



2015
Housing &
Homelessness
ADVOCACY DAY



**The Board
Advocacy Project**

Special Messaging for Nonprofit Board Members

When board members raise their voices, they are a unique and powerful addition to advocacy efforts.

Board members are business leaders, community volunteers, philanthropists, and opinion leaders who dedicate their time, resources, and reputations to our missions. That combination means board members can be powerful champions for the policies and investments our missions need.

Strengthening your advocacy message by mentioning your board service can be as easy as 1 – 2 – 3!

1. Start by saying who you are.

When you introduce yourself to a legislator, ***mention you are a board member.***

“Hi, my name is Ben Miksch, and I serve on the board of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness.”

2. Follow by saying why you care.

Remind decision-makers of the shared values and beliefs that drive your vision of what is possible for your community.

“I volunteer on the board of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness because I believe that no child should have to do their homework by the dome light of their family’s car.”

3. Finish by saying how the policy will impact your organization and the people/community your organization serves.

This action has immense power: a nonprofit board member explaining to a legislator how proposed policy will affect the quality of service his/her organization provides or impact the people and community their organization serves.

“Every fall through Project Cool, the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness helps homeless students get the school supplies they need to feel confident and be prepared. Backpacks full of supplies are a great starting point. But what homeless youth and students really need are safe, healthy, affordable homes. A \$100 million capital budget investment in affordable housing would mean that a lot more children in our community would have the stable foundation they need to succeed in school and reach their full potential.”

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A Special Note On Wearing Multiple Hats

Do you serve on a board of a nonprofit, but you're also attending Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day as paid staff at a different organization?

This is often referred to as wearing "different hats" and is something that legislators in Olympia are very familiar with. It is very common for people to mention what hats they are "wearing" in a meeting and then to state which hat they are "wearing" when they make an advocacy ask.

You should definitely let legislators know if you serve on a board. And you should feel comfortable letting them know when you are speaking on behalf of your job, your board, or both.

"Hi, my name is Benjamin Miksch and I am the Affordable Housing Policy Specialist for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. I also serve on the board of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. Although I will be wearing my Housing Alliance hat for the rest of this meeting."

The Importance of Revenue

Many of the Housing Alliance's member organizations have either signed onto the Housing Alliance's revenue petition or have passed board resolutions that include a clause calling for the legislature to explore new revenue options.

Please mention the importance of revenue to legislators during your meeting.

We don't need to be ready to argue about the merits of one revenue proposal versus another. But as we ask for new investments in affordable housing, it's very important that we also let them know that our boards and organizations support figuring out a way to pay for those investments instead of transferring funds away from other effective programs or worthy groups.