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Leader’s Script to accompany the Advocacy 101 training slides

1. Slide 1

Welcome! This training was created out of a desire to teach others what advocacy means, how simple it can be, and why it is so vitally important. We are happy you are here, and in the next hour you will learn how to be an Advocate, and how to build a relationship with your elected policy makers at the city, county, state, and Federal governments. We will teach you ways to improve and build upon the skills that you already have to become the best advocate you can be.

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Welcome, on behalf of Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, and

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Arizona, a ministry of the Grand Canyon Synod,

Of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). LSS-SW is a nonprofit organization that works in four program areas, Refugee and Immigration, Aging and Disability, Emergency Services and Children and Family. LSS-SW recognized the growing need for advocates to speak out on behalf of our neighbors, and those who utilize our services.

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Arizona (LAMA), a ministry of the Grand Canyon Synod, is one of 17 State Public Policy Offices (SPPO) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Guided by Lutheran social teachings, LAMA works for change in public policy based on the experience of Lutheran ministries, programs and projects around the world and right here in Arizona. LAMA advocates for justice in the areas of hunger, civic engagement (voting rights) and water resources, and with its partners at Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, housing and homelessness, by speaking with and for those who have little or no political power. LAMA works with congregations in Arizona -- ELCA Lutherans and others -- to create and use networks for advocacy on these issues.

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Today we are going to talk about advocacy, as a direct means to get to know your legislators and senators, and open avenues to share with them your concerns for the marginalized people of our communities. We hope our training will enable you to become an active advocate for the benefit of children, families, seniors, and refugees or other causes you find important. Advocacy is defined as: “the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal **:**the act or process of advocating something.” We’ll talk about those that serve in office and how to find out information on their policy priorities and how to contact them. We’ll talk about best practices in advocating. Finally, we’ll talk about how to carry your momentum forward after the training and take what you’ve learned with you.

1. Slide 4.

The role of advocacy is to:

* create a relationship with your elected representatives in local, state, and national districts. They are “real people” and, for the most part are very willing to listen to your concerns and celebrations. Creating a relationship with your representative can help build a foundation. If a legislator remembers you and your knowledge of a topic, they may even reach out to get your feedback on a certain piece of legislation they are working on.
* Stand up for those whose voices are often not heard. Advocates become the voices for the disenfranchised and minoritized.
* Provide an avenue to express your opinions and passions to those who have been elected to serve. This is your Arizona and your voice matters. Policy makers have been elected to represent your opinions.

1. Slide 5.

We are going to take a moment for you to think about a time in your life

when you stood up for someone, or someone stood up for you. (Instructor: Give an example from your own life to start the discussion if need be).

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Were there questions that arose for you? What stood out? (Instructor: Take a moment to let people share. Provide some examples of your own.)

1. Slide 7.

Let’s get right into it. Who are your representatives? Arizona is divided in Legislative Districts and Congressional Districts. The Legislative Districts are represented by State elected officials who serve at the State level. Congressional Districts are represented by elected officials who serve nationally in Congress. Each of us lives in a

Legislative and Congressional district in Arizona. We are going to show you how to find your districts and if you wish you can follow along on your phone. You can scan the QR code provided or go to <https://irc.az.gov> on your phone.. Scroll down on the page to view congressional and legislative maps. Click on either and enter your home address. This will bring up the district in which you live.

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To find your Senator and Representatives at the State Level, you can go to azleg.gov or scan the QR code provided. There is a lot of useful information on this site. Our toolkit contains an entire manual explaining the different resources on this site. For today, we are just going to show you how to find your legislators. These are the people you will be getting to know. Once you are on azleg.gov, if you are on your phone click “Member Roster.” If you are on a computer, hover over either the Senate or House and then click on Members. The page will direct you to a list of Senators or Representatives.

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Once you find your representatives and senators you will want to introduce

yourself to them through an email, or a phone call. Or even better, write a letter!

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We want to help you make an impact with your policy maker through effective letter-writing. We’re going to spend some time today talking about effective letter writing, and then give you an opportunity to write your own letter to your representative.

1. Slide 11

Here is an example of a letter.

1. Slide 12

Tell me about Jim!

1. Slide 13

Here is another example of a letter.

1. Slide 14

Tell me about Tom!

1. Slide 15

Advocacy is all about communicating your concerns for real people who have

very little support or witness in the halls of government. You can change that!

Besides meeting with your policymaker, you can communicate your concerns in one of three means:

Email to your representative/senator stating “I am a constituent…” and the issue at hand. Emails are “worth 1 point.”

Call the office and speak with a staff person “I am a constituent and expressing your issues.” The call is “worth 2 points.”

Write a letter, hand-written letters stating “I am a constituent and expressing your issues.”

Handwritten letters are “worth 20 points!” This communication tells the staff and the

Representative/senator that you are serious about this matter.

Here are some tips for effective letter writing.

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Here are more tips for advocating for children, veterans, the homeless, seniors,

the unemployed, teachers, mentors, a whole host of your neighbors who have no one’s

voice to speak for them.

1. Slide 17

Practice makes perfect. Now we will have you try your hand at writing a sample letter. We will use some recent policy examples and ask you to write as if you were asking your representative to either support or oppose the policy. Keep the letter short, concise, and on point. Be polite. Thank the representative/senator for their service.

1. Slide 18

An example of recent policies are HB2509, or the “tamale bill.” And the Phoenix City Ordinance on Accessory Dwelling units. \*Hand out sheet of paper and briefly explain bills. Use your time to write to your policy maker in regards to one of these examples.

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Here is an example letter that you can use to help format your own.

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In addition to writing letters and contacting your policy makers via email, Request to Speak is a system that allows you to show support or opposition to the bills in committee during the legislative session. You must first go down to the capitol to register, and then you log in at home. After registering, you can sign in from home to document support or opposition virtually, or you can sign up to go speak in person at the capitol.

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To make things easier, LAMA can go down to the capitol on your behalf to get you signed up. Simply scan the QR code to go to the Application page. Fill out the application and email back to LAMA.

1. Slide 22

After you have connected with the policy maker via letter, you may request a meeting!

The meetings are often short in nature; usually just plan enough time to introduce yourself, your story, and something you’d like them to know about what is important to you. A face-to-face meeting may be difficult to arrange, as many people want to share in the legislator’s time. It may take several tries to get a meeting set up. They often have packed schedules and committee meetings, and it is not unusual for your visit to be cancelled or rescheduled, sometimes at the last minute. Plan for about a 10-15 minute meeting and have an outline and talking points with who is saying what, so that the meeting flows smoothly. Leave some time at the end for the policy maker to ask questions or give input. You can bring educational material to leave behind if you would like.

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Make sure you go into the meeting with a friendly and polite demeanor. This will set the tone for the meeting. The legislator may not have the facts about the issue we are bringing forward, or they may have incorrect information. Always back up what you are saying with facts and if the legislator has incorrect information, remain respectful as you present your information. We might not necessarily agree with the policy maker we are meeting with, but it is our responsibility to retain a professional demeanor. If we are rude or demanding, there is less chance that our message will be received. The policy maker may be less willing to take a meeting with us in the future, or value any input we have.

Remember, the goal is to create a relationship so that trust can be built. Finding common ground can help remind everyone that there are shared values across political alignments.

1. Slide 24

Personal stories are often most impactful. You can argue statistics and facts, but you cannot argue with someone’s lived experience. If you or someone close to you has lived experience around what you are talking about, share your experience (make sure if you are sharing someone else’s story that you have permission).

Be courteous. Always send a thank-you letter/email. This is a good way to build rapport and relationship. A handwritten letter or card is always the best option.

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All that can sound intimidating! If you’re feeling overwhelmed, it’s ok. There’s good news…

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First of all, being nervous is completely normal! Even those who meet with their representatives regularly have experienced feelings of anxiety or nervousness. But remember, “Representatives are people, just like us.” In the video, Bahney talks about having courage, and remaining focused on the needs and stories of those impacted. Courage does not mean we never feel nervous or uncomfortable in our interactions with policy makers. But it is important to remember that they are people just like us, and they may not have the knowledge that we have about the issue.

And even if they have the knowledge, and disagree with what you are saying, we can still have an impactful visit by remaining professional.

Most often, your policymaker will be happy to hear from you, as they represent you, and they will be friendly and courteous. It is rare that a policymaker will be outright rude, especially if you remain professional and polite during the meeting.

You can also always bring a friend! This is a good way to feel more comfortable and have support. Just be sure to identify who is from the policymaker’s district.

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Stay involved. Subscribe to LAMA’s newsletter. Subscribe to LSS-SW’s

Advocacy newsletter, and keep up to date on legislative matters and bills being

Introduced. \*\*Promote Lutheran Day at the Legislature here.

And, talk with your friends about advocacy. We’d love to create a cadre of concerned,

polite, letter writers who will take a stand for justice, for the well being of neighbors

Facing hard times, and those who feel left out and forgotten.

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Thank you for your time, and your desire that justice would wrap its arms

around those who have no one to speak for them. You will make a difference.

Because what we know is “advocacy works.”

1. Questions?