



AUGUST ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Local Outreach Opportunities

Updated: July 23, 2015

Congress is currently considering several tax policy proposals with significant implications for philanthropy and its effectiveness in addressing some of society's most pressing challenges. You play a critical role in ongoing efforts to educate policymakers about how philanthropy helps build thriving communities.

Engagement with Elected Officials

One-on-One Meetings

Request individual meetings with key staffers and/or Congressional members in district offices to reinforce the negative local impact of tax policy changes. You can include other nonprofit, foundation, or community leaders who share your perspective and can compellingly talk about the negative impact tax policy changes will have, as well as Board Members or others from your organization (see Recruit Allies, below).

Site Visits

Invite elected officials on site visits and demonstrate the power and local impact of charitable giving on the community. Site visits provide elected officials with a concrete understanding of how local programs and services are helping their constituents, and personalize the negative impact tax policy changes can have on these programs and their constituents.

Be sure to include key community leaders and advocates, as well as beneficiaries and donors. Site visits can also be promoted to the local media, but, before engaging the press, be sure to coordinate with the offices of elected officials.

Mailing Lists

Make sure that your member of Congress and relevant staff receive copies of your annual report, newsletters, e-mail updates, and other materials. But don't just send these materials "blind", make certain to include some context (a handwritten note drawing their attention to a particular aspect of a report, etc.) and reinforce personal contact.

Events

Invite elected officials and/or key staff to events in their districts that feature and/or celebrate local programs and services, and the constituents that depend on charitable giving.



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Recruit Allies

Starting with your Board of Directors, Founders and other influential leaders from your organization, identify individuals willing to connect with your Member of Congress and make a personal connection while telling the positive story of your organization and underscoring its value in the community.

Media Outreach

Members of Congress follow local news coverage closely. Through effective media outreach, you can raise their awareness that philanthropy is creating innovative solutions and making positive impact in your community.

Letter to the Editor

Send a brief letter (typically 200 to 250 words) to the editorial page editor of your local newspaper in response to relevant news coverage or editorials, and raise awareness about your organization's efforts to strengthen your local community.

Press Release

Inform local media outlets about the impacts of philanthropy in your community. Emphasize the real, potentially negative consequences on the community if lawmakers enact tax policies that could harm philanthropy's effectiveness. By sharing key data or issuing a public statement about policy debates in Washington, you can convey to Congress—and to your member—that your organization is fully engaged in conversations on the Hill.

Op-ed

Submit an op-ed (typically 550 to 750 words) to the editorial page/op-ed editor to educate your community about your work and to encourage lawmakers in Washington to support their community by protecting the impacts of philanthropy here in their district.

Editorial Board Meeting

Arrange a meeting with members of the editorial board from your local paper to highlight the impact of philanthropy and the consequences of policies that hamper the sector's ability to do its job. Editorial support can have a significant impact in shaping opinions and prompting action. As with the one-on-one meetings with elected officials, it may help bolster your case and strengthen the effectiveness of your message to bring one or two selected individuals with you:



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someone who has been positively affected by your organization; a board member who can contextualize the organization's impact within the broader community.

One-on-one Reporter Meetings

Connect with influential reporters for one-on-one discussions or interviews, and raise awareness in your community about tax policy decisions made in Washington. You also want to make sure that journalists view you as an important source of ongoing information about the issues impacting your community.

Social Media

Engage in and activate a targeted outreach/activation campaign on social media; this provides you with the ability to identify and connect with likely allies, participate in conversations in the online space on issues important to you and engage lawmakers in those discussions. *For more, see [Social Media and Online Outreach Opportunities](#).*