

Advocacy Progress Planner

An Advocacy & Policy Change Composite Logic Model at planning.continuousprogress.org

Advocacy Progress Planner component definitions.



Impacts

**What's the big picture?
What are you ultimately trying to achieve?**



Improved Services And Systems

Programs and services that are higher-quality and more accessible, affordable, comprehensive, or coordinated. When all is said and done, our work on policy is meant to improve the quality of services and systems through which government serves the public interest.

Positive Social And Physical Conditions

Better circumstances and surroundings for people, communities, and the larger web of life of which we are a part. These conditions may include reduced poverty, improved health, higher air quality, etc. Our desire to change policies – and therefore services and systems – all serves one higher purpose: to produce a better world.



Policy Goals

Thinking about Goals: What kind of policy change is needed?

Policy Development

Creating a new policy proposal or policy guidelines. Perhaps the issue requires a new policy approach; your goal is to articulate it in a form ready for decision-makers to consider. This may involve building consensus among

key issue experts, advocates, interest groups, potential opponents, decision makers, and those affected by the issue.

Placement on the Policy Agenda

The appearance of your issue or policy proposal on the list of issues that policymakers give serious attention. Your issue is on the radar screen for key decision makers -- but it's still a disturbingly small blip. Increasing its salience with constituents and decision makers can place your issue on the agenda, or move it higher on that agenda.

Policy Adoption

Successful passing of your policy proposal through an ordinance, ballot measure, legislation, or legal agreement. Your policy solution is ready for prime-time: it is well considered; it's

moving up the agenda; the political stars are aligned. Going for policy adoption is the right goal.

Policy Implementation

Proper implementation of a policy, along with the funding, resources, or quality assurance to ensure it. The policy is in place, but it's not being implemented well. Your goal is to fix what's wrong. Focus on the details. The implementation stage might also provide opportunities for adopting new regulations or policies (to fix those that are problematic).

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Tracking a policy to ensure it is implemented properly and achieves its intended impacts. The policy is being implemented, but you aren't sure that it's being implemented fully. Its ultimate impacts might be compromised or even undermined. Your goal is to put effective monitoring in place.

Policy Maintenance

Preventing cuts or other negative changes to a policy. A good policy is under attack – whether for budgetary or ideological or programmatic reasons. Your goal is to protect it.

Policy Blocking

Successful opposition to a policy proposal you do not support. A former policymaker remarked: "My job was to ensure that government did fewer stupid things on my watch." Perhaps that is your role. It is an honorable one.

Audiences

Thinking about your Audience: Who needs to hear your message? The more precisely you define your target audience, the better.

Elected Officials

Individuals elected to public office. Many – though not all -- policy decisions lie with current elected officials. Incumbents may need some convincing that the status quo is not as things should be. Try to determine as specifically as you can which officials are the key decision makers and which groups can best influence their actions. In general, of course, try to narrow your target audience as much as you can.

Candidates

Individuals running for public office. If current elected officials are the problem, perhaps it makes sense to concentrate on candidates for office who might bring a fresh perspective to the issues. You may want to reach out to candidates or their staff to discuss your issue and proposed solutions. Don't forget that elected officials are sometimes also candidates. This choice carries some potential legal consequences – or at least obliges you to be aware of the relevant tax code restrictions.

Public Administrators

Individuals in government agencies who administer, oversee, and manage public programs or funds. If administering or implementing a policy is the problem, you may need to focus on appointed or career officials rather than on elected politicians. Understand the pressures they work under and the solutions they might find appealing.

Voters

Individuals who are registered to vote, or more specifically individuals with an established voting record. Influencing candidates and elected officials is easier if your audience includes voters – and especially voters that incumbents and candidates need to persuade. Like you, politicians won't waste time trying to persuade the "unpersuadeable;" can you bring new voters to them?

Political Donors

Individuals and groups that donate to candidates, campaigns, and PACs. Donors can have influence with elected officials and candidates. See if you can work with them to help win support for your issues and solutions.

Specific Constituencies

Groups of people with shared interests, characteristics, or qualities, often because of where they live or what they do. We preach specificity for a good reason: to help advocates use their resources as effectively as possible. You don't have the funds to persuade the general public to agree with you; and you don't need to. Which "publics" or constituencies can help you achieve your policy goal? Who will carry the most weight?

Media

Individuals who generate news coverage for newspapers, radio, television, or websites and are in a position to include your issue in their coverage. Reporters, bloggers, editors and other media gatekeepers are an audience in themselves, and a means to reach the audiences to whom they speak. A good understanding of how the media portrays your issue will help you decide what to "pitch" and who to pitch it to. Can you develop relationships with particular gatekeepers? Can you take advantage of social networks and spread your messages using viral marketing? Remember to assess how media coverage connects to your overall advocacy strategy. Unpaid and paid media placements can support your other media tactics by, for instance, bringing more people to your Web site right when you have an urgent action for them to take. News media will be more receptive to your issue if they know the public is interested, so be ready with evidence and a local contact they can talk to.

Popular Culture Artists and Gatekeepers

Individuals who contribute to popular culture. Writers (song, screenplay, television), producers, directors, agents, and performers often are open to working with advocates. If this area is less familiar to you, consultants can work with you to gain access to this audience individually or through meetings sponsored by organizations such as the Writers Guild of America.

Business

Private-sector organizations or enterprises. Does your issue bear on core business interests in a specific sector? For instance, advocates on poverty, environmental, health care, and migration issues can articulate how each of these issues affects the bottom line. Is your issue affecting their business's competitive advantage? Are they addressing it as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts? Can their participation increase your impact on decision makers by providing the clout and prestige of business organizations, as well a "strange bedfellows" story line?

Community Leaders

Individuals who are influential in their communities, such as mayors, school board members, clergy, police chiefs, etc. "Zoom in" -- how does your issue affect local leaders and organizers? Has it changed the community in concrete ways? Often the most compelling

stories and actors -- even for global issues -- are found at the local level. The right local story can take an abstract issue and make it tangible and more credible. If you are working on a statewide or national campaign, your local story may propel the issue onto the national stage through strategic media placement.

Courts

The local, state, or federal forums where legal disputes are adjudicated. Perhaps your issue would be best served by enforcing or clarifying laws or rights that need firmer legal grounding, or simply legal defense, rather than a new law. Taking the issue to court can lend authority (and even publicity) to your cause.

Other Audiences?

Once more: Ask yourself: "What is the smallest audience that I need to engage in order to spur change on my issue?" The answer may yield other, even more specific audiences that will be key agents of change.

Inputs

Thinking about What You and Your Organization(s) Have or Need: What will it take to implement your strategy effectively?

Capacity Building

Fund Raising

Generating the public or private dollars you need to carry out your advocacy strategy. Cost out the advocacy activities carefully so that you aren't caught short. Make sure that your donors are informed of and comfortable with use of their contributions for this activity. If you expect that your policy goal requires a long-term strategy, how long until you will need additional resources to sustain your efforts?

Staffing and Leadership Development

Hiring or developing the people to implement your strategy and establishing a clear understanding of who is doing what. Identify your leadership and staffing strengths and gaps. Do you have good leaders, both at the top and on the ground? Is there a functional gap in staffing that a coalition partner can fill? Would it make sense to hire a consultant to fill skill deficits?

Skills Development

Getting the up-to-date knowledge and abilities needed to implement your advocacy strategy. Adding new advocacy tools or refining your use of current tools may require new skills. You can either get these skills through training or by engaging partners or consultants who already have them. Do you know how to build and run a coalition? Do you know how to draft legislative language? Do volunteer coordinators know how to organize Hill visits? Do campaign managers know how to record feedback in your new database software?

Infrastructure Development

Setting up the equipment, systems, and other nuts-and-bolts supports you need to advocate. Consider whether you have the operational supports you need. If achieving your policy goal will be a long-term process, think ahead to what you might need later. Will your plans stretch your e-advocacy database's capacity? Will your volunteer chapter leaders be able to handle additional phone traffic? Does everyone have the software they need to work with campaign documents?

Preparation/Planning

Data Collection

Gathering data you need upfront to plan, implement, or evaluate your strategy. Think carefully about any “baseline” information you will need to measure your progress both in achieving your policy goals and building your organization’s capacity. Let’s say you hope to sway public opinion on your issue by introducing a more persuasive way to frame the issue. Do you have the information you need about public opinion? Are you able to track the changes in public opinion that might result from your efforts? Do you know how many of your members or chapters are currently active on this issue? Do you know exactly where your work will be most effective?

Problem Assessment

Understanding the nature of the problem you’re addressing and how best to address it. You know why you are in business: to have a positive impact on society, and in particular to achieve change in your issue area. To increase your impact, you need a clear, specific understanding of the problem so that you can identify workable solutions. You also need to know the benefits and disadvantages of different policy solutions. How many people are affected by the problem and how many will be helped by the solution? Will changing the tax code, for example, ultimately affect more lives and be more sustainable than another policy solution that will be vulnerable to budget cuts every year? Do your policy solutions have a plausible chance of being adopted?

Policy Assessment

Assessing where your issue is on the policy agenda or in the policy process and what about it needs to change. Who has influence on your issue—the courts, legislative branch, or executive branch? Which committees are responsible for your issue? Your analysis may lead you to identify a policy that needs funding or improving or defending. Is current policy the problem? Are there better policy options available to be implemented? Is current policy good but poorly implemented? Is it a regulatory issue? Are you working to prevent the enactment of bad policy?

Landscape Mapping

Reviewing the policy and advocacy environment that surrounds and will affect your strategy. Most issues worth addressing are complex. A “mapping” process can help you articulate how your advocacy goal fits in the landscape of current policy debates. And it can help you weigh different advocacy options for reaching that goal. Are other organizations working on the same or related issues? Do they support your solutions or propose competing ideas? Are other issues on the horizon likely to knock yours out of the minds of the public or policymakers, or worse yet confuse these audiences? What results from past efforts – by your own and other organizations – are worth building on? **Check out our section on other Contextual Factors you should keep in mind.**

Goal Setting

Developing a clear understanding of what success will be and what it will look like. Your goals should meet the **SMART test**: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and tangible (or time-limited). Do you have a **theory of change** that articulates your major goals, the benchmarks you hope to reach along the way, and your underlying assumptions? Is your goal achievable in the current policy and economic climate?

Strategy Development

Planning systematically for how to position and maneuver in order to reach your goal. This whole “logic model” exercise is meant to help organizations develop a well-crafted strategy. You need a clear goal and an honest assessment of the current landscape and of what resources are available to you. Do you know how to get where you’re going based on where you are now? Do you have a contingency plan if circumstances change? Are you ready to act quickly if you must? That’s what strategy development – and logic models and theories of change – are all about. Committing time and effort to this process will pay off later; you’ll be glad you did.

Partner Development

Building formal or informal relationships with strategy collaborators and contributors. You know what is needed to reach your goal. And you know what you have. Do you need to add capacity by developing partnerships either informally or via an organized coalition? Do you have specific “asks” for new partners? Even if you don’t share a broad agenda, where do you share common ground with potential partners? Have you assessed their reliability? Have you identified point persons for each partner?

Message Development

Framing what you want to say, who you want to say it to, how you want to say it, and who you want to deliver it. Carefully targeted research with your audience(s) can help you identify ways of talking about your issue so messages will resonate. Your audience is more likely to absorb a consistent message, persistently delivered, using pre-tested language. Your messengers must be comfortable delivering this message, of course. And your messengers must be credible and convincing to your audience. (Do not take this for granted.)

Materials Development

Creating publications, brochures, websites, or other “communications collateral” to deliver advocacy messages. Creating effective materials requires an excellent understanding of your audience and of your capacity to reach them. It’s not what you say that matters; it’s what your audience hears. Develop materials with tested language that your audience can hear. The medium you choose matters as well; put your resources into formats your audience will find accessible and appealing.

Contextual Factors

There are many factors you can’t control that may affect your success. Take the time to factor them in...

Political Climate

Factors about the policy process and current policy and political environment that can affect your policy proposal’s success. Advocacy groups focus on their issue, as they should. But before launching a new campaign, step back and consider the broader political context: are key decision makers likely to be distracted by election battles? Are they recovering from a particularly bitter partisan battle or enjoying a moment of relative peace? Will your issue be visible in the next election? Will your proposal offer an opportunity for compromise and success? Should you be gearing your advocacy efforts to candidates, current incumbents, or both?

Economic Climate

Factors about the current or future economic environment or about the budget process that might affect the availability of funds to support your policy proposal. Some issues are especially sensitive to voters' economic prospects, or to perceptions about the economy and the budget. Can your policy proposal be cast as promoting sacrifice (via higher taxes or fees) at a time when constituents may already be squeezed? Have you suggested reasonable ways to raise revenues or create savings? Does the current climate favor budget-neutral policies? Will your issue face challenges within the budget process or intensify a budget fight within the government?

Social Climate

Current events, crises, tensions, or social movements that might positively or negatively affect your policy proposal's success. Another big-picture question: are there big social tensions that your policy solution might exacerbate or alleviate? Does race play a role in your issue, and if so, how are you planning to discuss it? Understanding this can help you frame your proposal more effectively. Advocates of bilingual education, for example, in 2006-7 faced a different climate as a result of fierce conflict concerning immigration reform.

Prior Experience

Your previous experience with advocacy generally or with advocacy on this particular issue. As you consider your organization's role in addressing the issue, assess candidly your prior experience with the issue, and with the tactics you plan to employ. Will your experience prepare you for this work or will your lack of experience have a potentially negative affect on your success? If so, how can you mitigate it?

Issue Competition

Other issues that are competing with yours for positioning on the policy agenda. As a famous pollster said, "Most people don't think about most things most of the time." Your issue is competing for your audiences' attention: in addition to their daily lives, of course, there will be many other issues advanced by advocates just as passionate as you. Take a moment to consider what else is out there. Can you time your effort to catch a moment when there may be less competition?

Potential Partners/ Competitors/ Opponents

Non-partner organizations or individuals who also are advocating on your issue, either for or against your position. Few organizations are the sole players in a field. With a clear sense of your organization's capacity, consider who else is out there. Are there potential coalition partners that might complement your strengths? Are there competitors or opponents whose actions you need to account for or reach out to as you shape your strategy? Hint: Consider re-running this logic model exercise from their perspective.

During: Activities/Tactics

Possible mouse over text for this heading: What Activities Are You Planning?

Policy and Politics

Issue/Policy Analysis and Research

Systematically investigating your issue or problem to better define it or identify possible solutions. Earlier, "landscape mapping" provided a baseline of information about the policy environment for your issue. It also helped you identify any needed policy changes. Gathering "political intelligence" or analysis and research during your campaign – whether

by your organization or a partner – allows you to stay current or anticipate opportunities for positive policy change. Continuing analysis also permits you to define and track indicators of progress towards your policy goals.

Candidate Education

Telling candidates about your issue or position - and about its broad or impassioned support. The purpose is to make the issue part of the election debate and to inform officials' decisions about it once elected. Candidates may be open to learning about new issues and perspectives, especially if they think that supporting your position could help their election prospects. Providing background and opportunities for open dialogue and debate are appropriate roles for nonprofit advocates. Consult resources like those from **Alliance for Justice** for more guidance on what is permissible, given your tax status and the state of play on your issue.

Relationship Building with Decision Makers

Interacting with the policymakers or others who have the authority to act on your issue and put change in motion. Relationships take time, honesty, and active listening. Getting your message to key decision makers requires patiently building up your access to them, directly or via their trusted advisors. If you can't get in the door, try to learn who can: this may be a time when "grassroots" groups need "grasstops" or other influential partners to help them be heard. If you can't make contributions to campaigns and PACs, you may want to create partnerships with organizations that can, as they often have access to elected officials.

Policy Proposal Development

Developing a specific policy solution for the issue or problem you are addressing. You may need to develop a new proposal where policy does not already exist. Or if your goals include changing prevailing policies, your tactical toolkit will include the ability to develop alternatives. Your policy development process should determine who your proposal will help (and potentially harm), how much it costs, and how it compares with other proposals and the status quo.

Litigation or Legal Advocacy

Using the judicial system to move policy by filing lawsuits or civil actions. For some issues and organizations, the courts are the appropriate battleground: class action suits may help those harmed by a policy; lawsuits may block or speed implementation of new regulations; even the threat of legal action may hasten needed change. Determine what court(s) might be receptive to your arguments. Consider the risks of litigation, including that a higher court's rulings could reverse past progress.

Lobbying

Attempting to influence legislation by communicating with a member or employee of a legislative body or with a government official or employee who may participate in forming legislation. The IRS distinguishes between direct lobbying and "grassroots lobbying," which means attempting to influence legislation by affecting the opinions of the general public or any segment of it. Direct lobbying is subject to legal limits, but remains a useful – and perhaps an essential – tool in the advocacy toolbox. Nonprofit groups may sometimes decide to count on coalition partners to lobby. Be clear about how lobbying limitations affect you and your partners.

Communications and Outreach:

Polling

Surveying the public via phone or online to collect data for use in advocacy messages.

Polling and other public opinion research like focus groups or in-depth interviews can reveal important baseline information about how your target audience feels – and talks - about your issue. If you will publicize the results as part of your communications, make sure your audience will perceive the organization conducting the research as credible.

Earned Media

Pitching the print, broadcast, or electronic media to get visibility for your issue or advocacy efforts with the specific audiences you wish to reach. Earned media is positive news coverage that you work to get. It includes coverage of your events or research, including “stunts” like a slogan projected at midnight on the State House walls. Placing op-eds, letters to the editor, or editorials on your issue costs you nothing but hard work. Blogging, a snappy piece of member-generated video, and other “social web” applications that encourage interaction among advocates can be another way to generate earned media.

Paid Media

Paying for media coverage through, for example, advertisements and “open letters.” The advantage of paid media is that you can craft your own messages and place them where your audience is most likely to see them. The downside: cost.

Public Service Announcements

Placing a non-commercial advertisement to promote social causes. Many media will place PSAs for free. For example, local network or public TV stations may be willing to run your video ads. One disadvantage of PSAs is that you can’t select when they will run or how often. PSAs tend to be most effective when they are part of a larger integrated communications campaign.

Media Partnerships

Getting a media company to agree to promote a cause through its communications channels and programming. The media company’s programming, PSAs, and web site content all can support the same goal. For example, Univision has media partnerships with advocates trying to ensure all eligible children are enrolled in preventive health programs.

Voter Education

Conveying your issue or position to specific groups of voters in advance of an election.

Electoral campaigns provide opportunities to reach voters as well as candidates at a time when policy issues may have unusually high visibility and salience. It is crucial to understand which group of voters you are trying to reach and why. As with candidate education, nonprofit organizations have plenty of latitude but need to understand what kinds of educational efforts are permitted.

Coalition and Network Building

Unifying advocacy voices by bringing together individuals, groups, or organizations who agree on a particular issue or goal. Your planning process may have revealed the need to complement your organization’s skills and expertise by forming a partnership or coalition with others who bring the assets you need. You may be able to realize the promise of network-centric advocacy – drawing flexibly and rapidly on the collective intelligence and assets of many more groups and individuals. Sometimes you will forge coalitions with like-minded groups that share your values and general issue positions; other times you may want “unlikely partners” that disagree with you on some issues but agree with you on your

specific advocacy goal. Working with unlikely partners often can strengthen your credibility with elected officials.

Grassroots Organizing and Mobilization

Creating or building on a community-based groundswell of support for your issue or position, often by helping people affected by policies to advocate on their own behalf. Decision makers often respond to home-grown demand. Grassroots organizing may mean reaching millions, or reaching the right hundreds – or even dozens – at the right time.

Rallies and Marches

Gathering a large group of people for symbolic events that arouse enthusiasm and generate visibility (particularly in the media). Rallies, marches and other forms of direct action are not for everyone and not for every organization. Depending on the scale, of course, rallies can require intensive logistical support and communications. Done well, they can earn the kind of media attention that few organizations can afford to buy. The most influential rallies and marches project consistent messages.

Briefings/ Presentations

Making your advocacy case in person through one-on-one or group meetings. You have crafted an excellent policy proposal, or a report documenting the failings of current policy and practices. Determine who needs to see it and find ways to convey your findings; remember that webcasts, video-conferencing, and even conference calls can extend your reach beyond print and in-person formats.

Demonstration Projects or Pilots

Implementing a policy proposal on a small scale in one or several sites to show how it can work. Organizations may conduct small demonstration projects to show the feasibility of their proposed change in policy or practice. And advocacy groups may monitor results and trumpet them in their communications with constituencies and decision makers.

Interim Outcomes & Benchmarks

What are the Benchmarks on the Way to your Goals for Advocacy Capacity and Policy Change?

Advocacy Capacity Benchmarks

Organizational Capacity

The ability of your organization or coalition to lead, adapt, manage, and technically implement the advocacy strategy. If you assessed your capacity at the outset of your strategy, you likely set some objectives for building certain capabilities that will help you achieve your policy objective – this time or the next time the policy window opens and conditions are right. You can't control the policy environment, but you can decide how to strengthen the internal assets necessary to react effectively and flexibly to setbacks and opportunities. Set interim benchmarks for those changes in your capacity.

Partnerships or Alliances

Mutually-beneficial relationships with other organizations or individuals who support or participate in your advocacy strategy. Tracking the health of your partnership or coalition will help you head off potential trouble: watch for active participation in coalition meetings; clear understanding of the division of labor among coalition members; and reasonably comfortable agreement over who puts in what, and who receives what. Does the group have

a mechanism for working through tough issues? Is the coalition more than the sum of its parts?

Collaboration and Alignment (including messaging)

Individuals or groups coordinating their work and acting together. Are you and your partners collaborating effectively by sharing information and staying on a common message? Tracking instances where this is occurring can help you make the case for continued funding. Identifying shortfalls can help you address problems early.

New Advocates (including unlikely or nontraditional)

Previously unengaged individuals who take action in support of your issue or position. Your advocacy message will have added impact when it comes from an unexpected messenger. Stretching your membership by engaging new constituents can get the attention of decision makers.

New Champions (including policymakers)

High-profile individuals who adopt your issue and publicly advocate for it. Individuals are drawn to causes that have the support of people they admire and respect. Develop policymaker champions with a track record for successfully drafting, amending, and passing bills. One foreign policy advocacy coalition knew it was on its way to legislative victory when it could command the support of both Bono and then-Senator Jesse Helms.

New Donors

New public or private funders or individuals who contribute funds or other resources for your cause. Recording new donors attracted by a campaign or other advocacy effort will help staff make the case internally for its continuation; as important, it can serve as evidence to policy decision makers of a serious constituency for policy change.

More or Diversified Funding

The amount of dollars raised and variety of funding sources generated. Armies run on their stomachs. Nonprofits run on funding. As with new donors, more funding or funding from more diverse sources allows the organization to build its capacity to achieve its policy goals. And it helps demonstrate to decision makers that the issue or campaign has "legs."

Organizational Visibility or Recognition

Identification of your organization or campaign as a credible source on your issue. Increasing your organization's visibility won't change bad policy. But it may be a legitimate benchmark if you are championing a new issue or new approach to policy. If that's the case, be sure to gather information about your visibility before you launch your advocacy efforts and then track it over time with the same audiences and measures.

Policy Change Interim Outcomes and Benchmarks

Media Coverage

Quantity and/or quality of coverage generated in print, broadcast, or electronic media. Attention in the news media is never an end in itself, but tracking the quantity and quality of coverage is a useful measure of progress. In addition to counting media impressions and web hits, remember to assess the quality of coverage. Are your talking points appearing where they did not before? Are you (or the issue) mentioned in media that reach your target audience? Is your perspective dominating or framing news coverage? Are reporters and columnists using your spokespersons?

Issue Reframing

Changes in how your issue is presented, discussed, or perceived. What's the big story that your issue evokes? If you are advocating for a community-based solution, but your audience has seen the community portrayed only as helpless (and apparently hapless) victims or somehow responsible for its own problems, some reframing is in order. Tracking your progress in telling a different story may require some specialized media content analysis. And it requires gathering careful baseline information in advance so you can track these changes in how the story is told.

Awareness

Audience recognition that a problem exists or familiarity with your policy proposal. Sometimes increasing awareness of an issue – or of your proposed solution – is a significant contribution. It is reasonably easy to establish a baseline beforehand, and to gauge your impact on levels of awareness over time among your audiences.

Salience

The importance your target audience assigns your issue or policy proposal. How does your issue stack up against the general noise of everyday life or even other issues in the same broad category in the minds of your audience? Even if your audience is aware that a problem exists, you won't get movement on your issue unless they also think it is important enough to address. If you are tracking this with public opinion research, be sure to pose your questions consistently over time, starting with before you begin your advocacy effort.

Attitudes or Beliefs

Your target audiences' affect toward your issue or policy proposal. Awareness of an issue or its gravity is just one part of public opinion. For many issues, your advocacy needs to shape underlying attitudes, perhaps combating false or negative beliefs that may block your audience from understanding the issue and your proposal. By understanding your audiences' beliefs, you are better able to address problems and propose solutions in ways that inspire them to act.

Public Will

Willingness of your target audience (non-policymakers) to act in support of your issue or policy proposal. Generating "public will" requires that your audience be willing to act on your issue's behalf. Measuring it precisely is difficult, but organizations can track progress using benchmarks such as participation in public hearings; questions to candidates for elected office; turnout at rallies and public meetings; number of letters and emails sent to elected officials in response to a call to action; priority accorded to an issue on a ranked list, etc.

Political Will

Willingness of policymakers to act in support of your issue or policy proposal. When advocates say that "the only thing standing between us and our goal is a failure of political will," it's a signal that the desired change is something that elected officials perceive as costly – measured, ultimately, at the ballot box. Increases in public will – that is, a clearly demonstrated desire for change from members of the public, and especially members of the voting public and those who donate to campaigns and PACs – can be tracked and demonstrated to politicians. Increases in political will may follow.

Constituency or Support Base Growth

Increase in the number of individuals you can count on for sustained advocacy or action on your issue. Growth in the support base for a policy change can be a measure of increased advocacy capacity for the group that nurtured this growth. A specified increase in the

constituency for an issue is a significant benchmark along the way to meeting your policy goals.