

Gaining Support

Think about individuals and groups who might support your efforts to influence policy. In other words, build your own constituency.

Consider:

Those you know: Friends, family members, fellow students.

Government: Your issue is a public policy issue. That means it involves government. It might be your school, the school board, city government, or county government. Consider finding out what an elected official or an agency of government thinks about your issue and whether you can find supporters there.

Business: Public policy often affects businesses. Consider whether a particular business or the business community might support your efforts. One business association that is powerful in most communities is the Chamber of Commerce.

Non-Profits: Neither businesses nor government agencies, these groups rely on membership dues, donations from supporters, grants, or volunteers. There might be a non-profit that could offer support. Consider these types of non-profits:

- Advocacy and interest groups such as neighborhood associations, unions, political organizations, environmental groups.
- Service, volunteer, and charitable groups such as the United Way or groups that focus on helping one particular problem.
- Religious groups.

How you gain support will depend on what policy you are trying to influence.

Your homework assignment:

Think of one thing you could do to get greater support for your efforts. Write one paragraph explaining your plan for building support.