

Advocacy 101 Guidance for Employees and Board Members

Public budgets and legislation have a powerful impact on our families and programs. Many of you are receiving a steady stream of advocacy alerts from different coalitions and networks that serve our sector. While advocacy alerts can be a useful source of news, they are only part of the equation to determine how we handle a given policy issue.

The Government Affairs team develops Metropolitan's official policy agenda and advocacy positions, in consultation with the Advocacy Task Force, center staff, and senior executives. We actively monitor policy issues and legislation to develop strategies and materials for leaders and staff who are authorized to directly represent us to policymakers.

We encourage all Illinoisans to make their voices heard, but as an agency, Metropolitan adheres to strict guidelines for advocacy that govern all not-for-profits. As a rule, advocacy is **NOT** a sanctioned workplace activity and should only be done on your own time as a private citizen. If you do want to get involved, here are some simple tips:

DO:

- **Keep it simple.** A phone message or short note is highly effective. You'll find contact information for state Representatives and Senators at this [Legislator Lookup](#) page.
- **Feel free to share brief anecdotes** about the potential impact on the people you serve, your work, your community, or your own family.
- **Adapt your message to different audiences.** Adapt your letter for state Representatives and Senators.
- **Know that timing matters.** Action alerts are timed to a particular deadline or strategies. If you decide to weigh in, do it promptly.

DO NOT:

- **Use agency resources to directly advocate policy positions or votes.** This includes MFS' computers, phones, staff time and branded materials.
- **Reach out to lawmakers whose districts you do not live in or work in.**
- **Be rude or disrespectful.** Avoid long letters, rambling messages, and spam.
- **Get discouraged if you do not hear back.** Lawmakers are busy people, but they do pay attention.

If you have questions or need information, please contact:

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