ACE of Florida Adult Ed Champions

Advocacy 101
To build a cadre of professionals, statewide, who have built RELATIONSHIPS with policy-makers and who can ADVOCATE for adult education and adult education issues as they arise.
Advocacy vs Lobbying

Advocacy: Organizations or individuals seeking to affect government on their own behalf for a cause or an issue

• Not paid
• Not required to register
• Educating
Lobbying: refers specifically to efforts to influence specific legislation.

- Usually paid
- Generally have to be registered
- Potential funding source issues
- May have financial stake/gain in outcome

Lobbyists are advocates but advocates are not lobbyists.
What do you advocate for?

- Your organization
- Your "cause"
- For or against a bill
- For or against language in a bill
- For or against funding
WARNING…..EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

• Make absolutely certain your superiors (including superintendents and presidents) know and support your advocating locally, in Tallahassee or in DC

• All districts are different
Identify your legislators
Research your legislators’ backgrounds
Research any bills they are sponsoring
During session be familiar with some bills authored
Meet in local office (more time, more relaxed)
Meet in Tallahassee (more issue focused)
Know YOUR purpose for going (specific issue or establish a relationship)

How is what you do important to THEM and/or Florida?

Know your district’s, college’s, and/or organization’s position

Prepare your case/message (local and/or state data)

Leave a fact sheet if available
• Make an appointment (gently persistent is OK)
• Limit attendees
• Identify a leader
• If more than two attendees – rehearse
• If coming from out of town confirm the day before; schedules change with little notice
• Be prepared (not disappointed) to meet with a legislative assistant
ACE/Adult Ed Champions – Before You Go

▶ If you take a business partner
  • Make sure of their purpose/message
  • Make sure they can make YOUR case from their perspective
  • If you take a student:
    ❖ Rehearse and time
    ❖ Travel arrangements
    ❖ Commitment
The Meeting

- Arrive early
- Treat all staff like they hold your future in their hands (sometimes they do)
- One person introduces organization, attendees, purpose for visit, and starts/facilitates/concludes discussion
- Thank them, up front, for their valuable time
The Meeting

- You might get 15 minutes; more or less.
- Stay on message and read the legislator.
- Be brief and to the point then let the legislator talk....as much as they want to
- Offer to research and provide answers you don’t have.....then follow up
- Share successes – tell your story
The Meeting

- Do not bring a laundry list (legislator can add)
- Do not ask about money
- Do not leave promotional items
- Do not argue a point
- Do not press for a commitment or a position – say you would appreciate their consideration
- Do not use jargon…speak THEIR language
ACE/Adult Ed Champions - After the Meeting

- After the Meeting
  - Leave a brief hand-out
  - Leave business cards if they weren’t collected first
  - Collect business cards from the legislator and staff
  - Pictures are OK sometimes….read the room
  - Write and send thank yous
  - Follow up if required
  - Follow or connect using social media
  - Maintain regular (3-4 times a year) contact
ACE/Adult Ed Champions – Your Points

- Tell your story….who you are …who you serve
- Share a handout
- Tell a quick success story (adult is the foundation for....)
- Thank them for supporting adult education and workforce education (they likely don’t know adult ed is part of that funding stream)
- Mention specific legislation (by number) that you want them to support
ACE/Adult Ed Champions Initiative

➢ START TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
➢ YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE
To build a cadre of professionals, statewide, who have built RELATIONSHIPS with policy-makers and who can ADVOCATE for adult education and adult education issues as they arise.
ACE/Adult Ed Champions - Guide

- Cover handout
- ACE 2020 Advocacy Agenda
- Face-to-face meeting "How To"
- Helpful Hints for Advocacy
- Advocacy one-page Cheat Sheet
- Writing a legislator
ACE/Adult Ed Champions - Guide

- Free Online Advocacy Resources
- COABE’s fact sheet
- How a bill becomes a law
- Wednesday House Schedule
- Wednesday Senate Schedule
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ACE/Adult Ed Champions - Tomorrow

- Appointments/Security
- I could not get an appointment.....now what?
  - Walk around; capitol, senate, house, knox
  - Stop by legislator’s office; leave materials
  - Attend a committee meeting
- Come and go from here but watch time