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CTE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

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WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

- The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.
- Advocacy requires an advocate (YOU!) – a person who speaks on behalf of the cause or proposal.
- **Becoming an advocate is one of the most important things you can do to secure the future of CTE!**

DOES IT WORK?

- Simple answer - YES!
- Politicians are up for a job review (election) every 2, 4, or 6 years.
- If you are active and engage your elected officials, they will listen to you.
 - **If policymakers don't hear from you, they assume there is no problem - use your voice!**

HOW DO I ADVOCATE?

- **Written and digital communications**
 - Emails, letters, social media, blogs, videos
- **Verbal communications**
 - Calls, virtual and in-person meetings
- **Public forums**
 - Town halls, community events
- **News media**
 - Op-eds, media interviews, Letters to the Editor
- **School Opportunities**
 - Guest speakers, school/district newsletters and papers

ACTE'S ACTION CENTER

- ACTE has an [Action Center](#) tool that is a great resource to help you start building relationships with your policymakers. It is a one-stop-shop to finding the information you need to send email messages and Tweets to your policymakers, find your Members of Congress, and locate media professionals to conduct media outreach.

TAKE ACTION

[Home](#) [Directory](#) [Bills](#) [Votes](#) [Elections](#) [Media](#)

Our Issues

Ask Your Members of Congress to Support CTE Funding During Critical Budget Reconciliation Period!

Ask your Members of Congress to support key CTE priorities in the budget reconciliation package!



TAKE ACTION

Tell Your Policymakers Why Robust Federal Investments in CTE Matter!

Ask your federal policymakers to support robust federal investments in CTE that will help upskill and reskill workers, help institutions recover and innovate from the pandemic and meet future workforce needs!



TAKE ACTION

WHO DO I ADVOCATE TO?

- **Local leaders** include:

- Superintendent, School Board Member, City/County Supervisor or Councilman, Mayor or County Executive

- **State leaders** include:

- State Delegate, State Senator, Governor's Office, Department of Education Officials, Department of Labor/Workforce Officials, Education Committee members in General Assembly

- **Federal leaders** include:

- Senators, House Representative, President, Department of Education/Labor Officials

ADVOCATES FOR CTE IN CONGRESS

- CTE remains a very bipartisan issue – this is great!
- CTE Caucus created to form a group of Members of Congress that are dedicated to advancing CTE
 - House Co-Chairs: Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI) & Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA)
 - Senate Co-Chairs: Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA), Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), & Sen. Todd Young (R-IN)

COMMUNICATION TIPS

- **Know your officials:**
 - Who are your federal, state and local policymakers?
- **Identify yourself:**
 - You are a CTE student and their constituent.
- **Be prepared:**
 - Know the impact of the issue on your school, state, etc.
 - Always be polite and offer constructive solutions, even in disagreement.
- **Be specific:**
 - What action(s) would you like the policymaker to take?
- **Follow-up:**
 - Send a detailed thank-you.
 - Leave or send a fact sheet after an in-person or virtual meeting.
- **Continue the conversation:**
 - Congratulate, thank, share information!

WRITING LETTERS AND EMAILS TO POLICYMAKERS

- Never underestimate the power of written constituent correspondence!
- You can ask for support, discuss current issues or legislation impacting CTE and explain why you need their help or support. In general, follow these guidelines to make your correspondence more effective:
 - Limit your letter to one or two pages, and 1-2 paragraphs for emails.
 - Use appropriate address, salutation and formatting, especially for letters.
 - Be positive.
 - Ask for a reply.
 - Use facts.
 - Establish yourself as a resource.
 - Thank them for their time and attention.

HOSTING SITE VISITS

1. GET PERMISSION

Before you begin any planning, get permission from necessary officials.

2. DETERMINE GOALS

What type of impression do you want the policymaker to have of your site?
What programs do you want to highlight?

3. DEVELOP A DRAFT AGENDA

Plan a short and concise introductory presentation about the school or business and the related programs the policymaker will see. Following the brief presentation, schedule an organized tour.

4. INVITE POLICYMAKERS

Many Members of Congress have an online form you can complete to request an appearance at your site visit by your chosen policymaker, typically under a heading titled “request an appearance.” Send a brief letter or email to the policymaker at his or her local office at least six weeks before the scheduled date (you can find contact information for your Members of Congress by visiting ACTE’s [Action Center](#)). Explain why you would like the official to visit your program. Include specific information about the visit (proposed date, time, location, others who may be invited, whether the media will be invited, what activities are planned for the visit).

5. DETERMINE PRESS ACTIVITIES

Send a press release to the local media inviting them to attend the tour. Tag members of the media on social media to invite them to your tour. (ACTE can help you with your media activities! Please visit the “[Targeting the Media](#)” section of ACTE’s Advocacy Toolkit.

6. CONDUCT THE TOUR

When the policymaker and his or her staff arrive, distribute descriptions of your programs, success stories about students and any other relevant information you feel promotes your program.

7. INCLUDE SUPPORTERS

Have a few supporters present, such as parents, students and business partners, to help you make the case.

8. MAKE YOUR PITCH

Emphasize how additional resources could benefit students. Ask the policymaker to support your programs through increased funding and effective policies. Remember to be specific if current legislation is pending.

9. FOLLOW UP

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY

- **Twitter:** share news and updates from your program, engage with policymakers and more in 280 characters or less!
- **Facebook:** share your CTE content and reshare CTE content from your friends, ACTE and others.
- **Instagram:** share pictures with captions to provide a look into your CTE world.
- **LinkedIn:** share program news and much more.
- **Alternatives:** blogging and videos.
- **For more social media tips, visit ACTE's Advocacy Resources page - listed at the end of the presentation!**

SOCIAL MEDIA QUICKTIPS

- Use your own **"voice."**
- Use **photos, GIFs and other graphics** to make your posts attention-grabbing.
 - Use a free software platform like **Canva** to create graphics.
- **Be truthful.**
- Be positive and use facts.
- **Be social.**
- Retweet, like, comment on, and respond to others' posts.

ACTE ADVOCACY RESOURCES

- State Policies Impacting CTE: Year in Review
- Sector Sheets
- Advocacy Guide for Business Leaders
- State Profiles
- Fact Sheets
- Advocacy Toolkit – NEWLY UPDATED!
- ACTE's Legislative Alerts
- CTE Policy Watch Blog (**subscribe by email!**)
- **@ACTEpolicy** on Twitter
- And so much more!



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