



Advocacy for Main Street Leaders

Michigan Main Street

**Kelly Humrichouser, Director of Government
Relations, Main Street America**

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Getting Started



Federal, state, and local contexts each have advocacy considerations for Main Street.



Educating and building relationships with decision makers is essential to advance Main Street priorities.



To advance the Main Street movement, leaders need to build advocacy muscle.

A photograph of a street lined with historic, multi-story buildings. The buildings have varied facades, including red brick and light-colored stone or plaster. Some have arched windows and decorative elements. The street is paved and has a few cars parked along the sides. A dark, semi-transparent triangular overlay covers the top right portion of the image, where the text is placed. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

In a constantly changing
world, focus on
Education and
Relationship Building

Educating Elected Officials

- + Policy makers need to hear from constituents on issues important to them.
- + Your role as a Main Street leader means you are an ambassador for Main Street - for your community, but also for your state program and potentially for Main Streets nationwide.
- + You can always educate, but after elections or other leadership changes, it is particularly important.
- + Educating is not lobbying (but you can lobby, too).

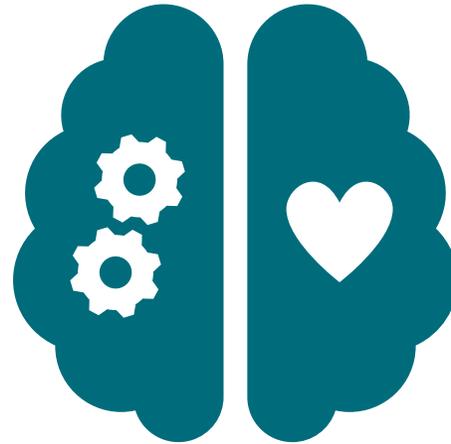
Building Relationships with Elected Officials

- + Your goal is for your decision-makers to think of you as a resource. This requires trust and personal interaction.
- + You need to understand what motivates them. Follow elected officials' newsletters and social media. Read their bios.
- + Communication from you can come in a variety of ways. There are so many things you can do:
 - Send them your newsletters.
 - Visit their coffee hours or town halls in their district.
 - Invite them for a tour of the district,
 - Let them know that you are a resource, AND that you are paying attention to the way that they are voting.
- + Always say thank you.

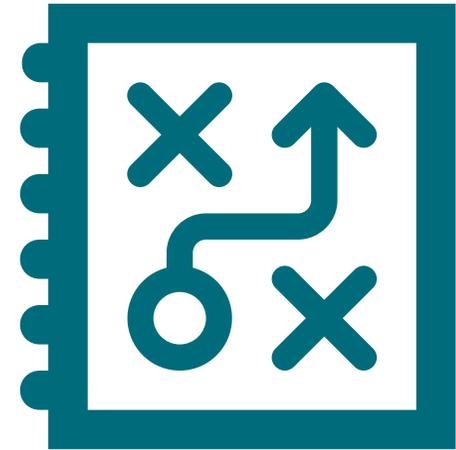
Crafting Your Advocacy Message



PROBLEM



VALUES



SOLUTION





Crafting Your Advocacy Message

Step 1 – Establish who you are:

- + Basic details
- + Mission
- + Elevator pitch

If in conversation, ask the question: “Are you familiar with our organization?”



Crafting Your Advocacy Message

Step 2 – State the problem:

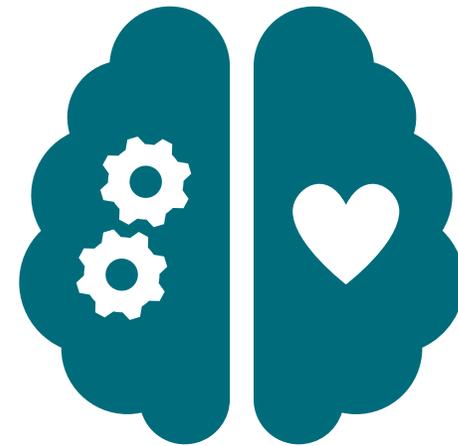
- + Clear statement of the issue at hand.
- + Give an example with data.
- + Be concise!
- + Resist the temptation to go down the rabbit hole.
- + Convey urgency.



Crafting Your Advocacy Message

STEP 3: Create a sense of shared values:

- + Go beyond data.
- + Connect on an emotional level.
- + Establish a sense of place.

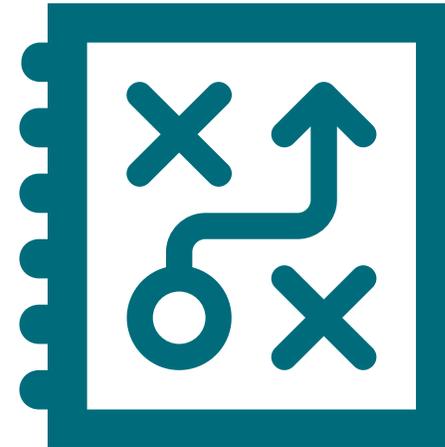


Why does your problem matter? Why is this important to your target?

Crafting Your Advocacy Message

STEP 4: Propose the solution:

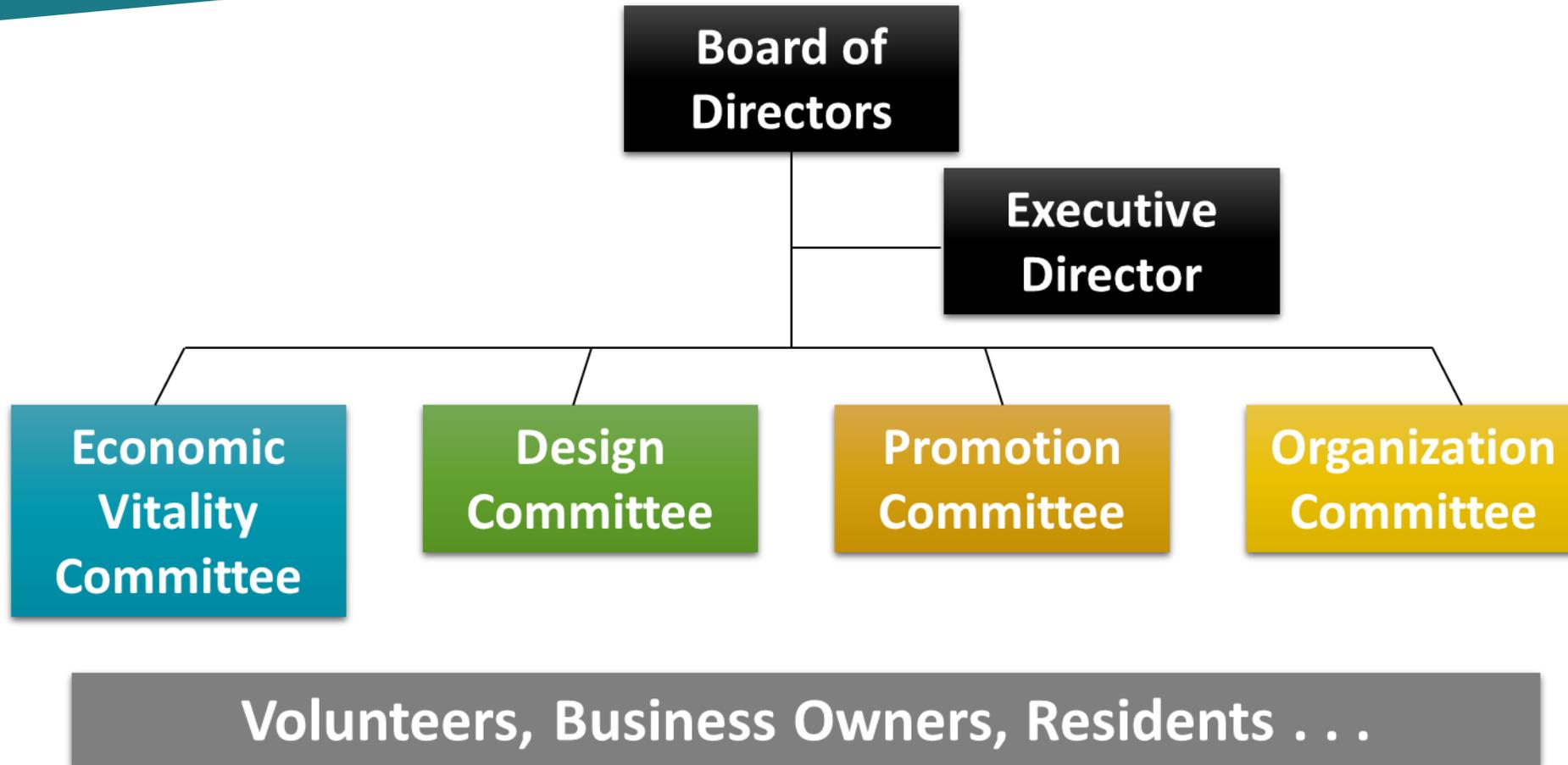
- + Revisit your advocacy goals.
- + Reduce hurdles and complications.
- + Ask for an action.



Communicating with Elected Officials - Tactical

- + Craft your message – should always be personalized.
- + Be brief and to the point.
- + Use one-pagers, storytelling documents, etc. as an attachment or handout to reinforce the message.
- + Never lie. It's ok to say you don't know.
- + Never underestimate staff.
- + In emails or letters, use proper title for the official.
- + In a conversation, do not just talk – also ask questions and listen.

Advocacy through the Main Street Approach



Advocacy Goals and Main Street

- Small business support
- Small business regulations
- Development incentives
- Technical assistance

- Historic preservation tax credits
- Façade improvement grants
- Building / zoning codes
- Streetscapes and placemaking
- Trails/outdoor recreation



At the core . . .

- Capacity building support for your Main Street program
- Capacity building support for statewide coordinating program

- Marketing support
- Tourism / destination marketing resources
- Event regulations

Main Street Advocacy Work Planning



Work Plan: Downtown Californiatown

Activity: District Tour for State Legislators

Lead Committee/ Task Force: Organization

Budget: \$500

Event date or project completion date: July 30, 2022

Anticipated results/ measures of success: 1) Stronger relationships; 2) Co-sponsorship of

Chair/ person responsible: Organization Chair

Phone: 555-555-5555

Email: orgchair@downtowncali.org

Project team members: EV Chair, Design Chair, Executive Director

Tasks	Responsibility/ Person or Committee	Timetable	Cost	Volunteer Hours	Staff Hours Needed	Progress/ Completion/ Comments Measurements of Success
Create/update one-pager handout on program	Org Chair	2 weeks	n/a		5 (designer)	One-pager updates complete and ready for distribution
Meet with CAMS to confirm statewide priorities to include	ED	2 weeks	n/a		2	Details confirmed for any statewide priorities to uplift
Connect with Representative's scheduler to determine date(s)	Org Chair, ED	ASAP, allow 3 weeks for follow-up	n/a	2	2	Dates held on Representative's calendar; expectation for final date confirmation established
Reach out to property owners of recently completed façade projects and new businesses opened in FY22 for tour	EV Chair + Design Chair	4 weeks	n/a	10		Property/business owners holding dates on calendars
Finalize tour details, refreshments, roundtable discussion	Org Chair, ED	4 weeks	\$200	2	2	*Determine needs for promotion/social media

Summer To-Do List – Host a Tour

1. Reach out to the scheduler to make your request. Give a few options for dates.
2. Prepare your team. Make sure the office knows who the elected official will be meeting with.
3. Have a media/photo plan for the visit. Work with the office's communications contact.
4. During the visit, use a one-pager or simple communications piece.
5. Don't forget to make the ask!
6. Follow-up with a thank you.



Understand election season limits: <https://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Keeping-Nonpartisan-During-Election-Season.pdf>



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Kelly Humrichouser

Director of Government Relations

khumrichouser@savingplaces.org

**National Main Street Center
53 West Jackson Blvd. Suite 350
Chicago, IL 60604
mainstreet.org**