CLEO Ambassadors Advocacy Toolkit

Building Political will for Resilient Communities

MAKING ADVOCACY GOALS EFFECTIVE

✓ Break down the problem
✓ Educate yourself
✓ Identify your rights
✓ Develop a solution (or goal) and strategy to address the problem
✓ Clarify your goal by identifying who you will communicate with to achieve your goal
✓ For goals/solutions, figure out what methods or strategy you want to employ and figure out steps

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE ADVOCATING

1. What is the problem or issue? If there is more than one, focus on one at a time.
2. What is my goal?
3. What facts do I know?
4. What are some specific and possible solutions to this problem?
5. What are some barriers to this solution?

PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGY METHODS

1. Call your legislator
2. Holding an informal meeting – Invite neighbors to come join you
3. Writing a letter or email of complaint – It is your right as a constituent. Remember you elect them so they work FOR YOU.

ASSERTIVE RESPONSES IN COMMUNICATION FOR ADVOCACY

✓ Schedule time to have this conversation
✓ Ask questions and plan to listen
✓ Share experiences and deep motivations
✓ Share a vision that articulates a shared set of interests for change
✓ Be clear and very concrete about “when” and “what” of the next steps

Don’t: X Try to persuade rather than listen X Chit chat about private interests X Skip stories to “get to the point” X Miss the opportunity to share ideas about how things can change X End conversation without clear plan for next steps

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EFFECTIVE STATEMENT AT A PUBLIC HEARING

Public hearings influence the members of the group holding the hearings. It is essential that we attend them and make effective statements about our issues.

Here are some tips:

✓ Arrange to speak in advance if possible; if not, arrive by the time the doors open to sign up to speak.
✓ Prepare your comments: Write up your key concerns and supporting arguments/evidence. If there have been earlier hearings, check the website to make sure you understand the positions being taken by the opposite side and refute them if they seem persuasive. Personal stories with an emotional impact always make effective testimony.
✓ Plan for what you will actually say: Highlight the most important ideas and exclude any unnecessary words. Hearings usually have time limits of 2 (County) or 3 (City) minutes, or at most 5 (City of South Miami) minutes. You can submit written comments at the end of the comment time. Bring along a few extra copies of your comments for submission.
✓ Rehearse your comments and time yourself so that you are sure that you have time to make your most important points. It is easy to become nervous when you are called to speak, so make sure you feel well prepared.

ADVOCACY IN WRITING

SAMPLE CONSTITUENT LETTER

This is sample format for writing a letter to a local, state, or federal politician. Letter writing can be a great tool to show your support for legislation or lack thereof that supports community engagement, environmental and health issues and to identify ways to address these issues.

To your City/County Commissioner/Senator/Representative

Honorable County Commissioner/ City Commissioner:

[Lead with your request, including the specific resolution/bill number(s).] I am writing as a constituent to encourage you to support funding for projects that will make my community resilient to the impacts of climate change. This important appropriation to the (targeted government agency and your area) would (state what bill would do and why).

I am [describe who you are briefly] and I want to share with you my story [or your experience, observations, concerns etc.] about the importance of (issue). For example: Highlight the urgency of climate action and how funding will expedite storm surge projects in South Florida. [Tell your story or provide other factual support for why the support is needed.]
Briefly explain why you think this legislation will help your community. I ask you to support this important piece of legislation, which will make such a difference in the lives of constituents you serve.

I also would appreciate it if you would let me know of the action that you take on this matter. [Ask your legislator to inform you of his/her decision.]

Sincerely, [Keep your letter respectful.] Your name [Keep letter to one page.]

SAMPLE EMAIL

To: district3@miamidade.gov CC: Deldra.Owens@miamidade.gov
From: empoweredwoman@yahoo.com

Hello,

My name is Concerned Citizen. I am writing because I am concerned about flooding, housing affordability, gentrification and other related matters on how climate change will be impacting my community.

Briefly explain why you think this XXXXXX

I would appreciate any type of support and further communication about the matter. I can be reached at: 000-123-456 or by email maria@yahoo.com

Thank you for your time. Concerned Citizen’s name.

ADVOCACY IN PERSON

✓ Be Gracious
✓ Be Professional
✓ Be focused
✓ Do Research

CITY OF MIAMI COMMISION

CITY OF MIAMI MAYOR: Mayor Francis Suarez, (305) 250-5300 fsuarez@miamigov.com Alicia Fernandez, Aide to the Mayor for Community Programs, alfernandez@miamigov.com

CITY OF MIAMI COMMISSIONERS
(D-1) Commissioner Willy Gort, (305) 250-5430, wgort@miamigov.com
(D-2) Chairman Ken Russell, 305-250-5333, krussell@miamigov.com
(D-3) Commissioner Joe Carrollo, (305) 250-5380, jcarollo@miamigov.com
(D-4) Commissioner Manolo Reyes, (305) 250-5420, mreyes@miamigov.com
(D-5) Commissioner Keon Hardemon, (305) 250-5390, KHardemon@miamigov.com

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MIAMI DADE COUNTY COMMISSION

MDC OFFICE OF THE MAYOR: Mayor Gimenez, (305) 375-5071
Alex Ferro, Chief of staff, alex.ferro@miamidade.gov
Jeannette Vazquez, Scheduler, jb3@miamidade.gov
Shirley Jones, Deputy Mayor Osterholt secretary, shirley.jones@miamidade.gov

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

(D-3) County Commission Chairwoman Edmonson
District: (305) 636-2331 Downtown: (305) 375-5393
district3@miamidade.gov
Scheduler: Marie Rusell, marier@miamidade.gov
Legislative aide: Deldra.Owens@miamidade.gov
Nimrod Simeon, nimrod.simeon@miamidade.gov

(D-6) Vice-Chairwoman Sosa
District: (305) 267-6377 Downtown: (305) 375-5690
Scheduler: Natasha Santos, nsantos@miamidade.gov, district6@miamidade.gov
Chief of staff: Betty Aguirre, bettya@miamidade.gov
Deputy Chief of Staff: Vivian Castro, vcastro@miamidade.gov

(D-1) Commissioner Jordan
District: (305) 474-3011 Downtown: (305) 375-5694
Scheduler: Funmilayo (Funmi) Giwa, giwa@miamidade.gov, district1@miamidade.gov
Chief of staff: Andre Ragin, randre@miamidade.gov

(D-2) Commissioner Monestime
District: (305) 694-2779 Downtown: (305) 375-4833
Scheduler: district2@miamidade.gov
Legislative Director: Elizabeth Owens, owense@miamidade.gov
Chief of Staff: Mac-Kinley Lauriston, mlaulis@miamidade.gov

(D-4) Commissioner Heyman
District: (305) 787-5999 Downtown: (305) 375-5128
Scheduler: Mary, mary4@miamidade.gov, district4@miamidade.gov
Legislative Analyst: Heather Needelman, heather.needelman@miamidade.gov

(D-5) Commissioner Higgins
Downtown: (305) 375-5924
District5@miamidade.gov
Chief of Staff: Maggie Fernandez, maggie.fernandez@miamidade.gov

(D-7) Commissioner Suarez
District: (305) 669-4003 Coconut Grove: (305) 694-3550 Downtown: (305) 375-5680
Executive aide: Joanne Padron, joanne.padron@miamidade.gov

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