

SARTAC Advisory Committee: Policy



**What Can You Do as a Citizen to
Educate Legislators?**

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What is SARTAC?

- Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center
- Online clearinghouse for information
- A partnership between regional technical assistance centers

- Funded by Administration for Community Living



Presenters



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Learning Objectives

- Learn the different levels of involvement
- How do you get involved in public policy as an advocate?
- Meeting with your legislators

Introduction or Beginning Level of Involvement:

- You are not too familiar about how it works, but you want to get involved
- You invite someone to go with you like a friend
- You make phone calls and emails to see what can be done
- Share your stories to your legislators or aid and how the change will affect your life on a certain topic

Middle level Involvement:

- You find out about a bill and want to get involved and advocate for change
- Work with a group of people on a common issue
- Talk with others who have key relationships
- Talk with experts, talk with advocacy groups
- Meet with legislators to educate and ask for change

Top level Involvement:

- Understand the issues
- Who is involved or affected?
- You have developed relationships with legislators
- You are at the table as a leader giving them knowledge by your expertise and experiences
- Other people come to you for information and guidance of what comes next
- You encourage others to participate

HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED

Educating or lobbying

You can share your story to let them know how it would affect your life.

A 501(c)(3) organization may engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status.



How do you get involved in public policy as an advocate? Group question

- What are the current issues in your state that affect people with disabilities?
- For example: Voting rights, home-based care, or transportation

Group activity: Is it a State Issue or a Federal Issue?

- Local transportation services
- Marriage penalty
- Social Security SSI or SSDI
- Housing opportunities
- Airlines

How do you get involved in public policy as in advocate? Things to consider

- Think about the issue you want to bring up, be prepared to talk about it
- How can you help with system change in your state for an important issue(s)?
- How do you speak to a Senator or House of Representatives?
- How can you meet them during this pandemic?
- In person or email or phone call – what are you going to say?
- Is it accessible in your state to connect to your legislators?
- Invite someone with you that has experience and also someone you can trust, if you have never do it before. Don't go alone!
- Set up a meeting time, don't just show up

Meeting with your legislators

Introduction:

- Who you are? Say your name
- Where you live, are you their constituent? Your town or City
- Tell them a story of how that legislation will affect their life
- If they ask you questions that you do not know the answer to, tell them you do not know, but will find out

Meeting with your legislators

Commitment from your legislator:

- “Can I get your support on...”
- How do you plan on voting? Can I get your vote?
- Have the correct information and facts –
- Send information - look at Position Statements, PowerPoints, or email them the information – find out what is allowed to remind them about your visit

Meeting with your legislators

Follow up:

- Give them a contact person
- Send them a “Thank you” note to remind them of you
- Call back to see if they have any questions

Group Questions

- If you have connected with your legislators, what can you tell someone who has not visited their legislators?



Resources

Resources for self advocacy groups can be found at www.selfadvocoacyinfo.org



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC). The website features a blue header with the SARTAC logo, which consists of a stylized book icon surrounded by colorful dots. The text "SARTAC" is in large blue letters, with "Self Advocacy and Beyond" in smaller red text below it. To the right of the logo, the full name "Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center" is displayed. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT, RESOURCES, SELF ADVOCACY, SUPPORT, and CONTACT US. A search icon is also present. The main content area features a collage of images: a man in a blue shirt using a computer, a group of people holding up a large whiteboard with various icons and a question mark, and a woman in a red and black striped shirt smiling at a laptop. Below the collage is a purple banner with the text "Your one-stop resource for organizing and supporting self advocacy groups". At the bottom, there is a green link that says "How can we help your self advocacy group?".