



# Engaging Volunteers and Their Communities in Advocacy

Advocacy is a powerful way to advance your nonprofit's mission and create lasting change. Engaging volunteers and their communities in advocacy strengthen your efforts and helps amplify your organization's voice. This guidebook provides a roadmap for why and how to involve volunteers in advocacy, how to manage and sustain their engagement, and how these efforts benefit your nonprofit.

### **Why Engage Volunteers and Communities in Advocacy?**

- Amplifies Your Voice:
  - Volunteers bring diverse perspectives, networks, and lived experiences to your advocacy efforts, increasing your reach and impact.
- Builds Grassroots Power:
  - Advocacy rooted in community involvement creates groundswell support, making your message more powerful and harder for decision-makers to ignore.
- Empowers Volunteers:
  - Engaging volunteers in advocacy provides them with tools to make a difference, fostering a deeper connection to your mission.
- Strengthens Relationships:
  - Advocacy creates opportunities to build strong, lasting relationships with stakeholders, community members, and lawmakers.
- Increases Visibility:
  - Advocacy efforts often draw attention from the public, media, and policymakers, raising awareness of your organization and its mission.

### **How to Engage Volunteers and Communities in Advocacy**

- Educate About Advocacy:
  - Offer training sessions to explain what advocacy is and why it's important.
  - Provide examples of past successes to show the tangible impact of advocacy efforts.
- Share Your Advocacy Goals:
  - Clearly communicate the issues you are advocating for and the changes you hope to achieve.
  - Break down complex issues into understandable and actionable steps.
- Offer Flexible Roles:
  - Identify ways for volunteers to contribute based on their interests, skills, and availability (e.g., letter writing, social media campaigns, attending rallies, or meeting with lawmakers).



### **How to Engage Volunteers and Communities in Advocac (Continued)**

- Equip Them with Resources:
  - Provide fact sheets, sample scripts, and talking points to help them feel prepared and confident.
  - Share templates for emails, letters, and social media posts.
- Leverage Community Networks:
  - Encourage volunteers to involve their friends, families, and local groups in your advocacy campaigns.
  - Partner with other community organizations to broaden your reach.

### **How to Manage Volunteer Advocates**

- Define Roles and Responsibilities:
  - Clearly outline what is expected of volunteers in advocacy efforts to avoid confusion.
- Provide Training and Support:
  - Offer workshops, webinars, or one-on-one coaching to ensure volunteers feel prepared.
  - Assign a staff member or experienced volunteer to serve as a point of contact for questions and support.
- Track Progress:
  - Use tools like spreadsheets, advocacy platforms, or CRM systems to monitor volunteer participation and the impact of their efforts.
- Recognize and Celebrate Efforts:
  - Publicly acknowledge volunteers for their contributions through newsletters, social media, or special events.
  - Share success stories and updates on advocacy milestones.

## **How to Keep Volunteers Engaged in Advocacy.**

- Build a Community:
  - Create spaces (online or in-person) where volunteers can connect, share ideas, and celebrate wins together.
- Offer Ongoing Opportunities:
  - Keep volunteers engaged by providing regular advocacy actions, such as signing petitions, attending town halls, or organizing letter-writing campaigns.
- Communicate Regularly:
  - Keep volunteers informed about your advocacy progress and how their efforts are making an impact.
  - Share updates, thank-yous, and calls to action through emails, social media, or group meetings.
- Provide Growth Opportunities:
  - Offer advanced training or leadership roles for volunteers who want to deepen their involvement.
- Ask for Feedback:
  - Regularly check in with volunteers to learn how you can improve their advocacy experience.

## **How Volunteer Advocacy Positively Impacts Your Organization**

- Enhances Mission Fulfillment:
  - Advocacy efforts help your organization achieve systemic change, directly supporting your mission and long-term goals.
- Strengthens Community Ties:
  - Engaging volunteers and communities in advocacy deepens their connection to your organization, creating long-term supporters.
- Increases Resources:
  - Successful advocacy can lead to increased funding, better policies, and more resources for your programs and services.
- Builds Organizational Credibility:
  - A strong advocacy presence positions your nonprofit as a leader in your field, attracting partners, donors, and media attention.
- Fosters a Culture of Engagement:
  - Involving volunteers in advocacy cultivates a culture of active participation, empowering your supporters to become lifelong champions of your cause.



In Conclusion: Engaging volunteers and their communities in advocacy is a powerful way to amplify your nonprofit's voice, drive meaningful change, and strengthen your organization. With clear goals, effective management, and sustained engagement, your volunteers can become unstoppable advocates for your mission. Together, you can create a lasting impact!