

The logo features the number '100' in a large, white, stylized font where the zeros are interconnected. Below the number, the word 'MILLION' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a black rectangular background with a distressed, hand-painted texture.

**100
MILLION**

**FREE.SAFE.EDUCATED.
UNITED STATES**

**POLICY &
ADVOCACY
TOOLKIT**



ADVOCACY 101

ONE OF THE MAIN GOALS OF THE 100 MILLION CAMPAIGN IS TO CREATE A GLOBAL YOUTH-LED MOVEMENT WHERE YOUTH CAN ADVOCATE TO ENSURE ALL CHILDREN, IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND GLOBALLY, ARE FREE, SAFE, AND EDUCATED. YOUTH HAVE THE POWER TO CREATE CHANGE AND WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT THAT.

“*ADVOCACY is when individuals and groups come together to mobilize for change to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Advocacy can take shape in a lot of different forms and at different levels. An individual can self-advocate for issues they care about or individuals and organizations can come together to build a coalition and collectively advocate for a cause.* **”**

THIS TOOLKIT WILL OUTLINE HOW YOU CAN IMPACT ISSUES IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY AND STATE TO MOBILIZE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.



UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Before you create an advocacy action plan, it is important to understand what the legislative process looks like in your area. The legislative process can vary between different cities or states, so do your research. If you don't know what a legislative process is, that's completely okay!



1. **Introduction & Referral of the Bill:** a Member of Congress introduces a bill and then it is sent to the relevant committee(s).
2. **Committee Consideration:** a committee may conduct hearings on a bill to provide committee Members and the public an opportunity to hear about the bill's strengths and weaknesses.
3. **House Floor Consideration:** the House debates and potentially amends the bill before voting on the passage of the bill.
4. **Senate Floor Consideration:** the same process takes place in the Senate.
5. **Resolving Differences between the Chambers:** a committee of both House and Senate Members work together to resolve the differences between House and Senate versions of the bill.
6. **Final Approval by House and Senate**
7. **Presidential Action:** the President has ten days to sign or veto the bill.

EXPERT ADVICE

They say an expert in something was once a beginner, and that holds true when it comes to advocacy. As a student, there is no doubt that you'll become an expert on the issue you care about in no time. However, you may not know where to start at the beginning of the process.

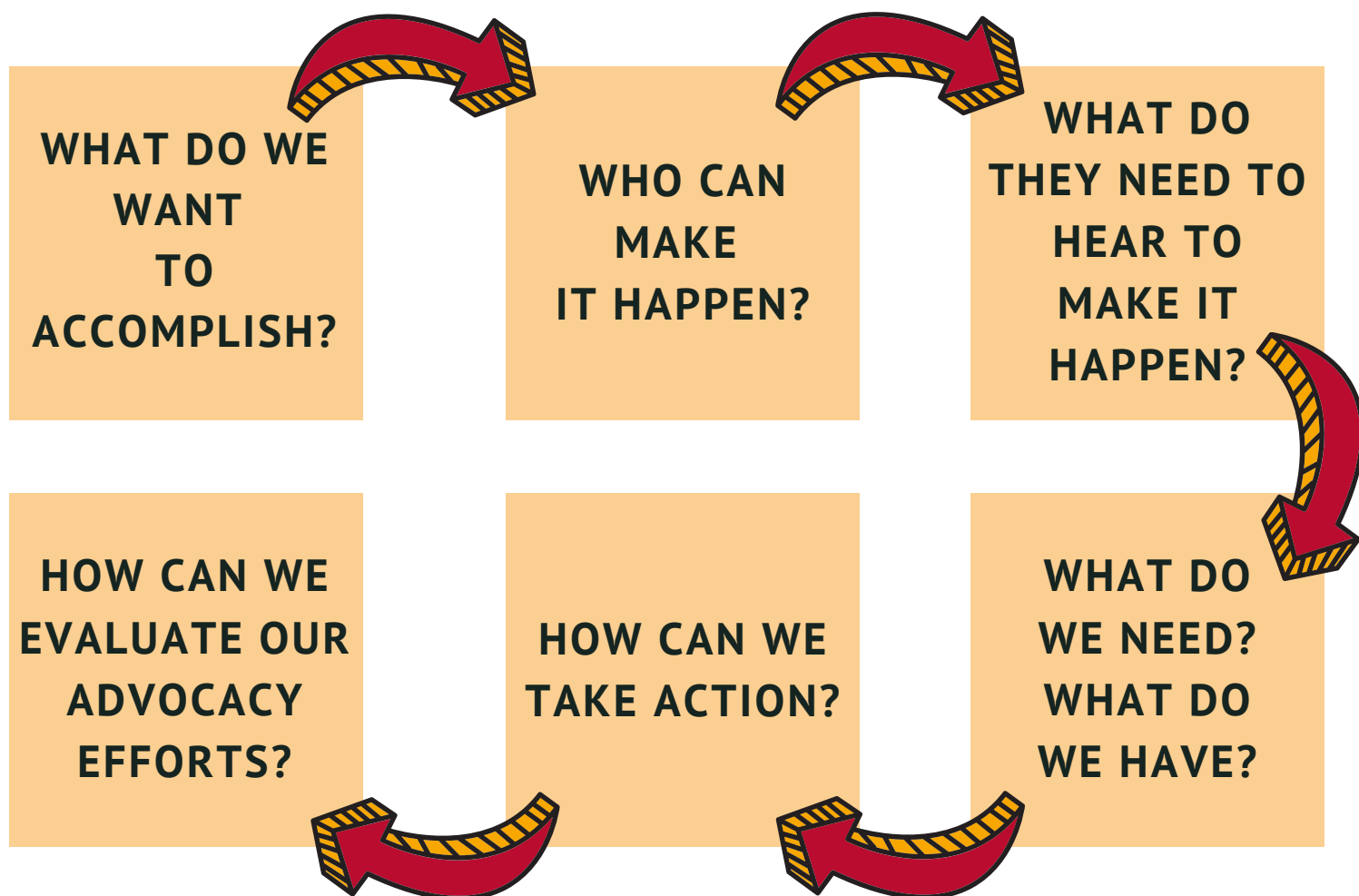
Rely on the experts in your community! Reach out to different organizations that are already working on the issue you want to advocate for and meet with them to learn more about the specifics. Have someone who works in government walk through the legislative process with you and your group. The more you know, the greater chance you have of creating change!

WHAT'S YOUR GOAL?



So you've figured out what you want to change in your community, studied up on the legislative process, and met with experts in the field to better equip yourself, now what?

ADVOCACY ROADMAP



By this point, you should already have an idea of what you want to accomplish. The next step is figuring out who can make it happen and moving on from there!

WHAT'S YOUR GOAL, CONT'D

WHO CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN?

Figuring out who can create change is important when coming up with an action plan. Depending on what you want to accomplish, a decision-maker could be anything from an elected official to an industry leader. For example, if you want to advocate for firearm restrictions in schools in your state, you would target state legislators; but if you want a certain company to change, you would target the executives of that company.

WHAT DO THEY NEED TO HEAR? FROM WHOM?

Depending on your different targets, what they need to hear may vary. It is always important to back up what you want accomplished with facts and stories, but also do your best to tailor it to your targets. For example, a state legislator might be more compelled to support your cause if she/he hears about how it directly impacts hers/his constituents.

WHAT DO WE NEED? WHAT DO WE HAVE?

This is a place for you to assess your resources. You might want to make a chart with needs and resources to brainstorm. You might need to do more research on how a particular issue impacts those in your community, but you might already have a bunch of student volunteers passionate about mobilizing people. This will help you assess what you might need to accomplish before you start advocating and where some of your strengths may lie.

HOW CAN WE TAKE ACTION?

What are different ways to take action? Depending on all the factors listed above, your advocacy may take many different shapes and forms. Refer to the next section for ideas and examples on different forms of advocacy.

HOW CAN WE EVALUATE?

While it is important to have a goal to work towards, it is just as important to evaluate your advocacy efforts as well. How many decision-makers were you able to engage? Did you get a particular legislation to pass?

DIFFERENT FORMS OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy can take place in many different forms with options for everyone; from planning a lobby day to simply emailing a legislator. Here are some different forms!



EMAILING & WRITING LETTERS TO DECISION-MAKERS

Emailing and writing to decision-makers is a great way to advocate for things you care about in an easy and convenient way. The support around an issue through letter writing and emails can act as a catalyst for change. This is something extremely useful if there is a current issue going on that you want a decision-maker to oppose or support.

CALLING YOUR DECISION-MAKERS

Calling decision-makers is another form of advocacy. This is also especially useful if you want the decision-maker to take action on a current issue. You will call the decision-makers office directly, and leave a short message if no one answers. Often times, calls are only to garner support or opposition and don't require a response from a decision-maker. You can have a script prepared to be able make the calling process easier.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH DECISION-MAKERS

A social media campaign is a great way to garner support and raise awareness around a particular issue. You can launch a Twitter campaign to get a powerful hashtag trending that's associated with your cause or launch a story series on Instagram with those that are directly affected. Social media is a great way to reach a larger audience and garner more attention.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF ADVOCACY, CONT'D

MEETING WITH A DECISION-MAKER

Meeting with a decision-maker is another form of advocacy that requires a little bit more planning than calling and writing. Meetings are a great idea if you would like a decision-maker to sponsor a bill or support you in some capacity. You can use a similar email template as the one below to request a meeting. Because of a decision-maker's schedule, you might be meeting with a staff member of theirs. Nonetheless, it is important to be prepared and keep the following things in mind:



These meetings are typically short (30 minutes or less) so it's important to come prepared with what you plan to cover.



Come up with an agenda for the meeting and bring any important handouts (i.e. fact sheets, testimonials, etc.)



If you're going as a group, facilitate a mock meeting prior to the real one. This will allow everyone to know their role and when to speak.



Don't forget to send a thank-you note after and follow-up!

ADVOCACY / LOBBY DAY

Planning a lobby day to advocate for important issues can be a lot of work but also provide great pay off. A lobby day is when individuals and organizations come together and spend a day meeting with decision-makers at different levels to advocate for a particular issue or cause.

EXAMPLE EMAIL



Subject: [State your ask (i.e. opposing or support a bill)]

Dear [Name]:

My name is [Your Name] and I am [Your Title] who [explain what you are writing to them about].

[Go into detail about your ask here. Choose up to three of the strongest points that support your position and state them clearly. Include a personal story. Tell your elected official why the issue is important to you and how it affects you and your community.]

[Repeat your ask here again concisely and thank them for taking the time to reach your letter.]

Sincerely,
[Your Name/Group Name]



EXAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is [Your Name]. I'm a constituent from [state and city you're from].

I'm calling [Name of elected official] to talk about [Name the bill or the specific issue].

[Explain in a few sentences why you support or oppose a piece of legislation and what you think your representative should do.]

Please vote [YES/NO] for [the cause]
[If asked for a response]

Thank you for your time and your hard work!



TIPS:

Prepare your call by writing down the main points you want to get across.

Call the local office unless if you are calling about an imminent vote, then call the Washington, DC office. You can find your Member of Congress's number here: <https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>

Let them know that you are a constituent. Elected officials are most interested in your opinions if you are their constituents.

Add your own words. Use your personal experience to explain how this bill will affect you and your community.

Be brief and concise.

CHECKLIST



Read the Advocacy Toolkit!



Figure out what issue you want to mobilize people around.



Learn about and understand the legislative/change-making process.



Seek expert advice on the cause you're passionate about.



Complete an advocacy roadmap.



Figure out what form of advocacy you want to coordinate efforts for.



Start advocating for children's rights and ensuring all children are free, safe, and educated!

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