



UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND COMMUNICATING WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Policy and advocacy work can initially seem daunting, it is a complex landscape of legislation, regulations, stakeholders, and competing interests. Yet, at its core, this work is about understanding problems and crafting solutions that make a lasting impact. This guide will equip you with tools and resources to help you understand the advocacy landscape, communicate effectively with decision-makers, and engage in the legislative process.

Tracking Bills

Washington Bills and Initiatives

Find current information about bills and initiatives. Search a bill number to find out bill sponsors, status, reports, and other information.

Create an account and a personalized list of bills.

- Click on the “Register/Sign in” button
- Sign up for an account if you don’t already have one
- Create at least one “folder” and “list”
- Start tracking bills relevant to your work

See who signed in on a bill.

Select the chamber, committee, and meeting in which the bill is being heard to see which legislators signed in and which position they took.

Watch proceedings by clicking on video links at the bottom of any bill page.

Watch WAFAC’s webinar for tips on:

- Finding bill information
- Signing in to provide testimony or record a position on a bill
- Important timing and cut-off dates of the legislature
- Overview of the legislative process



Engaging in the Legislative Process

First, to participate effectively, you'll need a basic understanding of the lawmaking process.

- [How a Bill Becomes a Law](#)
- [Understanding Bills](#)

There are several different ways to engage in the lawmaking process in Washington.

1. Contact a legislator: [Find your local representatives online](#)
2. Participate in a public hearing of a bill in a committee meeting by [testifying or submitting a written testimony](#).
3. [Comment on a bill](#)

Tips and Tools

Testifying at Hearings Toolkit

Recommendations and tips for testifying at legislative hearings.

Tips for Engaging Elected Officials

FACNet tip sheet on how to contact and engage with elected officials.

Policy Prep Sheet

Worksheet for preparing for and organizing meetings with legislators.

Being an Effective Advocate

Tips on generating effective messages and communicating them.

Storytelling

Guide to creating compelling stories that help you advocate for your mission and community.

What Nonprofits Need to Know About Lobbying in WA

Practical guidance on rules for lobbying specific to WA

Additional Learning Opportunities:

- [Aspen Policy Academy](#): Increasing Organization Potential for Impact
- [Advocacy Check-Up](#): Nonprofit Self Assessment