

Advocacy is key to helping your organization advance its mission. Here are a few ways you can integrate advocacy into every level of your organization. The Housing Alliance is here to help!

First steps to formalize your commitment to advocacy:

- Take the Board Advocate Pledge (tinyurl.com/BAP-Pledge);
- Sign up for email Action Alerts from the Housing Alliance at wliha.org;
- Include advocacy in Board member job descriptions;
- Establish a public policy subcommittee on your Board.

Before every legislative session:

- Endorse the Housing Alliance's legislative agenda;
- Schedule a briefing to hear about public policy priorities for the coming legislative session;
- Team up with the Housing Alliance to build an advocacy plan;
- Set up a phone-tree and/or email group for important advocacy needs;
- Keep an updated list of lawmakers who are in a position to impact your programs and services, including committee roles, party leadership, and legislative district.

Take action and maintain lawmaker relationships (1-2 hours/month):

- Share email Action Alerts with your board and staff, and use the Housing Alliance Bill Tracker (<http://wliha.org/bill-and-budget-tracker>);
- Coordinate with the Housing Alliance on talking points and to help schedule lawmaker meetings;
- Invite lawmakers to organizational events, and recognize the ways their work has advanced your organization's mission.

Advocacy is key to helping your organization advance its mission. Here is sample language you can use to help establish a culture of advocacy on your board. The Housing Alliance is here to help!

Sample language to include advocacy in a board job description:

“Public policy impacts our organization and those we serve; therefore each board member is expected to advocate for public policies that help the organization achieve its mission. Advocacy may include engaging in the legislative process, writing letters to the editor, attending and speaking at public meetings, and other activities that further public policy goals.”

Sample language to include advocacy in a Public Policy subcommittee charter:

“Because public policy impacts our organization and those we serve, achieving our mission includes working for public policy that furthers our efforts. This includes:

- Inspiring and engaging the full board in public policy advocacy;
- Monitoring progress on public policy priorities and keeping the board informed about advocacy opportunities;
- Identifying board advocacy priorities annually and bringing to full board for adoption;
- Developing an annual advocacy plan; tracking and reporting progress toward that plan.”

Sample Board Advocacy Plan:

“By October, we will identify up to three advocacy priorities for the board and adopt a resolution for each. We will share the resolution with the appropriate decision makers along with a letter signed by the board.

“Every board member will send at least one email to their state legislators before the start of the legislative session and at least one during session. The Public Policy subcommittee chair will follow-up with board members.

“By January, we will meet with all three state legislators from each district in our service area. When possible, we will hold these meetings at our program site and include a tour and an opportunity to meet program participants.

“At least three board members will attend Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day.”