



Successful Advocacy: Making Your Voice Heard

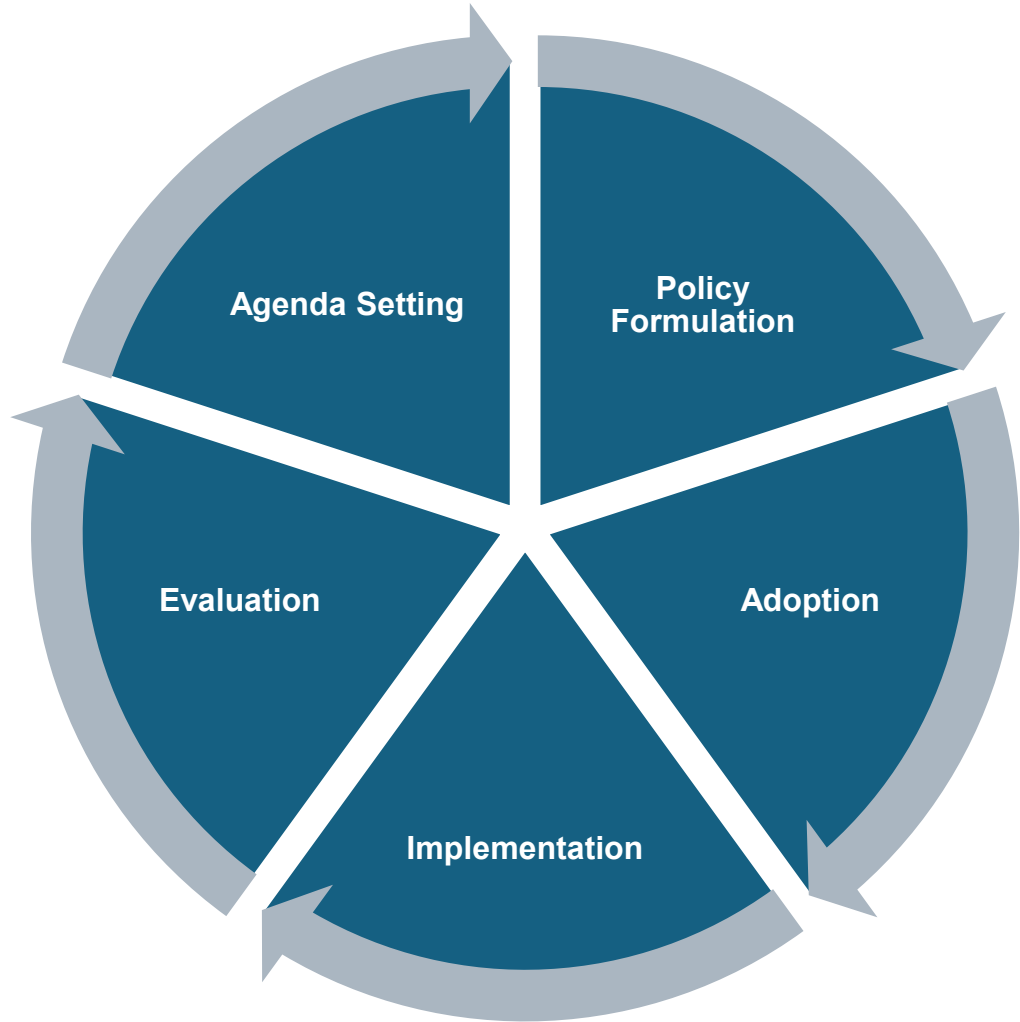
April 9, 2026



Agenda

- Introductions & Background
- Policymaking Cycle & Advocacy
- Setting Up a Meeting
- Effective Meetings with Lawmakers
- Storytelling
- Storytelling Exercise
- Importance of Follow-Up
- WMFHA's Role

Policymaking Cycle & Advocacy



Asking



Thanking

Setting Up a Meeting

- Have a clearly stated purpose and goal
- Come with solutions, not problems
- Work through staff and remain persistent
- Understand that plans can change
- Common meeting length is around 15 minutes



A Winning Meeting Formula

- 01 State Your Business**
- 02 Explain Your Reasoning**
- 03 Provide Impact on Business/City/District**
- 04 Tell Stories**
- 05 Restate Your Ask**
- 06 Listen for Comment**
- 07 Follow Up**

Research Beforehand



Legislative Profile

- Political party
- Are they in leadership?
- What committees are they on?
- What are their policy priorities and interests?



Relationships

- Do you have the same college affiliation?
- Are they from your hometown?
- Do you know a member of their staff?
- Do you know someone that knows their spouse?



Personal Profile

- Religion
- Professional Associations
- Family interests
- Clubs
- Interests
- Day Job

Top 10 Tips for Effective Lawmaker Meetings

01

Be Cool

Staff report experiencing rude or unprofessional constituents

02

Focus on ONE issue at a time

If you present multiple issues, elected officials often prioritize your list themselves and choose the easiest piece that may not be your most important ask

03

Provide Info Lawmakers are seeking

What do you want me to do? Start pitch with your desired outcome. Why Do you Want That? Your reasoning to your ask. How will that impact my district? More economic, numbers, logic backing. How will this impact my people? Give specific examples of people who agree.

04

Use your meeting materials effectively

2/3 members believe that materials they are given is unhelpful. Focus on 1-2 page issue summary. Prompt them to ask you to send/follow up props or reports.

05

Research legislator beforehand

Make sure you understand their district, committee assignments, and voting record. **Never ask them to do something they are already doing.**



Top 10 Tips for Effective Lawmaker Meetings

06

Avoid Meeting in mobs

2-3 is perfect for getting point across in most effective way. If you exceed numbers, advocate as TEAM. Ensure you agree on strategy, give positions: Lead, Storyteller, Conveyer of local impact, subject expert, reporter.

07

Know your opposition's argument

Understand negative consequences if they are there, increase backup that you are position expert.

08

Expect tough questions

You have control with what you want to ask, and control you want to have. Remember, ABC "Acknowledge (glad you asked, good question) Bridge (However, I'm here for this issue) Communicate (I'm asking for your support and contribution)

09

Listen for commitment

You have to have the ask in order to receive their commitment. Firm: Can we expect to see you listed as a co-sponsor of this bill?

10

FOLLOW UP

Without follow up, this was all just a meeting. Make arrangements for a follow up with the staffers before the meeting even takes place. Let them understand you are more motivated and organized than the opposition.



Effectiveness of Storytelling

- Human beings react to emotions, not rationally
- Attention Span
 - 1980s: 22 seconds
 - 2016: 2.8 seconds
 - Goldfish: 9 seconds
- FIRST - what's the point?
 - If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there



Storytelling Elements

Set the Stage
& Establish
Stakes

Make It
Dimensional

Describe the
Challenge

Discovery

Describe
Victory

Finish with a
Hook

Storytelling Elements

Set The Stage & Establish the Stakes

- Use a hook!
- Establish context for the life you'll describe

The Discovery

- Surprise the legislator
- This is what challenges people's worldview
- Wait until it has the most impact
- Balance the past & present

Make it 3 Dimensional

- Frame the narrative, use adjectives
- Make it real, don't be afraid to be graphic
- Don't hold anything back

Describe Victory

- Invite policymaker to be on winning team
- Describe what winning looks like
- The hero (policymaker) wins

Describe the Challenge

- Identify the Conflict
- Concerns can be mental, philosophical, emotional, physical, and internal

Finish with a Hook

- Have ending sentence clearly memorized
- Exercise restraint - know it's the ending.
- Don't try to fill awkward silence, allow time to respond

Storytelling Exercise

- Split in to roughly equal groups
- Each group chooses a policy you'd like to speak for or against
- Formulate a 3-5 minute story using storytelling elements that supports or opposes the policy
- Pick one person out of your group to deliver your story to the rest of the room
- Be ready to point out storytelling elements

Choose a Policy to Support or Oppose

- Statewide ban on cellphones in schools until the age of 18
- Statewide certified mail requirement for rent increase, lease renewal, and eviction notices
- Countywide requirement for A/C in every rental unit's bedroom or else the unit is condemned

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Importance of Follow Up

- Block time for follow up before meetings
- Recruit colleagues for assistance
- Plan thank you communications in advance
 - ◆ Email, Social Media
 - ◆ Best Time: Nights & Weekends
- Consider how to get staff to ask “can you send me that?”
- Answer anything you couldn’t in your meeting
- Research future district events
- Never take no (or yes!) for an answer!
- Stay informed and ready to resume contact
- Thank them for their time
- Take business cards
 - ◆ Legislative Director
 - ◆ Chief of Staff
 - ◆ Legislative Assistant
- You said you’d sponsor...
- If they don’t hear from you, it will feel like it wasn’t important
- Remember them from year-to-year

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**Learn more about
WMFHA Advocacy!**



Legislative Links & Communications

Look for our monthly e-newsletter, weekly recap during session, Action Alerts and more

Resources:

- <https://www.wmfha.org/legislative-agenda>
- [WMFHA.org/news/advocacy-news](https://www.wmfha.org/news/advocacy-news)
- <https://leg.wa.gov>

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Thank you!

Questions?



WMFHA Political Action Committee (PAC)

A PAC is a platform for political fundraising.
WMFHA Members can elect to contribute

- These funds help create and maintain relationships with elected leaders and candidates who are friendly to multifamily issues.



**ACCESS
LEADS TO
SUCCESS**



By participating in races across the state, WMFHA can continue to be a policy leader with a seat at every table, both locally and statewide.

Unlike many PACs, we are non-partisan, which means, we don't support republicans or democrats, **we support champions of the industry.**