COMMUNICATING WITH DECISION MAKERS to Promote Preservation and Main Street

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**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why:</strong></th>
<th>Value of advocacy and outreach to decision-makers for your Main Street or preservation program.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What/When:</strong></td>
<td>Understanding the legislative process and calendar and how your efforts can align with the big picture.</td>
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<td><strong>Who:</strong></td>
<td>Best practices of who to contact or connect with especially during periods of transition.</td>
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<td><strong>How:</strong></td>
<td>Media and communications to make the connection and the case for your program or issue.</td>
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WHY ADVOCATE?
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• **Create** awareness for important community needs and places that matter.

• **Solve** critical community problems.

• **Gain** ground for continued access to resources and incentives, such as Main Street project funding or historic tax credits.

• **Maintain** existing resources: don’t take funding, incentives, or policy for granted.

• **Build** partnerships to lend your organizational capacity to others.
WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Compelling Data + Effective Storytelling + A Clear Ask = Advocacy for Policy Change
## WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Explaining a fact sheet to a decision maker.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Producing or disseminating data that makes your case.</td>
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<td>Coalition &amp; Relationship Building</td>
<td>Hosting a community forum.</td>
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<td>Media Outreach &amp; P.R.</td>
<td>Inviting leaders to a student performance or writing a letter to the editor.</td>
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<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Nonpartisan voter engagement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobbying</td>
<td>Requesting that a decision maker takes a particular stand on an issue via legislation.</td>
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WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

**Information**
- Newsletters, online briefs, etc. This is a way to tell the story and educate the public without links to an agenda.

**Workshops**
- Advocacy discussion and training. Enable the public through training.

**Forums**
- Informing key audiences about your advocacy. Providing an opposing view adds legitimacy and balance.

**Research**
- Conducting research to measure community value, including economic impact. Research supports all levels of advocacy.
WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

- **Advocacy Days**: Establishing a community of advocates on the local, state, and federal levels. Develop a common message to educate decision makers.
- **Policy Setting**: Setting an advocacy agenda targeted at local, state, and federal government.
- **Accountability**: Recognize past support and efforts by elected officials and develop champions. Get decision makers to state their opinions and commit to action.
- **Lobbying**: Two forms of lobbying: Direct and Grassroots
WHEN TO ADVOCATE - FEDERAL

1. January
   Welcome new and returning members of Congress. Make sure you're signed up to receive their newsletters and follow them on social media.

2. February
   Work with your local newspaper to submit an op-ed about how the HPF or HTC has supported your organization and community.

3. March - April
   Set up meetings with your members of Congress either virtually or at home during the holiday recess week.

4. May
   Celebrate Preservation Month! Ask elected officials to speak at any in-person or virtual events you may be planning.

5. June, July, August
   Schedule a site visit with elected officials or their staffs during Independence Day and August recesses.

6. September - December
   Be ready to jump in on any campaigns through the National Trust, Main Street America, or other national organizations to advocate on government funding finalization or year-end packages.
• Indiana has a part-time legislature that does not meet year-round. The General Assembly convenes on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January.

• During **odd-numbered years**, the legislature meets for 61 days (not necessarily consecutively) and must be adjourned by April 30.

• During **even-numbered years**, the legislature meets for 30 days (not necessarily consecutively) and must be adjourned by March 15.
WHEN TO ADVOCATE – INDIANA LEGISLATURE

• Indiana has a **biennial budget**, meaning that each budget contains appropriations for two fiscal years. Fiscal years in Indiana begin on July 1st and end on June 30th of the following year.

• The budget drafting process begins during **even-numbered years** with the State Budget Agency issuing Biennial Budget Instructions to state agencies. The instructions provide guidance to agencies in submitting requests for funding.
DEFINING YOUR ADVOCACY TARGET

• Select your target based on your advocacy needs—Federal? State? Local? Non-elected official?
• Tailor your advocacy pitch to the decisionmaker you’re trying to reach.
• Staff are decisionmakers, too!
**DO AND DON’T OF CONNECTING WITH CANDIDATES**

**Do:**
- Candidate Forums.
- Questionnaires.
- Get Out the Vote Campaign.
- Focus on Issues, not Individuals.
- Remind those who ask: you cannot endorse a candidate.

**Don’t:**
- Endorse a candidate.
- Support a candidate financially.
- Use your resources to support a candidate — including time.
- Give unequal access to facilities.
2021 CLEVELAND MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

ISSUE

Downtown Cleveland, like the entire city, faces significant economic and social challenges. It is also well-positioned to play a leading role in building a sustainable, inclusive economic recovery. Downtown Cleveland Alliance’s cleanliness, safety, hospitality, and business development services help create a welcoming environment for working, living, and playing. Cleveland boasts a highly walkable downtown, newly increased transit frequency and a quality of life that is attractive to locals, visitors, and remote workers alike. Downtown is also an economic engine for the entire city, generating 65 percent of the tax revenue that fuels city services and development and attracts talent, investment, and job growth to the entire city, while only 10 percent of city revenues are funneled back into downtown capital projects.

It is imperative that the next generation of leadership commit to embracing our history and leveraging our strengths to build a more vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming downtown.

QUESTION

Please describe:

1. Your experience with and strategy regarding economic and community development, and how you would interact with the business community.

2. How your vision for Downtown Cleveland aligns with DCA’s vision of Downtown Cleveland as the inclusive 24/7 hub of a welcoming global city that weaves downtown districts and surrounding neighborhoods into a seamless urban fabric.

3. The specific policies and plans—including economic development programs—that you will implement to fulfill that vision.
VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES
LEADING A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

+ Share “Do and Don’t” list with staff, volunteers, or others representing the organization.
+ Endorse in a personal capacity. Don’t endorse candidates with your organizational title – or use “for identification purposes only.”
+ Use personal time or vacation time for campaigning purposes.
Compelling documents are essential to share your message!
TIPS ON DESIGN:
• Use a designer OR a design tool
  • Canva for nonprofits, Visme
• Use clear fonts – avoid script
  • Two font maximum
• Stay aligned with your brand
  • The color wheel
• Add visuals or infographics
  • Vennage
• White space is good!
  • Avoid too much information.

ONE-PAGER RECOMMENDATIONS:
+ Keep in mind your target audience
+ Use compelling, concise headers
+ Add information in bullets
+ Include storytelling elements – clear quote from an impacted individual
+ Pull back from jargon – use the language of the person you are communicating to.
+ What is the ask? And how can they follow-up?
BEST PRACTICES FOR OUTREACH

Before the Meeting or Visit

• Work with the Scheduler and District Director
• Be flexible
• Follow-up with the names and affiliations of all individuals who will attend
• Work with the Communications Director or Press Secretary
• Sign up for office communications and social media
• Do your homework
BEST PRACTICES FOR OUTREACH

During the Meeting or Visit

• Take photos and use social media
• Tell authentic stories
• Use reliable data
• Make the advocacy ask
• Don't stop until you get a "yes"

Sen. Mark Warner visits the River District (Danville, VA) during August recess 2022.
After the Meeting or Visit

• Always send a thank-you note
• Include follow-up materials and photos taken during the visit
• Keep the staff up-to-date on activities
• Check in to see if they have taken action on your advocacy goals
Framing Your Ask

FRAME: 

DATA: 

STORY: 

ASK: 

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: OUTREACH PITCH
Find a group of 3

One person is making a pitch, one person is timekeeper, one person is the target.

- Both the target and the timekeeper will offer gentle, encouraging feedback.

Cycle through each role.
Stay Involved!

- Savingplaces.org
- Mainstreet.org

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