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Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote

501(c)(3) Status and Election-Related Activities

NCJW is a 501(c)(3) organization.

NCJW is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. When planning efforts to promote and protect the vote, NCJW must follow certain rules and restrictions.

FAQs

In what sort of election activities is NCJW allowed to participate?

NCJW members can and should engage in **nonpartisan** voter registration drives, voter education, getting out the vote, volunteering at the polls, and advocacy around voting rights. The 2018 Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote guide, illustrates different ways to take election-related action.

Can NCJW sections or members endorse a candidate or party?

No. We cannot tell people to vote for a specific candidate, party, or ideology. We can emphasize the importance of voting. *(Note: As private individuals, we can engage in partisan activities, including campaigns.)*

Can NCJW encourage others to vote for candidates with certain views?

No. Telling individuals to vote for candidates who are “pro-LGBTQ rights,” for example, is similar to endorsing an individual candidate directly. Similarly, we cannot encourage members to vote for “more female” or “more Latinx” candidates. We can encourage members to vote for a slate of candidates that reflect the diversity of our communities.

Can NCJW create candidate questionnaires?

Yes, but with restrictions (see resource 2.4, “Educating Voters,” in the 2018 Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Guide for more details). NCJW must:

- Distribute the questionnaire to every candidate;
- Ask a broad range of unbiased, open-ended questions;
- Distribute responses with no editorial comment, and without stating NCJW’s views; and
- Print responses exactly as received from the candidates without edits.

Can NCJW host candidate forums?

Yes, but with restrictions (see resource 2.4, “Educating Voters,” in the 2018 Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Guide for more details). NCJW must:

- Invite all viable candidates running for an office;
- Pick a neutral location for the forum;
- Ask a broad range of unbiased, open-ended questions; and
- Use an independent moderator.

Can NCJW publish voter guides?

Yes, but with restrictions (see resource 2.4, “Educating Voters,” in the 2018 Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote Guide for more details). NCJW must:

- Include all viable candidates’ positions, regardless of party affiliation;
- Cover a broad range of issues; and
- Describe the issues and candidate’s positions using unbiased, neutral language that does not hint at NCJW’s positions.

Can NCJW participate in ballot initiative campaigns?

Yes. Because ballot measures advocacy qualifies as lobbying under federal tax law, we can take positions on them, sponsor ballot measures, or form committees to spend money for or against measures on the ballot. However, state law varies, so your section may need to register and report to the state as political committees.

What if only one candidate can attend a forum or responds to a questionnaire?

We must invite all viable candidates running for an office to attend a candidate voter forum or to answer a candidate questionnaire. Even if all are invited, there is a risk that the event or questionnaire could appear partisan if some candidates refuse to participate. Cancel the forum or questionnaire if only one candidate agrees to attend or respond.

May we invite someone who is running for office to speak?

It is safer not to invite sitting public officials who have announced their candidacy to speak even at programs unrelated to elections. If, however, you do invite a sitting public official who is also a candidate, make it clear to the invitee that he/she must not refer to their candidacy or electioneer in any way. Clarify in your opening remarks, program, etc. that NCJW is a nonpartisan organization and the speaker’s appearance does not constitute a political endorsement.

What if I am unsure my activity meets these guidelines?

Consult Alliance for Justice’s [“The Rules of the Game: A Guide to Election-Related Activities for 501\(c\)\(3\) Organizations”](#) and please contact national staff if you still have questions.

Resource

Guidelines for Submitting Testimony in the Name of NCJW

Summary

The following may serve as a guide for SPAs and sections in: (1) deciding whether to testify on behalf of NCJW on an issue; (2) preparing such testimony; and (3) distributing the testimony and publicizing our positions. This outline provides the basic tools and information needed to draft and submit testimony. If you have questions or need more information, please contact NCJW's National office or your SPA coordinators. **All testimony offered in NCJW's name must first be cleared by the National office.**

Testimony is an oral or written statement offering a particular point of view, in support of or in opposition to a specific proposal. Testimony is presented, or a statement submitted, in the name of the National Council of Jewish Women, Inc. only on those portions of legislation or regulations which directly relate to NCJW's specific position on issues corresponding to our mission and resolutions. The proposed legislation/regulation is reviewed in light of those positions. We need not testify on every issue, and rarely do.

The format below follows general suggestions provided by congressional committees about how to testify at public hearings or submit a written statement for the record.

Comments on proposed federal regulations follow a similar format, except that they may be written as a letter addressed to the administrator of the federal agency proposing the regulations. (It is important to compare the proposed regulations with the law that is being implemented.)

- Substance of the Testimony/Statement
 - Heading
 - Name of subcommittee holding the hearing, name of the full committee, name of the legislative body (US House of Representatives or US Senate, if testifying before Congress) or name of Executive department and agency
 - Subject being addressed
 - Date on which it is to be presented or submitted
 - Name of person presenting the testimony, his/her exact title, and affiliation.

- Introduction
 - Begin with identification of the person presenting the testimony – name, residence, and NCJW position. Make sure to state that you are a volunteer. If statement is submitted for the record, begin with item I.E.ii.2 below.
 - Identify the National Council of Jewish Women as a national Jewish women's volunteer organization, and explain who we are, what we do, how many members we have (90,000 members and supporters), and why we are concerned about the issue at hand. Refer to our mission and resolutions, our past studies, and our experience in the particular issue area, including related community service.
 - Express appreciation for the opportunity to appear/submit testimony
 - Summarize points to be covered, usually general principles.
 - Body of Testimony
 - Expand major points with: materials from NCJW studies; experience in community service and public affairs activities; and information and examples gathered from other authoritative sources.
 - Conclusion
 - Relate specific legislation when pertinent
 - Reiterate appreciation for the opportunity to appear/submit testimony
 - Cautions
 - Oral testimony may have a time limit, sometimes changed "on the spot," requiring oral, extemporaneous summary of the written statement.
 - To be prepared, have two statements (you will often be instructed to bring copies or provide your statement in advance):
 - A complete statement in full detail.
 - A summary statement highlighting salient points, in case the Chair asks the witness to summarize. (When asked to summarize, make sure you ask that *the full statement be submitted for the record.*)
 - Only a person knowledgeable about the issue should testify. If such a person is unavailable, a written statement should be filed. Be prepared to answer questions or request permission to submit answers at a later time.
 - If the witness lives in a city where there will be several sessions of the hearing on this issue, it would be helpful to attend earlier hearings or have an NCJW member attend and brief the presenter of the testimony.
- I. Written Testimony
- Format
 - Heading should be typed single-spaced and centered
 - Testimony/statement should be typed double-spaced with wide margins
 - Details should follow under major point, which is underlined (see I.C.)
 - Copies
 - Multiple copies (usually 50) must be presented 24 hours in advance of the

- hearing when testifying before a congressional committee or subcommittee.
- 25 additional copies should be prepared and available for the press table.
 - Extra copies may be needed when submitting testimony for the record.
2. Testimony at regional congressional hearings or executive departments in major cities:
 - Testimony may be presented in the name of a single or several sections, by the SPA Chair, or by an NCJW board member speaking on behalf of any of the above. Current or past leadership may be asked to present.
 - Testimony must be consistent with NCJW's positions but give specific local experience and examples if relevant and appropriate.
 - Format, content, etc., are the same as for testimony presented in Washington, DC.
 3. Testimony/Statement to a committee of the state legislature, or legislative body of county/city/township:
 - Format is similar to that used before congressional committees.
 - Identification of NCJW should include not only national membership and constituency information but pertinent information about NCJW in the state/county/city/township at the level of testimony.
 - Special emphasis should be placed on local experience and needs as related to the issue under consideration.
 - It is important to consult with the NCJW National office for necessary coordination with NCJW policies and issues.
 4. Follow-up after presenting testimony, or submitting statement:
 - Always send copy of testimony to the NCJW National office (lmorris@ncjw.org) and SPA coordinator.
 - Send copy to SPA Chair and consult with her first if testimony is presented at the section level.
 - Be sure that the section president has a copy of the testimony if it is submitted on behalf of the section; send a copy to the bulletin editor.
 - Send a copy to your legislators if appropriate.
 - Send a press release to the media. If testimony is quite long, include a summary that highlights main points, with a copy of entire statement attached. If the testimony is brief, include the entire statement. Make sure you include the NCJW mission statement to identify NCJW.
 - When asked to submit answers to specific questions, or to provide additional information, respond immediately.
 - Share responses from legislators with the NCJW National office, State Policy Advocacy Chairs, and SPA coordinators, etc.

**Please remember that all testimony must be cleared in advance
with the National office.**

Resource

Communicating with Public Officials

Best Practices

The following tips are intended to help you call, write, and set up meetings with public officials to urge them to support NCJW's legislative priorities. On the last page, you will find key contact information and important websites.

Advocacy is all about action. Speaking out on important issues – in person, on the phone, via letters, faxes, or emails, as an individual or in a group – is a critical part of the democratic process. Make the most of the opportunity to express your views to decision-makers.

- Do your homework. Learn as much as possible about the issue of concern and the decision-maker with whom you're communicating.
- Choose the method that is most comfortable for you. There are many ways to make your opinions known. The important thing is to take action.
- Have a clear, focused purpose for your action. Address one issue at a time. The more prepared you are, the more persuasive you can be.
- Be specific about what you want to achieve. What do you want your senator, representative, or other decision-maker to do?
- Communicate as a constituent. Show the legislator or official how his or her constituency is specifically affected by or concerned about the issue.
- Be courteous and reliable. Don't promise what you cannot deliver in terms of help or information. Leave your contact information. Always follow up on requests for additional materials or further clarification. And always send a thank-you note after a meeting.

TIPS FOR CALLING A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Most legislative offices keep track of calls from constituents on various issues and report the number of calls they get to the legislators themselves on a regular basis. Calling your

legislator's office to register your opinion is an important way to advocate for NCJW's priorities.

- Call the US Capitol Switchboard at **(202) 224 3121** and ask to be connected to your legislator's office. You may also call the member of Congress outside of Washington, DC, in their district office (check the local phone book or the member's website for those numbers).
- Give your name and address to the person answering the phone so that it is clear that you are a constituent.
- Clearly explain your position on the issue (only address one issue per call) and what you would like the legislator to do (e.g. vote for or against a bill).
- If you have questions or want additional information, ask to speak with the staff person who works on the issue about which you are concerned (for example: "May I speak with the staff person who works on budget issues?"). Feel free to ask if you can leave a message if the staffer is unavailable, and be sure to include your name and phone number.

TIPS FOR CALLING THE WHITE HOUSE

Calling the White House is similar to calling a legislator. However, the White House also has an automated opinion line where you may leave a recorded message. To register your opinion on an issue, call the White House comment line at 202 456 1111.

TIPS FOR WRITING TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Like phone calls, congressional offices keep track of emails and faxes from constituents on various issues and report the numbers to the representatives and senators on a regular basis. Sending an email to your member of Congress is another important way to advocate for the issues about which you care.

- Email is an easy and efficient way to send a message to your legislators. Be sure to sign up for the NCJW Action Center at www.ncjw.org/signup. Use it to receive periodic alerts asking you to take action by sending a pre-written letter to decision-makers on selected topics of concern to NCJW. (You may edit the pre-written letter when it appears on your screen.)
- If you are writing a letter of your own, it is best to send it by email or fax. You may need to call the congressional office or look on their website (www.senate.gov or www.house.gov) to find the correct email address or fax number. Letters sent to Congress through the USPS go through a rigorous and lengthy security screening process, slowing delivery by several days or more.
- Clearly state your purpose at the beginning of your letter (include the bill name/number and what you would like the legislator to do).

- When possible, include personal examples of why you support/oppose the particular bill.
- Address only one issue per letter and keep your message short and to the point.
- Unless you are an official NCJW spokesperson, your letters should be sent by you as an individual and not in the name of the organization. SPAs and section spokespeople should include their title and contact information in the signature.

Sending Emails

When addressing an email to a public official, follow the same suggestions as for a printed letter. For the subject line of your e-mail, identify your message by topic or bill number.

The body of your message should use this format:

Decision Maker's Name

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear (Title) (Last Name),

Insert your message here...

Addressing correspondence to a US Senator

The Honorable (Full Name)

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Last Name):

Addressing correspondence to a US Representative

The Honorable (Full Name)

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Last Name):

TIPS FOR MEETING WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Meeting with a member of Congress or their staff is an effective way to convey a message about a specific issue or legislative matter and to build a relationship.

- Call the legislator's office to make an appointment. Ask to speak to the scheduler.
- Often you will be asked to fax or email a written request. Include the number of people joining you, what organization(s) will be represented, and what issues you want to discuss.
- A day or two prior to your meeting, confirm the appointment by calling the scheduler or staff person with whom you will be visiting. In addition, if you have a written confirmation, bring a copy to the meeting.
- On the day of your meeting, be prompt. If the legislator or official is late, be patient and flexible.
- Don't be disappointed if your meeting is with a staff person, or if your meeting begins with the public official and ends with staff. There is great value in educating and building a relationship with the key staff people who cover your issues — they play a vital role in the legislative decision-making process.
- Bring some succinct written materials outlining your position and leave them with the person you are visiting.
- An effective visit should include the following components:
 - A clear statement of **who you are and why you are there**;
 - An **explanation of the issue(s)** and what you want the decision-maker to do about it;
 - One or more **personal stories** illustrating why these issues are so important to you and your community (This is a great opportunity to discuss your views as **a person of faith and provide personal experiences from your section's community service efforts!**);
 - A **direct ask**: "Will you support/oppose this proposal?" Give the person you're meeting with time to respond; and
 - A **thank you**.
- Follow up on the meeting with a thank-you letter outlining what was covered, reiterating your main message on the issue.

Don't forget to follow up.

- **Meeting Report:** After your visit, make sure to write a brief summary of what took place. It should include the following:
 - Date, time, and name of person with whom you met
 - Questions asked by the legislator or staff person
 - Follow-up materials or information requested by the legislator or staff person

- Any comments gathered concerning the legislator’s willingness to support the issue on which you were advocating

Keep this information for future reference and share it with any concerned coalition partners you might be working with and the NCJW National office.

- **Thank-You Letter:** It is very important to write a thank-you letter to the individual(s) with whom you met. This letter serves both as a courtesy and as a written reminder of what took place at the meeting. This letter should include:
 - Date and time of the visit
 - General “Thank you for your time”
 - Issues discussed and why they are important to you
 - Reminder of the action you are asking the legislator to take (e.g. if the person(s) with whom you spoke made a commitment to co-sponsor, support, or oppose a specific piece of legislation, you should express your gratitude and remind him or her of this commitment)
 - Follow-up materials (if during your visit, the individual(s) with whom you met requested additional information or materials, you should include this information in the letter or provide them with an idea of when to expect the information)
 - Signatures (if possible) and contact information for yourself and everyone who attended the visit

This letter should be faxed or emailed to ensure a timely delivery.

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
 Washington, DC 20500
 Tel 202 456 1414
 Fax 202 456 2461

president@whitehouse.gov

Comment Line: 202 456 1111

US Capitol Switchboard

202 224 3121

Senate Office Buildings

Dirksen Senate Office Building

Hart Senate Office Building
 Russell Senate Office Building

Senate Mailing Address

[Senate Building and Room Number]
 Washington, DC 20510

House Office Buildings

Cannon House Office Building
 Longworth House Office Building
 Rayburn House Office Building

House Mailing Address

[House Building and Room Number]
 Washington, DC 20515

Senate and House Bill Status

202 225 1772

Library of Congress

202 707 5000

THOMAS (Legislative Information on the Internet)

www.congress.gov

Congressional Record

www.congress.gov/congressional-reco**KEY WEBSITES****EXECUTIVE**

The White House

www.whitehouse.gov**JUDICIARY**

Supreme Court of the United States

www.supremecourtus.gov**OTHER GOVERNMENT RESOURCES**

Federal Register

www.archives.gov/federal_register

The Library of Congress

www.loc.gov

State and Local Government on the Net

www.statelocalgov.net**LEGISLATIVE**

US Senate

www.senate.gov

US House of Representatives

www.house.gov

Clerk of the House

www.clerk.house.gov

Tips for Introducing State Legislation

Do you have an idea for a new piece of legislation or policy on a critical issue that is missing in your state legislature? Good news, there is something you can do! Working with your NCJW section, coalition partners, and lawmakers, introducing legislation in your state capitol is not as hard as it may sound. Check out the tips below along with NCJW's [action plan worksheet](#) to help you get started.

Do Your Homework:

Before you even start to think about drafting legislative language or adapting other state bills or coalition template language, and finding a state lawmaker to sponsor and introduce the bill, it's important to do your research. *Contact the NCJW National office, visit the state legislature's website, and seek advice from lawmakers and state policy experts.*

- Does the issue you intend to address fit within NCJW's Resolutions?
- What are the current state laws on this issue?
- Is this something that must be passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor to take effect in your state?
- Has this legislation been introduced in the past? If so, what happened?
- Is this issue of interest to particular lawmakers?
- What is the political climate in your state?
- Is there (or could there be) organized opposition to this legislative effort?
- Have other states passed this legislation?
- What will the legislation, if passed, cost the state? If there's an associated cost, you might want to meet with budget committee staff to discuss the implications.
- What are the chances for success of your effort? *If the chances for success are minimal, consider related legislation that is a smaller step forward toward your goal. It's a great opportunity to start changing the conversation.*

Understand Your State Legislative Cycle:

Check online to learn about your state legislative cycle. Build relationships with legislators and key staff if you don't already know them. Call to introduce yourself, and schedule an in person meeting. Contact the NCJW National office for more information.

- Do you know the key dates of the legislative year?
- Are there certain dates for bill introduction, budget hearings or other committee hearings that may be relevant?
- Do you know who the committee chairs and other important legislators are?

Establish NCJW Credibility on the Issue:

If NCJW isn't already a known entity on the issue, learn all you can by attending workshops, joining coalitions working on the issue, and hosting issue related programs.

- Are there key existing organizations and/or social justice secular and religious organizations within your state? If so, set up meetings with them to get to know the people already involved and to learn more about the issue.
- Is there an existing coalition? If so, reach out about joining. If there isn't a coalition in your community, [start one](#).

Engage Partners in Your Effort:

There is strength in numbers. Engage partners from the outset to enhance support for your bill.

- What groups are working on the issue? Who is the lead group?
- Is there a coalition working on this issue?
- Who are likely potential partners? Who aren't the "usual suspects" but have a self-interest? Think about casting a wide net. Depending on the issue, you may want to consider the following communities: Jewish, faith, law enforcement, teachers, women of color, victims' rights, etc.

Choose a Bill Sponsor:

Once you fully understand the pros/cons, financial implication(s), and breadth of support for your idea, it's time to look for a bill sponsor to introduce the legislation in the legislature.

- Look online for state legislation on the same issue and find the sponsor(s) and supporter(s) of those bills. Determine if the lawmaker(s) is still serving in the legislature.
- If the above isn't an option, start with legislators and staff with whom you already have a connection. Ask if they know of a lawmaker(s) who might like to sponsor your legislation or if they would like to do so.
- If you don't have contacts with lawmakers or their staff, look for lawmakers who support NCJW's issues.

Draft Bill Language:

Your bill sponsor may have some familiarity with and expertise on your issue. Legislative language will often be generated by the lawmaker's staff.

- If possible, work with another organization that has the capability to help write or edit bill language.
- Look to see if other states have similar legislation.
- Utilize your NCJW network, including SPAs and the National office, for template or similar legislation.

Build Community Support for the Bill:

It's helpful to look for like-minded organizations that would be supportive of your effort. It's also important for you to educate and inform your community.

- Engage other members and NCJW sections in your state if applicable.
- Work with your existing coalition and/or reach out to other existing coalitions that would likely support your effort.
- Reach out to your local Jewish Community Relations Council and Federation to engage the Jewish community.

- Utilize local and state Jewish and general press.
- Host a community program.
- Utilize local radio to spread the word and educate your community.
- Raise awareness on social media.

Be Prepared:

Once you've got a legislator ready to support your bill, it's time to get prepared.

- Be ready to respond to any amendments.
- Plan, build, and sustain support for the legislation through grassroots outreach and lobby visits with legislators and/or their staff.
 - Write [letters to the editor](#) and [op-eds](#) about the bill.
 - Take out ads in local press.
 - Host community education programs to encourage support for the legislation.
- Anticipate the need to re-evaluate your plan and pieces evolve.

Celebrate!

Though you may not see results right away, civic engagement is powerful and should be celebrated. Remember to recognize the small victories and the efforts of everyone involved as you journey towards your final social change goal.

Resource

Hard Questions & Pivoting

We come across questions that catch us off guard all the time. The good news is, there are techniques to pivot back to our original point and keep the conversation on track. Here are some best practices and potential frameworks when responding to touch questions.

Personal Stories: When using personal stories in your advocacy work, they should demonstrate the following:

- Vulnerability
- Honesty
- Respect
- Faith values

AAR (Acknowledge, Answer, Redirect) Model: Use this model when responding to difficult, yet sincere questions. If you're not sure how to answer something, try the AAR model..

- **Acknowledge:** Demonstrate understanding or empathy with what the person is saying
- **Answer:** Answer their questions in a straightforward & short way. If you don't know the answer, that's okay! Tell them you'll find out and get back to them
- **Redirect:** Refocus back to your main points of conversation

Example:

Question: How are you going to make sure women don't use abortion as birth control?

Answer: *(acknowledge)* I can hear this issue is important to you. *(Answer)* When it comes down to it, we know that the vast majority of people seeking abortions do not use it as contraceptive. *(Redirect)* It's important that we ensure all people can access safe and affordable reproductive care, including abortion, if we want healthy communities, and this legislation will do that.

FFF (Feel, Felt, Found) Model: Use this model when responding to someone who shares similar values with you, but their actions don't align with their words.

- **Feel:** Show empathy & understanding for where they are right now
- **Felt:** Connect by sharing a past personal experience that demonstrates a similar feeling that they're currently feeling

- **Found:** Share how you have changed your opinion and feelings contrary to their objection

Example:

Question: I'm just unsure, how could we possibly have any control over the courts?

Answer: (*Feel*) I get that, sometimes the courts feel very removed from our lives. (*Felt*) In fact, I was hesitant to get involved in organizing around the courts at first too. (*Found*) I have found that by educating the public and talking to our senators, we can have a huge impact on judicial nominations and really shape what our judicial system looks like.

Responding to “Whataboutism”: Use this approach when someone asks you an insincere question that is intended to derail the conversation. Typically these questions start with “but what about...”

- **Personal story contrary to concern**
 - Share a personal story that illustrates the exact opposite of their point
 - If you don't have one personal to you, share a story from someone else, with their permission of course
- **Acknowledge concern**
 - Don't legitimize their concern -- there is a huge difference between “I hear that you have a concern” and “I understand why you're concerned”
- **Pivot back to main point of visit**
 - “I hear that you're concerned, but it's really important that we stay focused on...”
 - “I know you want to talk about ____, but we came here to discuss ____”
 - “It's critical that we stay focused on...”
 - “I want to get back to why we're here today, which is...”

Example:

Question: What about the women who make false harassment accusations?

Answer: (*Personal story*) I've met a lot of women who've faced sexual harassment and not a single case was false. In fact, most women I know are so fearful of retaliation that they never report. (*Acknowledge concern*) I can hear that this is something you are concerned about, (*Pivot back*) but it's important that we stick to the facts and talk about how to prevent sexual harassment.

NCJW Advocacy Visit Report Form

Elected Official Visited: _____ State/District/City: _____

Met with: Official Only Official and Staff Staff Only

Staff in Attendance (names): _____

What issue(s) do the staff cover: _____

NCJW Members in Attendance: _____

Form Completed By (Name / Email / Phone #): _____

[Issue A / Legislation A Name & Bill #]

[Ask 1] Yes No

[Ask 2] Yes No

Comments:

[Issue B / Legislation B Name & Bill #]

[Ask 1] Yes No

[Ask 2] Yes No

Comments:

[Issue C / Legislation C Name & Bill #]

[Ask 1]

Yes No

[Ask 2]

Yes No

Comments:

Any other general comments/questions/follow-up needed?

How Should I Educate?

There are a variety of ways to educate others about your issue. What's most important is that you speak from your heart and share your personal convictions as to why the issue is important. Make use of fact sheets.

- **One-on-one conversations:** One effective way to share your message on this issue or any other is through a direct, personal, face-to-face conversation. Open up a one-on-one dialogue over coffee with family, friends, or colleagues, or set up a meeting with a community leader. Ask them for their views and try to answer their questions and concerns. Make sure that when the conversation is finished, they leave with the tools needed to learn more and to educate others. This method works well with individuals with whom you are already acquainted.
- **Phone calls:** When in-person meetings are not feasible, phone calls provide a good alternative. Set up a time to talk with leaders of local community or religious groups to tell them about your issue. Follow up after the call with an email or deliver copies of fact sheets so they can learn more. Organizations might organize a lunch or coffee for these leaders to informally introduce them to the campaign with the goal of getting their endorsement and collaboration.
- **Social Media:** Use Twitter, Facebook, and other forms of social media to share information about your issue and enlist supporters and activists. Link to articles about important federal court action and use the hash tag #CourtsMatter. Share any fact sheets on social media and link to relevant websites.
- **House Parties:** A house party is a great way to educate a small group of people (such as neighbors or colleagues) in an informal social environment. Provide issue materials and take a few minutes to speak about the campaign to your guests. Then open up the discussion to the group to share their thoughts and concerns on the issue. Add an action element whenever possible.
- **Town Hall Meetings:** If you are looking to reach a wider audience, plan and publicize a public town hall meeting or community event. Invite "experts" on the various topics to speak and provide materials and sign-up forms at an information table. Invite decision-makers to be on hand in the audience and invite them to briefly address the gathering, giving their views.

Be creative. These are only a few suggestions for spreading the word and educating people. Have fun coming up with other ideas for reaching out to educate and involve individuals and like-minded groups. Please share your ideas with NCJW so that we can let others know what you are doing.

Whom Should I Educate?

- **Family:** Winning allies for your issue begins at home. Educate your spouse or partner, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, and anyone else willing to listen. Ensure that those closest to you know what is at stake. Talking to your family is a good way to practice talking about the issues.
- **Groups:** Identifying and connecting with allies are important aspects of effective advocacy. More voices equal more power. As an individual, talk about the issue at your PTA meetings, book club gatherings, and exercise classes – don't dismiss any venue as irrelevant. Reach out to progressive organizations that deal with related issues to inform them about the issue. Make sure that you tell those organizations that already deal with the issue that you are interested and on board so that they know they can count on you as a partner.
- **Religious Affiliates:** For many Americans, their progressive social values are deeply rooted in their religious beliefs. Religious leaders, as well as those who strongly identify with their faith group, can be important allies in the fight to expand access to contraception. Reach out to your clergy leaders. Ask them to consider speaking about the issue in a sermon or newsletter article. Enlist them as partners for events and action.

Advocacy Training Resource

Ten Tips for Facilitating a Successful Training

1. Set Realistic Goals

Decide in advance what a successful training would look like. Consult with those who invited you or with the audience in advance to determine their goals and expectations. Be aware of time — your training goals should be realistic based on the time allotted to you.

2. Know Your Audience

Before you plan the training, ask questions about the audience. What is their knowledge or skill level on the subject matter on which you are training? What is their interest level? Is this a totally new area, a refresher course, or is it building on earlier trainings? What else is on the program — will the audience be tired after a long business meeting? Will they be sleepy after eating a large lunch? Should there be accommodations made for non-English speakers or audience members with disabilities? Are there gender-neutral restrooms available for nonbinary participants?

3. Know the Venue and Logistics

Find out in advance if the audio-visual (AV) equipment you need will be available. Set up and test the equipment ahead of time. Depending on the size of the audience and the room, check if there is a working microphone (and someone there to trouble-shoot if it malfunctions)? Is there a microphone for audience members who might want to ask questions? Is the lighting adequate for your purposes? What is the actual set up — is the audience in rows of chairs or at tables? Are you up on a stage or closer to the audience? Speak up in advance and let the organizer know what AV equipment you will need and your preferred set up. Make sure the venue is accessible to anyone who might want to participate.

4. Plan the Training with Your Goals & Audience in Mind

Organize your training based on the skill level of the audience. Never talk down to an audience (even if they are young people); but, do not assume too much knowledge on their part either. Be clear in your explanations. Time components of your training so you will be able to complete it without rushing, and use someone as a timekeeper or keep your own time in order to stay on track!

5. Choose an Appropriate Format and Media

If you are going to use PowerPoint (and equipment is available), choose powerful images and limit the amount of text on each slide. You want the audience to look and listen to you rather than read! If you will be speaking and writing on a white board or easel paper — consider writing key points in advance and asking another person to write during the training so you don't lose your audience by turning away from them. Think about handouts in advance. What would be most useful as reinforcement of the training afterwards? When is it best to provide handouts — beforehand, afterwards, during?

6. Make Your Training Interactive

Think about beginning your training with a relevant question directed at the audience. This is a good way to learn about your audience and engage them immediately. Sometimes it is useful to contact some who will be in the audience in advance to involve them in the training — sharing a relevant experience, for example. If possible allow time for small group activity — brief dialogues between members of the audience about a related topic; small group discussion in response to a launch question you provide; or practice using a particular skill. Leave sufficient time for the activity based on the assignment and size of the group and plan on a “report back,” which may or may not involve every group or individual.

7. Decide in Advance How to Handle Questions

Always leave time for questions, but think about how to incorporate them into the training. Decide whether you want to allow participants to stand up and ask directly, fill out a card that can be collected so that you can group like-questions together and/or be selective, or use small groups to answer questions collectively. Make it clear from the beginning when and how questions may be asked so you are not interrupted. Be attentive to your audience and check for signs that might indicate they are confused!

8. Be Flexible!

Remember to expect the unexpected — equipment failure; a larger/smaller-than-expected audience; a rebellious audience member; or a change in the timing for the session. Most audiences will be sympathetic when things go wrong, so be candid and relaxed about any problems or mistakes — people appreciate a leader with whom they can identify! Go with the flow and be ready to make last minute (sometimes on the spot) changes. Perhaps you'll have to cut a group activity or a report back, maybe you will have to add more time to the small group activity, or take questions mid-way if you sense confusion in the audience.

9. Practice, Practice, Practice

Get comfortable with your materials but don't over-practice so that you aren't attentive to the "vibe" in the room. Have water, a cough drop, tissue, and anything else you might need close at hand.

10. Maintain Your Sense of Humor, Smile, & Have Fun!

You don't need to start with a joke, but you should have fun with your material and audience. Smile and try to maintain a conversational tone as you speak. Be open to learning from your audience and seeing things in a different light. Enjoy!