

Independent Living Research Utilization

Turning Words into Action

Teleconference and Web Cast

Training for the Cash and Counseling Program

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Trainers

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Advocacy Definitions

Self advocacy is action taken on one's own behalf to protect or improve the individual's life circumstances.

Examples:

- John Smith moves to a small rural community and discovers that there is no ramp going into the Post Office. He calls the Regional ADA office and discovers that there is a decades-long requirement that all federal buildings must be accessible. He secures a copy of the law and regulation and takes it to the Postmaster, who orders the required modifications.
- Betty Johnson experienced a head injury in an automobile accident and has been gradually re-integrating herself into her community. One of her largest barriers occurs whenever she is in the bank, when the tellers try to rush her through the line. Betty never feels confident that she understands all of the transactions which have occurred, but can't get the tellers to slow down. Betty asks to speak with the manager, explains her situation, and she is directed to by-pass the lines and go to the 'courtesy' desk, where her transactions are handled and each is explained as it occurs until she understands it fully.

The role of the advocacy organization:

- Developing materials in formats which are understandable to their consumers
- Offering training in self advocacy which stresses not only consumer rights, but also techniques for asserting one's wishes, identifying sources of information and using research tools.
- Creating coach and peer support opportunities for individuals who need some guidance, but wish to act on their own. ("Have you tried . . . ?")

Individual advocacy is assistance given to a single person that is intended to improve both the person's life circumstances and the person's self-advocacy skills.

- John Smith moves to a small rural community and discovers that there is no ramp going into the Post Office. He asks a passer-by to send out the Postmaster, who tells him that adding a ramp for one person is too expensive and advises John to "Do what you did today. Have someone come in and get me and I'll come out."

John calls the local Center for Independent Living (CIL), which agrees to send a peer counselor with him back to the Post Office. Armed with the law and regulations—and a second person in a wheelchair—they meet with the Postmaster, who agrees to add the ramp.

- Betty Johnson experienced a head injury in an automobile accident and has been gradually re-integrating herself into her community. One of her largest barriers occurs whenever she is in the bank, when the tellers try to rush her through the line. Betty never feels confident that she understands all of the transactions which have occurred, but can't get the tellers to slow down.

One day, while visiting the local Head Injury Foundation, Betty shares her concern and asks the organization to intervene for her. Instead, the peer counselor agrees to go with Betty to the bank to talk to the manager. Together, they explain her needs and the manager agrees to the above accommodation.

The role of the advocacy organization:

- Assisting the consumer instead of doing "for" the consumer.
- Developing materials in formats which are understandable to their consumers
- Offering training which stresses not only consumer rights, but also techniques for asserting one's wishes, identifying sources of information, and using research tools.

Systems advocacy is activity which has the effect of altering laws, regulations, or practices that impact large numbers of people.

- John Smith calls the local CIL about the inaccessibility of the Post office and discovers that he is one of a long line of people with disabilities who have been put off by the Postmaster. The center files a complaint with the Access Board because this is a violation under the Architectural Barriers Act.
- The Head Injury Foundation discovers that a number of their consumers have received substandard service related to staff insensitivity from People's National Bank. The director of the organization calls the head of the Public Relations Department of the bank and explains that this is a large enough problem to warrant a call to the press.

Anxious to avoid a public relations nightmare the bank agrees to a three-tier approach to addressing the problem, which includes 1) a four-hour training for all of its staff, 2) a review by disability advocates and modification of all company procedures to address disability issues, and 3) the integration of disability content into all pertinent future training at the bank.

The role of the advocacy organization:

- Providing leadership within a community on issues warranting systems advocacy
- Developing leaders within the disability community

- Educating the disability community and their stakeholders regarding issues of importance to people with disabilities

Words That Depict Disability Stereotypes

Limited intellect	Burdens	Unfortunate cripples
Asexual	Erratic	Victims
Drag on society	Undependable	Outcasts
Angry	Uncontrollable	Menaces
Unemployable	Incompetent	Subhuman
Medically Fragile	Diseased	Sick
Deviant	Biologically inferior	Deficient
Childlike	Dependent	Not capable

If Society believes in these stereotypes . . .

. . . Who do they elect to represent them?

If our representatives believe in these stereotypes . . .

. . . What types of laws are they likely to pass?

Communicating with Public Officials

Setting the meeting:

- **Set appointments--and keep them.** This is the first step in demonstrating respect and professionalism. Not only that, it's simply good manners. Call as far ahead as possible to set your appointment. The further ahead, the more likely it is that you will get enough time to fully share your ideas.
- **Prepare your presentation.** Know what you're going to say and, if you're part of a group, who is going to say it. Practice how you will make critical points and how you will respond to tough questions.

Developing your case:

- **Establish common ground.** One of the best ways to build rapport is to establish what you have in common. It's there if you look for it. For example, it could be a family member. . . a bill she sponsored last year. . . a relevant speech he gave in your community. . . a hearing you testified for. Your job is much easier if you, or one of your party, is a constituent of the legislator or official.
- **Show why you are the expert.** Share information about yourself, members of your group, and your organization that qualifies you as expert(s) in the matter under discussion.

Being clear about what you want:

- **Identify decision points.** Be clear and concise in your request, but avoid appearing rigid and uncompromising. What exactly is it that you want? What is it about the principles of both your organization and the public official that make your points so important?
- **Consider friends and adversaries.** Identify other groups or organizations that would support or oppose your position. Why are they right or wrong? Is there a possibility for a win-win solution to the discussion?

Continuing the relationship:

- **Offer assistance.** Offer your assistance if there is something you can do to help clarify or strengthen your position--and then do it! Don't make promises or commitments that you don't intend to keep.
- **Show appreciation.** Send a follow-up letter thanking the public official for the meeting and briefly clarifying the major points discussed. If you met with a staff member, be sure to send a complimentary note to his or her boss.

The Key to a Successful Meeting ... Planning¹

The purpose of a meeting with your Senator or Representative is to persuade him/her to support your issue, bill cause, etc. Since the opportunity is an infrequent occurrence you will want to make every minute count. The following planning steps have been proven useful to participants at prior training sessions. Once you have decided who will attend the meeting with you, include them in a planning session to structure the agenda you will follow during the meeting.

ATTITUDE: Think of your legislator as an honest, intelligent person wanting to do the right thing. Try to understand that he or she has to make decisions about thousands of issues during a legislative session and has limited time to spend on any one issue. Consider yourself an information source about the special issues affecting individuals with disabilities. Try to “package” the information in a way that will be remembered; usually an anecdote about one individual will be more powerful than a page of statistics.

ISSUES: Use fact sheets, or issue papers. Decide how you will briefly introduce each of the issues during the meeting. Use personal stories to illustrate the impact on your life.

WHO WILL SAY WHAT: Each person in your group will want to say something about the issue. Decide in advance who will say what. Consider one person being the lead spokesperson, introducing everyone and keeping the discussion moving. If you plan an article for your local newspaper or affiliate newsletter try to get a quote from your Senator or Representative.

FACTS: You will not be able to include all the information from the fact sheets. Decide in advance which facts/data/statistics you will use to make your points.

QUESTIONS: Anticipate questions from your legislator or the staff member, and have the answers ready. If you don't know the answer to any question, say “I don't know that answer, but I'm sure I can get the information for you.” (And then let someone know so that the answer can be obtained.)

OPPOSITION: Recognize that there are at least two sides to every issue and be open and candid about what “the loyal opposition” might have said. State your views and the reasons for your position.

¹This list and the one following entitled “Personal Contact” are excerpted from *Coalition Building for Systems Advocacy: A National Teleconference Participant's Manual*, August 21, 2002, a program of the IL NET, an ILRU/NCIL National Training and Technical Assistance Project. They were contributed by the Boston Center for Independent Living from their *Legislative Advocacy Training* Program and are provided here as examples of what other groups of advocates have created as resources for developing advocacy skills.

WRITTEN MATERIALS: Decide what written material to leave to be referred to later. A brochure about your parent group or organization, newspaper clippings about individuals needing services, etc. could be added to the fact sheets. Leave your name, address and telephone number so you can become a contact person.

Personal Contact

One of the most effective ways to influence the decisions of a legislator is personal visits. Frequent contacts are necessary to associate your face and name with your cause. Whether you plan to meet one-to-one or with a group, plan the meeting and develop an agenda to cover all the points you wish to make. Pick just one or two issues to discuss. If it will be a first time meeting, select an issue about which he/she may be sympathetic - or at least open minded.

Here are some simple steps to follow:

- Make an appointment. If you drop by without an appointment, you may wait, or you may force him/her to postpone something else, thereby creating negative feelings before you begin. **BE ON TIME.**
- Always introduce yourself, even at a second or third meeting. Don't put the legislator in the awkward position of having to grope for your name.
- Get down to business quickly Begin on a positive note State the Bill number, title and author, or state the issue, your position, and what you want him/her to do.
- Thank him/her for previous support. Legislators like to know that you know their record. If you don't know the record, thank him for taking the time to meet with you.
- Be specific, be clear and be simple. Provide information about how this issue impacts his/her constituency and people throughout the state. Use fact sheets, charts, statistics, etc.
- Use personal stories and anecdotes. Remember, your job is to persuade and a personal story will leave an image that the legislator will remember when he/she votes on the issue.
- Ask what you can do. Ask if you can provide further information, arrange a tour of a program, and contact others.
- Leave written materials. Your legislator will file the materials and refer to them when questions come up later and/or when he/she votes on the issue.
- Thank him/her again.

Learn how to be a 10-Minute Advocate²

Tools and resources to help you advocate For the health and human needs of Utah's families

*Sponsored by the Invest in Utah Families Coalition ARC of Utah * Association for Utah Community Health * Catholic Diocese * Coalition of Religious Communities * Community Health Centers, Inc. * Community Services Council * Disabled Rights Action Committee * Health Care for All * Episcopal Diocese * JEDI Women * League of Women Voters * Legislative Coalition for People w/Disabilities * M.S. Society * National Alliance for the Mentally Ill * Provo Community Action Services * S.L. Community Action Program * S.L. County Office for the Aging * Utah CAP Association * Utah Children * Utahns Against Hunger * Utahns for Choice * Utah Issues*

Introduction

You can make a difference...

Together we can make a huge difference for Utah's families.

Advocacy is already part of your life. Most of us do it everyday. Your experiences speaking up for your child in school, the neighbor or friend in need, etc. will enable you to become a very effective advocate for the needs of Utah's families.

WHY YOU?

No one else can speak for you. Everyone needs to participate, or we truly do not have a Democratic government, one that is operated "by the people for the people." There are four basic steps to becoming involved in the legislative advocacy process. They are:

Step One: Choosing and learning about your issue(s)

Step Two: Identifying decision-makers

Step Three: Understanding the legislative process & how you can play a role

Step Four: Communicating your views

You and your neighbors know what services are needed in your community to keep families healthy and self-sufficient.

²This guide is excerpted from *Coalition Building for Systems Advocacy: A National Teleconference Participant's Manual*, August 21, 2002, a program of the IL NET, an ILRU/NCIL National Training and Technical Assistance Project. It is provided here as an example of what one group of advocates (in this case in the state of Utah) put together as tools and resources for developing advocacy skills. The telephone numbers and contact names are of officials and offices in Utah and included here only as an example of a resource list.

Step One: Choosing & Learning About Your Issues

First you must identify what issues of concern you want to influence. There are too many different areas for you to attempt to advocate for them all effectively. It can be anything – poverty, war, racism, streetlights, potholes, human rights, etc. What concerns YOU about your neighborhood, community, state, and/or country?

What are YOUR issues?

Family Concerns:

Housing Concerns:

Health Concerns:

Human Service Concerns:

Other Concerns:

In order to be an effective advocate, you should learn as much as you can about your issue(s). While you do not need to know everything, you must be able to answer the question “why?” your position should be heard. If you are concerned about something which does not directly affect you, learn from those who are. Other resources are available such as existing advocacy groups, newspapers, libraries, other states, etc. You can not find too much information about your issues.

I can find more information about _____
by: _____

Step Two: Identify the Decision Makers

To enjoy your rights as a citizen, it is very important to register to vote (and vote!) and learn the names of your legislators. If you are not yet registered to vote or want to identify your legislators, call your local county clerk:

Beaver County 438-6465
Box Elder 734-2031
Cache 716-7150
Carbon 636-3245
Daggett 784-3154
Davis 451-3589
Duchesne 738-1100
Emery 381-5106
Garfield 676-8826
Grand 259-1321
Iron 477-8340
Juab 623-3410
Kane 644-2458
Millard 743-6223
Morgan 845-4011
Piute 577-2840
Rich 793-2415
Salt Lake 468-3427
San Juan 587-3223
Sanpete 835-2131
Sevier 896-9262
Summit 336-4451
Tooele 843-3140
Uintah 781-5360
Utah 370-8128
Wasatch 654-3211
Washington 634-5712
Wayne 836-2731
Weber 399-8400

If you can get access to the internet, you can also get this information at www.auch.org (Click on “grassroots advocacy”).

You can also call the Senate and House offices for information on bills and meeting times.

Senate: (801) 538-1035

House: (801) 538-1029

Toll free: (800) 622-3367

Step Three: Understand the Legislative Process

To understand how we can influence potential legislation, we must first discover how the legislative process works. The State Legislature is responsible for making and

changing state laws, as well as setting funding levels for the executive branch of government (the state budget).

The legislative process begins when someone (a concerned citizen, legislator, governor, etc.) recognizes the need to create or change a state statute. The person takes the idea to a legislator who can support it or “carry the bill”. This idea then becomes a bill, which needs to pass through the legislative process in order for it to become law.

Golden Rules of Advocacy³

1. Be fair and respectful toward public officials.
2. Avoid cynicism. Government may be faulty, but so is every profession.
3. Be understanding. Put yourself in the public official’s place.
4. Be friendly. Don’t contact public officials only when you want their help.
5. Be reasonable. Recognize that there are legitimate differences of opinion.
6. Be thoughtful. Commend the right things public officials do.
7. Be charitable. The failure of public officials to do what you wanted may be your responsibility if you have not done a good job in preparing your case.
8. Be constructive. You don’t like to be scolded, pestered, or preached to – and neither do they.
9. Be realistic and persistent. Remember that controversial legislation and regulation usually result in a compromise not wholly satisfactory to any one contending party.
10. Be practical. Recognize that each lawmaker has commitments and that a certain amount of vote trading goes on in all legislatures.
11. Be a good opponent. Fight issues, not personalities.
12. Be informed. Do your homework. The mere fact that you want an official to adopt your position won’t be enough.
13. Be loyal and trustworthy. Never leave officials out on a limb by changing your position after they have publicly taken the position that you urged upon them.

³Adapted from *A Guide for the Powerless* by Samuel Halperin, Institute for Educational Leadership, 1981.

14. Be discreet. Participation in discussion about lawmakers being “bought” or “paid off” is worse than useless.
15. Be generous. Remember that in success everyone can claim credit. Thank policy makers for their positive acts at least as often as you inquire why they went wrong.
16. Be visionary. Especially when it comes to the political process, there is seldom an absolute defeat. A loss with one member may lead to finding a better champion elsewhere.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if my issue is a bill or an appropriation (budget item)?

Bills passed by the Legislature will change, delete, or add to the laws of the State. The State budget is passed as a bill too, but the process is different. During the General Session appropriations sub-committees put together the pieces of the overall budget, setting the levels and kinds of programs that are available through the various state agencies.

Where can I get legislative information?

Most legislative information can be found on the World Wide Web (accessible at many public libraries) on the Legislature’s vastly improved web site: <http://www.le.state.ut.us/>. You can also follow what’s going on at a web site called codeco, a high-quality private subscription service: <http://www.code-co.com/utah/>.

Where can I get a copy of a bill?

Use one of the web-based services described above. Or, visit the Bill Room at the Legislature (4th floor). Copies are 10¢ a page.

How can I follow what’s happening to a bill?

- Read the newspaper. The major dailies run updates each day.
- Call Legislative Information at these numbers:

Senate: (801) 538-1035

House: (801) 538-1029

Toll free: (800) 622-3367

- Subscribe to Utah Issues’ Legislative Update to get a weekly report on low-income and Health and Human Service bills and budget items. Call (800) 331-5627.

Step Four: Communicating Your Views

Should you call, testify in person, email, visit, or write policymakers?

It depends on your schedule and what kind of resources you have. If possible, avoid depending on email. Personal visits can make a big difference, if you can find the time.

No matter what form you use, follow these guidelines:

- Always identify yourself by name **and address**. Perhaps the most important thing you can say about yourself is, **“I am a voter in your district.”**
- Be brief, informed, and polite.
- Identify the issue, bill, or budget item you want to talk about. Don't assume they know about it - they have so much to deal with!
- State your purpose for calling and what your position is. Give one or more reasons for your position. It is almost always a good idea to speak from personal experience.
- Always thank them for their time.

Calling

Policymakers pay attention when citizens take the trouble to call and convey their views. Call just before upcoming votes in committee, on the floor, or late in the session. Avoid calling on Sunday or on Monday evenings.

House: (801) 538-1029 (800) 662-3367

Senate: (801) 538-1035 (877) 585-8824

Writing

Letters are good early in the session. Write to:

Your legislator's name

Utah State Capitol

Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Fax and Email

House Fax: (801) 538-1908 Democrats: (801) 538-9505

Senate fax: (801) 538-1035 Democrats: (801) 538-1449

For a directory of legislators' email addresses visit: www.le.state.ut.us

Or visit: www.auch.org

Testifying

In addition to expressing your personal opinion, you can also influence policymakers by testifying before committees. Testimony provides a written record of the various views on an issue. It offers a legitimate way to educate the public and policymakers on an issue. Testimony also forces groups to clarify their views and present a unified position of support or opposition.

Here are a few suggested guidelines:

- Find out what procedures are used: how to get on the agenda, how to address the committee, how the meeting is run, and rules you need to follow. If possible, observe a prior meeting. Plan on arriving early.
- Gather your facts, prepare your statement, and type a copy (double spaced) so it is easy to read. Keep it short. Be objective. Practice your statement and time it to make sure it is not too long. Be prepared to answer questions.
- If more than one person is testifying, coordinate testimony prior to the hearing to avoid duplication. Find out if there are advocacy groups organizing testimony on your issue (see pages 11 & 12 of this guide). Often they will try to arrange for a variety of perspectives on the issue.

Advocacy Groups & their Issues

Bills start out in either the House or Senate. This example shows what happens to a bill that starts in the House.

1. A *constituent* (voter) contacts a representative (rep) and asks him or her to run a bill.
2. The rep submits a request for a bill to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel (OLRGC). An attorney from this office reviews existing law, researches the issue, and drafts the bill.
3. A copy of the bill is given to the rep. The rep approves it (or not) for introduction during the session.
4. The bill is numbered and copies are delivered to the docket clerk in the House of Reps ("House"), bill room, and the internet.
5. The bill is introduced and read the first time in the House. It is then referred to the House Rules Committee where the bill is examined for proper form and fiscal (financial) impact.

6. The Rules Committee reports back to the House, orders that the bill be printed with the *fiscal note* (a statement showing what the bill would cost the state if passed) and assigns the bill to a House *standing committee* (organized by topic, these offer citizens the opportunity to comment on legislative issues).
7. The standing committee holds a public meeting to review the bill. In most cases, there will be time for citizens to give brief testimony. The committee may amend, hold, table, substitute, or favorably recommend the bill.
8. If “recommended favorably,” the bill returns to the House floor for its second reading. Reps vote “yea” or “nay.” To get to its 3rd or final reading in the House, a bill needs a *simple majority* (51% or more of the votes). If it passes, it is placed on the 3rd reading calendar.
9. On the 3rd or final reading in the House, the sponsor typically explains the bill and answers any questions. Amendments (changes) to the bill may be proposed at this time and voted upon.
10. A “motion for the previous question” closes debate and stops further amendments. The bill passes once again with a simple majority.
11. The bill goes through a similar process in the Senate.
12. If it passes both houses, it is signed by both presiding officers and examined in its latest form by the OLRGC. This is called “enrolling.”
13. The final bill is printed and sent to the Governor for signature. If the Governor fails to sign, the bill automatically becomes law. The Governor can *veto* (reject) the bill and give the reasons to the presiding officers of the Senate and House.
14. A bill enacted as described above becomes law 60 days after adjournment unless another date is specified within the bill.

The Ten Informal Rules of Lobbying, or Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Lobbying, but Never Thought to Ask⁴

1. Consider yourself an information source. Legislators have limited time, staff, and interest on any one issues. They can't be as informed as they might like on all the issues - or the ones that concern you. You can fill the information gap.
2. Tell the truth. There is no faster way to lose your credibility that to give false or misleading information to a legislator.
3. Know who else is on your side. It is helpful for a legislator to know what other groups, individuals, state agencies and/or legislators are working with you on an issue.
4. Know the opposition. Anticipate who the opposition will be - organized or individual. Tell the legislator what their arguments are likely to be and provide them with answers and rebuttals to those arguments.
5. Make the legislator aware of any personal connection you may have. No matter how insignificant you may feel it is, if you have friends, relatives, and/or colleagues in common, LET THEM KNOW. Our legislative process is very informal and though it may make no difference in your effectiveness, it may make the difference.
6. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something. If a legislator wants information, you don't have or asks something you don't know, tell them and then offer to get the information they are looking for.
7. Be specific about what you are asking for. If you want a vote, information, answers to a question - whatever it is - make sure you ask for it directly and get an answer.
8. Follow up. It is very important to find out if your legislator did what he/she said they would. It is very important that you then thank them or ask for an explanation as to why they did not vote, as they said they would, etc
9. Don't "burn any bridges". It is very easy to get very emotional over issues you feel very strongly about. That's fine, but be sure that no matter what happens you leave your dealings on good enough terms that you can go back to them. Remember, your strongest opposition on one issue may be your strongest ally on another.

⁴This list is excerpted from *Coalition Building for Systems Advocacy: A National Teleconference Participant's Manual*, August 21, 2002, a program of the IL NET, an ILRU/NCIL National Training and Technical Assistance Project. It was contributed by the Boston Center for Independent Living from their *Legislative Advocacy Training* Program and is provided here as an example of what other advocates have created as resources for developing advocacy skills.

10. REMEMBER YOU ARE THE BOSS! Your tax money pays legislators' salaries, pays for the paper they write on, the phone they call you on. YOU are the employer and they are the employee. You should be courteous, but don't be intimidated. They are responsible to you and often, legislators are grateful for your input.

Telephone Alert System

What is a telephone alert?

The telephone alert is a method of getting critical information about an issue to advocates in order to let decision-makers know how advocates feel about the issue.

When does a telephone alert work?

A telephone alert is most effective when issues are so time sensitive that a mail alert would not allow sufficient time to take action. When used effectively, the telephone alert will also yield a larger number of responses from grassroots advocates, consumers, and others in the community.

When doesn't a telephone alert work?

Telephone alerts are not as effective when an issue is too complex to be addressed in a brief, concise message or when the number of decision-makers to be contacted requires a large commitment of the advocate's time.

How does a telephone alert system work?

You create a telephone alert tree. Leaders identify issues, prepare the alert message, and put the alert into motion by calling the next person in line. Members of the alert system receive the message, write it down precisely, and then pass it on to the next member in line. The last person in line calls the leader who initiated the alert and passes the message back precisely as it was received. After each member passes the alert along, he or she calls the decision-maker with the alert message.

What can I do to make sure my telephone alert system will work?

Follow these few simple rules:

- Always make the message concise and to the point.
- Make sure the information is correct (title, name, phone number, bill number, etc.).
- Make sure key members of the tree have back-ups.
- If the alert tree member (or the back-up) isn't available, leave your phone number and call the next person in line.
- Give alerts a high priority!

Political Contact Report Form

Date of visit _____

Elected official _____

Present? Yes _____ No _____

Staff name(s) _____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

U.S. Representative _____ U.S. Senate _____ City Council _____
State Assembly _____ State Senate _____ Supervisor _____
Other _____

District _____

Reason for visit/contact:

Outcome of visit/contact:

Follow-up:

Other information/comments:

Staff/volunteer _____

Guide for Giving Personal Testimony⁵

1. Go to the podium.
2. Pause and establish eye contact with each member of the panel.
3. Look directly at the Chairperson.
4. State your name.
5. Make a statement about yourself.
6. Describe your circumstances.
7. Describe how their actions will affect you.
8. Describe what impact this will have on your everyday life.
9. Pause...
10. Describe how this decision will affect others in your community.
11. Ask a value -based question.
12. Pause and re-establish eye contact with each member of the panel.
13. Thank them and offer to answer questions.

⁵Adapted by Bob Michaels from *A Guide for Personal Testimony* developed by The Research and Training Center on Independent Living, University of Kansas.

Writing to Public Officials⁶

1. Begin the letter.
2. Write something about yourself.
3. Acknowledge past support.
4. Tell why you are writing this letter.
5. Summarize your understanding of the issue being considered.
6. Tell what decision you would like them to make.
7. Describe what this decision will mean to you personally.
8. Tell how many others in your community will also be affected.
9. Describe specifically what action the official should take.
10. Offer assistance, if possible.
11. Close the letter.
12. Review letter for disability-sensitive language and length.

⁶ Adapted by Bob Michaels from *Writing Letters to Public Officials* developed by The Research and Training Center on Independent Living, University of Kansas.

Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor⁷

1. Begin the letter.
2. Tell why you are writing this letter.
3. Describe why this issue is important to the community.
4. Describe how this issue affects you personally.
5. Praise or criticize what someone has said or done about the issue.
6. Tell why this is good or bad.
7. State your opinion about what action should be taken.
8. Call on others to support your position.
9. Close the letter.
10. Review the letter for disability-sensitive language and length.

⁷Adapted by Bob Michaels from *a Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor* developed by The Research and Training Center on Independent Living, University of Kansas.

The Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities BYLAWS⁸

Article I Purpose

I. Purpose

1.01 INTENT OF THE COALITION

The Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, hereafter referred to as LCPD, has been established by the Utah Governor's Council for People with Disabilities to advocate for individuals with disabilities. The Intent of the LCPD is to represent the interests of all disability areas and the full range of ages. Its purpose includes: in the State of Utah.

- A. To advocate by educating the Governor of Utah, State Legislators, Congressional Delegations, Agencies, Departments, Divisions and the general public, about legislative issues and funding affecting people with disabilities.
- B. To advocate by coordinating efforts with others who work to improve conditions for people with disabilities.
- C. To educate volunteers to be effective advocates through training and mentoring.

Article II Membership

II. Membership

2.01 MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA/PROCEDURES

Membership in the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities shall represent all people with disabilities. Membership may be granted to consumers, parents, relatives and other interested advocates upon the following:

- A. Membership forms must be filled out by all individuals wishing to be considered a member of the LCPD.
- B. Official membership is in effect thirty (30) days after completed membership form is filed at the LCPD office.

⁸These Bylaws are excerpted from *Coalition Building for Systems Advocacy: A National Teleconference Participant's Manual*, August 21, 2002, a program of the IL NET, an ILRU/NCIL National Training and Technical Assistance Project. It is provided here as an example of how one group of advocates (in this case in the state of Utah) created a coalition for advocacy purposes.

2.02 NON VOTING MEMBERS

The LCPD staff and government employees whose employment relates to disabilities are considered non-voting members and shall serve as resources and provide technical assistance to LCPD members and committees.

Article III Meetings

III. Meetings

3.01 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the LCPD shall be held in the Spring of each year, or as soon as practical thereafter. The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to elect officers and to conduct other business as needed.

3.02 REGULAR MEETINGS

The LCPD shall hold regular meetings at least six (6) times a year. Meetings during the Legislative session may occur weekly.

3.03 SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee.

3.04 EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

All regular and special meetings of the LCPD shall be open to the public and the media. The LCPD may adjourn to executive session upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the quorum for the purpose of maintaining privacy or confidentiality for individuals.

3.05 RULES OF ORDER

Business shall be transacted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Article IV Voting

IV. Voting

4.01 VOTING ELIGIBILITY

An individual must file an LCPD Membership form thirty (30) days before voting privileges are established.

4.02 QUORUM

Voting members of the LCPD present at a regularly called meeting may transact business and shall constitute a quorum.

4.03 APPROVAL OF ISSUES

Issues receiving at least ninety (90) percent favorable vote shall be supported by the LCPD.

- A. Issues receiving a unanimous vote shall be thus recorded.
- B. Issues that fail to receive at least ninety (90) percent favorable vote may continue to be monitored by the LCPD upon majority vote to do so.

Article V Elections

V. Elections

5.01 NOMINATIONS

The Chair of the LCPD shall appoint a Nominating Committee in January of an election year.

- A. The nominating committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) and not more than seven (7) members.
- B. Individuals considered for nomination must give their consent in advance and in writing.

5.02 ELECTIONS

The Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting of the LCPD.

- A. The nominating committee shall present the slate of recommended officers one (1) month prior to the annual meeting.
- B. Additional nominations may be made from the floor
- C. Nominees from the floor must be present and consent to nomination or the person presenting him or her must provide written consent to the Nominating Committee Chair.

5.03 TERM OF OFFICE

Officers shall be elected to serve for a term of two (2) years, or until successors are duly elected upon vacation of office.

- A. Individuals elected to serve as Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary may not serve more than one (1) term in the same office, but may be eligible again after an interval of one (1) term.

- B. An officer who assumes an unexpired term is eligible for election to serve one (1) additional term.

5.04 VACANCIES

The LCPD Chair may make appointments to fill vacancies.

Article VI Membership of Executive Committee

VI. Membership of Executive Committee

6.01 CHAIR

The Chair shall preside at the LCPD meetings; shall see that all recommendations of the LCPD are transmitted; shall be or may designate the spokesperson for the LCPD to the public and the media; shall make official appointments; shall give direction to the work of the LCPD; and shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the action of the LCPD, or as may be necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the Chair. At the end of his or her term, the Chair shall assume the position of Immediate Past Chair and continue to serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

6.02 VICE CHAIR

The Vice Chair shall counsel with the Chair in carrying out LCPD duties, and perform the duties of the Chair in his or her absence. The Vice Chair shall serve as Parliamentarian, as Chair of the Bylaws Committee when necessary and help appoint the committee chairs.

6.03 SECRETARY

The secretary shall, with assistance from the LCPD Staff, oversee the recording of the minutes of LCPD meetings; give notice of meetings; keep records of attendance; help select LCPD committee chairs and perform other duties as assigned by the LCPD Chair.

6.04 PAST CHAIR

The outgoing Chair will assume the position of Past Chair, and shall provide continuity to LCPD and support to the Chair as requested. The Past Chair will serve on the Nominating Committee.

6.05 CHAIR REPRESENTATIVE

The Chairs of all committees shall meet together to elect one (1) individual to serve as a member of the Executive Committee. The election will be held during the Summer Leadership Training Session. The Chair Representative serves a term of one year, and may be re-elected.

6.06 LCPD STAFF

The LCPD Staff shall be non-voting members of the Executive Committee.

6.07 TERMINATION OF AN OFFICER

Any officer of the LCPD may be terminated by a majority vote for just cause.

- A. This action may be appealed by the individual terminated at a meeting of the Executive Committee and committee chairs.
- B. Action may be taken by a majority vote of those present.

Article VII Responsibilities of Executive Committee

VII. Responsibilities of Executive Committee

7.01 ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The role of the Executive Committee will be to assist in planning, to discuss organizational needs and concerns and to come to consensus before speaking for the LCPD on issues.

- A. The Executive Committee shall make a report at the regular LCPD meetings.
- B. The Executive Committee may designate ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.
- C. The Executive Committee shall consider all committee chair appointments and make recommendations to the LCPD Chair for official appointment.

7.02 MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called at any time by the Chair, or Vice Chair in the event of absence or incapacity of the Chair. Announcements of all called meetings shall be made to each member of the Executive Committee.

Article VIII Committees

VIII Committees

8.01 LCPD COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee shall appoint chairs for the LCPD Committees. The LCPD Committees shall include but are not limited to:

- 1) Children's Health Services
- 2) Health Care
- 3) Services for People with Disabilities
- 4) Mental Health
- 5) Rehabilitation

- 6) Special Education
- 7) Special Education - Deaf and Blind Issues
- 8) Higher Education
- 9) Housing and Transportation
- 10) Screening Committee for Awards Nominations
- 11) Other Committees as needed.

8.02 SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee may designate ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.

8.03 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Committee chairs are officially appointed by the LCPD Chair. Each committee chair is responsible to oversee work of the committee and to provide leadership for the accomplishment of the committee's goals. Committee Chairs are responsible to make official committee recommendations to the LCPD membership.

- A. A usual term of appointment for committee chairs shall be one (1) year.
- B. Co-Chairs may be appointed.

8.04 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

LCPD members may serve on committees of their choice.

- A. Each member shall have one (1) vote on matters before the committee.
- B. Committee members shall represent positions as determined by committee vote.

8.05 COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

The Executive Committee shall provide for special committee representation as deemed appropriate.

- A. The immediate past president shall serve as a member of the Nominating Committee.
- B. A member of the Executive Committee shall serve as a member of the Screening Committee for Awards Nominations.

Article IX Administration

IX Administration

9.01 DIRECTORS

The Director(s) of the LCPD shall be hired to carry out the business of the LCPD and, at the request of the Executive Committee, be the spokesperson(s) for the LCPD.

**Article X
Funds and Property**

X Funds and Property

10.01 FUNDS

Any funds made available by the grant from the Utah Governor's Council for People with Disabilities and contributions made to the LCPD shall be spent in accordance with budgets, guidelines and safeguards required by the grant or contributors. Accounting and disbursement of funds shall be the responsibility of LCPD staff or other designated parties in accord with prevailing laws and practices. The Executive Committee shall review monthly financial reports and the annual audit.

10.02 PROPERTY

Property made available for use by the LCPD shall be directed by the LCPD, with the LCPD Staff serving as custodians of the property.

10.03 PERSONAL BENEFIT

No such funds or property shall be used for the personal benefit of LCPD members, its staff, or committee members assisting the LCPD.

- A. Reimbursement may be made for actual expenses incurred in doing the work of the LCPD with prior authorization by the Director(s).
- B. All reimbursements are contingent on availability of funds.

**Article XI
Policies and Procedures**

XI Policies and Procedures

11.01 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Executive Committee shall consider and adopt policies and procedures that establish criteria, protocols, nominating procedures and other guidelines as needed.

- A. Policies and procedures will be presented to the LCPD membership for comment and shall be considered official after a thirty (30) day comment period.
- B. The Policies and Procedures Manual will be made available at all LCPD meetings.

**Article XII
Amendments of Bylaws**

XII Amendments

12.01 AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the quorum at any regular meeting. Notice shall be given in the regular meeting preceding the LCPD meeting in which bylaw amendments will be considered. Amendments shall become effective immediately after approval. Bylaws Committee will consider recommendations which receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote in any regular meeting of the LCPD.

**Article XIII
Changes or Dissolution**

XIII Changes or Dissolution

13.01 CHANGES IN THE LCPD

In the event that administrative or legislative changes alter relationships or terminology, but do not materially change the purpose or composition of the LCPD, the LCPD may continue as an entity and adapt to these changes through amendments to the bylaws. Clarification may be requested from the Utah Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, or other pertinent parties.

13.02 DISSOLUTION

In the event that administrative or legislative changes make this coalition no longer a viable entity to serve as an advocate for people with disabilities in the State of Utah, the LCPD may be dissolved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the LCPD.

- A. In the event of dissolution, funds and/or property held in the name of the LCPD shall be transferred to the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities or the source from whence they came.
- B. The LCPD's records shall revert to the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities.
- C. In the absence of other responsible action, any of the last group of officers or any three (3) former LCPD Members may request that appropriate dissolution action may be taken.

LCPD Bylaws 6/11/99