

Advocacy 101

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of **speaking out**, **taking action**, or **organizing** to promote or protest an issue that affects individuals, communities, or society at large. It may involve raising awareness, educating lawmakers on a certain issue, or pushing for change, whether at the local, state, or national level. At its core, advocacy ensures that different voices can be heard. It's how people bring attention to their lived experiences and demand the changes they need to thrive.

Advocacy can take many forms. It might look like marching in the streets, calling or writing to your elected officials, testifying at a public hearing, organizing a community event, or using social media to amplify an issue. Often, effective advocacy involves a combination of these strategies and more.

Advocacy is not new. It's been a part of human society for as long as people have gathered to share concerns, build community, and challenge injustice. In the United States, the right to advocate is protected by the [First Amendment of the Constitution](#), which guarantees freedom of speech, freedom of the press, peaceful assembly, and the right to petition the government for change. These are not just rights — they are tools for action!

Advocacy is one of the most powerful tools we have to shape a more just and equitable world. When it comes to women's health, advocacy has been critical in areas like improving the inclusion of women in clinical trial research and expanding access to health care. Without advocacy, many of the rights and services we rely on today would not exist.

Why is advocacy important?

Change doesn't happen on its own. Advocacy moves new policies forward, proposes changes to improve federal programs and systems, and brings communities together to demand better. Advocacy ensures policymakers know how local, state, and national programs are working—or not working—for the people they were elected to serve; in other words, it informs policy.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

