



# IRUSA ADVOCATES

## *Advocacy Toolkit*

**Mission Statement & Introduction:** Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA) provides relief and development in a dignified manner regardless of gender, race, or religion, and works to empower individuals in their communities and give them a voice in the world. With a strong commitment to advocating for positive change, IRUSA recognizes the power and potential of university students in shaping a better future. That's why we are excited to offer you our exclusive advocacy toolkit, designed specifically for students like you.



## How to Use this Toolkit:

- 1** Request an Advocacy Training by IRUSA  
(Virtual or in Person)
- 2** Follow the Step-by-Step Guide on Organizing an  
Effective Advocacy Campaign
- 3** Communicate and report back to IRUSA on  
campaigns so that they can be amplified by our  
team
- 4** Fill out our follow-up survey so we can better  
assist you moving forward





# Step-by-Step Guide on Organizing an Effective Advocacy Campaign:



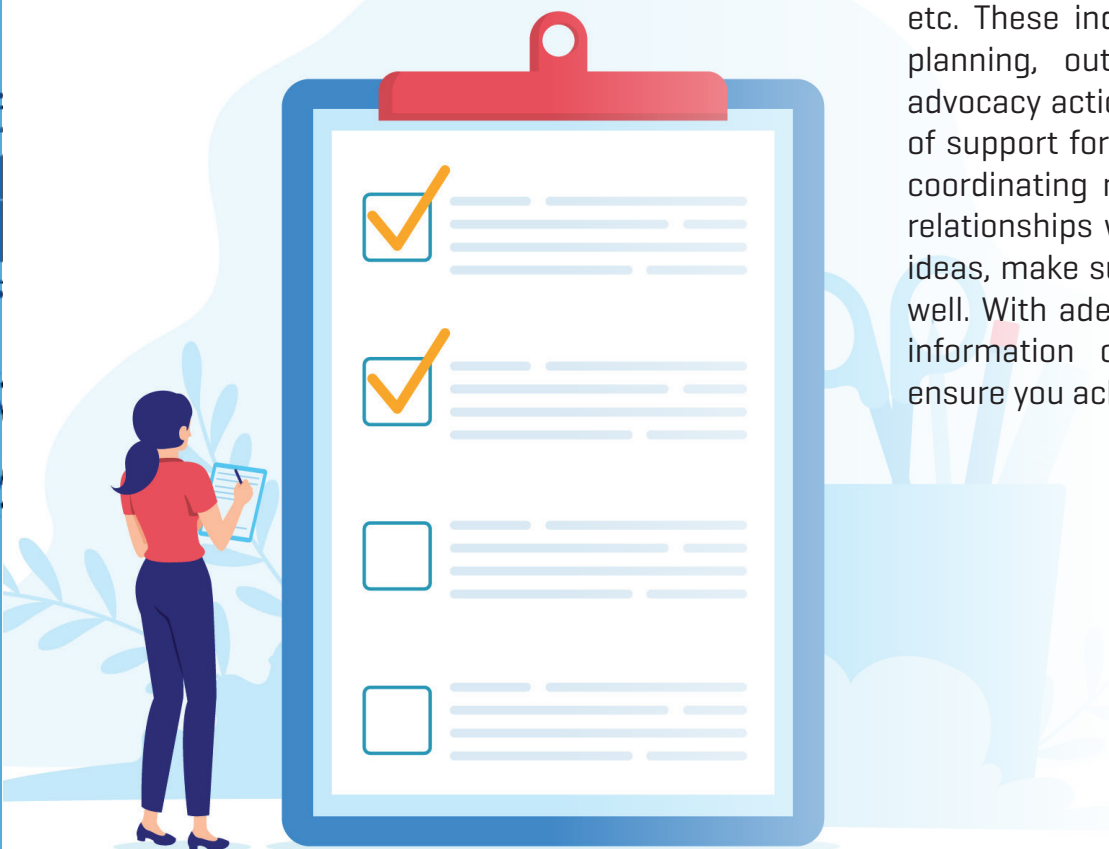
**1 Identify the Issue:** This should always be done with ample input and collaboration from impacted communities. This is often done through taking surveys or holding listening sessions to find out what are the hardest pressing issues facing the community. Always take into account the political context. Choose a campaign that is winnable and reflects the interests of your club constituents and community members.

**2 Education:** Once you have selected a topic of interest, identify knowledgeable individuals within your network to educate your group on the campaign. These individuals can include faculty members, scholars, or community members available to give a lecture either virtually or in-person. This time is also your opportunity to recruit more advocates for your campaign. Open up the lecture to fellow peers, surrounding university students, etc.

**3 Learn About your National, State, and Local Elected Officials:** Identify who your elected officials are depending on the level of government – are you planning to meet to discuss local and state policy or are you wanting to discuss national policy? If the latter, are your congressional members in congressional leadership? Explore the House and Senate subcommittees to learn more about active members, specific policy areas, current events, and committee hearings.

To learn more about your governor, state legislators, mayor, and local officials, click [here](#).

**4 Assemble a Team and Know Your Audience:** An ideal team consists of a diverse collection of individuals impacted by your policy area. This can include students, university staff and administration, community members, local organizations, faith-based groups, etc. These individuals can all share in the planning, outreach, and coordination of advocacy actions and speak to the diversity of support for selected policy focus. Before coordinating meetings to discuss current relationships with policy makers, goals and ideas, make sure to research your audience well. With adequate preparation of relevant information on your audience, you can ensure you achieve your desired outcome.



5

**Identify Strategy:** A campaign without a strategy is likely to be ineffective. It's imperative to work together in a collaborative way to build community support around a winning strategy. ***Check out these important components:***



## Identify goals and vision:

Identify the shared goal and vision. Work toward a long-term goal with attainable short-term and medium-term goals. Goals should always be winnable! Make sure to map out your goals first.

## Identify allies:

List potential partners and make an outreach plan.



## Identify targets:

List potential legislators; you need to consider potential supports as well as opponents.



## Identify other actions to strengthen your advocacy meetings:

action alerts, media, and rallies etc. Prepare leave behind materials that further explain the policy asks and educational materials the staffer can share with the representative.

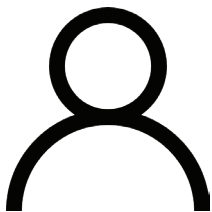
*Putting it all*



*together*



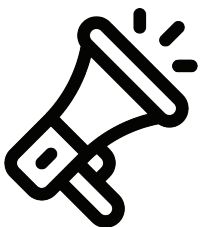
## 6 Identify the plan for the meetings:



**The Facilitator** will kick off the meeting by introducing your group, explaining the purpose for the meeting, and providing time for each person attending to briefly introduce themselves. Make sure each participant introduces the organization they represent or their connection to housing issues. The facilitator will also jump in if the meeting goes off-track and redirect the conversation.



**The Personal Story** is key to every meeting. Someone should be present who is either an impacted person themselves or has worked closely with and been impacted. Telling this story will show how peoples' lives and communities are enriched through policy reform in this respective realm. For more information, check out NLIHC's Storytelling Tips & Tricks.



**Specific Issue Points** - It will be helpful to use both your prepared notes, resources such as this toolkit as well as leave behind materials to refer to during the meeting. Split the issue points between members of the group, preferably in the way it most impacts them/people they know.



**The Ask** is the critical part when you ask. Be direct in what you want the representative to do, whether it's to vote in a certain way on a policy or to introduce legislation, etc. Listen carefully and ask for clarification if their response is vague. Be sure to note their policy responses.

## 7 After the meeting:

**Debrief with your group:** It's important to debrief after the meeting. As a group, ask: what did we hear? Did we get what we wanted? How did we work together as a team? What are the next steps? Share your reflections/questions with us!

**Follow up:** Make sure to send a thank you email to the staff after the meeting with any information they asked for and any other relevant information you think would be helpful. Inviting the staff and/or Members to an upcoming event focused on this policy ask is an excellent next step!



# IRUSA/DVOCATES

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***Be an Advocate and Stay Connected!***