**Transportation and Public Space Toolkit for Older Adult Organizations**

**Navigating the Political System**

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**Navigating the Government System**

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   2. *Federal, state and local funding streams?*
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Other?

**Navigating the Political System**

**Effective Advocacy**

## **Clear and simple messages**

A campaign message needs to resonate with your audience, whether its policymakers, the public, or both. Make sure your message is easily communicated and understood. The change that you want to see happen needs to be clear and achievable so the audience believes they can make a difference.

## **Passion and credibility**

Do your research! It is important to have evidence about how the change you want to make will affect people’s lives. Passion without evidence is rarely effective; conversely, evidence alone is insufficient. You need both.

## **Hear from people who are affected**

People who are directly affected by the issue you are working on can be the best advocates for an issue. When elected officials and other decision-makers meet a person who can talk about something they themselves have faced, they are much more likely to listen and feel compelled to act.

## **Focus on issues**

Focus on issues – not your organization. Advocacy that concentrates on the results you want to achieve is more likely to be persuasive when it is not mixed with efforts to build the brand of an organization.

## **Work with partners**

Working with other organizations will make your message stronger. Decision-makers want to hear a loud, clear, and coherent message from all concerned organizations. If a coalition is broad and includes non-governmental organizations, academics and others that are all saying the same thing, government is much more likely to listen.

**Effective Partnerships**

Partnerships are an important component of community advocacy efforts.  Partners can enhance community engagement, increase community awareness of the issues, and establish a framework for the continued support of services for older adults in communities.

* Working in partnerships will help multiply the power of advocacy efforts and build strength in numbers.
* Working in partnerships includes getting other individuals, organizations, alliances, and coalitions involved to accomplish your advocacy goal.
* Getting more individuals and groups involved helps you win on the issues that are important to you.
* Working in partnerships helps you increase the number of people and groups working to improve older adult health and well-being and builds strength.
* When working with others—whether it is an individual or a group—try to understand their motivations and interests.
* Remember that partnerships can include the “usual suspects” as well as unlikely partners.  The only way to know if someone will support your issue is by asking.

Roles That Older Adult Organizations Can Play at the Community Advocacy Level:

* Partner with older adult advocacy organizations in your area, including senior centers, Age Friendly Seattle & King County Coalition, and Aging and Disability Services
* Inform community leaders, decision-makers, and elected officials about issues that are affecting older adults in your community
* Invite decision-makers to visit your professional setting or community project
* Provide testimony and telling your story at community forums, events, and in your local media
* Serve on the board of an organization that supports older adult health and well-being
* Initiate a community project or forming a partnership, alliance, or coalition to address a problem

**How to Find Your Legislator**

ADDRESS LOOKUP

Seattle City Council: <https://www.seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council/find-your-district-and-councilmembers>

King County Council: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/council/councilmembers/find_district.aspx>

State and Federal Legislators: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>

MAPS

Seattle City Council District Map: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/elections/elections/maps/seattle-city-council-maps/seattle-city-council-districts.ashx?la=en>

King County Council District Map: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/elections/elections/maps/county-council-district-maps/county-council-districts-2012.ashx?la=en>

King County Congressional District Map: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/elections/elections/maps/congressional-district-map/congressional-districts-2012.ashx?la=en>

King County State Legislative District Map: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/depts/elections/elections/maps/legislative-district-maps/legislative-districts-2012.ashx?la=en>

**Meeting with Your Legislator**

Legislators appreciate meeting with and hearing from their constituents! You can find information on how to schedule a meeting with them on their website. One of their office staff with help find a date, time and location that works for you.

Elected officials are very busy and sometimes things come up. If your legislator is not available during your scheduled meeting, you might meet with their staff. That is okay! They will be sure to communicate everything you discuss in the meeting with your legislator.

It helps to bring a handout that you can leave behind with your legislator. One page with a few clear, succinct points will help them remember your issue. Visual examples or data are also helpful.

**Tips for Talking with Your Legislator**

Talking with your Legislator is one of the best ways to advocate for your cause. Older adults have a lot of power as constituents, and Legislators are eager to hear your perspective on issues. Remember that politics is all about relationship building, so try to maintain your connection with your Legislator over time. A quick email or phone call every now and then will keep your issues on the forefront and ensure that they’ll remember you.

Here are a few tips for maximizing your time with a Legislator:

* **Introduce yourself.** Give the legislator your name and contact information and identify yourself as a constituent in their district.
* **Dress professionally.** For office visits, business attire is always appropriate.
* **Be polite.** Even though you may disagree on certain ideas, it’s important to stay calm and convey your points without becoming negative. You may disagree with a Legislator on one issue but agree later on another. Always keep in mind that relationships matter!
* **Tell a personal story.** Stories about your experiences can have a bigger impact than any facts or figures before a Legislator. Having a clear example of how legislation affects the health of constituents in their district will stick in Legislators’ minds when bills come up for a vote.
* **Have talking points.** You’re not expected to have all the answers on any issue, but you should be prepared with a few talking points about the issues you care about. Be familiar with these before your meeting. **If a Legislator has a question you can’t answer, it’s okay to say you don’t know and will get back to them.**
* **Stay focused & be concise.** Try to focus in on your top two or three issues (maximum!). You will probably only have a short amount of time to talk to your Legislator, so make sure you know in advance which key points you want to get across.
* **DON’T use jargon or acronyms.** Be very clear in the language you use. Assume that your Legislator doesn’t know what your job entails, how your organization works, etc.
* **DON’T get angry or be rude.** There will be times when you disagree with a Legislator, sometimes on controversial or heated issues. It’s okay to disagree and still make your points, but don’t lose your temper. Whether you two have agreed on everything or not, the Legislator should leave the meeting with a positive impression of you.

**How a Bill Becomes a Law**

The chart below describes the general process for a bill to become law, at both the local level and at the state and federal levels.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **City or County** | **State or Federal** |
| **1** | A bill is introduce by a city council or county council. | Bills are introduced in the House or Senate. |
| **2** | A committee studies the bill and may hold a public hearing on it. The committee can amend the bill and vote on it. | A committee studies the bill and may hold a public hearing on it. The committee can amend the bill and vote on it. |
| **3** | After committee approval, the bill goes back to the full council. | After committee approval, the bill goes back to the full House or Senate, where it was introduced. |
| **4** | Council debates the bill and may amend it again. The full Council then votes on the bill. | If the House or Senate pass a bill, it is sent to the opposite chamber to start the process over again. E.g. Bills that were introduced and passed in the House are sent to the Senate. |
| **5** | The County Executive or City Mayor signs the bill into law. Or, they can veto part or all of the bill.  It is possible for the council to overturn a veto if two-thirds vote in favor of the bill. | At the state and federal level, the President signs the bill into law, or can veto part or all of the bill.  It is possible for the legislature to overturn a veto if two-thirds vote in favor of the bill. |

**Budget Timelines**

State and local?

**Navigating the Government System**

**Local Government Agencies (or just Local Players?)**

**Agency Budgets**

**Funding Opportunities**

**Grants**

The City of Seattle has several grant sources that are useful for community groups.

It is also useful to know how much projects cost!

* + Seattle Department of Transportation has a cost-estimate guide to commonly requested street improvements. Link??

**Neighborhood Matching Fund**: Small Sparks, Small & Simple grants and Large Project Funds. All require extensive community participation.

* [Small Sparks](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/smallsparks.htm) are up to $5,000 and can fund group development, special events, celebrations, and networking at the local level. You can apply for Small Sparks any time during the year.
* [Small & Simple Matching Fund Grants](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/smallandsimple.htm) are more involved to apply for and administer and have two annual application periods in the spring and fall for grants of up to $20,000. Beacon BIKES received a Small & Simple grant to fund their greenways circulation plan.
* [Large Project Fund Matching Fund Grants](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/largeproject.htm) have one annual application for grants of up to $100,000 and require pre-scoping meetings.

**Other City of Seattle Grants**

* [Neighborhood Project Fund](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/btgnsfcrf/) awards grants for locally-requested improvements to public streets and parks. The first segment of the Wallingford Greenway was funded through a Neighborhood Project Fund.
* Tree planting assistance grants offered through several City of Seattle departments. Beacon BIKES has proudly planted 400 trees through the [SDOT Community Tree Program](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/btg_streettrees.htm).
* [Business district beautification grants](http://www.seattle.gov/economicDevelopment/biz_district_guide/clean_green.htm) may be applicable to fund greenways.
* Seattle Department of Transportation offers [free bicycle racks](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/bikeracks.htm) in business districts.

Taken from: <http://seattlegreenways.org/resources/funding-ideas/>

**Green Sheets**

<http://clerk.seattle.gov/budgetdocs/budgetsearch/budget.html> - search “green sheet”

Green sheets are a way for Seattle City Council to make adjustments in the city’s budget (Mayor’s proposed budget?). A green sheet can:

* Increase or decrease revenues
* Increase or decrease expenditures for specific programs or services
* Increase or decrease staff positions
* Add or delete a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project
* Increase or decrease funding for a CIP project
* Amend (if necessary) and vote on budget legislation

Green sheets are presented in the City’s budget committee.

**Other?**

***From Toole Design:***

**EIGHT INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS**

* Good goals and policies from committed leaders: Planning policies and design standards for the community that incorporate accessibility needs, preferably based on Universal Design principles. Community leaders keep accessibility needs on their public.
* A tipping point: A person, event or combination of both that created the focus on accessible pathways.
* Collaboration among stakeholders: Organizations work together in tangible ways so that the citizen’s experience is consistent and transparent. Recognizing the contributions of stakeholders is also important.
* Objectives standards: The community has longer-term goals for accessible pathways with intermediate milestones.
* Evidence of policy translated into practice: The community acknowledges its accessibility policies in practice.
* Evidence of budget commitment: Accessibility needs are visible in the operating and capital budgets of the local government and transit agency.
* Regular feedback: The community uses sustainable mechanisms to request and receive information on the status of accessible pathways. There may be regular assessments of the conditions of the pedestrian network, especially with respect to accessibility.
* Learning from other communities or commitment to learning: There is evidence that the community used successful process and techniques from other communities.

**MAJOR PLAYERS’ QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**

Information on each of the players and stakeholders is included in the Overview to this Guide. Each major player has their own set of responsibilities in the process. Sometimes they work independently of the other two players; other times they must work in conjunction with them. The Quick Reference Guide below provides the context in which each major player operates and encourages collaboration of effort.

**Local Government**

* Identifies both departments and individuals that play a role in transportation activities.
* Considers the transit agencies, citizens and advocacy groups as co-producers.
* Transit service helps strengthens the economy and community. This, in turn, establishes the interest in people using the service.
* Accessible pathways are something everyone who spends time in the community can use. It’s really about universal/inclusive design – not just ADA compliance.

**Transit Agencies**

* Do not “own” the streets and sidewalks, but the customers need the streets and sidewalks to get to the service. Encourage the local government to work on the agency’s behalf.
* Transit service helps strengthens the economy and community. The local government has an interest in co-producing that service.

**Advocacy/Community Organizations**

* Establish methods to understand what is built, as well as what is being proposed by the community. This will allow the organization to identify and have input before a project is built. It is much more difficult to have impact after the work is completed.
* Understand best practices from other communities and their applicability.
* Engage local government and transit agencies in new places, e.g., do a joint presentation at one of their professional conferences.
* Serve on a general advisory board of the local government or transit agency. Do not limit representation to the traditional board that addresses disability issues.
* Familiarize members with city planning master transportation plan or other master plans that exist for local governments as well as the local engineering standards.
* Reference plans and standards in a manner that local agency staff understands.
* Awareness of project prioritization methods in the agency’s capital improvement program will help focus scarce financial resources.

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/stakeholders.html>