Advocacy Works! Organizing for State Legislative Victories

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance - Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy and affordable home.
Today’s agenda

• Introduction with spotlight on recent victories
• Sneak peek: 2021 state legislative priorities
• Tips for Successful Advocacy *Will include live discussion!*
• Get involved! Overview of advocacy opportunities
• Advocacy in practice: take action today!
• Q&A
Recent Big Wins for Affordable Housing & Homelessness!

- $240 million for the affordable homes!!
- $30 million increase for Housing & Essential Needs rental assistance!
- Eviction reform!
- Statewide COVID eviction moratorium!
- $100 million for rental assistance!
- Move-in fee installment plans!
Advocacy made those wins possible! How?

- Advocates are electing housing champions to state level offices!
- Advocates are delivering consistent & strategic message!
- Lawmakers are hearing from local advocates throughout the year!
- Voices statewide are demanding action!
- Persistent advocacy has been building for years!
Sneak Peek! Top 2021 Top Priorities!

• **Increase and Preserve Affordable Housing:**
  Invest $250 million into the Housing Trust Fund to build safe, healthy, permanently affordable homes statewide!

• **Keep people in their homes and prevent an increase in homelessness:**
  Pass statewide protections against discriminatory and arbitrary evictions (good cause termination requirements) and prevent evictions based on nonpayment of rent accrued during the COVID economic recession.
Advocacy is needed all year-round!
**Interim**: The intervening time between legislative sessions.

**Session**: The time when lawmakers are convened at the State Capital. Starts the second Monday of each January (1/11/21).

**Biennium**: The state runs on a two-year budget cycle. Each odd-numbered year is the primary budget writing year and those sessions are 105 days long. Even-numbered years are the second half of the biennium and those sessions are only 60 days long.
Work with a nonprofit 501c3 organization? You can still advocate!

- Advocacy: Educating on an issue = **No limits.**

- Lobbying: Advocating for a specific piece of legislation or budget = **Some (generous) limits.**

- Campaigning: Helping get someone elected = **Not allowed! But you can do this on your personal time!**

Learn more: Alliance For Justice - Bolder Advocacy at bolderadvocacy.org
Tips for having a successful lawmaker meeting!
Helpful Information to Know Before Meeting With a Lawmaker

• Does the lawmaker serve on any key policy committees?
• Do they hold a leadership position within their caucus?
• What bills have they sponsored?
• What is their voting record?
### Representative My-Linh Thai (D)

**41st Legislative District**

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<tr>
<th>Home Page</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Details</th>
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**District Office**

1200 12th Avenue S  
Suite 801  
Seattle, WA 98144  
(206) 435 - 7034

**Olympia Office**

424 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504  
(360) 786 - 7926

**Committees**

- Civil Rights & Judiciary (Vice Chair)  
- Education  
- Health Care & Wellness
Know what you want to accomplish with your meeting:

• Develop a relationship?
• Educate the lawmaker?
• Make a specific request?
• Express concerns about their position?
• Thank them for something specific?
Who should attend the meeting?

• You! Be ready to share why you care about the issue.

• People directly impacted by the issue have especially important and unique expertise to share with lawmakers.

• Non-profit board members often have valuable perspectives about why these issues matter to the public.
Tips for effective communication: Be prepared!

• Have the “story of you” ready: short and clear statement on who you are and why you care.

• Have your ask prepared: “I hope you will vote yes on Senate Bill 2245.”

• Listen carefully and ask questions: “What leads you to that conclusion?”, “What might change your mind?”, etc.
Tips for effective communication: Challenge harmful comments.

• Don’t be afraid to challenge stereotypes or stigmas of homelessness. Polite, but clear communication is a key part of educating lawmakers. “95% of the people experiencing homelessness in our county are from here.”

• For more see https://www.wliha.org/toolkit
Tips for effective communication: Use reliable data that helps to illustrate the problem.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key Facts</th>
<th>230,395 OR 22%</th>
<th>$24,300</th>
<th>-163,726</th>
<th>$55,886</th>
<th>71%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renter Households that are extremely low income</td>
<td>Maximum income of 4-person extremely low income households (state level)</td>
<td>Shortage of rental homes affordable and available for extremely low income renters</td>
<td>Annual household income needed to afford a two-bedroom rental home at HUD's Fair Market Rent.</td>
<td>Percent of extremely low income renter households with severe cost burden</td>
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Data from the NLIHC Gap report: NLIHC.org
Tips for effective communication: Pitfalls to avoid.

• Don’t offer up other programs to cut in the budget. **Do** pivot back to the importance of your ask.

• Don’t spend most of your time making small talk. **Do** get to know the lawmaker, but make sure you have time to get to the point.

• Don’t use acronyms. **Do** offer to provide full background on the issue or program you want them to understand.
Michele’s top tip!

“You are part of a movement, make sure your comments reflect that. Don’t just talk about what you need, talk about what we all need.”
John’s top tip!

“Always remember to make a very clear ask of your lawmaker, and use that commitment to hold them accountable!”
“Tell your story!
Storytelling is very important. Make sure you have your two to three minutes ready to go, and highlight the particulars in the story that are most relevant. Also share how a program or bill would benefit you and how it would benefit others in your situation.”
- Mr. B, RAP Steering Committee, LD Lead
“Everyone is nervous when they talk to lawmakers, but they are human just like you and me. Mostly they don’t know the experiences that you go through. That’s why we tell our stories. They are the ones supposed to work things out for us, they’re the people we elected in.”

- Lisa Sawyer, RAP Steering Committee, LD Lead
“I have learned that voices like mine are missing in rooms where decisions are being made. Each time that I can speak for myself, I am lifting up my community, and creating space for other voices that have been excluded in the conversation but impacted significantly. For I have been given a microphone for the first time and I plan to use it to best serve my community.”

- Kati Ortiz, LD Lead
The Housing Alliance is a resource for engagement:

- “Learn at Lunch” educational webinars,
- Advocacy tools at www.wliha.org,
- Staff are available to provide support,
- Sign up for our emails and follow us on social media to stay engaged!
The Housing Alliance advocacy programs:

- Resident Action Project
- Board Advocacy Project
- Legislative District (LD) Leads
Get Active Today!

• Take action to prevent the expiration of the statewide eviction moratorium today!


AND Call Governor Inslee! 360-902-4111

• Share your story!
  - Have you received a no-cause notice to move?
  - Has your life been positively impacted by a state funded affordable home? We need your stories! JohnS@wliha.org
Any questions?
Contact us with questions and to get involved!

Michele Thomas, Director of Policy and Advocacy She/Hers
MicheleT@wliha.org

John Stovall, Member Organizer, He/Him
JohnS@wliha.org