



GREEN BAY

Introduction to Advocacy



What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of supporting, defending, or arguing for a specific cause or issue.




The purpose of advocacy is to bring about change, whether that's accomplished through raising public awareness, increasing support, or influencing policy for a certain issue.

For example, **NeighborWorks Green Bay** is working on advocacy efforts to provide more affordable and accessible housing opportunities in all of Northeastern Wisconsin!

If you've ever tried to promote an issue you care about, you've engaged in advocacy!








Different Types of Advocacy

-  **Self-advocacy:** when you stand up for yourself, defend your rights, or represent your own views and interests, you are being a self-advocate.
-  **Individual advocacy:** this type of advocacy involves acting on behalf of others (a client, an individual, or a group) to advance their goals. A parent might advocate on behalf of their child, or a lawyer may advocate for the legal rights of their client in court.
-  **Systems advocacy:** the goal of systems advocacy is to change policy, rules, or laws on a particular issue. This can happen at the local, state, or national level. Both individuals and organizations engage in systems advocacy.

These types of advocacy are like tools. They can be used separately or in conjunction with each other. The type of advocacy best suited for your situation depends on the goals you want to achieve and the resources you have at hand.

What Does it Mean to Advocate?

Just like there are several different types of advocacy, there are many different activities that you can do to advocate for your issue.

-  Contact your member of Congress
-  Attend a march or protest
-  Organize a campaign in your community or on social media
-  Write an op-ed or letter to the editor for your local newspaper
-  Start a petition







Advocacy helps others understand your point of view and support your cause. Ultimately, the goal of advocacy is to effect change on the issue you care about.



Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups are organizations that form around a shared interest in order to influence public opinion and policy.







These groups promote their cause in a number of ways:

-  They lobby the government
-  They litigate a law related to their issue
-  They educate or advertise to influence public opinion
-  They organize campaigns and events

Not all advocacy groups operate under the same rules. Depending on the type, advocacy groups are subject to different tax laws and restrictions regarding how much political activity they are allowed to engage in.

501(c) and 501(c)(3) groups are tax-exempt nonprofits, and can engage in varying levels of political activity depending on their classification. NeighborWorks Green Bay is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so we are more limited in our political engagement, but we are allowed to engage the community and help create advocacy groups and campaigns with community members.

How to Make an Advocacy Plan

-  Choose a policy issue
-  Make your issue personal
-  Become a "Subject Matter Expert"
-  Create a legislative ask
-  Practice, Practice, Practice
-  Partner with others

Advocacy includes a range of activities. The goal of advocacy isn't just limited to influencing lawmakers on a piece of legislation. Although advocacy can involve lobbying, it also encompasses everything else you do to communicate and promote your cause.

Advocacy is about influencing others to make decisions on a given issue. Oftentimes, advocacy is about promoting a cause on behalf of others. This makes it distinct from activism. Whereas advocates listen to and amplify others, activists engage in direct action that leads to social change. There is a significant overlap in the work that advocates and activists do. Many individuals and organizations engage in both advocacy and activism to advance their goals.



Contact Us for More Information

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