

*Successful advocacy campaigns are often referred to as a three-legged stool that includes engaging policymakers, your grassroots network and the media. Your grassroots network provides the people power behind your effort.*

### **How do you engage your grassroots network?**

Engaging your grassroots network starts with identifying who could help to advocate for sexual education (usual or unusual organizations). The next step is to educate these individuals on your policy issues and the basics of advocacy. The third step is to mobilize your network for action. Finally, maintain the network so you can repeat the process in the future.

## **STEP 1**

### *Identify your network*

*Develop a list of contact persons in each organization that support your policy issues*

*Create a system for contacting these individuals*

- ▶ **Develop a list of contact persons in each organization that support your policy issues**  
This may include, but is not limited to, staff, board members, funders (foundations, corporations, individuals), volunteers, clients, clergy, business leaders and policymakers. Note, this contact person is always more efficient than contact the organization.
- ▶ **Create a system for contacting these individuals**  
You want to be able to educate, mobilize and maintain your network. To do so, you need to have a way of providing ongoing information. For example, this system could be an email list, print newsletter/brochure, phone list or social media channels.

## **STEP 2**

### *Train your network*

*Provide information about your issues*

*Offer information and training on how to advocate*

- ▶ **Provide information about your issues**  
Share research, general information and policy forecasts related to your policy issues with your network via newsletters, sessions at your annual conferences, trainings, webinars, mailings, websites, social media channels, individual meetings, etc.
- ▶ **Offer information and training on how to advocate**  
Although some have got Advocacy activities in their organization, many of those in your network may be hesitant to do so without understanding the basics of how to call, write and visit with policy makers. You can easily offer trainings and/or include this information in your electronic or print communications.

### STEP 3

*Mobilize your network*

*Ask your network to take action with policymakers*

*Encourage your network to reach out to potential supporters*

### STEP 4

*Feed your network*

*Keep sharing information*

*Maintain your list*

*Consider the effectiveness of your network*

- ▶ **Ask your network to take action with policymakers**  
Hearing from multiple constituents is the best way to influence the action of policymakers. When asking your network to call, write or visit policymakers, consider providing the following information. Your network is more likely to take action if you provide everything that's needed to do so.
  - ▶ **Suggested talking points**  
*This doesn't have to be anything fancy, but it is helpful to suggest a few points for your network to cover regarding the economic or human impact of the issue.*
  - ▶ **Contact information**  
*Be sure to provide contact information for the policymaker(s) that you want contacted.*
  - ▶ **Websites for additional information**  
*Identify website(s) that your network can visit to learn more about the issue and/or for tips on how to call, write or visit policymakers.*
  
- ▶ **Encourage your network to reach out to potential supporters**  
This is an opportunity for your network to involve potential supporters (or those not currently part of your network) about the policy issues of importance to your organization. Individuals in your network could present at community forums, to social or church groups, to volunteers, etc.
  
- ▶ **Keep sharing information**  
Make sure to keep up with the communication to your network regarding your policy issues even when you do not have a specific advocacy task. Consider sharing reports or policy updates of interest.
  
- ▶ **Maintain your list**  
Make sure that the contacts on your list are up to date. You don't want to send an email to 1,000 people that only reach 10 because of outdated addresses.
  
- ▶ **Consider the effectiveness of your network**  
Think about whether or not you are reaching your advocacy goals and consider if you need to add other individuals or organizations to your network (think also out of the box) and/or if you need to change your method of communication.