



Checklist: Year-Round State Advocacy

Successful state advocacy programs are now run all year long, with teams using the second half of the year, when legislatures are no longer in session, to prepare and improve. The third quarter is a particularly important time.

First Quarter

(January to March)

Overall Goal: Focus on the legislative sessions

- Prioritize the shortest sessions first
- Create alerts in your legislative tracker to tell you when bills move
- Create a document and log the parts of your program that are working and those that need improvement throughout the sessions
- Get your bills introduced
- Respond to state budgets where necessary
- Create a routine to evaluate new bills in your legislative tracker daily
- Launch campaigns to activate grassroots advocates when appropriate, keeping them engaged on your issues in states that matter
- When the sessions present urgent situations like a floor vote, use that urgency to recruit new grassroots advocates with public campaigns, such as a petition on social media
- Write an op-ed that supports your top legislative champion in every key state
- Support those same champions on social media by driving tweets of support from their assigned advocate in your ambassador program
- Hire new staff included in this year's budget

Second Quarter

(April to June)

Overall Goal: Finish sessions strong and analyze the results

- Gather cosponsors and marshall support for your bills
- Conduct your fly-ins and lobby days
- Follow each session by assessing the action (bills, vote totals, cosponsorship, partisan balance and other metrics)
- Assess your organization's performance, including wins, losses and areas to improve
- Prepare reports for your leadership
- Thank lawmakers who helped in each state (publicly, when possible)
- Brief your grassroots and grasstops activists on the results from the sessions

Third Quarter (July to September)

Overall Goal: Focus on improving your team

- If you register voters, support candidates or educate your audience on issues, begin running your election program
- Meet with lawmakers in their districts to build and grow relationships
- Educate legislative staff with meetings and materials
- Consider new technology such as text messaging or advanced legislative tracking
- Schedule conversations and demos with technology vendors
- Meet with other organizations to start building coalitions for next year
- Craft your budget pitch for next year
- Launch a petition or take other action to attract grassroots supporters in areas where you are weak
- Check in with grasstops advocates to ensure they are engaged and enthusiastic, and recruit when necessary
- [Survey your stakeholders](#) to identify existing relationships between members of your network and public officials that could be helpful
- Begin monitoring next year's state budgets

Fourth Quarter (October to December)

Overall Goal: Prepare for next year's sessions

- Continue running your election program
- Plan for next year, including legislative agenda, active states, and resource allocation
- Educate your grassroots and grasstops advocates for next year
- Create messaging for next year's issues
- Begin communications for next year, such as op-eds
- Organize your state lobby days
- Begin job searches for new staff included in next year's budget
- Clean your data, including tagging, segmenting lists, appending information and eliminating unresponsive people
- Implement new technology, including training and testing
- Write year-end reports for your leadership
- Track pre-filed bills for the pending sessions