How will you measure success?
Policy change can take time, so don’t just focus on the end point of your goal. Develop measurement benchmarks along the way so you’ll know you’re making progress and to help you refine your advocacy strategy as needed.

What are the most powerful messages?
Use what you know about your decision-makers’ interests to develop a compelling message about your advocacy goal. Your message should briefly introduce the issue, connect it to your decision-makers’ interest, address the solution, and end with a clear “ask.” It is important to also identify people who can deliver that message most effectively.

Who are the decision-makers & influencers?
Identify the specific decision-makers who have the power to give you what you want and the influencers who can persuade them to act. These are the individuals who can say yes or no to your goal, so be specific.

What are your advocacy assets & gaps?
Your assets are the skills, expertise, and resources you have to conduct advocacy activities. Conduct a thorough inventory of your assets, as well as anything you’re missing to get the job done.

Who are your key partners?
Be strategic about the partners you choose and how you partner with them. Good partners bring new constituents to an issue, demonstrate wide-scale support, improve your ability to reach and persuade a wider set of decision-makers, help mitigate opposition, and yield additional expertise, skills, and resources.

What are your tactics?
Be selective about your advocacy tactics. The best activities are the ones most likely to have an immediate and direct impact on your target decision-makers or key influencers. When designing your tactics, consider whether they address your decision-makers’ interests, help lessen the influence of any opposing groups, and align with your advocacy assets.

What is your advocacy goal?
This is your policy solution to the issue—or what you’d like a policymaker to do to address it. Describe the change you would like to see, how that change will happen, the timeframe, and which institution needs to act to make it happen.

What is your advocacy issue?
This is the first, and most critical, stage of the process. Your issue should be specific and clear, align with your organization’s mission, and be realistically addressed through advocacy within five years. You’ll also need evidence about why your issue is a problem.

What opposition & obstacles exist?
It’s important to understand who may resist or oppose your goal in order to design tactics and messages to reduce their influence on key decision-makers. Also, identify obstacles—like competing priorities, political controversy, or insufficient resources—that might hinder progress.

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