on to be elected officials in the future, many still do have political aspirations, whether it's moving to a higher administrative post or eventually taking some leadership role in the community (i.e. a leadership role with a labor union or advocacy organization). Thus, from the perspective of an aide, building the right connections isn't just about building partnerships in the present. It can also be an opportunity to build a personal relationship that goes beyond the term limits of any one office.

## The Challenges

1

### They Work Long and Unusual Hours:

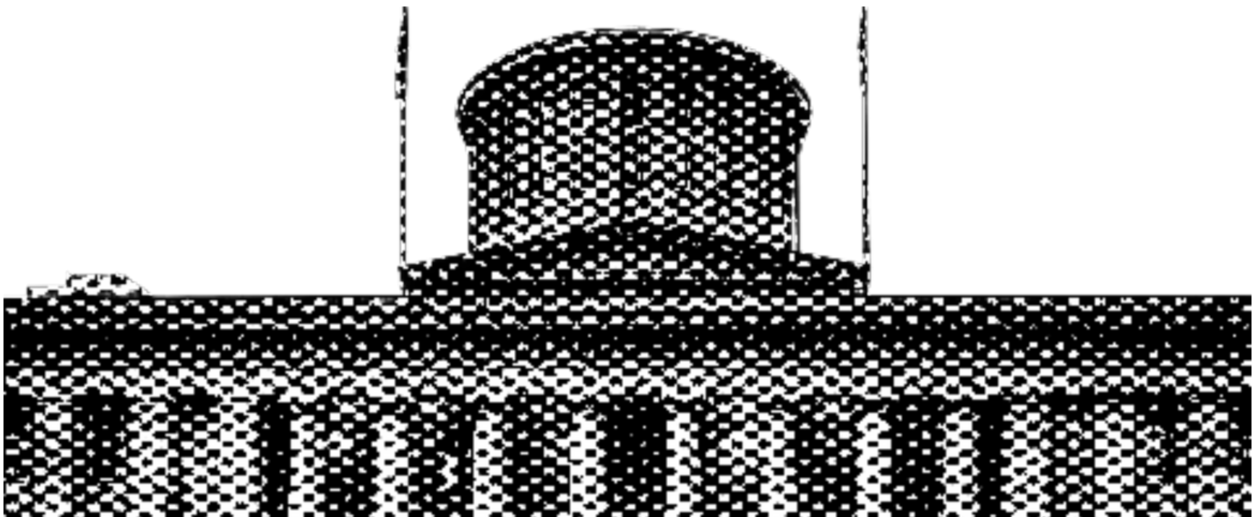
A legislative aide's work hours can be quite difficult to manage. Between attending community meetings that are usually scheduled after hours and legislative hearings that can go until 2 AM (especially during the budget season), legislative aides are expected to work some difficult and long hours. Furthermore, this can be demanding work that requires keeping up with an unrelenting 24-hour news cycle and ever-present crises.

*continued on next page* →

2

### They Don’t Get Paid Very Well:

Let’s be honest: the majority of people working in nonprofit services don’t get paid nearly enough for the important work they do. We believe the same ought to be said for legislative aides. Legislative aides tend to make significantly less than their counterparts in the private sector while working longer hours. Engage with them understanding that they probably are doing this work for similar reasons: passion, love for community, and notions of equity, fairness, and justice.



3

### They “Drink From the Fire Hose” Daily:

Diversity, variety, complexity, and rich histories are some of the qualities that make our communities great places to live, learn, work, and play. Ironically, these very qualities can be the things that make a legislative aide’s work so difficult because there is so much stuff in our community that requires government involvement for maintenance, improvement, or fixing. Legislative offices could be conceptualized as a small conduit through which a massive body of water passes (aka the districts they represent). In one of our team member's case, their office was made up of only 5 individuals, including the legislator, representing a district of 120,000 people. With such a ratio, it should be no wonder why many offices are often overwhelmed and working at max capacity trying to process and act upon every complaint, request, and call for partnership. In our line of work, the fire hose never stops blasting water!

*continued on next page*

## They Deal With All Kinds of Bad Behavior:

4

While our idealism typically draws us to this line of work, it's the reality of human nature combined with histories of grievances that makes us want to run for the hills at least once a week. Simply put, being the first point of contact through which your community has access to the government can put you in the line of fire for all kinds of frustration, vitriol, and even abuse from constituents. At times, such frustration and anger are understandable. After all, our government has an undeniably long history of oppression, abuse, and mismanagement. However, being one of the faces of this institution day in and day out can be an emotionally draining and difficult task. We can recall various moments where we've seen emails filled with racist and violent connotations, town halls that devolve into screaming matches, and even outright death threats. In one team member's experience, a constituent recognized them in a restaurant on the weekend and decided to berate their boss while they were on a date. We understand this is a fact of public life, but it doesn't mean it's not something legislative aides are not sensitive to.

What's our point? Legislative aides, just like their legislator bosses, are people. Those who can recognize the common human condition that lies beneath our ideological and political differences are already two steps ahead in building relationships with them! We highly recommend checking out the additional resource at the bottom of this module called "What It's Like to be a Staffer at Congress," to learn more.

## The Structure of a Political Office

| Staff Position | What They Do |
|---|---|
| The Chief of Staff | The Chief of Staff is almost like the Executive Director of the political office, running and maintaining the key administrative duties at the pleasure of the board which makes the key decisions (the legislator). While the legislator is the most public face of the office, the chief of staff generally works behind the scenes managing staff, delegating tasks, mediating disputes, and solving issues before they are brought to the legislator. If you've ever seen Game of Thrones, seeing the Chief of Staff like the Hand of the King would be a fair comparison. If you have a good relationship with the Chief of Staff, consider yourself properly plugged into the workings of the legislator's office. |

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| Staff Position | What They Do |
|---|---|
| The Scheduler | While you can consider the Chief of Staff the key gatekeeper to a legislator's office, you should consider the scheduler as the key gatekeeper to a legislator's time. There are no two ways around this: if the scheduler doesn't schedule you, you are unlikely to have dedicated face time with the legislator. If you want face time with a legislator, building a relationship with the Scheduler is the best way to get the heads up on possible availability. |
| Legislative Staff | As one would expect, this is where the office's legislative staff functions are fulfilled and policy formation begins. If your goal is to influence any kind of legislation, this is where you will want to start building relationships, especially with the relevant policy lead (if there is more than one). Beyond calls and emails, you can also meet policy team members at committee meetings, hearings, and full legislative meetings, should they be held in person. |
| Press Assistant | Every successful legislative office relies on a press assistant or communications aide with the media (through press releases and op-eds) and the public (through newsletters and social media) to share their priorities, accomplishments, general government offerings, and opportunities for engagement. If you want a piece of the action when it comes to any of these communications, say sharing a new service offering in their newsletter or highlighting a successful collaboration with said legislator's office on a press release, be sure to keep their communications team in the loop. |
| Constituent Services | Constituent services are often the first point of contact the general public has with the government and are typically the easiest way to touch base with a legislative office. More often than not, you can expect someone to pick up the phone as this office operation is more in line with customer service etiquette. We think it's fair to consider constituent services like the operator switchboard connecting you to the relevant government service or office needed. At times, constituent services will also recommend service offerings from nonprofits if they deem it the right fit for the constituent's needs. Thus, building relationships with constituent services can be a great way to generate service referrals for your organization. |

# Build Your Rolodex:

It's time to build out your proverbial Rolodex and start knowing how to make contact with your legislator's office. In this exercise, you will find the contact information for each of the key legislative office functions we explored in the last section for both your state representative and senator. Check out their government website and then LinkedIn to find what you need to fill in the blanks.

Legislator

Office Staff

Position

Name

Phone Number

Email

If bios are present, an interesting fact or commonality to keep in mind (i.e. their alma matter and any association they are a part of):

## Best Practices: How To Engage The Staff

Now that you have the contact information for all the important functions of the legislator's office and a general understanding of the different reasons to contact each, it's time we explore the best ways to engage the legislative staff! Some of the following best practices have been touched on previously, but in this section, we will go in-depth into some of the tactics we have found work the best.

Disclaimer: we understand our experience is not entirely representative of this vast and diverse profession! So before we go through our list, we highly recommend giving this article "Congressional Staffers Reveal How They Like To Be Approached" a good read. We promise it's anything but a boring read.

Here are some of the additional suggestions we have on top of those amazing suggestions from that article:

### 1 All the Best Practices for Engaging a Legislator Apply:

Be a professional, ensure your message is clear and concise, and always be sure to drop a thank you note!

### 2 Join their Newsletter and Social Media:

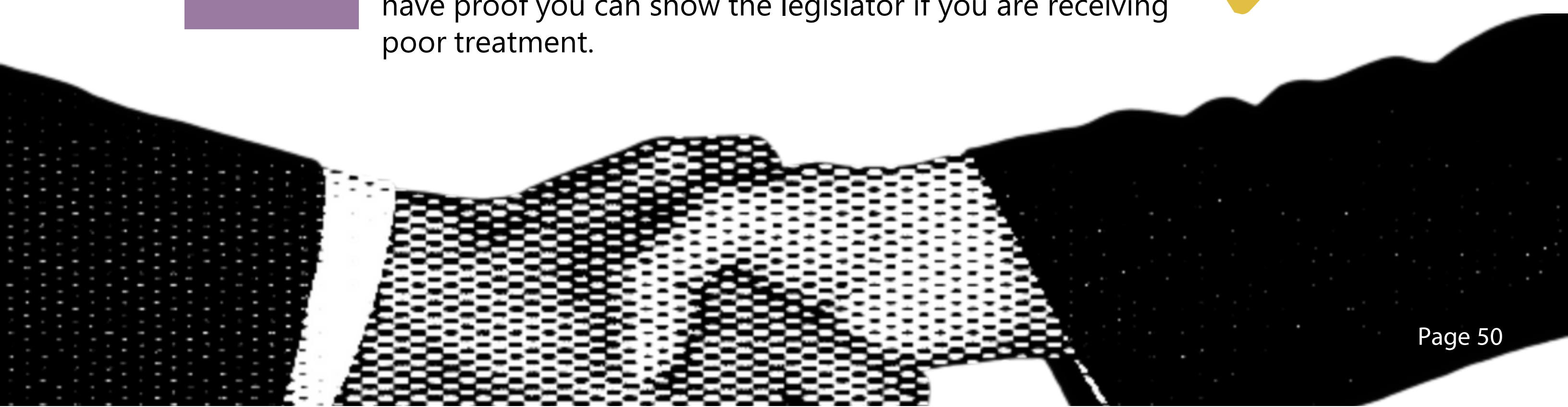
Looking at their office's newsletter and social media should be considered a part of the background research you conduct.

### 3 Invite Them to a Site Visit:

You may not be able to get the legislator themselves to visit, but if you can get a staffer, that's the next best thing! Remember, staffers are extensions of the legislators themselves and should be treated with the same respect and congeniality.

### 4 Always CC the Legislator:

When emailing the appropriate staffer, I suggest CCing the legislator. This not only helps you to ensure the staffer will give proper attention to your message, it also ensures you have proof you can show the legislator if you are receiving poor treatment.



# Resources

- What it's Like to be a Staffer at Congress: This article offers an in-depth first- person recollection of what it's like to work in a legislative office. Being an aide in the state and federal capital has many similarities.
- Video Interview with Legislative Aide: This interview with a Minnesota state legislative aide gives insight into how they transitioned from doing nonprofit work to working at the state capitol.
- How to Conduct an Effective Congressional Meeting: This resource provides a structured guide on how to meet with legislators and their staff including another great list of To Dos and Don't Dos.

Part 3

# ADVOCACY SKILLS

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# How to Present Yourself

This section will guide you on presenting yourself with confidence. You'll learn techniques to enhance your vocal image, boost your inner and outer strength, and craft a compelling elevator pitch.

## How to Shape Your Vocal Image

Your vocal image is how you sound when you speak, including your tone and overall delivery. It's important because it impacts how others perceive you and can even affect your self-esteem. A solid vocal image backed by charisma can distinguish between a bland self-advertisement and an inspiring introduction.

Improving your vocal image can be as simple as practicing breathing exercises and effective delivery strategies, and can help you come across as more confident, credible, and persuasive.

Here are five ways to improve your vocal image:

1. **Clarify your intention**
2. **Connect with your emotions**
3. **Ensure message alignment**
4. **Learn from great actors**
5. **Practice, practice, practice**

1

**Clarify your intention.**
Ask yourself why you are speaking and what you want your audience to do as a result of hearing you out.

2

**Connect with your emotions.**
Identify the emotions you feel when you speak and learn from past experiences to prepare for future speeches.

3

**Ensure message alignment.**
Make sure your content is in alignment with your intention and appropriate for the audience and occasion.

4

**Learn from great actors.**
Watch movies and pay attention to how actors use their voice in different situations and with different emotions and intentions.

5

**Practice, practice, practice.**
Rehearse your speech or presentation out loud and make adjustments as needed to improve your vocal image.

## Resources

- *Five Ways To Polish Your Vocal Image*

# Empowerment from the Inside Out

## Empower your voice.

Upspeak, also known as uptalk, is a speech pattern that makes every sentence sound like a question. It's the verbal equivalent of raising your eyebrows at the end of a statement. Not only can this be frustrating for the listener, but it can also undermine your credibility and make you sound less confident. But fear not! There are ways to overcome upspeak and speak with clarity and confidence.

*First, try practicing speaking with a deliberate tone and purpose. Take your time with your words and focus on using a downward inflection at the end of your sentences.*

*Another technique is pausing between phrases or sentences, allowing your listener to absorb what you're saying and preventing the urge to rush through your speech. It may take some practice, but the results are worth it!*

## Strike a powerful pose.

Power posing is the practice of adopting expansive, confident body language to instantly boost your mood and self-assurance. Think Wonder Woman with her hands on her hips, or Superman standing tall with his arms crossed. Studies have shown that striking a powerful pose can have a direct and positive impact on your mindset, even more so than verbal affirmations.
So if you're feeling nervous or unsure about an upcoming pitch or negotiation, take a few moments to strike a pose and feel your confidence soar!

## Water yourself.

When speaking to powerful people, it's important to be at your best. And one way to do that is by hydrating yourself with water. Coffee may be tempting, but it won't do your body or brain any favors in the long run. Think of yourself as a beautiful flower that needs hydration to flourish. Drinking enough water can help you look and feel the part. When you're hydrated, your skin will look healthier, your mind will feel sharper, and you'll have more energy to tackle whatever challenges come your way. So, grab a glass of water and get ready to shine!

## Dealing with rejection.

Dealing with rejection can be challenging, but it's also a valuable learning opportunity. To navigate rejection with confidence, stay calm and composed, focus on using clear and deliberate speech patterns, and strike a powerful pose. Remember, a "no" is never a forever no. As mentioned in "How to Build Relationships with Legislators," there are no permanent friends or enemies. New opportunities will arise, and you'll have another chance to achieve your goals. If you fail, try again later. With persistence and a positive attitude, you can turn rejection into success.

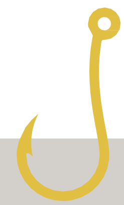
# Resources

- *What upspeak says about you?*
- *Power Posing: What Every Mental Health Professional Should Know*

## What Makes a Good Elevator Pitch

A strong first impression is crucial, which is why having a well-prepared elevator pitch is vital, even if you're not actually in an elevator. It communicates your purpose and value in a concise manner, whether you're engaging busy officials, potential funders, or interested clients.

Let's take a closer look at the structure of a good elevator pitch!



**1**

### Hook.

The hook is your attention grabber. This is when you introduce yourself, your organization, and its impact without overwhelming your conversation partner.

**2**

### Body.

The body is an opportunity to elaborate on the information you shared in the hook. You can use it to explain what sets your organization apart, who it serves, and/or how effective it is with key stats.

**3**

### Wrap-Up.

The wrap-up is the final step of your pitch, where you make a specific ask that brings everything together. This is your chance to clarify the action you want your conversation partner to take, whether it's to volunteer, donate, or spread the word about your organization. Make sure your request is clear, concise, and compelling!

## Resources

- *How to Nail an Elevator Pitch for Nonprofits*
- *How Nonprofit Storytelling Shapes Your Elevator Pitch*

# Your Turn!

A strong first impression is crucial, which is why having a well-prepared elevator pitch is vital, even if you're not actually in an elevator. It communicates your purpose and value in a concise manner, whether you're engaging busy officials, potential funders, or interested clients.

Let's take a closer look at the structure of a good elevator pitch!

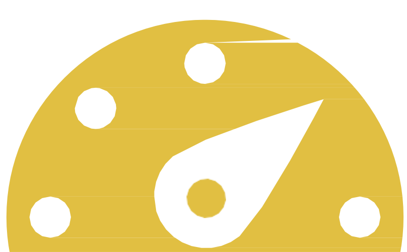
**Record Your Pitch.**
So, here's what you can do: grab your phone or a camera, and hit record! Practice your pitch or presentation, and don't be afraid to speak in a conversational and casual tone. Remember to make eye contact with the camera and don't speak too fast or too slow.

**Watch Your Footage.**
Take some time to watch the footage and note areas you can improve upon. Maybe you stumbled on a particular word or noticed that you tended to look away from the camera too often. These are all valuable insights that you can use to refine your presentation.

**Refine Your Presentation.**
After you've reviewed your recording and taken notes, make changes to your script and try recording yourself again. And if you really want to put your skills to the test, try practicing your pitch in front of friends or coworkers and ask for their feedback and advice.

**Practice Your Pitch.**
Remember, practice makes perfect, and the more you practice your pitches and presentations, the more confident you'll become in your public speaking abilities. So go ahead, give it a shot, and see how much you can improve!

See the next section for "How to use Talking Points and Scripts" to take your elevator pitch to the next level.



# How Talking Points Can Help You Make a Compelling Case for Your Cause

Legislators are often inundated with requests and information from various interest groups and constituents. Crafting well-thought-out talking points helps you to communicate your message clearly, concisely, and memorably. It keeps you on track and lets you make the most of your limited time with the legislator. By being well-prepared, you show that you know your stuff and have a specific ask or call to action, which can build a relationship with the legislator and boost the chances of them hearing and acting on your message. Below is a guide on how to develop talking points for a meeting with elected officials.

## Creating an Effective Message: Tips for Preparing Powerful Talking Points

**1**

### Identify your purpose:

Before developing your talking points, it is important to identify your purpose for meeting with the elected official. Is there a specific issue or policy that you want to discuss? Are you advocating for a particular cause or organization? Understanding your purpose will help you focus your message and develop talking points that are relevant to your goals.

**2**

### Research the issue:

Once you have identified your purpose, do your research on the issue or policy you want to discuss. Gather data, statistics, and other relevant information that supports your position. Be sure to look at both sides of the issue to anticipate potential objections or counterarguments.

*continued on next page* →

3

## Prioritize your message:

In a meeting with an elected official, you may have limited time to communicate your message. Prioritize your talking points so that you can focus on the most important points first. Consider what is most persuasive and impactful to convey, what the official is most likely to be interested in, and what the official has the power to influence.

## Include a call to action:

End your talking points with a specific call to action that clearly articulates what you want the elected official to do. Be specific about what actions you would like the official to take, and offer resources to help them act on your suggestions.

4

5

## Practice and prepare:

Practice delivering your talking points in advance of the meeting to ensure that you can communicate them effectively. Consider possible questions or objections the official might have and prepare your responses. Bring written copies of your talking points to the meeting to help you stay organized and ensure that you do not forget any important details.

By following these steps, you can develop effective talking points that communicate your message clearly and persuasively to elected officials. Remember to be respectful, professional, and courteous in your meeting and to follow up afterward to reinforce your message and build a relationship with the official's office.

# Tailoring Your Message: How to Personalize Talking Points for Maximum Impact

Personalizing your talking points is a key way to make a powerful and memorable impression when speaking with elected officials. Below are some tips for personalizing your talking points.

## 1 Share your personal story

Consider sharing a personal story or experience that illustrates why the issue or policy you are advocating for is important to you. This can help make your message more relatable and compelling.

## 2 Use local examples

Highlight local studies and statistics that illustrate the impact of the issue or policy on your community. This can help make your message more relevant and impactful for the elected official.

## 3 Refer to the official's past actions or statements

If the elected official has a history of supporting or opposing the issue or policy you are advocating for, refer to their past actions or statements. This can help you build a more persuasive argument and demonstrate that you are informed about their positions.

## 4 Mention your organization or constituency

If you are speaking on behalf of an organization or a particular constituency, be sure to mention it. This can help you build credibility and demonstrate that you are speaking on behalf of a group of people, rather than just yourself.

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5

## Practice, practice, practice

When personalizing your talking points, be sure to use respectful and professional language. Avoid personal attacks or insults, and stay focused on your message and your goals.

# Conversation Guide

A conversation guide is like a cheat sheet that can help you stay focused, organized, and on message. It's like having a secret weapon to make sure you're making the most of every opportunity to engage with others and build support for your advocacy efforts.

The following conversation guide differs from an elevator pitch as it is intended for more extended conversations with representatives, promoting relationship- building and in-depth discussions to establish ongoing relationships with legislators, making it a vital tool for advocates to have productive conversations with lawmakers.

## Example

**About our organization and what ODVN does**
"Hello [Legislator's Name], I am [Your Name], and I am the [title] of [program and organization] from [Your Town/City/State]. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I'm here to discuss [the issue you want to address], which I believe is an important issue for our community."

## The Problem

I understand that you have a lot on your plate, but I'm hoping that you'll give this issue your attention and consideration. [Explain why this issue is important to you and your community, providing any relevant statistics or personal anecdotes that may be relevant].

## The Solution

I also wanted to ask you what your stance is on this issue and whether you have any plans to address it in the near future. I believe that [state your position on the issue], and I'm hoping that you'll consider taking action to [state your desired outcome].

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## The Ask: How They Can Help Us

I am asking for your [clearly state what you want the elected official to do].

## Closing

Thank you again for your time, and I hope that we can work together to make positive change in our community.

*You may also reference ODVN's Advocacy Day Conversation Guide for additional resources.

## Remember, it's okay to mess up

It is natural to feel nervous or intimidated when speaking with elected officials, but it is important to remember that it is okay to make mistakes. Remember, elected officials are there to serve their constituents, and they want to hear from you, even if your message is not perfectly polished. If you make a mistake or stumble over your words, simply acknowledge it and move on. The most important thing is to stay focused on your message and to communicate your concerns or ideas clearly and respectfully.

Part 4

# CRAFTING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

# Crafting Your Social Media Strategy

Social media can be a powerful tool to making a difference in the movement. Not only can it be used to build public awareness and support for the cause, but it can also be used to thank those who have championed the movement or correct common misconceptions on issues.

In this social media toolkit, you'll find various tools to help brainstorm and plan your social media posts. We hope these tools will allow you to spark conversations in your communities and create awareness, with the ultimate goal of serving and supporting survivors.

## Facebook

Facebook remains one of the largest social media platforms globally, with billions of active users. While Facebook was initially popular among younger demographics, particularly teenagers and young adults, its user base has aged over time. Research has indicated that older adults, especially those aged 65 and above, have been increasingly adopting Facebook. Younger demographics, particularly teens, have shown a preference for other platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok.

*Tip: Engage with your followers by responding to comments and messages in a timely manner. This can help build trust and strengthen relationships with supporters, and can also help create a sense of community around the advocacy cause.*

| Media Channel | Social Media Copy |
|---|---|
| Facebook | "Amid the alarming rise in severe domestic violence cases across Ohio, ODVN and our partners are calling on state leaders to provide more funding for vital programs and services that help survivors escape abuse and rebuild their lives. With the right resources and support, survivors can heal and thrive, and our communities can become safer and stronger. Join us in advocating for greater investment in domestic violence prevention and intervention efforts!" |

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# X (formerly Twitter)

Twitter, now called X, is a platform that is widely used by celebrities and politicians to communicate directly with their audience without intermediaries. They can share their thoughts, opinions, announcements, and updates in real-time, fostering a sense of immediacy and authenticity.

Twitter (X) plays a significant role in political discourse, with politicians using the platform to communicate their policy positions, engage with constituents, mobilize supporters, and shape public opinion. It has become a key tool for political campaigns, activism, and advocacy efforts.

X can be used by advocates to quickly disseminate information, share news and updates about their cause, and engage with policymakers and the public. It can also be used to amplify messages through the use of hashtags, retweets, and mentions.

*Tip: Make use of relevant hashtags related to your cause. This can help increase the visibility of their tweets, attract more followers, and connect with others who are interested in or working on the same issues.*

| Media Channel | Social Media Copy |
|---|---|
| X | Big shoutout to Senator Smith for championing domestic violence reform in Ohio. Your leadership and commitment to this issue are making a real difference in the lives of survivors. Thank you! #OhioDVN #OhioAdvocacy |

**Handles**

Using handles in tweets is an effective and important way to engage with other users and increase the visibility of your tweets. By tagging other accounts, you can connect with individuals and organizations that are interested in your cause, and potentially reach a wider audience. The @ sign (or handle) is also a great way to acknowledge and thank supporters, and build relationships with key stakeholders in your advocacy efforts.

**Hashtags**

Using hashtags in tweets is an important tool for advocates to help increase the visibility of their messages and connect with others who are interested in or working on similar issues. By using relevant hashtags, you can expand your reach, find new followers, and tap into larger conversations around your cause. Here are some hashtags that can be used to build a community on X. Feel free to be creative and tie your hashtags to your agency and particular issue that you are highlighting!

#LoveShouldntHurt
#VictimsRights
#SurvivorStrong
#BreakTheSilence

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## Instagram

Instagram can be used by advocates to share visual content that promotes their cause and engages their audience.

Instagram is particularly popular among younger demographics, making it a valuable platform to engage with the youth and create awareness among this demographic group.

Download this design here.


Visual graphics can be utilized for specific awareness campaigns, such as the importance of funding crime victim services or important dates.

*Download this design here.*

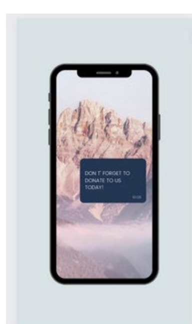


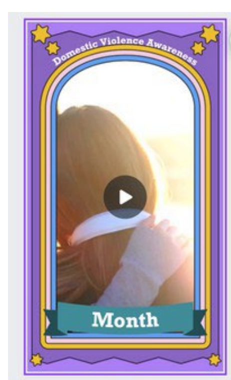
*Download this design here.*

**Utilizing Instagram Reels**

If you want to get your advocacy message out there and make a splash, Instagram reels are your new best friend. They're like mini-movies that can capture attention, showcase your passion, and help you reach a whole new audience. Plus, they're super easy to create and share, so you can get your message out there quickly and efficiently.

*Download these templates here.*







**For questions regarding messaging and media relations, please reach out to ODVN!**