Getting Ready for Advocacy Day: Advocacy 101 & Giving Testimony

Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day

Register now!

Thursday, Feb. 28th, 2019
Olympia, Washington
8:00 am - 4:00 pm


Join 600+ advocates for a powerful day of action.
- Meet your lawmakers, tell your story
- Learn about important housing bills and build your advocacy skills
- Stand with the growing movement for safe, healthy, affordable homes

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Agenda

• Legislative advocacy and tools
• Background on the legislature
• Take action!
• Tips on giving testimony
• Insight from advocate/organizer Chris Heer
What is legislative advocacy?

1. Lawmaker education, providing information
2. Relationship-building
3. Pushing for meaningful commitments, providing accountability
4. Using your power for inside-strategy
What is our role during Legislative Session?

Legislative Session goes fast; advocates must make their priorities visible.

Advocacy consists of five major roles:
1. Tracking bills and budget hearings—
   • Housing Alliance hosts bi-weekly Advocate calls and bill tracker
   • Legislature website: [http://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Calendar.aspx](http://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Calendar.aspx)
   • Sign-up for your legislators’ newsletters (find your legislators at app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/ )
2. Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day (NEXT WEEK!)
3. Action Alerts and calls to Legislative Hotline (1-800-562-6000)
4. Testify or sign-in pro/con at committee hearings
5. Lawmaker or LA meetings; host organizational members, board members
Sign-up for Action Alerts: wliha.org

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**Bring Washington Home Annual Fundraiser**

Join us as we celebrate the voices of our movement! By supporting our advocacy at Bring Washington Home, you're helping to do something extraordinary: boost the signal of our mission to ensure that everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home. There is no cost to attend Bring Washington Home, but guests will be invited to contribute a personally meaningful amount to sustain our work. **RSVP and get more info here!**

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**Resident Action Project**

The **Resident Action Project** (RAP) is organizing a statewide network of people who have personal experience with homelessness, housing instability, and the challenges of living on a low income - and together, we are building power to change public policy. As a RAP friend and member, you will gain organizing, advocacy, and policy skills. Want to get involved? **Learn more here!**

RAP is a joint project of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, and the Washington Housing Alliance Action Fund.

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**TAKE ACTION**

July 24, 2017 - 1:30pm
Tell Congress: Lift spending caps, and invest in homes!

**VIDEOS**

The Housing Alliance Story

**LATEST NEWS**

Housing Alliance statement of support for Seattle's proposed Fair Chance Housing Ordinance

Washington Low Income Housing Alliance Legislation pending before the Board of Supervisors
Agendas, Schedules, and Calendars

Committee Meeting Agendas
Daily, weekly (near and during session), and monthly lists of upcoming meeting agendas.

Committee Meeting Schedules
Daily and monthly schedules of upcoming committee meetings.

Past Committee Meetings
Previous committee meetings from the current calendar year, listed by date.

Calendars

Session Cutoff Calendar
Relates calendar dates to legislative days and notes session deadlines for committees and floor action.

Senate Committee Meetings / Floor Schedule
Links to weekly PDF files of the Senate schedule.

Floor Activity Reports
Bills currently being debated on the floor in the House and Senate (updated in real time), bills scheduled for floor debate with links to amendments, histories, bill text, and roll call votes.

Bill Introductions
Lists all introductions in the current calendar year.

Capitol Campus Activities and Events
Calendar of Events on the Capitol Campus (goes to Dept. of Enterprise Services website)
Bill Tracker: http://wliha.org/bill-and-budget-tracker
Meetings between staff and constituents
Meetings between lawmaker and constituents
Attending events in-district
Personal messages from constituents

“How important is it to understand constituents’ views and opinions?”

Source: “Citizen-centric advocacy: the untapped power of constituent engagement.” Congressional Management Foundation.
In-person issue visits
Individualized email messages
Phone calls
Visit from a lobbyist
Form email messages

Influence on policy decision

- A lot of positive influence
- Some positive influence

56
83
84
94
94

Source: “Citizen-centric advocacy: the untapped power of constituent engagement.” Congressional Management Foundation.

Direct communication makes the biggest impact on a lawmaker who hasn’t made a firm decision yet.

This makes individualized email and in-person visits critical.

Email blasts “give cover” for supportive lawmakers.
WA State Biennial Legislative Cycle

- 49 Legislative Districts—2 Reps + 1 Senator

Biennium—2-year legislative cycle

- Odd years—105 days, pass a budget for 2019-2021
  - 3 budgets: Operations, Capital, Transportation
- Even years—60 days, adjust w/supplemental budgets
- Special Sessions—30-day extensions if no budget passed
- *Interim—between sessions

49 Legislative Districts:

State Senate

49

State House

98

Democrats  Republicans
The structure of a mobilization message

Value
Problem
Solution
Action
Mobilization message => Pitch to lawmakers

The structure of a mobilization message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduce yourself</th>
<th>“Hi Rep/Senator ____. My name is _____ and I live/work in your district.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name the issue</td>
<td>“I’m here to talk to you about______. Are you familiar with it?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why it’s important to you;</td>
<td>“This is an important issue for me because…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the ask</td>
<td>“Will you vote yes?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning for and structuring a lawmaker meeting

CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING A LAWMAKER MEETING

BEFORE THE MEETING
☐ Designate someone to greet the decision maker and introduce them to the key people at your meeting, especially important if you are hosting a large event.
☐ Welcome the decision maker to the space if the meeting is not in their office.
☐ The person greeting should know what the decision maker looks like. Their webpage will have a picture of them. (See the previous section on looking up a legislator’s webpage.)

DURING THE MEETING
☐ Begin with introductions of everyone in the room, having each attendee introduce themselves with their name, relevant organizational affiliation, and how they are connected to the lawmaker’s district. For example, do you live there and/or work there, and/or serve people there?
☐ If you do not have a direct connection to the district, identify the particular knowledge or experience that you have about the issue. For example, you study laws that criminalize homelessness.
☐ Introduce the issue and be sure to ask if the decision maker is familiar with it. This will help you assess how much background information to give. Even if they say they are familiar with the issue, you should make the key points you want to share.
☐ Briefly and succinctly explain the issue. Explain why it is important and how it impacts you and your family (if relevant).
☐ Lead with values. For example: “Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, and affordable home.”
☐ Share anecdotes from those directly affected and direct service providers.
☐ Share relevant data. See the Country-by-County Fact Sheet on Housing Affordability from the Department of Commerce.
Step 1: Know your **AUDIENCE**

- Voting history
- Campaign commitments
- Committee and caucus assignments
- Priorities and key issues
- Legislative Aides
Step 2: Know your **GOAL**

- Prioritize issues to cover based on your ask.

- Don’t assume the lawmaker knows the issue (or bill).

- Stay focused—only share what they need to know.
Step 3: Develop the AGENDA & ROLES

Develop your AGENDA

- Introductions
- Meeting overview
- Personal stories
- The “Ask”
- Background info, response-reframe
- Thank you, follow-up

Identify your ROLES

- Facilitator
- Storyteller(s)
- Pitcher
- Notetaker
- Time-keeper
Join the Day of Action!

600 Million for Homes

Your voice matters! Your legislators need to hear from you. Take action for affordable homes by sending a message now! The more lawmakers hear from you, the closer we are to safe, healthy, and affordable homes for all.

Housing Alliance 2019 Priorities

- Invest $200 million in the Housing Trust Fund.
- Allow local communities to retain a portion of the state’s sales tax to invest directly into affordable homes. (HB 1406/SB 5646)
- Implement eviction reform (HB 1453/SB 5600) and require cause for tenancy termination (HB 1656).
- Increase the Housing and Essential Needs rental assistance program for adults with disabilities by $69 million.
- Make the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) more progressive (HB 1921/SB 5582)
Why is testimony important?

- Lawmakers care as much, if not more, about *stories* than statistics.
- They see your face, feel your emotions, they know you care. You showed up.
- Public Hearings are a critical point in the legislative process for advocacy.
- You are the expert – opportunity to educate lawmakers.
- Democracy in action.
- It’s empowering!
How does testifying work anyway?

- Nut and Bolts of the State Legislature and Public Hearings
- When will people be asked to testify?
- On the day of, what should people expect?
- If you can’t come in person, how else can you share your story?
Crafting Your Testimony – Essentials

- Say who you are
- Say why you are here
  (“I’m here to ask you to support House Bill…”)
- Share a brief personal story
- Relate your story to the bill
  (“This bill would alleviate this issue for me and many others by…”)
- Reiterate the ask
  (“Please vote yes on House Bill…”)
Crafting Your Testimony – Tips and Suggestions

• Tell your story, in your own voice
  • Use statistics strategically, but not always necessary
• Ask yourself, “What is my motivation?”
• Identify the problem and the solution
• Focus on the most relevant parts of your story - don’t try to cover it all. Make sure to relate it to the bill.
• Write it down, streamline it, stick to the script
• If nothing else, be clear about your ask
• Have multiple versions ready at different lengths
  • 3 min, 2 min, 1 min
• Work with Housing Alliance to coordinate stories
Special Guest

Chris Heer, 2019
Thank you!

**Upcoming webinars:**
Tues Feb 26, 12:00- 1:00 pm
“Understanding Evictions and Fighting Anti-Black Racism with Housing Justice”

**Volunteer Prep Parties:**
Monday 2/25 and Tuesday 2/26
5:30-7:30pm
Register here:
https://wliha.typeform.com/to/oZoU46

For more information, contact dimitrig@wliha.org