

# ADVOCACY AUDIT

In the advocacy space, activity is sometimes considered an indicator of whether advocacy is working, which is not exactly a sophisticated way to measure impact or assess whether you have the right tools in place. Here's a quick five-step audit you can use to identify gaps and find opportunities to elevate your advocacy efforts.

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## STEP 1: DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT CHAMPIONS (OR CHAMPIONS AT ALL)?

There is no doubt: If you do not have congressional champions, it's nearly impossible to move an issue forward in Congress. Champions are important, but the right ones are critical. **Evaluate whether your champions are well-positioned on the key committees, committed to the issue, well-liked among their peers, able to work across the political aisle, and are making your issue a priority in their own agenda.**



## STEP 2: DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT MESSAGE?

Congressional members and staff—the consumers of advocacy—need messaging that's accurate, easy to absorb, and grounded in solid data. It should offer a complete but concise overview of the issue, delivered consistently and without too much flexibility. As Congress becomes more message-driven, having a strong one is essential. **Evaluate whether your message resonates with your audience and aligns with three things: (1) your solution, (2) policymaker priorities, and (3) your organization's mission.**

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## STEP 3: DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT MATERIALS?

Advocacy materials usually go one of two places—a staffer's desk or the trash can. There's not much in between. Still, strong materials are essential for building support and keeping staff from having to dig for information. Like your message, they should be grounded in solid data and clearly tied to the state or district of your target policymakers. **Evaluate whether your materials provide everything needed to understand the issue—and that they're compelling enough for someone with little to no background on it.**



## STEP 4: DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT VALIDATORS?

Third-party validation is essential for advancing advocacy issues. One organization—especially one directly impacted—saying an issue matters is not enough. The more well-branded the validator, the better. And the more of them, the clearer it is that the issue has broad support. **Evaluate whether you have the right number and mix of validators, ones that resonate with your audience and are willing to actively support your message.**

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## STEP 5: DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT METRICS?

Metrics are often the toughest part of advocacy campaigns—and too often, they're focused on actions (like the number of meetings, tweets, or messaging documents produced), rather than impact. The goal isn't action, it's impact: moving the issue, securing champions, growing support, and deepening policymaker commitment, growth in network support, etc. There's plenty to measure that gives real insight into what's working and what's not. **Evaluate whether your metrics reveal impact, highlight where tactics are falling short, and show how your campaign is performing overall. (Hint: If you can't measure that, you do not have the right metrics in place.)**



There are larger and more sophisticated advocacy audits (which we are happy to help you with), but this five-step process will help you review your plan and see what is performing well and what needs some adjustment.