ADVOCACY DOs & DON'Ts

Texas Nonprofit Strong

DO

- Get to know your policymakers in advance of asking for their help.
- Let your policymaker know you are a constituent and if you have any previous/professional connection.
- Have one chief spokesperson who will manage all discussion during a large group meeting with a policymaker and/or staffer.
- Stay on message–time is limited, so be clean and concise. Make an ask–let them know what issue/bill you want them to support.
- Be (and sound) convinced of the essential value and importance of the issue you are bringing forth. You will never convince anyone else if you are not convinced yourself.
- Emphasize local examples and the local impact of any legislation–use stories as well as data. Policymakers want to know how a bill will impact their district.
- Share material via chat during the visit (if appropriate) as well as via email as a follow-up with your policymaker and/or their staff. Provide information about how to get in touch with you later.
- Let your policymaker and/or their staff know if you do not know the answer to their question. Tell them you will follow up with the information they requested.
- Write a thank you note to your policymakers and/or their staff for meeting with you, and be sure to thank them if they support your position on a bill or an issue.

DON'T

- Be late. Policymakers and staff are very busy during session and their schedule may be tight.
- Mislead or give your policymaker false information. If you do so unknowingly, go back and admit your mistake.
- Send form letters; they are usually disregarded.
- Get off topic. Make sure to stay on message and focused on sharing information and making an ask.
- Get drawn into any confrontation with a policymaker and/or their staff that appears to be "dead-ended" or "partisan."
- Belittle those who disagree with you. On the next issue, they may be on your side.

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