

Successful Advocacy

Tips for advocacy success

Know your issue

You should be able to demonstrate that you can clearly explain what your issue is, why it concerns you and what you would like done about it (i.e. knowing what your “ask” is). Knowledge of key facts and supporting arguments, or at the very least, having access to them, is very important for establishing credibility and ultimately realizing success.

CADDAC can assist you with key messages – short points that persuasively explain the most important elements of your issue in simple language. There is also useful background information on CADDAC's website at www.caddac.ca.

Know your audience

Identifying who the audience is that will be receiving your advocacy pitch and knowing a little something about them can help you tailor your message and perhaps be more successful. By doing a little advance research (all politician biographies are available on the internet) and asking questions you will be better positioned to open a constructive dialogue.

Here are some additional tips:

- Keep informed about major political issues so you know the context for government decisions and what may be impacting them.
- Try to understand the perspective of the person you are meeting with. This will help you shape your ask. For example, if they have particular policy interests, find ways to connect your issue to their interests.
- Remember that politicians want to be re-elected – frame your issues with this in mind. Positions that represent a ‘win’ for both your cause and the decision-maker you are advocating to, are the best.

- Look for people within your circle of family, friends or colleagues who have established relationships with the people you need to see and may be willing to make introductions for you.

Determine the best way to get your message out

As outlined above, there are a number of ways to advocate for your issues including letters to politicians, petitions, attending meetings and writing to your local newspaper. Different situations will require different actions. But you should consider of these factors:

- How urgent is my issue? Can it wait for a sit down meeting with your MPP/MLA or do you require an answer now, in which case you should call or write their office.
- Is your issue unique to your family or is it something affecting others in your community you could advocate together with or through CADDAC.
- Who is best positioned to secure the change you seek? Your local representative or a cabinet Minister?
- What else is going on politically? Is there an election taking place whereby you could ask all candidates for their thoughts on your issue?
- Can your issue be resolved easily with a simple overview from you or is it more complex and will therefore require more than one outreach to more than one person.