Educating the New Congress:
Step-by-Step Advocacy Training Series for Homeless Educators and Service Providers

6-PART SERIES

Part IV - Shining a Light: Using Media (and Social Media) to Boost Legislative Advocacy
MARCH 9, 2021; 3:30PM EASTERN
About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website: http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org
- Newsletter: https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up/
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships
1. Getting Grounded: Advocacy in the New Congress
2. How to Effectively Communicate with Congress
3. What Does Successful Advocacy Look Like? Learning from Peers
4. Shining a Light: Using Media (and Social Media) to Boost Legislative Advocacy
5. How To Engage Parents and Youth with Lived Experience in Advocacy
6. How to Apply These Lessons Closer to Home: State Policy Advocacy

https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/webinars/upcoming-webinars/
Recap --
Parts I and II: Getting Grounded &
How to Effectively Communicate with Congress

In the first session, we covered:
● The imperative of constituent engagement
● The dynamics of the 117th Congress
● The difference between advocacy & lobbying

In the second session, we covered:
● Best strategies for communicating with Congress
● Effective Meetings: Preparing, During, Following Up, Do’s and Don’ts
● Online and Other Forms of Advocacy

In the third session, our peers covered:
● Entering the advocacy space and the impact that it can have
● Why they make time for advocacy
● Significant lessons learned while engaging in advocacy
Shining a Light: Using Media (and Social Media) to Boost Legislative Advocacy
Why is media important to advocacy?

- Strategic use of media is critical for focusing attention on a particular issue, creating public pressure for legislators to act and showing the strength of the collective stakeholders.
- Policymakers at every level pay close attention to media hot-button issues, especially from their constituencies.
- Social media allows for engaging with elected officials in a much more direct, public way.
Why are you an important voice for advocacy?

+ **You know the issue firsthand,** which makes you a valuable storyteller and trusted voice on the issue.

+ **We need vocal advocates for children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness at every level.** You don’t have to consider yourself political to make an impact.

+ **Many organizations have legal limitations on engaging in active legislation (even in a Tweet),** but individuals do not.
Local Media
Why is local media important to policymakers?

+ Local media can drive legislative priority-setting.

+ Policymakers want to read what their constituents read and stay in tune with concerns and issues affecting them.

+ Policymakers and their staff closely follow how the media covers legislation they are involved in or vested in.
What makes a compelling story to legislators?

+ **Frontline and expert voices**, especially located in constituencies.

+ **Timeliness** (i.e. tying to legislation, current events)

+ Connecting to other **high-priority issues or narratives**

+ **Strong data/evidence**
She's racing to help homeless kids — but can't reach them during pandemic

Eric Adelson  Special to Detroit Free Press
Published 6:01 a.m. ET May 16, 2020  Updated 2:10 p.m. ET May 16, 2020
SCHOOL DISTRICTS SAW UNPRECEDENTED DROP IN ENROLLMENT DURING PANDEMIC

As school started this fall during the pandemic, some of the largest school districts saw an unprecedented decrease in student enrollment. Sharyn Alfonsi reports on how districts mobilized to get kids in school this fall.
How can you help shape a compelling story?

+ Above all, you decide what to share and how to share it. You are in control of your story.

+ Know your message.

+ Use supportive facts when you can.

+ Avoid jargon and complex statistics.

+ Involve stories and voices that illustrate the issue.
How can you connect earned media to advocacy?

+ Share the article on social media, tagging relevant policymakers.
How can you connect earned media to advocacy?

+ You can send earned media stories with policy demands to elected officials.

Dear Caitlin and Dan,

Last night’s 60 Minutes report highlighted critical school efforts to reach out to find and enroll children and youth experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. The show featured the outreach of Laura Tucker, a McKinney-Vento homeless education liaison with Hillsborough County Public Schools, who is carrying out responsibilities under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

We surveyed liaisons like Laura nationwide, and released a report today with Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan: “Lost in the Masked Shuffle and Virtual Void: Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Amidst the Pandemic.” The report found an estimated 420,000 fewer children and youth experiencing homelessness have been identified and enrolled by schools so far this school year due to challenges in identifying and reaching them. It contains data and insight sourced directly from educators and homeless liaisons across 49 states, who work on the ground to identify and enroll students experiencing homelessness.

The SHC/U-M report also includes recommendations for urgently addressing this crisis, including dedicated funding for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, and the Emergency Family Stabilization Act (H.R. 7950, S. 3923), in the next coronavirus relief package. You can read more about those priorities here.

Please let me know if you have questions, or need more information.
Social Media
Engaging elected officials on social media:

+ Twitter is the fastest platform for reaching policymakers.
+ Tag policymakers in social posts.
+ Like + retweet policymakers’ posts to react/respond to them.
+ Use graphics, when possible.
+ Use Tweet Threads to put out longer form statements.
Writing Posts

+ Clarify your key audience.

+ Write like you talk - and write for clicks.
  + Avoid jargon.
  + Write in an active voice
  + Be brief.

+ Use relevant hashtags.

+ Stick to your key messages.

+ Prioritize videos and images where you can.

+ Make sure there’s a clear, actionable takeaway.
  + Make policymakers aren’t just aware of the issue, but of your proposed solution/next step.
Ktown for All 💜 @KtownforAll · Feb 12

Transitional homeless shelters connected with #ABridgeHome fill up fast. The Special Enforcement Zones surrounding shelters punish Angelenos who desperately want help but can’t get inside. @BobBlumenfield, this is inhumane. Struggling people need #HomesNotZones.

There aren’t enough beds for everyone

- **40k**
  - Unhoused Population
- **1k**
  - Transitional Shelter Beds

SERVICES NOT SWEEPS
We urge @SenFeinstein and @SenAlexPadilla to swiftly pass the COVID relief bill, including important housing elements:

- 👇 PPP support for nonprofits & community orgs
- $19 billion in rent assistance
- $5 billion for housing choice
- $5 billion for supportive housing
This week, the @EdLaborCmte passed its portion of the COVID relief bill, which contains nearly $130B for K-12 education. But as it stands, very little of these funds, if any, are likely to reach the 1.5M students experiencing homelessness. We must change that. (1/8)

10:00 AM · Feb 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

SchoolHouse Connection @SchoolHouseConn · Feb 12

1. Congress must reserve at least $500M in COVID-19 education funding for students experiencing homelessness.

2. Congress also must ensure that these students have emergency needs met to help stabilize their housing, health, & other basic needs. (1/8)

SchoolHouse Connection @SchoolHouseConn · Feb 12

3. Given that HUD’s definition of "homelessness" excludes 84% of the homeless children identified by public schools, Congress must pass the bipartisan Emergency Family Stabilization Act, which provides flexible funding directly to community agencies, in any final package. (2/8)

SchoolHouse Connection @SchoolHouseConn · Feb 12

#Congress: It’s time to STAND UP for our most vulnerable students.

The consequence of not doing so is too great - millions will fall further from opportunity, continue to experience homelessness as adults, & remain at high risk for spreading contracting COVID-19. (3/8)

SchoolHouse Connection @SchoolHouseConn · Feb 12

We cannot promise “opportunity for all” in this country without supporting children and youth who are homeless, especially amid COVID-19.

Learn more in our latest @Medium piece: bit.ly/375pHc2 (4/8)

Child, youth, & family homelessness in CARES Act

- The first major COVID relief bill, the CARES Act, stated that funds "may" be used to support homeless children through EIMCY. But in a survey of 1,444 school district homeless liaisons conducted in September and October of 2020, only 18 percent indicated that CARES Act funds were being used to support homeless children.
Tweet Storms are a tactic to create noise and show clear, widespread support of an issue/solution by coordinating posts with partners/allies.

How to launch a Tweet Storm:

+ Identify your call-to-action and policymaker targets to tag.
+ Select a dedicated day and time for your Tweet Storm.
+ Draft your posts - with a unique hashtag and graphics.
+ Recruit allies and partners to post in the Tweet Storm.
  + Provide them with the posts, hashtags, and tags.
+ Start tweeting and retweeting on the selected day/time!
TWEET STORM EXAMPLE

LA CAN @LACANetwork · Feb 19
@MayorOfLA #SeizeTheHotels, you have the authority even if you lack the courage. Grow a backbone, stop with the pointless rhetoric, and house the houseless today.

People's City Council - Los Angeles @PplsCityCouncil · Feb 19
EMERGENCY TWITTER STORM 📣 🌴

@CD6Nury has failed to agendize the FEMA hotels motion for another week. Over 5 unhoused Angelenos die a day, they need to seize the fucking hotels right now.

TONIGHT 7 pm, use the toolkit.: bit.ly/seizethehotels #SeizeTheHotels
## Planning Social Media Posts

+ Create a calendar to plan posts and engage electeds around newsworthy moments, days of awareness, holidays/ cultural days of significance, and current/upcoming legislation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hashtags:</th>
<th>Sample Posts:</th>
<th>Twitter Copy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#ChildWelfareCovid, #ChildWelfare, #FosterCare, #KinshipCaregivers, #KinshipNavigator, #KeepFamiliesStrong, #Grandfamilies</td>
<td>Grand Magazine explores grandparents’ perspectives on parenting their grandchildren during the pandemic, emphasizing the role that physical health and mental outlook play in multigenerational relationships. Read more here: <a href="https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/grand/2020fall_y2/index.php#p/9">https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/grand/2020fall_y2/index.php#p/9</a></td>
<td>Check out @GRANDMMagazine’s Fall issue story on grandparents’ perspectives on parenting their grandchildren during the pandemic illuminating the role that physical health and mental wellbeing play in multigenerational households. Read more here: <a href="https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/grand/2020fall_y2/index.php#p/9">https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/grand/2020fall_y2/index.php#p/9</a></td>
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<td>The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative continues its weekly webinar series this week with a new presentation exploring the role public housing agencies play in youth and foster care alumni success. Register here: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwof-yppQD0bGNOWyetz66Fkr-hrFkKA75G">https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwof-yppQD0bGNOWyetz66Fkr-hrFkKA75G</a></td>
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Expanding Your Reach
Expanding Your Reach

If your organization has the budget to boost social media activity, consider digital advertising or boosting posts.

Digital Advertising

+ Know your goal: awareness, engagement, or mobilization?
+ Know your targets: Narrow your targeting to efficiently spend your budget.
+ Set your budget: The more targeted your audience is and optimize towards a goal, the more you get out of your $$.

Recommended resources:
+ For Facebook/Instagram advertising, see here.
+ For Twitter advertising, see here.
Expanding Your Reach

Measuring Your Ad Reach

**Awareness:**
+ Impressions: The number of times your ad was shown.
+ Reach: The number of unique people who saw your ad.
+ Frequency: The number of times a person saw your ad.

**Engagement:**
+ Engagements: People taking action on your ad in the form of clicks, comments, reactions, shares.

**Mobilization:**
+ Link clicks: Number of times people click your link or post
+ Click-thru rate: Ads divided by impressions.
+ Cost per click: Total budget spent by divided clicks.
**Boosting Your Post**

You can push out top performing organic content to a wider audience in your peripherals.

### Boost Post

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- People you choose through targeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- People who like your Page</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- People who like your Page and their friends</td>
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</table>

**Location - Living In United States: Illinois**
- Age 18 - 65+
- People who match: People who like Live Free Chicago,
- Friends of connections: Friends of people who are connected to Live Free Chicago

**Automatic Placements (Recommended)**

Use automatic placements to maximize your budget and help show your ads to more people. Facebook's delivery system will allocate your ad set's budget across multiple placements based on where they're likely to perform best. Learn more.

### DURATION AND BUDGET

By clicking Boost, you agree to Facebook's Terms & Conditions | Help Center
Questions?
THANK YOU
Next Session

Part V: How To Engage Parents and Youth with Lived Experience in Advocacy

In the next session, we’ll discuss considerations and tips for facilitating the participation of youth and parents with lived experience in advocacy with featured guests, Jordyn Roark and Yorri Berry.