

Exercise – Advocacy Organization Superheroes

Purpose: To get teens to think about what qualities make up a strong advocacy organization and to understand how advocacy works.

Break students up into 3-5 person groups

Materials for each group:

- “Funding Advocacy Efforts” worksheet
- Butcher Paper
- Markers

Step 1: Break students up into 3-5 person groups

Step 2: Advocacy Statement

Have each group identify a specific area where they wish to be an advocate i.e. Not education but “education for foster youth in Washington D.C.” = advocacy statement. Write advocacy statement at the top of the page.

Step 3: Exercise explanation

“Drawing upon what we have just learned about advocacy and advocacy organizations, I would like you to design an ‘Advocacy Superhero.’ This superhero will personify the qualities that you feel are important for a strong advocacy organization.

As an example, if an organization has “vision” for the future, you might want to draw big eyes or if they are able to reach many people through their advocacy, you might draw a large mouth or long arms. Draw arrows to each feature and explain the meaning.

At the bottom of the page, please identify three ways that this organization will advocate for their cause. Draw the “advocacy activities” by which the organization will advocate for their cause ie social media, lobbying, meetings . . . and then identify:

1. How it will be accomplished
2. What types of groups you will be targeting
3. The goal for the advocacy
4. How it may connect to the other advocacy efforts

Please don’t forget to name your advocacy organization.”

Step 4: Sharing

Have each group share their finished product. Encourage questioning of each organization.

Funding Advocacy Efforts

Definition

The word “advocacy” comes from the Latin “advocare” and literally means “to call out for support.” Today the word is used to describe a particular democratic process, where individuals and groups take different actions to try to influence those who make decisions that affect our lives. Advocacy is also about standing up for an issue or cause you believe in, and trying to change people’s lives to build a better world. It is tricky to measure the impact of advocacy.

Advocacy is a process of:

- Identifying a problem
- Coming up with a solution to that problem
- Establishing strong internal and external support for that solution
- Implementing an effective plan

Advocacy Activities

- Publicized research
- Public education efforts
- Convenings
- Trainings
- Lobbying
- Nonpartisan analysis, study, or research
- Build relationships with legislators
- Educate legislators
- Nonpartisan voter education
- Social Media
- Public Service Announcements for TV and Radio

Why Fund Advocacy?

- Private dollars aren’t enough to solve societal problems
- Often need government funding which could require a change in legislation
- To make philanthropy more effective

Characteristics of a Quality Advocacy Organization

- Strong Leadership
- Solid, experienced staff
- Work in coalitions with other groups
- Successful track record
- Dedication to research
- Commitment to building positive relationships
- Skilled at communication

Example

