

# ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR GUIDE



## TRACK 2, MODULE 2.1: YOUTH ADVOCACY 101

#### **ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

#### **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM**

This curriculum was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private, nonpartisan philanthropic organization. It is intended as an educational resource for young people with foster care experience and the adult supporters who work with them to improve services, systems and opportunities. In accordance with federal law and the Foundation's policy, this curriculum does not support or endorse specific legislation, political candidates or partisan viewpoints or encourage any lobbying activity.

Handouts, case scenarios and examples included in the Elevating Youth Engagement curriculum are provided as educational resources only and do not represent the views of the Foundation or its Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative® and its network site partners.

#### **©2025 THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

Permission to copy, disseminate or otherwise use information from this series is granted with appropriate acknowledgment. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org/copyright](http://www.aecf.org/copyright).



### Before the Training

This module includes an exercise where participants will review a sample policy agenda and fact sheet, which are provided as one handout. You will need to print copies of the handout to bring to the session or email a copy to participants in advance.

You also will need to think of check-in and checkout questions and add them to the presenter deck. Sample questions are provided in this guide.

# ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR GUIDE

*Elevating Youth Engagement* is a training series for young adults and their adult partners to prepare for collaboration. **The trainings teach the philosophy and practice of authentically engaging young adults in partnerships that promote codesign and leadership development.** The approaches and best practices discussed can be applied to systems-change work, policy and practice advocacy, and other opportunities for young people with foster care experience to use their expertise to inspire change. It contains lessons developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative® and Cetera Inc.

The training is divided into three tracks. Each track contains a set of modules, and each module includes a slide deck, facilitator guide and handouts.

The *Elevating Youth Engagement* training series helps organizations adopt a tested approach for meaningful youth involvement, whether new to youth engagement work or looking to improve existing efforts. The training series also helps young leaders advance their advocacy skills and grow professionally.

Many adult-led organizations involve young people as advocates or partners. These trainings will provide fundamentals of codesign and help adult supporters engage and encourage young leaders as partners while acknowledging and addressing their professional aspirations and developmental needs.

*Elevating Youth Engagement* begins with the assumption that including young people who have experienced foster care in advocacy and systems-change efforts is necessary. Their ideas and perspectives lead to policy and practice improvements that ensure a better future for young people in foster care and transitioning from foster care into adulthood.

This guide is intended to help prepare facilitators to deliver the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training. The three tracks can be delivered as a comprehensive series or divided into smaller presentations by topic or audience. Facilitators are encouraged to use the materials in the way that best suits their needs and community.

## TO LEARN MORE


For more information about the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training series, please contact: [webmail@aecf.org](mailto:webmail@aecf.org).

# OVERVIEW OF ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING MODULES

## Track 1: Youth Engagement for Adult Supporters

<b>Module 1.1</b>	Foundations of Authentic Youth Engagement	This module focuses on the benefits of engaging young people and committing to actions that will increase authentic youth engagement.
<b>Module 1.2</b>	Coaching as a Youth Engagement Practice	This module focuses on a coaching approach to advance the professional and personal development of young people who have experienced foster care.

## Track 2: Youth Engagement for Young Leaders

 <b>Module 2.1</b>	Youth Advocacy 101	This module focuses on building skills to advocate for oneself and others, understanding how child welfare policy and practices are developed and the types of advocacy, and using personal storytelling to influence and educate decision makers.
<b>Module 2.2</b>	Wellness and Advocacy for Young Leaders	This module focuses on the connection between self-awareness, personal wellness and advocacy, and offers tools for young leaders to manage their well-being to minimize harm when advocating.

## Track 3: Youth Engagement for Adult Supporters and Young Leaders

<b>Module 3.1</b>	Values and Authentic Youth Engagement	This module focuses on how individual values contribute to self-identity, decision making, relating to others and determining team values.
<b>Module 3.2</b>	Youth-Adult Partnerships and Adolescent Brain Development	This module focuses on how the experience of foster care affects the adolescent brain and how to incorporate insights about adolescent brain development in youth engagement work.
<b>Module 3.3</b>	Authentic Youth Engagement: Partnership to Action	This module focuses on the elements of authentic youth engagement, practices that increase authentic youth engagement and tools to support young people's leadership development and advocacy skills.
<b>Module 3.4</b>	Action Planning for Authentic Youth Engagement	This module focuses on the Emergent Learning process, and how to inform a youth engagement strategy and develop an action plan.

## AUDIENCES FOR THE ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING SERIES

The Casey Foundation developed the *Elevating Youth Engagement* training series for the following audiences:

- Jim Casey Initiative sites and Jim Casey Initiative network partners;
- youth and young adults with experience in foster care;
- child welfare leaders and staff; and
- professionals, community leaders, mentors and advocates within organizations and other groups that influence or affect outcomes for youth who have experienced foster care, especially those who currently partner with young people in program, practice and policy-level systems-change efforts — or aspire to.

## OUTCOMES FOR THE ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAINING SERIES

This training series is intended to strengthen participants' technical knowledge and skills as well as increase their understanding of the importance of shared decision making.

### TECHNICAL LEARNING RESULTS

Participants will gain knowledge of:

- authentic youth engagement and its purpose, guiding values, principles and priorities;
- science related to adolescent brain development;
- the definition and characteristics of authentic youth engagement; and
- practices that increase authentic youth engagement in their work.

### ADAPTIVE LEARNING RESULTS

Participants will better understand:

- reasons to practice authentic youth engagement in all areas of their work;
- the ways that experiencing foster care can affect adolescent brain development;
- how authentic youth engagement provides opportunities for leadership development and policy advocacy;
- why it's important to manage well-being as an advocate; and
- how authentic youth-adult partnerships can advance goals to best serve young people with the greatest need within systems-change efforts.

## PREPARING FOR THE ELEVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TRAININGS

### WHO SHOULD FACILITATE?

Facilitators should be comfortable and experienced speaking in front of groups, and be willing and able to:

- describe and promote youth-adult partnerships as a critical strategy to improve older youth outcomes;
- use disaggregated data and provide local examples of youth-adult partnerships; and
- speak to all learning results of this training.



### Recommendations:

- Young adults and adult system partners should co-facilitate. Co-facilitation is an opportunity to model the philosophies and practices taught during the training in real time. Co-facilitation is also an excellent opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills and, if comfortable, give real-life examples to participants throughout the training.
- Read the brief *Authentic Youth Engagement: Youth-Adult Partnerships* in preparation for this training for background and literature on engaging youth in authentic, meaningful ways.
- Prepare anecdotal examples related to local demographics, policies and the state of child welfare for relevance.
- Review the Guidance for Facilitators, provided below.

### TIME CONSIDERATIONS

Each *Elevating Youth Engagement* training module can take up to 2 1/2 hours to deliver. To maximize knowledge retention, facilitators are encouraged to offer one or two modules at a time in a session with a break in between. Some modules contain two parts and will need 60 to 90 minutes per part. If it's not feasible to deliver both parts of the training on the same day, it is recommended to deliver part two no more than a week after delivering part one to ensure participant retention.

Plan to take one to two breaks during each module to keep people engaged in the material. Facilitators are encouraged to use their best judgment in deciding break times.

**Note:** Sample discussion questions are provided in several modules to encourage audience engagement. Facilitators are welcome to include additional discussion questions relevant to the material throughout the training as deemed necessary. Adding discussion questions may increase the length of the training.

### Below are additional resources that can provide facilitators and participants with deeper context related to:

#### CASEY'S APPROACH TO YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP

- *A Framework for Effectively Partnering With Young People*
- *In-Depth Case Studies of Authentic Youth Engagement in Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Sites*

#### ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- *The Road to Adulthood: Aligning Child Welfare Practice With Adolescent Brain Development*
- *Brain Frames: Short Tools for Positive Interactions With Youth in Foster Care*
- Video: *Why the Teenage Brain Has an Evolutionary Advantage*
- Video: *Promoting Brain Gains for Youth Emerging From Foster Care*
- Video: *The Stages of Adolescent Brain Development*

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR DELIVERING THE TRAINING IN PERSON

**Before the training:** Set the room to allow small and large group discussions. Avoid a setup with rows where all participants face the front and away from one another. A U-shape, square or several round tables can accomplish this.

**During the training:** Provide small fidget toys or snacks.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR DELIVERING THE TRAINING VIRTUALLY

**Before the training:** Provide participants with links or access to a folder that contains the handouts for the module.

**During the training:** Welcoming participants to the training should include providing training and tech logistics for Zoom or other virtual platforms, such as how to use the “Raise Hand,” chat and mute and unmute features. Instruct participants to use a “Raise Hand” feature to ask questions or share out during an activity. Participants may be instructed to drop their answers in the chat at the discretion of the facilitator.

**During the discussions:** Remember to present in gallery mode so that participation is more interactive.

### Facilitator Checklist of Materials for Youth Advocacy IOI

- ☒ Notebook (recommended: for facilitator notes)
- ☒ Journals (recommended: one per participant to complete reflections and take notes)
- ☒ Pens and pencils (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Markers (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Highlighters (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Fidget toys
- ☒ Snacks
- ☒ Sticky note pads (recommended: several per participant table)
- ☒ Flipchart and tape (recommended: several around the room for participant exercises)
- ☒ Chart paper for related questions and ideas to be captured.  
Often referred to as “Parking Lot” or a “Garden” board.
- ☒ Computer/projector (for presentation)
- ☒ Handouts to print in advance or email
  - ☒ Types of Policy Advocacy
  - ☒ High-Level Overview of the Lawmaking Process
  - ☒ Sample Policy Agenda and Fact Sheet (this is one document)

## **GUIDANCE FOR FACILITATORS**

This module aims to educate young people on civic engagement while helping them build practical advocacy skills they can use in everyday life. Participants will explore how laws and policies are made, how government systems function and how young people — especially those with experience in foster care — can participate meaningfully in shaping the decisions that affect them.

The module is designed to:

- increase young leaders' understanding of government structures and policy processes;
- build their confidence in advocating; and
- provide tools to help participants identify issues that matter to them and explore ways to engage in civic and systems-change efforts.

Participants will have opportunities to:

- practice identifying public issues;
- analyze policy agendas;
- reflect on their personal experiences and advocacy goals; and
- engage in discussions and exercises that support personal and professional growth.

### **Facilitator Responsibilities**

Facilitators play a key role in modeling the values of this curriculum. When leading this module, facilitators should:

- provide accurate, neutral and nonpartisan information about how public policy and civic engagement work;
- encourage participants to define their own advocacy priorities and strategies;
- refrain from sharing personal political beliefs, policy preferences or endorsements; and
- foster a respectful space where participants feel safe sharing their perspectives and asking questions.



# YOUTH ADVOCACY 101 PRESENTATION SUMMARY

The sample agenda below is designed for a two-hour training, but facilitators should feel free to adjust time allotted based on their style, the group and breaks needed.

Activity	Topic	Time Estimate
Presentation	Welcome	 4 minutes
Presentation	Agenda	 2 minutes
Presentation	Module Results	 2 minutes
Discussion	Check In	 10 minutes
Presentation	Module Context	 2 minutes
Presentation	Defining Authentic Youth Engagement	 3 minutes
Presentation	The Characteristics of Authentic Youth Engagement	 3 minutes
Presentation	What It Means to Be an Advocate	 5 minutes
Presentation	Types of Policy Advocacy	 8 minutes
Presentation	Educating or Lobbying — Know the Difference	 8 minutes
Presentation	Defining Law and Legislation	 5 minutes
Presentation	Defining Administrative Policy	 5 minutes
Presentation	Overview of the Lawmaking Process	 5 minutes
Discussion	Contributing to the Lawmaking Process	 5 minutes
Presentation	Advocacy Strategies	 5 minutes
Presentation	Engaging With Legislators — What to Do and What Not to Do	 5 minutes
Presentation	Example of State-Level Advocacy in Action	 5 minutes
Break Time	Break	 5 minutes
Presentation	Recap	 1 minute
Presentation	What Is a Policy Agenda?	 3 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Review a Sample Policy Agenda and Fact Sheet	 8 minutes
Presentation	Framework for Developing a Policy Agenda	 3 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Name It	 5 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Claim It	 5 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Tame It	 5 minutes
Presentation and Exercise	Frame It	 5 minutes
Discussion	Report Out Findings From Exercise	 10 minutes
Discussion	Check Out	 10 minutes
TOTAL TIME ESTIMATE		ABOUT 2 1/2 HOURS

## PRESENTATION: WELCOME

4 minutes

**Do:** Introduce yourself briefly — just your name and title or role — and provide any necessary, brief background about the training. Provide basic information necessary to ensure participants' comfort (food, parking, location of restrooms, breaks).

The sample talking points below are provided as a guide, but facilitators should feel free to add examples relevant to their work and express points in their own words. Use illustrative examples that reflect local context but remain nonpartisan and educational.



### Talking Points:

- *Hello everyone! My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I have the pleasure of supporting you all with developing your advocacy skills as young leaders. Welcome to Youth Advocacy 101!*

## PRESENTATION: AGENDA

2 minutes

**Do:** Provide a high-level overview of the agenda and briefly describe the flow of the day.

### Talking Points:

- *We are going to start with a review of results, check in and set some context. We're then going to review authentic youth engagement as it relates to policy advocacy and move into a breakdown of the types of policy advocacy.*
- *We will go over the legislative process and advocacy strategies, then we will take a break.*
- *We are going to wrap our day up by dissecting a policy agenda using the Name It, Claim It, Tame It and Frame It framework. Then, we will discuss our learnings and check out for the day.*

### Agenda

- Review module results
- Check in
- Review of authentic youth engagement
- Policy advocacy breakdown
- The lawmaking process
- Advocacy strategies and advocacy in action
- Break
- Considerations for developing a policy agenda
- Sample policy agenda and fact sheet activity
- Discussion
- Check out

## PRESENTATION: MODULE RESULTS

2 minutes

**Do:** Read results and hold space for any questions or clarity needed.

### Talking Points:

- *The results for this session are as follows:*
  - *Participants will develop their understanding of public policy and its connection to the state and federal legislative processes;*

### Module Results

Participants will:

- develop their understanding of public policy and its connection to the state and federal legislative processes;
- increase their knowledge of key legislative terms and strategies for effective policy advocacy; and
- exercise skills related to policy advocacy and analysis by learning the fundamentals of developing a policy agenda.

- Participants will increase their knowledge of key legislative terms and strategies for effective policy advocacy.
- Participants will exercise skills related to policy advocacy and analysis by learning the fundamentals of developing a policy agenda.

## DISCUSSION: CHECK IN

10 minutes

**Before you begin:** Add to the slide a check-in question related to the topic, based on the level of understanding in the group.

Here are a few sample check-in questions:

- Why is advocacy important to society?
- What is one thing you have advocated for in the past?
- What was a policy or law change that affected you personally?

**Do:** Invite participants to introduce themselves and answer the check-in question. Choose whether you will call on participants or ask participants to speak and then call on another person.

### Talking Points:

- *We want to invite you to check in so we can all get to know one another a little better.*
- *When you introduce yourself, please say your name, where you're from (could be the state, city or community you live in or any organization you are associated with) and answer the check-in question. The check-in question is... (State the question.)*

#### Check In

- Name
- City/State

▪ **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:**  
Insert relevant check-in question.



## PRESENTATION: MODULE CONTEXT

2 minutes

**Do:** Read the module context.

### Talking Points:

- *This module focuses on:*
  - *youth voice and involvement with policy advocacy;*
  - *strategies for effective advocacy;*
  - *policy and practice advocacy; and*
  - *lawmaking process.*
- *For this training, we are working from the assumption that all participants here today have a shared value that including young people who have experienced foster care is necessary to improve system policy and practice.*

#### Module Context

##### FOCUS:

- Youth voice and involvement with policy advocacy
- Strategies for effective advocacy
- Policy and practice advocacy
- Lawmaking process

##### ASSUMPTION:

- Participants agree that including young people who have experienced foster care is necessary to improve system policy and practice.

## PRESENTATION: DEFINING AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

3 minutes

**Do:** Read the definition of authentic youth engagement. This definition comes from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

### Talking Points:

- *Authentic youth engagement is an approach that values the wisdom and expertise of young people. It brings to life a philosophical and strategic approach built on the belief that policies and practices will be fundamentally better if we partner with young people who have experienced the foster care system.*

### Definition of Authentic Youth Engagement

- It is a philosophical and strategic approach to working with young people.
- Through this signature practice, young people use their individual and collective power and expertise in helping to shape a better future for those in and transitioning from foster care into adulthood.



## PRESENTATION: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

3 minutes

**Do:** Emphasize the impact of authentic youth engagement and review the characteristics.

### Talking Points:

- *Authentic youth engagement values young people's meaningful contribution and recognizes opportunities for professional development.*
- *In other words, authentic youth engagement means providing opportunities for meaningful contributions by young people and intentionally building their professional skills through their leadership and advocacy experiences.*
- *System reform efforts benefit from the ideas of young people, and the work benefits the personal and professional development of the youth.*
- *The characteristics of this type of work include:*
  - *As equal partners, young people build self-esteem and practice problem-solving and leadership skills they will need in adulthood.*
  - *Young people gain access to information, develop new skills and contribute to strategy development. Adults gain insights from the experience and expertise of those most affected and can make better decisions.*
  - *Young people and adults lead together.*

### Characteristics of Authentic Youth Engagement

This approach prioritizes young people's expertise and ability to help shape solutions. It also provides **meaningful opportunities** for **professional development**.



# PRESENTATION: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ADVOCATE



5 minutes



**Do:** Read the definitions of “advocate” and “policy advocacy.” Describe tasks and activities that are common in advocacy work. Invite participants to describe policy advocacy tasks or activities in which they may have been involved.



## Talking Points:

- Let's start with what it means to be an advocate.
- When you advocate, you're speaking up about your needs and wants and the needs and wants of others. You're sharing your ideas for improving the services that will help you and others thrive and asking for your needs to be recognized and adequately met.
  - **Example:** When you voice your needs in a meeting about your case plan, you are practicing self-advocacy.
- When we speak about youth advocacy, we often refer to advocacy that will ultimately improve policy for young people in foster care.
- Policy advocacy is the act of speaking out to influence public policy, which includes laws, regulations, funding levels and other decisions or actions of governments to address public issues or achieve societal goals. The goal of policy advocacy can include shaping how services are delivered and how resources are allocated. In the context of child welfare policy advocacy, this can mean advocating to ensure policy and funding decisions reflect the needs and interests of children, youth and families who are involved in the child welfare system. This advocacy can take many forms and often involves using research, data and evidence; implementing communications strategies; developing policy analysis and agendas; mobilizing or organizing a base of support; and engaging policymakers or government officials.
  - **Example:** When you gather data about older youth in foster care and share it to educate child welfare policymakers, you are engaging in policy advocacy activities.
- Much of advocacy, including policy advocacy, involves strategically sharing your story to help audiences understand why a change is needed or how it will improve outcomes for youth; publishing or distributing reports; and holding community conversations or town hall meetings. Some of the ways you might contribute include sharing your ideas, providing information based on your own experience, helping to prepare presentations, facilitating meetings and summarizing notes and action items.
- Just to make sure we are all clear on what policy is — Policy is a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions.



**Ask:** By a show of hands (or thumb icon, if being presented virtually), who has participated in public speaking or any type of policy advocacy?

## What It Means to Be an Advocate

- Advocacy is speaking up about your needs and wants and your ideas for improving services that affect you and other youth in foster care.
  - **Example:** When you voice your needs in a meeting about your case plan, you're practicing self-advocacy.
- **Policy advocacy** is the act of speaking out to ask for or influence government policies, practices and funding.
  - **Example:** When you gather data about older youth in foster care and share it to educate child welfare policymakers, you're engaging in policy advocacy.





## PRESENTATION: TYPES OF POLICY ADVOCACY

8 minutes

**Handout:** Participants should receive the Types of Policy Advocacy handout, which provides definitions.

**Do:** Read the definition for each type of policy advocacy.

### Talking Points:

- *Now that we have a fundamental understanding of policy and policy advocacy, let's look at a few types of policy advocacy.*
  - **Administrative:** An administrative policy is a rule, guideline or procedure created by a government agency (not legislators) to explain how a law will be carried out or enforced. These policies are not laws themselves, but they affect how laws are implemented in everyday practice. Administrative advocacy encompasses a variety of positions concerned with influencing the formation, application or change of the rules that government agencies put in place to implement laws. Administrative advocacy occurs at all government levels — federal, state and local.
  - **Legislative:** Legislative advocacy is about making your voice heard and taking action on behalf of yourself or others, such as educating lawmakers about research on older youth in foster care.
  - **Budget:** Budget advocacy is taking strategic approaches to influence decisions made by authorities affecting how budgets are developed, managed and allocated.

### Types of Policy Advocacy

- Administrative
- Legislative
- Budget



## PRESENTATION: EDUCATING OR LOBBYING — KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

8 minutes

**Do:** Read the brief definition of “lobbying.” Compare policy advocacy activity that is only for the purpose of educating to the types of advocacy activity that are defined as lobbying. Invite participants to read the Internal Revenue Service guidelines related to lobbying and educating, provided in the Types of Policy Advocacy handout.

### Talking Points:

- *As a young leader interested in improving child welfare services, it is important for you to know the difference between policy advocacy that is only for the purpose of educating and advocacy activity that is considered lobbying.*
- *Lobbying is defined as activity intended to directly influence legislation (city, state or federal) or to influence an election's outcome. Examples of lobbying activity include telling voters or policymakers what position to take for or against a bill, or what candidate to support.*
- *Whether you are speaking for yourself or speaking as a representative of an organization, knowing the difference between educating and lobbying will help you. As a citizen, you have the right to do both, but when you represent an organization there are often responsibilities that come with policy advocacy activities.*

### Educating or Lobbying: Know the Difference

Examples of policy advocacy defined as <b>EDUCATING:</b>	Examples of policy advocacy defined as <b>LOBBYING:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sharing your story to show how a policy or practice change would help youth safely transition from foster care to adulthood</li><li>▪ Creating a fact sheet to present data that supports the need for change</li><li>▪ Holding a town hall discussion to present facts and hear from youth who have experienced foster care</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Engaging in activity intended to directly influence legislation (city, state or federal) or to influence an election's outcome</li><li>▪ Telling lawmakers to support or reject legislation or telling voters which candidate to choose in an election</li><li>▪ Urging the public to contact legislators to take a position on legislation</li></ul>





- You may have an opportunity to work with a Jim Casey Initiative network site, a foster care youth advisory board, a state child welfare agency or a nonprofit foster care service organization. Always make sure you understand what the guidelines are by working closely with your organization's leaders. Many of these organizations are subject to special restrictions on policy advocacy activity and particularly any engagement in lobbying. There are usually internal rules asking workers and volunteers to refrain from partisanship, such as political or electoral endorsements — or legal restrictions that forbid or limit lobbying for certain policies. The rules vary by state, jurisdiction and company. Learn more by reading the Internal Revenue Service guidance in your handout.

## PRESENTATION: DEFINING LAW AND LEGISLATION

5 minutes

**Do:** Review the definitions and key characteristics of “law” and “legislation.”

### Talking Points:

- As we discuss policy advocacy, it's important to understand the relationship between the law and policy.
- Policy can be influential, but laws are set standards, principles and procedures that **MUST** be followed in society.
- A law (also called a statute) is a formal rule or requirement that is passed by a legislative body, such as Congress or a state legislature. They are binding and must be followed by individuals, organizations and government agencies. Breaking a law can result in legal consequences.
  - **Example:** A state legislature passes a law requiring youth in foster care to have a transition plan by age 14.
- Legislation is the process of making laws. It includes writing, discussing and voting on new rules by a group of lawmakers. We use the word “legislation” to talk about these rules while they are still being worked on and before they officially become law. Here are some key characteristics of laws:
  - Laws are created by elected lawmakers (Congress, state legislatures).
  - Laws require a formal process to pass (e.g., voting).
  - Laws are enforceable by court action.

### Defining Law and Legislation

- A law (also called a statute) is a formal rule or requirement that:
  - is passed by a legislative body, such as Congress or a state legislature;
  - requires a formal process to pass (e.g., voting); and
  - can be enforced by court action
- Legislation is the process of making laws. It includes writing, discussing and voting on new rules by a group of lawmakers. We use the word “legislation” to talk about these rules while they are still being worked on and before they officially become law.



11

## PRESENTATION: DEFINING ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

5 minutes

**Do:** Review the definition and key characteristics of administrative policy.

### Talking Points:

- An administrative policy is a rule, guideline or procedure created by a government agency (not legislators) to explain how a law will be carried out or enforced. These policies are not laws themselves, but they affect how laws are implemented in everyday practice.
  - **Example:** A state child welfare agency creates a policy that says youth must complete a certain life skills assessment to meet the legal requirement of having a transition plan.

### Defining Administrative Policy

- An administrative policy:
  - is a rule, guideline or procedure created by a government agency (not legislators) to explain how a law will be carried out or enforced;
  - explains or guides how laws are to be implemented in everyday practice, but are not laws themselves; and
  - can vary by agency or state.
- Certain administrative policies, like regulations, are legally binding and can be enforced by several means, possibly even court action.



12

- Certain administrative policies, like regulations, can carry the force of law. This means that a regulation is legally binding and can be enforced by several means, possibly even court action.
- Here are some key characteristics of administrative policies:
  - Administrative policies are created by government agencies.
  - Administrative policies explain or guide how laws are to be implemented.
  - Administrative policies can vary by agency or state.
- As you can see, establishing policy or requirements through law vs. administrative policy carries greater weight from an enforcement perspective. Administrative policy is also stronger when it is grounded in law that backs it up. This is why it is important for advocates to consider the value of advancing a policy agenda that requires legislation and for advocates to understand the legislative process.

## PRESENTATION: OVERVIEW OF THE LAWMAKING PROCESS

5 minutes

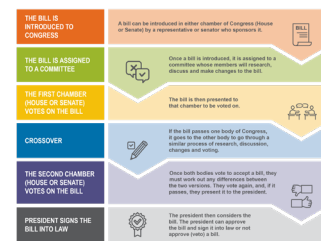
**Handout:** Participants should receive the High-Level Overview of the Lawmaking Process handout.

**Do:** Review the high-level overview of the lawmaking process.

**Talking Points:**

- On your handout, you have both an explanation and illustration of the lawmaking process.
- Laws can begin as policy or even as ideas.
- First, a representative sponsors a bill. This bill is often drafted from a policy agenda. We will learn more about policy agendas later. The bill is then assigned to a committee for study. If released by the committee, the bill is put on a calendar to be voted on, debated or amended.
- If the bill passes by simple majority (218 of 435), the bill moves to the Senate. In the Senate, the bill is assigned to another committee and, if released, debated and voted on. Again, a simple majority (51 of 100) passes the bill.
- Finally, a conference committee made up of House and Senate members works out any differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The resulting bill is returned to the House and Senate for final approval. The Government Printing Office prints the revised bill in a process called enrolling. The president has 10 days to sign or veto the enrolled bill.
- Think of bills as ideas that are illustrated by policy agendas and brought to life by laws through the legislative process.

### High-Level Overview of the Lawmaking Process



## DISCUSSION: CONTRIBUTING TO THE LAWMAKING PROCESS

5 minutes

**Ask:** *Given what you have learned about the legislative process, how can advocates and young leaders contribute to the lawmaking process? If you have participated in policy advocacy, how did you contribute?*

**Note:**

After the participants share, be sure to elevate ways that they may have missed. For example:

- scheduling a meeting with their legislator;
- visiting the Capitol; or
- writing letters, calling and sending emails.

### Discussion: Contributing to the Lawmaking Process

- How can advocates and young leaders contribute to the lawmaking process?
- If you have participated in policy advocacy, how did you contribute?



## PRESENTATION: ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

5 minutes

**Do:** Preview the four types of advocacy strategies that participants will learn about in this module.

**Talking Points:**

- *We've discussed the legislative process and how a policy is turned into a bill that can then become law. We've also discussed ways that young people can get involved. Let's talk a little bit about advocacy strategies.*
- **Advocacy messaging:** Tailoring your message to your audience and the importance of who is delivering the message.
- **Engagement in government relations:** Directly influencing and making appeals to lawmakers.
- **Research and data analysis:** Developing and circulating powerful information to make a case showing the importance of the issue and validating it as an issue.
- **Mobilization:** Showing lawmakers that there is a base of support for the issue.
- *As an advocate, you will likely use parts of all these strategies in your advocacy work. While these are all different strategies, they work best when used together.*

### Advocacy Strategies

**Advocacy messaging:** Tailoring your message to your audience and understanding the importance of who is delivering the message.

**Engagement in government relations:** Directly influencing and making appeals to lawmakers.

**Research and data analysis:** Developing and circulating powerful information to make a case showing the importance of the issue and validating it as an issue.

**Mobilization:** Showing lawmakers that there is a base of support for the issue.



# PRESENTATION: ENGAGING WITH LEGISLATORS — WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO



5 minutes



**Do:** Review professional etiquette when engaging legislators and the connection between policy advocacy and relationships.



## Talking Points:

- *Relationships are key when you want a legislator to understand and take up your issue.*
- *You should properly acquaint yourself with the staff members of the legislators, committees and resource officials with whom you will be working. These people are essential sources of information and have significant influence in some instances in policy development.*
- *Before you begin, confirm whether you are representing yourself or an organization as you engage with legislators and know whether your planned activities and messaging are considered educating or lobbying.*
- *What to do:*
  - *Be engaged on social media (posts and hashtags)*
  - *Write letters, send emails and make phone calls*
  - *Visit your state capitol or the United States Capitol during the legislative session or Foster Care Day*
- *What NOT to do:*
  - *Be long-winded about your issue*
  - *Be demanding or disrespectful if legislators or their staff members do not value your issue*
  - *Be unprepared or not have your remarks planned and laid out*
  - *Be late*
- *Let's take a look at some policy that was moved into law with the support of young leaders!*

### Engaging With Legislators

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Be engaged on social media (posts and hashtags)
- Write letters, send emails and make phone calls
- Visit your state capitol or the United States Capitol during the legislative session or Foster Care Day

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Be long-winded about your issue
- Be demanding or disrespectful if legislators or their staff members do not value your issue
- Be unprepared or not have your remarks planned and practiced
- Be late

16

# PRESENTATION: EXAMPLE OF STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY IN ACTION



3 minutes



**Do:** Provide participants with an example of legislative advocacy on the state level.



## Talking Points:

- *In 2018, Rhode Island amended state law to create a voluntary extended foster care program and the option for reentry into foster care for youth between ages 18 and 21.*

### State-Level Advocacy in Action

In 2018, Rhode Island amended state law to create a voluntary extended foster care program and the option for reentry into foster care for youth between ages 18 and 21.

Youth advocates played a key role in its passage by:

- mobilizing local youth advocacy boards to partner with members of the Rhode Island state legislature to draft legislation and sponsor an extension of care bill;
- providing testimony in committee meetings in support of the bill; and
- participating in facilitated conversations with bill sponsors around areas to modify the legislation to help ensure its passage.

17

- Youth advocates played a key role in its passage by:
  - mobilizing local youth advocacy boards to partner with members of the Rhode Island state legislature to draft legislation and sponsor an extension of care bill;
  - providing testimony in committee meetings in support of the bill; and
  - participating in facilitated conversations with bill sponsors around areas to modify the legislation to help ensure its passage.

## BREAK TIME

5 minutes

**Do:** Announce break time. A break may be extended for lunch or if facilitators feel like participants need more time.

### Talking Points:

- *Let's break for five minutes!*
- *When we get back, we're going to do a little analysis activity.*
- *If you have questions over the break, be sure to write them on the parking lot board.*
- *Happy breaking!*

### Note (if presenting virtually):

- *If you have questions over the break, be sure to drop them in the chat.*



## PRESENTATION: RECAP

1 minute

**Do:** Summarize the first half of the session and make the connection between advocacy strategies, policy, law and advocacy organizations.

### Talking Points:

- *Welcome back! We have covered quite a bit. I would say that you guys are well on your way to elevating your advocacy.*
- *We've covered:*
  - *the legislative process;*
  - *advocacy strategies;*
  - *types of policy advocacy; and*
  - *what to do and what not to do when engaging with legislators.*
- *Give me a big thumbs up if you're ready to look at some more examples of policy advocacy in action!*

### Case Study: The Breakdown of a Policy Agenda





## PRESENTATION: WHAT IS A POLICY AGENDA?

3 minutes

**Do:** Define a policy agenda and what it can provide.

### Talking Points:

- *A policy agenda is the strategic layout of a social issue, the issue's impact on society and proposed solutions.*
- *Policy advocates and civic organizations use policy agendas to help frame an issue that they want to make into a law.*
- *As an advocate, developing a policy agenda:*
  - *helps you get specific about an issue that you want to bring to the attention of leaders in child welfare and legislators;*
  - *allows you to become informed about your issue;*
  - *helps you connect your personal story to your policy issue; and*
  - *helps you use data to make your position on the issue valid and bring serious attention to an issue that is affecting citizens.*

### What Is a Policy Agenda?

- A policy agenda is the strategic layout of a social issue, the issue's impact on society and proposed solutions.
- Policy agendas are meant to get the attention of people involved in policymaking, such as government officials.

#### Why is setting a policy agenda important?

It allows you to:

- be clear on what you are advocating for;
- figure out the specifics of the policy; and
- determine if now is the time to advocate for the policy.

20

## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: REVIEW A SAMPLE POLICY AGENDA AND FACT SHEET

8 minutes

**Handout:** Each participant should receive one handout that has the sample policy agenda and fact sheet for the exercise.

**Note:** Reviewing the sample policy agenda and fact sheet is best done in groups of three to six, depending on the size of the whole training group.

**Do:** If the activity is going to be completed in small groups, make sure participants are split into their groups at this time. Instruct them to read the sample policy agenda and fact sheet either independently or as a group.

### Talking Points:

*Today, we're going to review the Name It, Claim It, Tame It and Frame It framework for developing a policy agenda.*

*We'll move through each component of the framework and consider how the concepts can be applied to the Sample Policy Agenda: Advancing Outcomes for Youth in Foster Care handout.*

*The sample fact sheet shows how a policy recommendation can be developed more fully with data, key messages and other details. You will use the fact sheet and policy recommendation of "Improve Access to Life Skills and Independent Living Services" as a resource as we move through the exercise. First, take a few minutes to read through the sample policy agenda and fact sheet. Then, we'll come back together.*

**Note (if presenting virtually):** If there will be groups, ask for volunteers to be group leaders. This should be done before going to breakout rooms.

### Review a Policy Agenda and Fact Sheet Sample



21





# PRESENTATION:

## FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A POLICY AGENDA



3 minutes



**Handout:** Each participant should already have the sample policy agenda and fact sheet handout to use during the activity. Make sure participants have pens or pencils to write down their notes.



**Do:** Set the context for the exercise of applying the *Name It*, *Claim It*, *Tame It*, *Frame It* framework for developing a policy agenda.



### Talking Points:

- *The Name It, Claim It, Tame It, Frame It framework is a tool that can help you determine your policy priority as an advocate.*
- *As we've learned, setting an agenda is important because you want to be clear on what you are advocating for and you figure out the specifics of the policy and determine if now is the time to advocate for this policy.*
- *Broadly speaking, public policy is what the government does or does not do about a problem that comes before them for consideration and possible action.*
- *We're going to use the framework to break down the sample policy agenda and fact sheet.*
- *As we apply the concepts of the Name It, Claim It, Tame It, Frame It framework to our sample policy agenda and fact sheet, let's keep in mind: There are no perfect answers. We are learning together.*
- *Highlight key points or where you have questions and be sure to capture your notes from each section.*

### Framework for Developing a Policy Agenda



## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: NAME IT



5 minutes



**Do:** Review the Name It questions to consider. For this and the next three slides, give participants a few minutes to answer the questions related to each component based on their sample policy agenda.



### Talking Points:

- *You will want to define the social issue that your advocacy will address, and you will want to do so in terms of deficit or excess. Quantify how big is too big or how small is too small. "Too many or too few" of something works most of the time but is not always necessary.*
- *Here are a few examples of framing:*
  - *"Too few children attend preschool" could be "Too few children are prepared for school when starting kindergarten."*
  - *"Too many families are homeless" could be "There are not enough shelter resources for homeless families."*
  - *"New schools are being built too slowly" could be "There are too many schoolchildren relative to the currently available classroom space."*

### Name It

- What is the social issue that your advocacy will address?
- What is the urgency behind the issue?
- Are there data points available on the issue? If so, what do they tell us?



- Answer these questions:
  - What is the social issue that your advocacy will address?
  - What is the urgency behind the issue?
  - Are there data points available on the issue? If so, what do they tell us?
- As you complete the Name It, Claim It exercise, you may wish to look up state data.
  - Provided at the bottom of the handout is a link to a report called “Fostering Youth Transitions 2023: State and National Data to Drive Foster Care Advocacy.” It includes data profiles for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and it provides data points on the issue of life skills services that might be useful for this exercise.
  - Are there data points available on the issue? If so, what do they tell us?

## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: CLAIM IT

5 minutes

**Do:** Remind the participants that not all problems justify government intervention. Take the participants through the main reasons that justify government intervention. When going through the reasons, provide examples.

### Talking Points:

- It is important for us to understand that some issues aren’t public policy problems because there is no justification for government intervention.
- Here are some reasons that justify government intervention for an issue:
  - It violates laws or constitutional rights.
  - It involves children (e.g., “Too few children in the child welfare system are in family-like settings”).
  - It is exacerbating inequality (e.g., “Too few third graders are reading on grade level, especially in neighborhoods where schools are under-resourced”).
  - It already has government involvement (e.g., “School systems could do more to reduce bullying among students”).
- Answer these questions:
  - Is public policy the solution?
  - Who is affected?
  - Should government intervene (are rights and freedoms violated)?

### Claim It

- Is public policy the solution?
- Who is affected?
- Should government intervene? Are rights and freedoms violated?



24

## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: TAME IT

5 minutes

**Do:** Note that many times an advocate knows the solution going into agenda development, but it’s good practice to fully establish the problem and justification for government intervention before determining a solution.

### Talking Points:

- Now, we’re thinking through what is the solution that can be presented.

### Tame It

- What are possible public policy solutions?
- What solutions does your policy agenda elevate that contribute to improving the issue?
- How do the solutions advance policies and practices that will improve outcomes for young people with the greatest need?



25

- *It is important that you develop your problem and THEN define the solution.*
- *You want to do your best to ensure that your policy solution is truly getting at the problem you desire to solve.*
- *Here are some examples:*
  - *Increase services to stabilize families. The recent Family First law provides funds to states for prevention services.*
  - *Prioritize and remove barriers to recruiting and retaining kin and foster families for all youth, especially for those identified in data as having the greatest need, including older youth and youth of color.*
- *Answer these questions:*
  - *What are possible public policy solutions?*
  - *What solutions does your policy agenda elevate that contribute to improving the issue?*
  - *How do the solutions advance policies and practices that will improve outcomes for young people with the greatest need?*

## PRESENTATION AND EXERCISE: FRAME IT

5 minutes

**Do:** Review the questions to ask in deciding whether now is the time to advance the issue. Emphasize to participants why this is an important part of the process. Then, take them through the final questions on the slide.

### Talking Points:

- *As advocates, we want to ensure that we don't waste time, resources and political pull to advance a policy agenda that has little to no chance of being passed. Consider:*
  - **Political feasibility:** *The likelihood of a policy not only being enacted but being implemented to its intention, given the political environment.*
  - **Cost feasibility:** *Knowing the cost and the political climate, could this policy solution work? Is there money to pay for it?*
  - **Opportunity:** *Does the current political climate lend itself to this happening? Is there a policy window? Are policymakers talking about this issue?*
- **Note this:** *If now is not the time to pursue a policy solution, you may be able to advance it in the future, so don't lose hope: Learning from this effort will prepare you for the next opportunity.*
- *Answer these questions:*
  - *Is now the time for this agenda?*
  - *What is the financial cost of introducing this policy into law? Is it feasible?*
  - *What happens if action is not taken on this issue?*

### Frame It

- *Is now the time for this agenda?*
- *What is the financial cost of introducing this policy into law? Is it feasible?*
- *What happens if action is not taken on this issue?*





## DISCUSSION: REPORT OUT FINDINGS FROM EXERCISE

10 minutes



**Do:** Instruct participants to report their findings out from the activity. Facilitators should chart participant responses.

### PART 1: TWO-MINUTE TEAM REPORT OUT



**Ask teams to answer the question:** *What were your findings from each part of the Name It, Claim It, Tame It, Frame It framework exercise?*

### PART 2: INDIVIDUAL REPORT OUT



**Ask each participant to answer the question:** *What was your most meaningful takeaway?*

#### Discussion: Report Findings for Exercise

##### Part 1: Two-Minute Team Report

What were your findings from each part of the activity?

##### Part 2: Individual Report

What was your most meaningful takeaway?



27

## CHECK OUT



10 minutes



**Do:** Invite participants to answer a checkout question. Again, choose whether you will call on participants or ask participants to speak and then call on another person.



**Before the Training:** On the final slide, you will need to add a checkout question related to the topic based on the level of understanding in the group. A frequently used checkout question is: What is one word to describe how you are feeling as we leave this time together?

#### Check Out

**NOTE TO FACILITATOR:**  
Insert relevant question here.



28