



## Advocacy Education Series: General Advocacy Tips

**Learn the System.** Each legislature has subtle nuances and particularities that set it apart. Getting involved with more seasoned advocates and learning about previous efforts in the legislature will help you avoid wasting time and effort on ineffective strategies.

**Prepare Your Personal Story.** Make a list of all the points you want to make and the examples and data that back them up so that you can organize your story in a way that bolsters your core argument. If you are meeting in person, practice your talking points with a friend or colleague.

**Be Flexible.** Know where you can compromise and be firm on areas where you can't. Be ready to work with different groups and legislators to increase your odds of success.

**Be Patient.** It takes time to change a law or get a new one passed. Any new law needs to be carefully considered before being implemented to minimize unintended consequences. Bills very rarely pass in one session. Trust that you are making progress and keep pushing forward.

**Make Your Ask Clear.** When you communicate with your elected officials, make sure they know exactly what you are asking them to do.

**Never Make Up an Answer or Give Incorrect Information.** Policymakers need to trust their resources. If you inadvertently give incorrect information, or things have changed since you met with your legislator, contact their office with the correct/updated information.

**Be Polite and Gracious.** Always make sure to thank legislators and staff for their time and efforts. Be gracious when your legislator is able to help you and be understanding when they are not—you do not want to burn any bridges.

*For additional guidance or questions, please contact Monica L. Reid, Senior Director of Advocacy, at [mreid@nacdl.org](mailto:mreid@nacdl.org).*