

Why advocate?

To persuade others to support the causes you support. “If you believe in great things, you may be able to make other people believe in them, too.” ~*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

1. To provide accurate and timely information about the arts in your community so that decision-makers can make knowledgeable decisions regarding arts policy.
2. To raise the visibility and importance of the arts in public policy.
3. To incorporate the arts in state priorities of economic development, education, and community development.
4. To increase the allocation of resources in support of the arts.

Who can be the most effective advocate?

One individual can influence a key decision-maker. Effective spokespeople are:

1. **Passionate.** People who can speak with conviction on the issue. But passion should not be confused with irrationality or hostility!
2. **Board members.** People who know your organization, mission, and impact on the community.
3. **Audience members.** People who benefit from your programs and services, who are also constituents of the decision-makers that you’re trying to reach.
4. **Local leaders.** CEOs, elected officials, civic leaders, recognized in their communities for engagement beyond your own organization.

How to craft your message?

1. **Focus on one issue.** Laundry lists dilute the message.
2. **Get to the point.** If the message can’t be summarized in one minute (or one page), the core message is probably too long.
3. **Be specific.** State your position clearly and give reasons for your point of view. Personal experience is always best.
4. **Write/speak from the heart.** Avoid stereotyped clichés that might make your message look like a form letter or sound like a canned speech.
5. **Consider the audience.** Craft your message to speak to the audience where he/she is. Describe the impact (both pros and cons) that your issue has on the listener and his/her constituents.

How to deliver the message?

1. **Identify yourself.** Let your audience know who you are and what/who you represent.
2. **Justify the messenger.** Be able to explain why you are an appropriate spokesperson for the issue.
3. **Be prepared and polished.** Have notes if speaking to stay on point. Proofread written correspondence.
4. **Value their time.** Public hearings generally allot no more than five minutes per speaker. Decision-makers rarely allot more than 30 minutes for face-to-face meetings.
5. **Allow for follow-up.** Be sure to include contact information so the audience can follow up later with additional questions.