

## Five Advocacy Options to Incorporate into Your Agency's Agenda

1. Mailing List: Add your local, state and federal elected officials to your organization's mailing list. Make sure that all on-line newsletters, reports and mailings are sent to them as well.
2. Site Visits: The best way to give elected officials a true picture of what your agency is accomplishing is to invite them to come and observe for themselves! Better yet, involve them in an activity - - serving lunch, packing boxes, etc. You have the "home-court" advantage and usually the official is more relaxed than if you were to visit with them in their office. If you have difficulty getting the member to commit to visiting your agency, invite the media or give the official some type of official recognition (framed certificate or the like).
3. Scrap Book/Photo Album: If you can't get your official to tour your site - - bring the site to them! Options include taking photographs and making them into postcards to send to elected officials. Or using the creative talents of some of your volunteers to create a "scrap book/photo journal" that documents in pictures what you are accomplishing (or the face of those still in need). We've seen many Congressional offices displaying such albums on their coffee tables.
4. Conference Calls - Staying Connected: Many local and small agencies do not have the resources to get to the State House or to Washington, D.C. Have your statewide coalition or others who are attending conferences and meetings at the State Capital or in Congress to bring you along via conference calls. Most offices have speaker phones with the capacity to include multiple callers. You will need to do a little "pre-scripting" beforehand to make sure that everyone is on message and truly adding to the discussion.
5. Food Stamp Challenge: Across the nation elected officials, religious leaders, anti-hunger advocates and others have opted to take the "Food Stamp Challenge" (eating only what can be purchased with an average food stamp allotment for a week, approx. \$21/person). Invite Senators and their staff to take the Challenge, or to join you and others on a shopping trip to the local grocery store to see just how much the average food stamp allotment buys. Encourage community leaders to take the Challenge. For a link to a Food Stamp Challenge toolkit from The Hatcher Group and FRAC and other information on the Challenge, go to the FRAC website, [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org).

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