NONPROFIT ADVOCACY: Using Data in Advocacy

Purpose: Your data can strengthen your advocacy. Identify which type of advocacy you are pursuing, then follow three steps to integrate data into your process. Check out these emPower tools for additional advocacy support: *Nonprofit Advocacy Overview, Policy Basics for Nonprofits,* and *Levels of Nonprofit Advocacy in Washington State*.

What is Nonprofit Advocacy?

Nonprofit advocacy aims to address root causes of problems to directly or indirectly shape public policy on behalf of a group of people.

Type		Audience	Goal
👤	**Community**	Like-minded organizations, community members	Build and maintain coalitions; educate the public about an issue
⚖️	**Legal**	Legal field (scholars, courts, judges, lawyers)	Start/support public interest court case; offer expert testimony; educate legal field on the issue
🤝	**Lobbying**	Public officials (local, state, national)	Influence a specific piece of legislation by petitioning lawmakers or via petition campaigns

3 Steps to Use Data In Advocacy

First, **review your data**; then **brainstorm advocacy goals** linked to your data findings; and finally, **link data with your goals** to draft an advocacy plan. This process works well when incorporated into your organization's strategic planning process.

💡 **Tip: Watch for Policy Windows!**

	Question	Example
① **Review Your Data** Answer **questions** to review data insights and decide if more / better data is needed	Where are you doing well? Where can you improve?	Your organization has improved its breastfeeding rates at birth from 80% to 90% over 5 years
	What is the story when you consider your data by population, location or services?	Rural locations and certain racial groups lag behind their peers in breastfeeding rates
	How does your organization look compared to local, state or national averages?	Your org leads the state in breastfeeding rates, though your state is below the national average

*A **policy window** is an unpredictable opening in the policy process that may be a chance to advance your issue*

EXAMPLE 1:
A transgender person is kicked off an airplane for breastfeeding, igniting pushback

EXAMPLE 2:
Your new Board member has a close friend in the legislature who cares about your issue

Advocacy Type Examples

		Community Advocacy	Lobbying Advocacy
2 Brainstorm Advocacy Goals	Short-Term Goal	By *June*, we will hire 5 more lactation support specialists	In *six months* we will recruit two partner orgs to form a paid family leave advocacy coalition
Using data from step 1, begin to brainstorm advocacy **goals**	Intermediate-Term Goal	In *one year*, we will increase breast-feeding support services by 50%	In *two years* we will present a formal family leave proposal to legislators and launch a digital awareness campaign
	Long-Term Goal	In *five years*, we will increase breastfeeding rates in our area to 90%	In *five years*, a paid family leave plan will provide 12 paid weeks off after a new baby joins the family

SMART Goals
Set SMART goals to focus your efforts & increase your odds of achieving them.

- **S** **SPECIFIC**: Well-defined, clear, unambiguous
- **M** **MEASURABLE**: Progress easily measured
- **A** **ACHIEVABLE**: Attainable considering your tools and resources
- **R** **RELEVANT**: Aligns with core values, mission & vision
- **T** **TIME-BOUND**: Has a set deadline

3 Draft an Advocacy Plan
Identify advocacy **actions** that connect to your goals

Community Advocacy	Lobbying Advocacy
Start or **join** a network of lactation support specialists working to raise parent awareness about breastfeeding	Launch a client survey to collect experiences and hardships without paid family leave
Develop a digital campaign to influence pregnant parents about health benefits of breastfeeding	Identify target legislators who will champion a leave policy and set up a meeting

For your toolbox!

Advocacy One-Pagers

What it is: Offers a concise overview of your organization, issue, and goals.

How to use it: Use to help facilitate meetings with legislators or staffers and leave it behind to remind them of your issue.

It should include: A summary of your organization, the problem, sources / references if applicable, the proposed advocacy solution, how the legislator can help, a list of supports, and your contact info.