

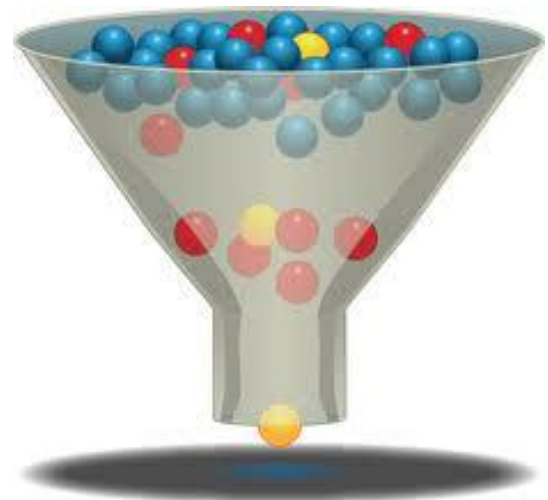


Choosing an Advocacy Campaign Goal

Choosing a specific advocacy goal is not easy – *nor should it be!* Advocates must carefully review available research, data, and information on decision-makers, potential allies and opponents, resources, staff and volunteer assets and more to clearly and succinctly answer the question “What do you want?” Your coalition may start out with many different answers to this question and it is important to work together to shorten and refine the list through a deliberate consensus-building exercise.

Your campaign goal should be specific, measurable, and realistic. (And, data-driven would be a big plus!)

Imagine the process of choosing a campaign goal for your organization as a funnel: Begin with a large universe of possibilities and, through a process of sequential inquiry, narrow the list down until clear, measureable campaign objectives emerge. Then, narrow that list even further through the funnel by analyzing specific criteria as they relate to each possibility until you emerge from the funnel with one, specific, clear, and attainable policy or systems change advocacy goal.



Question 1: What do you want to change?

- What are the biggest “problems” facing your organization, your community, or your constituents – things that, if changed, would make it easier for you to achieve your mission?
- Of those, which might be improved via policy or systems change, including funding?
- What does the data (hard facts and vignettes from real life) define and illustrate about the problem and potential solutions?
- What are the possible policy or systems changes that would reduce or eliminate the problem?

Question 2: What is the larger environment and how it will impact the goal?

- What other organizations might also be working to achieve that same policy or systems change?
- Is there precedent for the policy or systems change, i.e. has it been done successfully somewhere else?
- Has it been attempted and failed somewhere else?
- What organizations might work to oppose the change?
- Are there potential funders who might want what you want?
- Is there a grassroots constituency that cares about the issue?
- Does the issue afford your organization an opportunity to develop or grow relationships with important stakeholders through the process of being involved in this campaign?

Question 3: Is it winnable?

- Can you identify at least one key decision-maker who might be willing to champion the issue?
- If the change requires money, is it fiscally possible or completely outside the realm of possibilities that can be imagined?
- Based on the experience elsewhere, what was the process for winning the policy or systems change?
- How much money would you estimate the campaign will need and does your organization have the resources to win?
- Recognizing that winning the policy or systems change is not the only definition of victory, will your organization “win” by enhancing its reputation, relationships or organizational affinity?

Question 4: How do the options rate?

Once you have narrowed the list of specific policy and/or systems change goals to a few options, score them on a variety of campaign criteria, utilizing the following grid.

Policy/systems change goal - Option #1:

Rate this campaign option in each of the following areas on a scale of 1 to 3 as follows:

1 = Definitely no 2 = Possibly 3 = Definitely yes N/A = Not applicable

Criteria for Selection	Score
It is a specific policy or systems change goal.	
There is data to support and defend it.	
There is a clear decision-maker (i.e. an individual or institution who can make the change).	
The policy/systems change is winnable politically.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to community organizations.	
There is access to the resources that will be required to achieve this policy/systems change goal.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to grassroots individuals.	
It will significantly enhance our organization's ability to achieve our mission.	
It will significantly improve the lives of our community residents and/or constituents.	
A campaign to address this policy/systems change is likely to help us build clout, credibility, and influence.	
The policy/systems change goal can be justified (defended) by available data.	
The policy/systems change has been identified as a priority by the issue experts in the community and/or in our organization.	
It is likely to have at least one identifiable decision-maker champion.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to our current partners.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will enable us to attract new partners.	
There is energy, enthusiasm, and strong commitment to the policy/systems change goal within our organization, including Board, staff, donors, and volunteers.	
Total Score for this policy/systems change option	

Policy/systems change goal - Option #2:

Rate this campaign option in each of the following areas on a scale of 1 to 3 as follows:

1 = Definitely no 2 = Possibly 3 = Definitely yes N/A = Not applicable

Criteria for Selection	Score
It is a specific policy or systems change goal.	
There is data to support and defend it.	
There is a clear decision-maker (i.e. an individual or institution who can make the change).	
The policy/systems change is winnable politically.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to community organizations.	
There is access to the resources that will be required to achieve this policy/systems change goal.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to grassroots individuals.	
It will significantly enhance our organization's ability to achieve our mission.	
It will significantly improve the lives of our community residents and/or constituents.	
A campaign to address this policy/systems change is likely to help us build clout, credibility, and influence.	
The policy/systems change goal can be justified (defended) by available data.	
The policy/systems change has been identified as a priority by the issue experts in the community and/or in our organization.	
It is likely to have at least one identifiable decision-maker champion.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to our current partners.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will enable us to attract new partners.	
There is energy, enthusiasm, and strong commitment to the policy/systems change goal within our organization, including Board, staff, donors, and volunteers.	
Total Score for this policy/systems change option	

Policy/systems change goal - Option #3:

Rate this campaign option in each of the following areas on a scale of 1 to 3 as follows:

1 = Definitely no 2 = Possibly 3 = Definitely yes N/A = Not applicable

Criteria for Selection	Score
It is a specific policy or systems change goal.	
There is data to support and defend it.	
There is a clear decision-maker (i.e. an individual or institution who can make the change).	
The policy/systems change is winnable politically.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to community organizations.	
There is access to the resources that will be required to achieve this policy/systems change goal.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to grassroots individuals.	
It will significantly enhance our organization's ability to achieve our mission.	
It will significantly improve the lives of our community residents and/or constituents.	
A campaign to address this policy/systems change is likely to help us build clout, credibility, and influence.	
The policy/systems change goal can be justified (defended) by available data.	
The policy/systems change has been identified as a priority by the issue experts in the community and/or in our organization.	
It is likely to have at least one identifiable decision-maker champion.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will be attractive to our current partners.	
It is a policy/systems change goal that will enable us to attract new partners.	
There is energy, enthusiasm, and strong commitment to the policy/systems change goal within our organization, including Board, staff, donors, and volunteers.	
Total Score for this policy/systems change option	