

A photograph of a young man with short brown hair, wearing a brown jacket over a blue shirt, sitting in a blue wheelchair. He is smiling and looking down at a woman's hand. The woman has long blonde hair and is wearing a light green shirt. A GoPro camera is mounted on the wheelchair's frame. In the background, there are other people, including a man in a plaid shirt and a woman in a green shirt, and a bicycle. The scene is outdoors on a paved surface.

ADVOCACY RESOURCES



Real life. Real possibilities.



Table of Contents

Welcome and Introduction	1
Voting	2
Advocacy at Federal and State Level	3
Easily Advocate Through Mosaic Allied Voices	4
How to Find Contact Information for Your Government Officials	4
Your Story is Important	5
Advocacy Examples	6
Social Media Posts	7
In-Person Visit	8
Important Advocacy Resources	10
Frequently Asked Questions	11



Welcome and Introduction

Elected officials want to hear from you. Your voice matters. Advocacy makes a difference.

Advocacy is defined as the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.

It is one of the most direct ways to influence government. There are many easy ways you can advocate. Writing letters, emailing and calling elected officials are the most common ways you can advocate. Visiting elected officials is another way for you to directly voice your opinions to elected officials.

Advocacy is a crucial component to ensure the government is working the best it can for people with disabilities. Advocates, community members, constituents and voters can influence elected officials by educating them about important issues. Engaging elected officials builds partnerships with advocates and leads to positive outcomes for people with disabilities, because elected officials become better informed through these interactions.

The purpose of these Mosaic Advocacy Resources is to provide the tools, information and resources for you to effectively engage elected officials and government on important issues.

Advocates for people with disabilities are uniquely positioned to bring about change in the community. Please use these resources to proactively engage elected officials by contacting their offices about issues important to you, participating in public hearings or forums and leading the way for other advocates in your community.

Advocacy is ingrained in Mosaic's mission:

Embracing God's call, Mosaic relentlessly pursues opportunities that empower people.

Mosaic relies on advocates like you to fulfill its mission by championing public policies that promote quality, personalized services in a community-based setting for people with disabilities.



Voting

The right to vote is one of the most important ways to engage in advocacy.

Voting gives you the power to choose who you want to represent you in government and is the most direct way to influence government.

Your vote is your voice.

It is critical you know your rights as a voter and are informed about the voting process. Before going to your polling place, it is important to research the candidates and ballot measures to know exactly what and whom you are voting for.

People with disabilities and advocates must actively participate in the election process because elected officials decide how services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are funded and delivered.

To learn about how to register to vote in your state, please visit: mosaicalliedvoices.org or vote.gov.

Dakota Reason (above) is served by Mosaic.

“Election Day is Dakota’s second favorite day of the year behind Christmas. Every time he has voted, he has seen that his vote has made a difference. He definitely has his opinion about the candidates, and even Mom is not going to change his mind.” - Celeste, Dakota’s mom



BEFORE ELECTION DAY

Prepare for Election Day:

- ✓ Confirm you are registered to vote several weeks before Election Day
- ✓ Update your registration if your address, name or political affiliation has changed
- ✓ Know how and when to request an absentee ballot if you are unable to vote at your polling place on Election Day
- ✓ Know your options for voting
- ✓ Know the voter identification requirements in your state
- ✓ Know your polling place and how to get there
- ✓ Know what time the polls open and close
- ✓ Become acquainted with the candidates and issues listed on the ballot



Advocacy at Federal and State Level

Government has three branches: legislative, executive and judicial.

The legislative branch is where the most advocacy on public policy issues occurs. The federal legislative branch, Congress, includes the Senate and House of Representatives.

Advocacy with legislators is important, because the decisions made by legislators have a direct impact on constituents. The legislative branch presents the most opportunities for advocates to provide input on legislation through public hearings and other opportunities.

Advocacy also occurs at the state level. Advocacy at the state level is more localized, and state elected officials are usually easier to access than their federal counterparts. State legislatures have advocacy opportunities similar to Congress to engage legislators during public hearings.

Both Congress and state legislatures play important roles in advancing public policy impacting people with disabilities. Members of Congress and state legislators are elected to represent people in their districts and promote issues important to their constituency. It is important to take advantage of legislative engagement opportunities.

THREE BRANCHES OF U.S. GOVERNMENT



LEGISLATIVE (makes laws)

Congress

- Senate
- House of Representatives



EXECUTIVE (carries out laws)

President

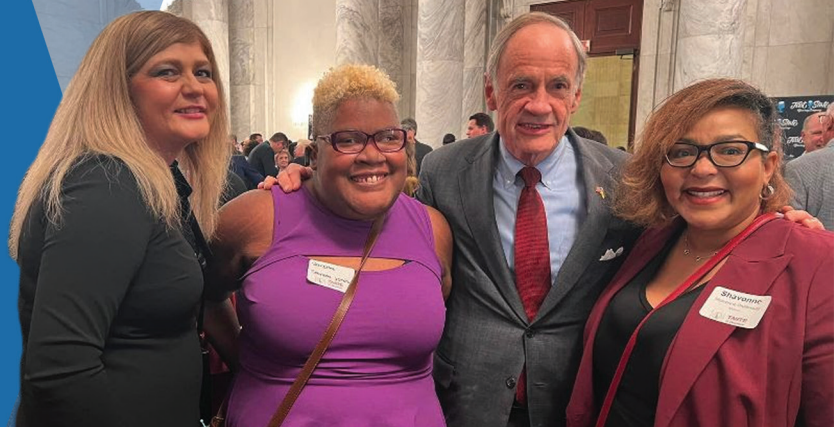
- Vice President
- Cabinet



JUDICIAL (interprets laws)

Supreme Court

- Other Federal Courts



Easily Advocate Through Mosaic Allied Voices

Mosaic Allied Voices (MAV) is a volunteer group of advocates. As a Mosaic Allied Voices advocate, you will get alerts about advocacy opportunities during the public policy process.

Typically, Mosaic will send an email alerting advocates to current public policy issues. The message will include a link to take action by sending a prewritten message to your elected officials. Simply click the link in the email, and a template with a prewritten message to legislators will appear. Please feel free to add personal experiences to your message to make it more impactful.

Being a MAV advocate makes advocacy work extremely easy!

You can sign up for MAV at mosaicalliedvoices.org. Once you are signed up, you will receive information and action alerts about prevailing public policy issues impacting people with disabilities.



How to Find Contact Information for Your Government Officials

Mosaic provides a great, easy-to-use tool to find and contact your elected officials, available at: mosaicinfo.org/find-elected-officials.

On the site, once you enter your zip code, all your federal and state officials will appear. You can send your elected officials a message by checking the box next to their names. You can also click on the name of an elected official to get more information, including their phone number, email, office locations and biographical information.

Other great websites for finding information about members of Congress are house.gov and senate.gov, which provide in-depth information about all representatives and senators and will direct you to their websites and contact information. Some offices may include the official social media accounts for the elected officials, which is also a great way to keep up on the daily activities of the officials.



Your Story is Important

Telling your story is an important part of being a successful advocate, because your personal experiences with an issue matter.

Elected officials and their staff see many constituents during a given day—telling elected officials your story helps make your position memorable.

A story should be concise, but it should include enough information to fully support the points you are presenting. Because the amount of face time you will have with an elected official or their staff will likely be short, it is a good idea to prepare for approximately five to 10 minutes to tell your story and ask for their support.

Stories explaining why you became an advocate, how a proposed policy will impact you and the work you do in the community are good to share.

Your story should always link back to the public policy issue and highlight the ask you are making of your elected official.

Remember, a story can be a great addition to the prewritten advocacy messages Mosaic provides, and it will help to reinforce your position.

“I think that my staff deserve \$100 per hour. I was very very scared when I had COVID-19 ... and my staff helped me through it. They kept me safe, made sure I wasn’t lying in bed all day, and I’m here because of them.”

**—James Gardner (above),
served by Mosaic**

S.P.I.T. STORY TECHNIQUE

When telling your story, it is good to keep the S.P.I.T. technique in mind.

S.P.I.T. is an acronym that means:

S—Specific

P—Personal

I—Informative

T—Timely

Be sure to follow the S.P.I.T. technique when telling your story to make it as effective as possible.



Advocacy Examples

Phone Call

Because phone calls are quick, it is important to have a script ready so you can clearly convey your message. Here is an example of a phone call script:

“[Senator or Representative], my name is [Your Name], and I am your constituent from [City], [State]. I am calling to ask you to support the 8% funding increase for community nonprofits, which will help stabilize the workforce crisis and funding needs for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. [Explain your connection to Mosaic here]. Mosaic and similar service providers need your help for additional funding to help keep our programs running.”

Email

Email is a great way to contact elected officials. State officials will usually have an email address that is used for constituent input. Members of Congress use contact forms on their website. Emails should also be concise and make your point clearly. Remember, the main goal of your message is to ask your elected official to support or oppose an issue. Here is an example of an email to an elected official:

“Dear [Senator or Representative],

I am [Your Name], Mosaic’s Executive Director for Mosaic in [Location]. Mosaic has a long history of serving more than 400 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 40 years in a variety of communities in [State].

Over the years, we have adapted to typical turnover challenges in our workforce, yet during the pandemic, these issues were amplified. We had staff shortages on all levels that resulted in people we support having limited service options and agency leadership working direct care to ensure the health and safety of those we support. While we have started to stabilize, we know that the workforce challenges will continue in the future.

We invite you to join us during Alliance’s Intellectual and Developmental Awareness Day on [Week Day], [Month], [Date] from [Start Time] to [End Time]. If you happen to be at the Capitol on [Month], [Date], we encourage you to walk the red carpet. To request a boxed lunch, RSVP [here] by [Month], [Date].

We hope to see you virtually or in person on [Month], [Date]!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]”



Social Media Posts


Social media is an increasingly effective tool for advocacy, and most elected officials are on Facebook and Twitter.

Spreading issue awareness should be the main objective of posting on social media. Hashtags (#) are a terrific way to connect your post to a movement or thread throughout various social platforms, because they will allow your social media audience to view others' posts and get more information about an issue.

Sample hashtags:

“Support people with disabilities! Tell Congress to **#SaveMedicaid** and to vote NO on HR 1628 **#NoCutsNoCaps**”

Sample Facebook post:

 Mosaic in Southeast Nebraska

September 8 · 🌐

Thank you Nebraska Association of Service Providers for coming to our Government Proclamation Signing Ceremony for DSP Appreciation Week!



Nebraska Association of Service Providers

September 6 · 🌐

Nebraska officially proclaims September 11-17, 2022 DSP Recognition Week! Thank you to Mosaic for speaking about the important role DSPs play in our communities.

This Friday is the deadline to nominate your favorite DSP to the NASP Top 10!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1v3f1cIG7Ms58zcf9pnjtz.../edit>

2

Like

Comment

Share

Sample Twitter posts:

DSP's deserve a standard occupational classification so that they can be paid accurately for supporting people with I/DD. Contact Congress, TODAY, to support the "Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act" (H.R. 4779 / S. 1437).

4

Please include HCBS in the U.S. Senate budget reconciliation package. People with IDD are counting on you to ensure sustainability in HCBS services in your State.

6

Thank you for approving \$56.7 million for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Arizona! We are grateful for your unwavering support of critical services for the most vulnerable citizens in Arizona.

2



In-Person Visit

An in-person visit with an elected official is the most direct form of advocacy. Mosaic is here to help you plan and ensure you have a successful visit. Remember, your visit may not last more than five to 10 minutes, so have your advocacy message and ask ready. Refer back to the S.P.I.T. technique for some reminders about telling your story.

An example introduction: Thank you, [Name], for meeting with us today. Mosaic is a nonprofit, whole-person healthcare organization reaching across 13 states in more than 700 communities and providing supports to nearly 4,900 people. We help empower people with disabilities, mental and behavioral health needs and autism, as well as aging adults, to live their best life. We primarily provide Home- and Community-Based Services. In [State], we support [Number] people with [Number: employees+contractors] members of our workforce.

Here are some general suggestions for success:

1. Treat the elected officials and their staff with respect: Even if you strongly disagree with elected officials' positions, it is extremely important to always be respectful of their work and time.
2. Be flexible: Always be ready to pivot, if the schedule changes at the last minute.
3. Dress for success: Professional or business casual is best when talking with your elected official or their staff.
4. Take photos to further document your visit—and to share them with others: While you don't need written permission to take pictures of officials and their staff, you should ask their permission before doing so.
5. Ask for help if needed: If you're unsure how to start advocating, communicating or sharing policy issues with internal and external partners, feel free to reach out to Mosaic's Vice President of Government Relations Cheryl Wicks. Her email is Cheryl.Wicks@MosaicInfo.org, and her office phone is 877.366.7242.



Tell them about your work in the community: Share a story about how you positively impact your community through your advocacy or volunteering.

The ASK, or in other words, what do you want your elected official to do: Ask for only one or two things and make it specific. For example, “Please vote for HR 1234. It will have a positive impact in your district, because it promotes inclusion for people with disabilities.”

Share a Mosaic mission story and the ASK: Share a short one- to two-minute impact story regarding a person in service, Mosaic at Home provider or direct support professional that relates to the ask of the legislator.

Answer any questions raised: It is perfectly fine if you do not know the answer; simply tell them you will get it, and be sure to get back to them in an expedient manner.

Thank them for meeting: Thank them for their time and the opportunity to meet. Leave your contact information and offer to be a resource on future issues impacting people with disabilities.

Post meeting follow up: Within five to seven days of meeting with an elected official, send an email to them, and thank them for meeting with you. If you need to send a follow-up to them, this is a great opportunity to do so.

It is always good to leave the meeting asking to meet with them again. If you do that, then follow up with them on a future meeting. It could be Direct Support Professional for a Day, visit at the Capitol, touring services we provide, etc.

Determine who the right contact person is, and if they do not follow up within a week, then follow up again.

It is best to research and understand when members of Congress or your state legislators are out of session. This will give you a timeline to work towards when scheduling visits.



Important Advocacy Resources

Here are resources to help you when doing advocacy work:

Sign up for Mosaic Allied Voices and access other advocacy resources, including an easy way to identify and send messages to elected officials: mosaicinfo.org/get-involved/advocate

Websites for the United States Senate and House of Representatives contain information about each chamber and the Representatives and Senators: house.gov and senate.gov

A robust glossary of legislative terms: congress.gov/help/legislative-glossary

For even more resources, go to ANCOR's Advocacy Toolkit: ancor.org/advocacy/toolkit





Frequently Asked Questions

How do I arrange an in-person visit?

Simply submit a meeting request via the “contact tab” on your elected official’s website, and request to schedule a time to meet with the official or staff about your issue.

How do I know which bills are currently in the state legislature or Congress?

Mosaic Allied Voices is a great way to get alerts about bills that affect the intellectual and developmental disability community. If you would like more details on current legislation, contact Cheryl Wicks.

How do I get started doing advocacy work?

Schedule a one-on-one meeting with Cheryl Wicks, sign up for Mosaic Allied Voices, and, if you’re with a Mosaic agency, talk with agency leadership. Create Google alerts about the issue, and check your state’s legislature website. In addition, engage in community conversations about issues through entities like your local city council, chamber of commerce or state provider association.

What if I don’t have a lot of time to do advocacy work?

Luckily, a lot of advocacy work is very easy and does not take much time at all. Using all of Mosaic’s tools such as those in the MAV Action Center, email, phone and social media advocacy can be done in less than 60 seconds. In-person advocacy requires more time and planning, but it can be a more impactful way to advocate.

It is truly easy to be a great advocate!



mosaicalliedvoices.org



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