

*Engaging policymakers in your organization's efforts, including your advocacy campaigns, is critical to furthering your organization's mission.*

## **How do you engage policymakers?**

Engaging policymakers begins with familiarizing yourself with the issues of interest to your organization, building relationships with policymakers and staff and then providing your expertise (including lobbying) on issues and legislation of interest.

### **STEP 1**

*Gather information*

*Understand the issues*

*Legislation process*

- ▶ **Understand the issues**  
Take an active interest in understanding the policy issues (local, regional, national and International level) relevant to your mission. This can easily be accomplished by setting up Google alerts to monitor media coverage of the policy issues of interest.
- ▶ **Legislation process**  
Take an active strategy to receive notices about legislative proposals from Policymakers and their staff and also ask them to keep you posted on when your help is needed. You can also monitor local, national or international legislation.

### **STEP 2**

*Build Relationships  
with Policymakers and staff*

*Target specific policymakers*

- ▶ **Target specific policymakers**  
Consider focusing on the officials that make policy affecting your organization. This may include local municipalities' elected officials and staff, commissions, as well as regional and national elected officials and staff or an international level. For example, a local Sexual Education project may be interested in advocating on Children Rights at the national or state and International level. Also consider targeting the individual policymakers that serve on relevant national and international legislative committees. For example, if your policy issues were referred to Youth then you would want to reach out to the members of the Youth committees at local to international levels.

## STEP 2

*Build Relationships  
with Policymakers and staff*

*Collect basic information  
about your policymakers*

*Educate policymakers and staff  
about your organization*

- ▶ **Collect basic information about your policymakers**  
Learn about your policymaker's interests, responsibilities and experience with your issue or the nonprofit sector. You can learn a great deal about your officials from media coverage and through their official websites. You should also remember to incorporate your board in this activity by asking about their relationships with policymakers.
- ▶ **Educate policymakers and staff about your organization**  
Add policymakers and staff to your mailing lists, invite your officials and staff to tour your facilities.

## STEP 3

*Provide expertise*

*Become a resource for  
policymakers and staff*

*Educate policymakers about  
the issues that you care about*

*Lobby policymakers  
to support or oppose legislation*

*Invite policymakers*

- ▶ **Become a resource for policymakers and staff**  
Encourage policymakers and staff to contact you if they have any questions on the policy issues of interest to your organization. Encourages legislative offices to contact your organization if the policymaker or staff has any questions regarding sexual educational topics like "Media impact on Youth".
- ▶ **Educate policymakers about the issues that you care about**  
Share with policymakers and staff any research findings, and the impact of current policies on those you serve or resources you protect.
- ▶ **Lobby policymakers to support or oppose legislation**  
Call, write and visit policymakers to share your organization's position on legislation, regulation or other policies and to urge their support. Consider have these tasks with all political parties at least those that are represented in Local, National Assembly or in Legislator committee.
- ▶ **Invite policymakers to be part of events organized by your organization or network.**