

tips for using the toolkit to educate educate and persuade policymakers



Establish your credibility. You are an election official, community leader, steward of democracy or elections expert whose insights deserve to be heard. If you're an election official, invite the policymaker to tour your office or observe election processes, like tabulation audits.



Do your homework. Before you reach out, identify where your interests, concerns and networks overlap. Know the policymaker's stances on relevant topics.



Start local. Build relationships with policymakers who represent your jurisdiction. Consider reaching out to those aligned with your goals *and* those resistant to your goals because having accurate information is critical for all policymakers.



Don't forget influencers. Contact policymakers and the people who influence them. This may include other advocates in the elections space, members of the policymaker's staff and election administrators or board members.



Educate, then persuade. Initiating contact is the first step toward building a trusted relationship. Offer education or mutual problem-solving, not a hard sell.



Prepare. As soon as you've got a meeting on the calendar with a policymaker, outline what you want to say. Prepare a brief introduction of yourself and your topic and practice it. Prepare a memorable closing statement that makes clear that you're available for follow-up conversations. Draft talking points to help answer questions you anticipate. Even if you don't use them, the drafting process will help you feel more prepared.



Plan to leave things behind. Customize the cover of the brochure template for your state or jurisdiction. Add supporting quotes from individuals and organizations to the back cover. Inside, replace the template's key facts with some of your own, if it's helpful. Edit and print the model bill language and any letters of support you collect. Print the brochure and use it as a folder to hold your documents. Bring extra copies. You may catch the attention of other policymakers or those who influence them and create additional education and persuasion opportunities.

Pro tip: If you're working on behalf of an organization, add the logo to the cover of the brochure template or fasten your business card to the top-right corner.