Public policy at all levels of government can have a direct impact on your core business, or that of the startups you work with. While policymakers generally want to do the right thing for their communities, many policymakers lack a full understanding of the startup ecosystem. Accordingly, engaging with policymakers is important to promoting an environment conducive to technology entrepreneurship. This guide walks through direct engagement, one of many forms of issue advocacy, through the lens of broadband connectivity, but these principles are applicable to advocacy on any issue.

### Step 1: Prioritize

- Multiple policies are likely to be impacting your business or startup ecosystem
- Order them by impact and urgency, and decide which issues to engage on

**Example:** You’d like to see more H-1B visas issued so you can hire down the road, but poor broadband connectivity is holding back your growth today.

### Step 2: Investigate

- Learn which ordinances, orders, or laws apply to the issue
- Discover which policymakers are positioned to impact the issue, remembering they may be at different levels of government

**Example:** If you care about broadband access in your community, *infrastructure funding, easement, right-of-way*, and *liability laws* are likely to apply.

### Step 3: Target

- Policymakers at multiple levels of government might impact your issue, so first engage the policymaker with the ability to make the greatest impact on the issue

**Example:** Your *county commissioner* might control utility easements, your *state legislator* might work on state funding and easement liability framework, and your *member of Congress* might help secure federal grants.

### Step 4: Engage

- Reach out and start a relationship with the targeted policymaker
- Attend their office hours or contact their office to schedule a one-on-one meeting
- When meeting with them, go in with an agenda, know what your ask is, talk about how you fit into the community, use concrete examples about how the issue impacts your and others’ businesses

**Example:**
- Ask them to approve the broadband company’s request to use the existing utility easement
- Use examples of startups that relocated away from the region for better connectivity
- Remember that the policymaker might have staff that works on the issue, but policymakers and their staff are not necessarily experts and you may need to educate them on an issue.

### Step 5: Follow Up

- After your meeting, follow up thanking them and reminding them of the issue
- Continue the relationship by making yourself available to engage further on the topic

**Example:** You may have convinced your commissioner, but they need help moving their colleagues to action.