



## Being an Advocate

### Objectives:

- ✓ Advisory leaders will be able to distinguish the difference in "lobbying" and "advocating."
- ✓ Advisory leaders will identify elected officials at all levels.
- ✓ Advisory leaders will share a success story someone has had with Extension.

### Advance Preparation:

- ✓ Invite new and current members to meeting
- ✓ Secure LCD or make transparencies and secure overhead projector

### Materials Needed:

- ✓ [PowerPoint: "Building Relationships..." visuals and notes pages](#)
- ✓ [One copy of Handout "County Elected Officials Worksheet" per participant](#)
- ✓ [One copy of Handout "State Elected Officials Worksheet" per participant](#)
- ✓ [One copy of Handout "Federal Elected Officials Worksheet" per participant](#)
- ✓ Easel, flip chart with paper and markers

**Time Needed:** 40 minutes

## BACKGROUND

Advisory leaders are extension's most effective advocates. Faculty is viewed as having a biased view of the world by elected officials. In fact, Halperin, head of the Institute for Educational Leadership, says they have a lot of negative stereotypes about educators. Well informed and articulate advisory leaders, on the other hand, can be very effective because they believe in the value of extension and recognize how the programs can save taxpayer dollars.

There is a link between "lobbying" and advocacy. Halperin says lobbying is loosely defined as any attempt to influence specific legislation. He says, "Advocacy is support for a cause you believe in, and may embrace a wide variety of activities and might, or might not include lobbying." He goes on to say, "Lobbying always involves advocacy, but advocacy does not necessarily involve lobbying."

Advocacy is an on-going process. Advocacy is about building relationships with elected officials, community leaders and other key leaders or stakeholders. Advocacy is also about educating elected officials about clientele needs and programs. People in elected offices are always changing and power is continually shifting. Therefore, the "wannabe's" and the outgoing have to be considered.

## **INTEREST APPROACH (10 minutes)**

- In pairs, brainstorm a list of synonyms for "advocate."
- Record answers on the flip chart to make a collective list of synonyms. Use this opportunity to clarify the distinction between "lobbying" and "advocating."

## **LESSON (20 minutes)**

- Present the PowerPoint: "Building Relationships..." visuals. Be sure to use the notes pages to guide you in the presentation. (5 minutes)
- Divide the group into small working groups of 4 to 5 people.
- Give the group 10 minutes to pool their knowledge about elected officials who serve the county.
- Process the activity with the following questions:
  - Is there information we need to learn that would be helpful in relating to our elected leaders?
  - How can we continue to collect information about each elected official?

## **APPLICATION (10 minutes)**

- With a partner, share a success story regarding your experience with Extension that you would like to tell an elected leader.
- Ask for volunteers to share with the whole group.

## **REFERENCES**

Samuel Halperin. (2001). A Guide for the Powerless - And Those Who Don't Know Their Own Power: A Primer on the American Political Process. American Youth Policy Forum, Washington, D.C.

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