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# Environmental Nonprofit Advocacy Guide

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# Environmental Nonprofit Advocacy Guide

Dina Truncali, MPA '16

## INTRODUCTION

By reviewing existing literature and interviewing nonprofit and government professionals, I have created a nonprofit strategic advocacy guide for environmental organizations at the local and regional level.

### What is advocacy?

The act of arguing in favor of something, such as a cause or policy, to influence:

- The actions of the public
- The behavior of corrupt corporations
- The outputs of government

Table 1. Nonprofit/Government officials interviewed for this guide

Name	Title	Organization
Samantha Bosshart	Executive Director	Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation
Hayley Carlock	Director of Environmental Advocacy	Scenic Hudson
Ufei Chan	Program Manager	Institute for Market Transformation, NYC Mayor's Office
Adam Flint	Program Manager	Southern Tier Solar Works
Nancy Goodman	Vice President for Policy	Environmental League of Massachusetts
Kate Miller-Corcoran	Farm Share Coordinator	VINES
Elaine Miller	Revitalization Specialist	NYS Department of State

## THE ADVOCACY CYCLE

### STEP 1. IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE

- Deciding upon an issue is the first step in beginning the advocacy process
- The advocacy issue should be specific and concrete
- The issue should clearly reflect the policy change the organization wants to achieve

### STEP 2. IDENTIFYING ISSUE GOALS

- Ensures that advocacy actions will actually help the organization achieve its desired end result
- Organizations should list short- and long-term goals that they hope to reach in a realistic timeframe

**“Sometimes, long term goals aren't apparent when you first start. If there is an identified goal, the goal might not be the final outcome.” – Samantha Bosshart, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation**

### STEP 3. IDENTIFYING ACTION STEPS

- Steps should be productive, doable, clear and concise
- Can be broken up into short-term and long-term actions

### STEP 4. IDENTIFYING ALLIES

- Organizations should seek allies across all sectors
- Likeminded organizations with similar missions are natural allies, as well as other non-conventional allies

**“You're not always strong enough to do everything by yourself. Doing things in coalition is very important. Alliances. Strength in numbers. There are always elite interests that are against the interests of the many, and if we don't join together, we're sunk.” – Adam Flint, Southern Tier Solar Works**

### STEP 5. FORMING COALITIONS

- Forming coalitions can be particularly beneficial to small organizations that lack power and resources
- The power of a coalition lies in the ability of the network to present an organized and united front

### STEP 6. STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- It is important to understand the political environment and the interests of relevant policy makers
- Establishing a strong working relationship with government officials early on will move policy makers to take your issue more seriously

## CONTEXT

Nonprofit organizations play an important role in the advancement of society today. Nonprofit organizations have the ability to fill the needs that government cannot reach by providing programs and services to people in need. While service delivery is a huge reason why nonprofits are so important, it is also the capacity of nonprofit organizations to bring about systematic, societal change which makes them such a strong force in the United States. By reaching outside of the internal boundaries of the organization to advocate on important issues, nonprofits can become greater, more effective organizations and enhance their overall impact.

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