

ADVOCACY 101

If you are passionate about tennis, you have the requisite background to become a successful tennis advocate. Successful advocacy also requires knowledge, organization and careful planning.

The USTA has put together this step-by-step guide to help potential tennis advocates achieve success in their efforts to grow tennis in their community. Find out more at THEBIGSERVE.USTA.com.

CONCEIVING YOUR PROJECT



Focus on your community, specifically issues affecting kids, youth activities and in-school and extracurricular programs.

Keep it simple.

Don't cloud your message with too many ideas.



Don't spend all your time focused on the end result. Anticipate problems early to avoid them later on. Try to see the situation from an opposing perspective.

STEP

1 Identify an issue/project that resonates with the local community

- What does your community need most?
- Is there a need for youth activities?
- Do the public schools need support?
- Are there local health issues in your area?
- Is there a lack of access to public courts, or do old courts need to be refurbished?
- What do local decision-makers care about?

2 STEP

2 Develop a clear idea

You should be able to explain your idea or project in a single sentence. If you cannot, the idea is not as clear as it needs to be.

3 STEP

3 Do your research

Making sure you've covered every angle is critical to the success of your project, so be sure to research the local policy priorities, be prepared to show how tennis-focused programming can benefit your community as a whole, and consider private and public funding options, including grants and fundraising opportunities. Explore the website of your local city or county government for pertinent information related to your project (budgets, master plans, key figures, etc.).

4 STEP

4 Identify potential obstacles

One of the best things you can do in the early stages is to see where your project may run into problems and then find ways to work around those problems. Being able to anticipate and solve issues in advance will make carrying out your project easier down the road. Try placing yourself in the shoes of your potential opponents and understand their perspective.

CARRYING OUT YOUR PROJECT



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STEP

5 Build a strong, broad-based coalition

A coalition is a group of organizations or individuals who work together for a common purpose. By joining with others who have similar priorities, you create a sense that tennis has wide community support. Building a coalition also increases your appeal and creates networking and partnership opportunities between you, your organization and your partner organization.



Additional benefits of a coalition include cost-effectiveness, greater potential to attract media attention, greater access to expertise.

STEP

6 Seek out external allies

Cultivate allies outside tennis, your immediate organization and your coalition. Never rule anyone or anything out. You may be surprised by who wants to help you.



Seek out allies in a variety of areas:

- Chamber of Commerce members
- City council members
- College presidents and trustees
- County Commissioners
- Mayor or local executive
- Planning and zoning commission members
- Park and recreation board members
- State legislators
- School board or committee members

STEP

7 Meeting with decision-makers

You have a focused plan and a network of allies and supporters. It's time to present your project to the local decision-makers for approval and turn dreams into realities.

- Attend city council/school board/park board meetings.
- Contact decision-makers directly for one-on-one meetings.

STEP

8 Executing your advocacy plan

Set intermediate benchmarks for success:

- Focus on achieving a series of short-term wins on the way to a long-term victory.
- Remain focused and vigilant, upbeat and positive.
- Make priorities clear to all.
- Be prepared to answer questions about opposing views in a positive fashion.
- Be polite at all times.
- Stay in consistent communication with:
 - all coalition partners and volunteers
 - local decision-makers
 - the media



You've lined up your allies and your plan is ready to go. It's time to present your project to the person or party that will make the final determination.