



The Board Advocacy Project

Unleashing Untapped Potential to End Homelessness

Today in Washington State, there are at least 500 non-profit organizations working on issues of homelessness and affordable housing. But too few of the 5,000 to 10,000 board members volunteering time to these groups are actively involved or trained in public policy advocacy. **The Board Advocacy Project wants to change that.**

By engaging, motivating, and training thousands of nonprofit board members across the state on how to be effective advocates, we'll help them use their individual voices and collective leverage to make a lasting difference in the campaign to end homelessness. Led by Common Ground, with support from the Champion Foundation, the Board Advocacy Project has created a framework to give board members the training and ongoing support they need to be effective advocates.

Here's what you can expect from the Board Advocacy Project:

Motivation. We'll help demonstrate the connection between effective advocacy and fiscal responsibility. As skilled advocates, board members can engage policy makers to protect and increase critical public funding for homelessness prevention and affordable housing. They can also help their organizations compete more effectively for philanthropic support critical to long-term success.

Skill Building. We'll provide useful guidance on how to be persuasive in all communications with elected officials. Building on board members' roles as community leaders, we'll arm you with the tools and messages required to be persuasive messengers for the cause.

Sustainability. We'll help assess your organization's structure and bylaws through an advocacy framework. By adopting sound advocacy plans, board advocacy committees, and internal budgetary commitments for advocacy, nonprofits can make sure advocacy becomes a permanent board priority, on par with governance, fundraising and other core board duties.

“Board members sometimes forget how powerful they are, how much their voices really count. Your voice and your advocacy can make a difference.”

– Norman Rice, CEO, The Seattle Foundation



Our Vision.

The tragedy of homelessness will end when public will demands it. There must be a public movement with enough power to move our decision makers to enact the policies needed to ensure everyone has a safe and affordable place to live. The Board Advocacy Project believes nonprofit board members are an enormous untapped resource who can play a pivotal role in this movement; and we will inspire and activate these community leaders through education, mobilization and ongoing support.

Board member advocacy is smart, simple and strategic – and it can make a big difference for communities for years to come.

Here are three things you can do today:

► **Watch Our Video.**

“Board Members: An Untapped Resource” features Bill Gates, Sr., Norm Rice, and other funders, civic and elected leaders explaining board members’ unique power and the risks of not engaging in advocacy. Watch it today on our website. Then share the link with fellow board members, or order a DVD copy to view at your next board meeting!

► **Register for a Training.**

Our two-hour workshops are thorough, informative and fun, and they’re happening in cities all across WA State this fall. While board members are our primary targets, anyone working in the housing and homelessness sector is welcome to attend. Visit our website today to sign up.

► **Expand the Conversation.**

Download our budget template for a visual illustration of the impact public funds can have on your organization’s financial well being. Then schedule a conversation about advocacy at your next board meeting, and use our video to spark the discussion of how advocacy can impact your bottom line.

For More Information:

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