

# Your Advocacy Plan

## Key Questions to Ask Yourself

Whether you plan to advocate with policymakers or private funders, you should think through several key decision points and determine which resources you will need to carry out the advocacy efforts. Consider the following questions when planning to advocate.

### **WHAT IS YOUR ADVOCACY GOAL?**

What does your group, program, or organization want to accomplish? Some possible goals might be to increase funding or awareness, improve program quality, etc. Make sure your goal is clear and concise, so you will be able to gauge your success.

If you need some help getting started, check out the case studies in the Advocacy Toolkit on pages 38-42 and 93-105 for ideas and inspiration.

### **WHAT ARE YOU ASKING FOR?**

An “ask” is what you are requesting from a person or an organization. In the private sector, this might be an ask to fund a certain project or an ask for an individual donation or corporate sponsorship. In the public sector, you may be asking for funding, policy, or laws that would improve access to quality adult education and literacy programs. Your ask should be specific and reasonable.

For more information about creating an ask, check out the Advocacy Toolkit, pages 30-34.

### **WHO WILL YOU REACH?**

Which policy makers, funders, or influencers would you like to reach? Examples are: city/town council members, state legislators, governor, business leaders, public library board members, charitable foundations, partner organizations, members of the media, community leaders and influencers, federal legislators, etc. It is important to connect with the right people who can help you reach your goals.

Check out the Advocacy Toolkit for more information about advocating with legislators (pages 67-73) and funders (pages 80-90). You will also find links to places you can contact on pages 120-121.

### **HOW WILL YOU REACH THEM?**

Decide how you will connect with your target audience. Will you request an introduction from a mutual contact, write a letter, make a phone call, set up a meeting, give a presentation, or something else? What issues are most important to your audience that you can connect to your “ask”? Adult education can connect with many other talking points, so illustrating that can help make headway.

To see some examples of possible hooks and messaging, check out the Advocacy Toolkit, pages 25-29.

## WHO WILL YOU INVOLVE IN ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES?

Which members of your team will be a part of helping you reach your goal? Will you involve students, teachers, tutors, board members, partners, volunteers, community officials, or other stakeholders?

To see some tips for involving adult learners in your program’s advocacy efforts, check out the Advocacy Toolkit, pages 55-57.

## HOW WILL YOU PREPARE?

What are the key talking points that you want to emphasize? How will you prepare your team? If you involve adult learners, how will you prepare them to comfortably explain how their participation in an adult education program has helped them, their family, or their community?

Check out the resources in the Advocacy Toolkit, pages 120-121, for help finding potential data sources and relevant information you can use.

## HOW WILL YOU PRESENT YOUR CASE?

What data and stories from your program and region will you use to make the case? Will you have handouts or a slide presentation? Will you meet in person or virtually? How will you present your program’s data and stories in conjunction with data from other sources? Think about what material you will share directly and what you will leave with your audience for them to reference later.

If you don’t already have an impact report for your organization, you can use this PowerPoint template {link to Impact Report PPT Template document}, Word template {link to Impact Report Word Template document}, and instructions {link to Instructions for Customizing Adult Literacy Impact Report document} to create one.

## HOW WILL YOU FOLLOW UP?

Will you send a thank-you letter or email or make a phone call to the policymaker, staffer, aide, or other audience? How will you remind yourself and your team to follow up? Do you need to report the results of your visit to your city/town, county, or state adult education and literacy advocacy organization? What format would be most suitable for that report? Use the follow up to continue the discussion or as an opportunity to set the stage for asking them to ratchet up their support in the future.