

GO: MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL



Building on the experiences and expertise of seasoned staff and partners across a range of fields, PolicyLink has identified the essential components of successful equity advocacy efforts. This information has been assembled in Getting Equity Advocacy Results (GEAR): a suite of benchmarks, methods, and tools for advocates, organizers, and their allies to track the results of their equity campaigns.

GEAR offers important benchmarks for advocates to **MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL** for equitable change. Equity advocacy benchmarks can be considered the 'mile markers' in campaigns for policy change. They can be useful for charting the course of a new advocacy effort, providing feedback on the progress of an existing one, and reporting on the success of a completed campaign.

More information on measuring the success of equity advocacy is available online: www.policylink.org/gear.

Opportunities to advance equity abound in the numerous activities associated with different advocacy efforts. Organizing, base building, and capacity-building activities expand community leadership, increase power, and build momentum to address important equity issues. Research and communications activities illustrate and disseminate important information about issues, reaching important policymakers and thought leaders.

Efforts to **MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL** for equitable policy change include five major components: negotiations to develop the change proposal, introduction of the policy change proposal, launch of the campaign for policy change, movement and modification of the change proposal, and success, redirection or failure of the change proposal. Benchmarks for each of these areas, and guiding questions to navigate them, are detailed on the following pages.

BENCHMARKS TO MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL

Negotiations to Develop the Change Proposal

Guiding Questions	Equity Benchmarks
<i>How well do stakeholders, allies, and policymakers understand the problem and policy change objectives?</i>	Policymakers and their associates—including those who may be responsible for implementation of the decision later, and especially those with leadership on the issue—are aware of the problem and knowledgeable about its details and equity dimensions.
	Policymakers and their associates are aware of the policy change objectives.
	Some policymakers and their associates are champions for change and the policy change objectives.
<i>How deep is the engagement of policymakers in advancing the policy change objectives?</i>	Policymakers champion the policy change objectives by speaking out and spreading information to strategic audiences, building on the efforts of the collaborative.
	Events and engagements (e.g., briefings, speaking engagements, protests) about the equity issue and policy change objectives raise awareness, build credibility, and garner growing support among policymakers and other target audiences.

Introduction of the Change Proposal

Guiding Questions	Equity Benchmarks
<i>What is the policy change proposal?</i>	A proposal to change public policy (e.g., legislation, a ballot initiative, regulatory change, litigation, etc.), other policy (e.g., procedural rules, organizational policies and procedures, etc.), or other power structure (e.g., inclusion or representation in decision-making bodies, etc.) is developed to address the problem, and is consistent with the collaborative’s policy change objectives.
	The proposal is carried by a strategically positioned policymaker and endorsed by other policymakers.
	The proposal is introduced into a formal decision-making process (e.g., bill is introduced, proposed regulation is released, etc.).
<i>How well does the collaborative navigate the changing social and political environments that influence the proposal?</i>	The problem and proposal maintain visibility among policymakers and engaged stakeholders.
	Advocacy strategies and internal communications are regularly reviewed to identify opportunities for new support and alliances.
	Strategies and tactics are flexible—both proactive and defensive—to respond to fluid political dynamics and perceptions of the issue.

Launch of the Campaign for Change

Guiding Questions	Equity Benchmarks
<i>What ongoing organizing and community capacity-building activities support the advancement of the proposal?</i>	Continued organizing and outreach activities build new and improve existing partnerships and alliances with community and local leaders.
	Collaborative strength and capacity is sustained through respect for collaborative members’ non-negotiable elements, regular checks of members’ comfort level with strategies, and transparent governance and leadership accountability.
	Capacity-building activities enhance advocacy leadership and cultivate new leaders to improve advocacy for the proposal and support for the overall effort.

<i>How do ongoing research activities support the advancement of the proposal?</i>	<p>Research and information regarding the problem and the proposal are written and shared strategically (e.g., research papers, issue briefs, educational materials, etc.) with target audiences.</p> <p>Flexibility to refine or change research, communications or campaign strategies when needed allows the collaborative to effectively navigate the policymaking process.</p>
<i>In what ways do strategic communications activities advance the proposal through stages of the decision-making process?</i>	<p>The framing and messaging employed by the collaborative regarding the problem and the policy change objectives are repeated and used by policymakers in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Policymakers respond favorably to calls to action from the collaborative, its members, and their allies.</p> <p>Policymaker champions are sought as a credible and expert voice about both the problem and policy change objectives.</p>
<i>How do leadership decisions promote the advancement of the proposal?</i>	<p>For public policy proposals, decisions to engage in direct lobbying are made at relevant and strategic points in the campaign.</p> <p>Collaborative members, allies, and champions demonstrate increased accountability, motivation, and engagement, over time.</p> <p>The resources of the collaborative are sufficient to support advocacy activities; core groups are able to remain engaged as the proposal passes through stages of decision making.</p>

Movement and Modification of the Change Proposal

Guiding Questions	Equity Benchmarks
<i>How are collaborative activities associated with the progress of the policy change proposal?</i>	<p>Movement of the proposal through the decision-making process reaps new or previously unidentified allies.</p> <p>Proactive tracking of the decision-making process reveals opportunities for strategic advocacy (e.g., testifying before policymakers, lobbying, speaking at public hearings, media blasts, etc.).</p> <p>Strategic advocacy activities (e.g., testifying before policymakers, lobbying, speaking at public hearings, media blasts, etc.) aim at specific steps in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Ineffective proposals are rejected even without a viable alternative.</p>

Success, Redirection or Failure of the Change Proposal

Guiding Questions	Equity Benchmarks
<i>How does the final decision on the proposal affect campaign activities?</i>	<p>The collaborative and the affected community have a shared understanding of the equity “wins” and their role in influencing those wins, and champions them.</p> <p>The collaborative is prepared to revisit its advocacy strategy if the final decision on the proposal is rejected.</p> <p>The collaborative has a strategy in place to advocate for effective implementation once the proposal is formally adopted.</p>

THE ONGOING ROLES OF ORGANIZING, CAPACITY BUILDING, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNICATIONS TO MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL

Equity is produced when communities are empowered to shape their environments so that they can thrive and prosper. This requires policies that are inclusive of community experiences and engagement, as well as leaders to turn the wheels of change. To get there, campaigns for policy change involve weaving together organizing, capacity-building, research, and communications strategies. In efforts to **MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL**, organizing, research, and communications must be synergistic. Strategic equity advocacy decisions rest upon the integration of these three important activities, and the foundation laid for them in previous stages. Examples and further information on how advocates engage in these ongoing activities are available in the **GEAR Overview: Tools for Navigating Change**, available online.

STRATEGIES TO DEFINE AND MEASURE SUCCESS

Effective strategies for measurement and analysis must match the differing demands, resources, and courses of each equity advocacy campaign. The **MOVE THE EQUITY PROPOSAL** benchmarks, which emphasize research, communications, and organizing, can use a diverse array of measures to track progress, including surveys, interview protocols, and instruments used for document review. Recommendations for using GEAR benchmarks for measurement are available in the **GEAR Guide: Planning and Assessing Success**.

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To learn more, visit: www.policylink.org/gear