

Advocacy from Home

When an interested person commits to perform one act of advocacy, the momentum grows, the effect gets larger, and policymakers pay more attention. We are building a grassroots effort to raise awareness about the needs of vulnerable Alaskans.

Following is a list of things you can do to make a change. Choose one (or more), make a commitment and follow-through!

- Write a letter/email to a public official about a situation that matters to you.
- Call in or appear in person and give your personal testimony at a public meeting.
- Coordinate a letter/email campaign. Invite five people to write a letter/email to a public official.
- Make a telephone call to a public official's office (city council, representative, senator).
- Coordinate a telephone-calling campaign. Invite five people to call a public official.
- Write a letter-to-the-editor about a situation that matters to you.
- Coordinate a letter-to-the-editor campaign. Invite five people to write letters to the editor.
- Use Facebook and other social media to post an opinion on matters related to vulnerable Alaskans.
- Go to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's JOINT ADVOCACY webpage and learn about action you can take, or organize five people to do it, at: www.alaskamentalhealthtrust.org.
- Host a reception for a public official in your home or place of work. Show them firsthand what your situation is. A fundraiser is even better.
- Ask five people to host a reception for a public official in their homes or places of work.
- Tag onto a public event, party or reception, set up a table that raises awareness about an issue.
- Visit your own legislator in your hometown and ask others to do it. Go to <http://akleg.gov/lios.php> to learn who your personal legislators are (scroll to the bottom and input address under WHO REPRESENTS ME).
- Make five personal contacts to friends to spread the word about an issue.
- Post on Facebook a link to a news story or letter to the editor on a topic you care about, or talk with your friends and co-workers about the issue.
- Write a longer opinion piece for your local newspaper, or find someone else to do it.
- Go on the radio talk show and discuss an issue, or find someone else to do it.
- Write a personal story and send it to a policymaker.
- Gather five written personal stories and send them to policymakers.
- Coordinate a local media campaign (with newspaper, radio, and/or TV).
- Attend a 'Super Advocate' advocacy training sponsored by the Trust and partner advisory boards.
- Testify at a public meeting (Assembly, City Council, Rotary, Chamber, School Board, etc.).
- Gather letters of support (on letterhead) from organizations that support an issue. Give the stack (hard copies) to a public official.
- Coordinate a local advocacy effort in your community. Contact the media, host receptions, organize letter-writing and telephone, coordinate volunteers in your area, visit legislators, etc.).

How to Follow the Legislature

- To follow what happens at the Alaska State Legislature, go to: www.akleg.gov. From this page, you can track bills, learn about the legislative process, follow committee action, read meeting minutes, learn about legislators, listen to live meetings or recordings of past meetings, and set up your own bill tracking system.
 - Click on **BILLS & LAWS** to track bills by action, sponsor, subject, and more.
 - To read about a specific bill, type in the bill number in **SEARCH** box (for example, SB56). On that page you can read the bill's committee history, sponsor statement, back-up documents, and copies of the bill. To read a copy of the bill, click on **FULL TEXT** and when you get to that page, click on the red & white PDF icon. Remember when reading a bill that the text written in parentheses is being deleted, and the underlined text is language that is being added. Sometimes a “new section” is added, and will NOT be underlined. Look for the words “a new section to read” followed by regular text. This is new text to be added to law.
 - To learn about a specific legislator's bills, go to **SPONSOR SUMMARY** under **BILLS & LAWS**.
 - To search bills by subject, go to **SUBJECT SUMMARY**, under **BILLS & LAWS**.
 - To learn how bills are progressing through committees, go to **BILLS IN COMMITTEE** under **BILLS & LAWS**.
 - To read about or listen to what happened in a committee hearing, go to **MINUTES AND AUDIO** under **COMMITTEES**.
 - To learn when committees meet so you can follow along or know when to call-in for public testimony, go to **HEARING SCHEDULES** under **COMMITTEES**.
 - To create your own free bill-tracking account, go **BILLS & LAWS** and under **Tools**, click on **BILL TRACKING MANAGEMENT FACILITY (BTMF)**. Follow instructions to create an account that will track the bills you want and send you an alert when a bill on your list has action.
 - For tutorials, contact lists, information, etc., go to **PUBLICATIONS**.
- To learn who your own legislators are, go to: www.akleg.gov and scroll down to the box “WHO REPRESENTS ME” and input your address and zip code. Every Alaskan has one Senator and one House Representative based on your home address.
- To learn about state legislators, go to <http://akleg.gov/senate.php> to learn about the Senators. Go to <http://akleg.gov/house.php> to learn about House Representatives.