

# ICAM

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## Advocacy Toolkit



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# Welcome!

Welcome to this Advocacy Toolkit, a comprehensive guide designed for animal welfare professionals dedicated to improving the lives of free-roaming dogs and cats. This resource aims to equip you with the knowledge and strategies necessary to effect meaningful change in your community through effective advocacy.

Within these pages, you'll find a wealth of knowledge and practical strategies, all designed to help you make a real, lasting difference for the animals who need our voices the most. Whether you're a seasoned campaigner or just starting out, this toolkit will equip you with the skills and confidence to advocate effectively.

We've structured this guide around nine essential questions, each one unlocking a crucial aspect of successful advocacy:

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As you work through these questions, you'll develop a clear vision, identify stakeholders, craft messages, and build strategies. You'll learn to leverage strengths, address challenges, and measure impact.

Every great change begins with a single step, which you're taking now. The path ahead may be challenging but offers immense potential for meaningful achievements.

As you begin this journey, know that your efforts are vital. The free-roaming dogs and cats in your community will benefit from your dedicated advocacy. With this toolkit as your guide, you have the potential to make a significant difference. Together, we can work towards a world where every animal is valued, protected, and thrives.

We invite you to approach this toolkit with an open mind and a readiness to apply its principles. Your commitment to this cause is commendable, and we're here to support your advocacy journey every step of the way.



### **Look out for these example boxes...**

**For illustration purposes, we'll follow the journey of an imaginary NGO called "Paws for Change," which is working on Dog Population Management in the fictional city of Bark View.**







# 1. What do you want?

## Your objectives

When setting your objectives, it's crucial to be clear, specific, and realistic. Your goals should address the root cause of and core issues facing free-roaming dogs and cats while also being achievable within a reasonable timeframe.

Before setting your objectives, you should review any relevant information that currently exists and identify any 'knowledge gaps'. Relevant information could include government legislation, regulatory guidelines, the minutes of a city council meeting, academic papers, newspaper articles, or scientific data.

It's also best practice to consult with relevant stakeholders as part of the objective setting process. You should consult with stakeholders in a variety of different ways to meet diverse needs. This could include town hall meetings, virtual events, or collecting views in writing. Remember to design your consultation so that you can measure the outcome, and to provide feedback to stakeholders in a timely manner.

### SMART objectives

Whether it's establishing a comprehensive DPM strategy, implementing a city-wide TNVR programme for free-roaming cats, improving access to veterinary care, or developing community education programmes, your objectives should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Setting SMART objectives will help you stay focused and track your progress effectively. If you have multiple goals, prioritise them based on urgency, potential impact, and feasibility.

### Setting SMART Objectives

After reviewing all available evidence, assessing their capacity and resources, and consulting with stakeholders, including the community, Paws for Change sets an objective to:

*“Launch a city-wide DPM programme in Bark View within 18 months, to stabilise the free roaming dog population through humane methods including sterilisation, vaccination, and community education”.*

## 2. Who can give it to you?

### ■ Who is your audience? Who are the power holders?

Identifying the right decision-makers is crucial for your advocacy efforts. Depending on your specific objectives, you may need to target different levels of government or various departments within the same governmental body.

#### Key stakeholders might include:

- Local council members or mayors for city-level changes
- County or regional councillors for broader area policies
- Members of Parliament for national legislation
- Heads of relevant government agencies (e.g., Department of Environment, Public Health, or Local Government)
- Civil servants in charge of animal control or public health
- Regulatory bodies, police commissioners or chief constables for enforcement-related issues



### Research these individuals thoroughly:

- Understand their backgrounds and political affiliations
- Review their voting histories on animal welfare issues
- Identify their key interests and priorities
- Look for any personal connections to animal welfare (e.g., pet ownership)

Not everyone will support your initiative initially. Map out your stakeholders to identify potential allies and those who may need more convincing - this will help you tailor your message.

### Finally, don't forget other influential stakeholders:

- Local business leaders who might be affected by or interested in your cause
- Community leaders and respected local figures
- Media personalities with an interest in animal welfare

## Identifying those with the decision-making power to make the change you want to see

As key decision-makers for their Dog Population Management programme, Paws for Change identifies:

- The Mayor of Bark View
- The Head of Public Health
- The Chair of the City Council's Environment Committee

They also note that the mayor is known to be a dog lover, which could be a helpful point of connection.



### 3. What do they need to hear?

#### ■ What is your message?

Crafting a compelling message is at the heart of effective advocacy. Your message should be clear, concise, and tailored to resonate with your specific audience.

#### Key components of a strong message:

- **The Problem:** Clearly articulate the issues facing free-roaming dogs and cats. Use data and specific examples to illustrate the scale and impact of the problem.
- **The Solution:** Present your proposed changes or programmes. Explain how they will address the problem effectively and humanely.
- **The Benefits:** Highlight the positive outcomes of implementing your solution. This could include improved public health, enhanced community safety, economic benefits, and of course, better animal welfare.



- **The Urgency:** Explain why action needs to be taken now. What are the consequences of delay?
- **The Ask:** Clearly state what you want the decision-maker to do.

**Remember to:**

- Use both emotional appeals and factual evidence.
- Address potential counterarguments proactively.
- Tailor your message to align with the values and priorities of your audience.
- Use simple, jargon-free language unless speaking to specialists.
- Prepare both short (elevator pitch) and long versions of your message.

## **A tailored message for the mayor**

Paws for Change develops a message for the Mayor of Bark View:

“Our city’s growing stray dog population is causing significant concerns for public safety, with over 100 road traffic accidents involving free-roaming dogs last year.

“Our DPM program promises to reduce accidents by 40% within two years by humanely stabilising the population and improving dog behaviour.

“Funding this initiative will make our streets safer and position Bark View as a leader in humane urban management, enhancing our city’s reputation.”



## 4. Who do they need to hear it from?

### Who are your messengers?

The effectiveness of your message often depends on who delivers it. Identify influential voices who can lend credibility and weight to your cause.

#### Potential messengers include:

- Respected veterinarians or animal behaviourists
- Local community leaders
- Celebrity supporters
- Coalition of multiple animal welfare organisations
- Ordinary citizens with powerful personal stories related to free-roaming animals
- Public health officials
- Tourism industry representatives (if stray animals are interacting with tourists)
- Local business owners
- Teachers or school administrators
- Religious leaders





### When selecting messengers:

- Ensure they are well-informed about the issue and your proposed solutions.
- Prepare them thoroughly with key talking points and potential questions.
- Match messengers to specific audiences based on their background and influence.
- Consider using a mix of experts for credibility and ordinary citizens for relatability.

### Expert opinion and real-world perspectives

Paws for Change recruits Dr Fatima Malik, a well-known local veterinarian, to speak about the health benefits of their proposed programme. They also enlist Mr Raj Patel, a respected business owner whose witnessed a motorbike accident involving stray dogs outside his business, to share his story and support for the initiative. Together, these messengers provide both expert opinion and real-world perspective to bolster the NGO's message.



## 5. How can you get them to hear it?

### How will you deliver your message?

To ensure your message reaches and resonates with your target audience, employ a variety of strategies and channels. A multi-pronged approach often yields the best results.

#### Consider the following methods:

1. Direct engagement
  - Schedule meetings with key decision-makers.
  - Attend and speak at council/ public meetings.
  - Provide testimony at legislative hearings.
2. Community Outreach
  - Organise community events.
  - Set up information booths at local markets.
  - Conduct door-to-door neighbourhood campaigns.



### 3. Digital Campaigns

- Leverage social media platforms.
- Create compelling video content.
- Launch online petitions.
- Develop a dedicated website for your campaign.

### 4. Visual Campaigns

- Create infographics to simplify complex data.
- Use before-&-after photos and videos to illustrate the impact of similar programmes.

#### Remember to tailor your approach based on:

- Your resources
- Preferences of your target audience
- The local context

## Multichannel communications

Paws for Change launches a multi-faceted campaign to promote their Dog Population Management programme:

- They secure a meeting with the Mayor.
- They organise a town hall event featuring Dr Malik and Mr Patel.
- They create a compelling video showcasing successful CNVR programmes in other cities.
- They coordinate a letter-writing campaign from local residents to council members.
- They also partner with the local business association to demonstrate broad community support for the initiative.

## 6. What tools do you have?

### ■ What are your resources?

Before launching your advocacy efforts, it's crucial to take stock of the resources at your disposal. This will help you plan effectively and identify areas where you might need to seek additional support.

**Consider the following categories:**

#### 1. Human Resources

- Staff members and their specific skills.
- Volunteers and their availability.
- Board members and their networks.
- Pro-bono professionals (e.g., lawyers, accountants, marketing experts).

#### 2. Financial Resources

- Current funds allocated for advocacy.
- Potential for additional fundraising.
- Grants or funding opportunities.

#### 3. Knowledge and Expertise

- In-house experts on free-roaming animal issues.
- Access to scientific research and data.
- Case studies from successful programmes elsewhere.

#### 4. Partnerships and Networks

- Relationships with other animal welfare organisations.
- Connections to local businesses or community groups.
- Media contacts.

#### 5. Digital Assets

- Website and social media accounts
- Email list of supporters
- Digital content (videos, images, infographics)



## 6. Physical Assets

- Office space or meeting rooms.
- Equipment (computers, cameras, printers).
- Vehicles for transportation.

## 7. Reputation and Creditability

- Track record of successful projects.
- Positive media coverage.
- Endorsements from respected figures or organisations.

## 8. Legal Resources

- Understanding of relevant laws and regulations.
- Access to legal advice or representation.

### When evaluating your capabilities:

- Make a detailed inventory of your resources
- Consider how each can be leveraged for your advocacy efforts

## An asset-based approach to advocacy

Paws for Change conducts a thorough resource assessment:

- They identify key assets including a passionate team of 5 staff and 50 active volunteers, a modest advocacy budget of £5,000, strong relationships with local vets and animal control officers, a growing social media following of 10,000 supporters, and a board member with connections to the local media.
- They also note areas where they lack resources, such as professional lobbying experience and sophisticated data analysis capabilities.

## 7. What do you need to develop?

### Where are there resource gaps?

After assessing your current resources, it's important to identify areas where you need to build capacity or acquire new tools to strengthen your advocacy efforts.

#### Common areas for development include:

1. Knowledge and Expertise
  - Deepen understanding of local, regional, and national government processes.
  - Enhance knowledge of successful Dog and Cat Population Management programmes worldwide.
  - Improve data collection and analysis skills.
2. Advocacy Skills
  - Develop lobbying techniques.
  - Enhance public speaking abilities.
  - Improve negotiation skills.
3. Media Relations
  - Build stronger relationships with local journalists.
  - Develop skills in writing press releases and pitching stories.
  - Improve crisis communication preparedness.
4. Digital Capabilities
  - Enhance social media management skills.
  - Learn to create compelling video content.
  - Develop email marketing expertise.
5. Fundraising
  - Explore new fundraising strategies.
  - Improve grant writing skills.
  - Develop a major donor programme.
6. Volunteer Management
  - Implement a robust volunteer recruitment and retention system.
  - Develop training programmes for volunteers.

## 7. Coalition Building

- Identify potential partners and allies.
- Develop skills in managing coalitions.

## 8. Legal Expertise

- Improve understanding of animal welfare laws and regulations.
- Build relationships with legal professionals.

## 9. Measurement and Evaluation

- Develop systems to track advocacy efforts and outcomes.
- Improve ability to demonstrate impact to supporters and decision-makers.

### Once you've identified your current limitations:

- Prioritise areas based on their potential impact on your advocacy goals
- Consider the resources required to address each area

## Growing stronger

After their resource assessment, Paws for Change identifies several key areas for development:

- They decide to prioritise improving their lobbying skills by sending two volunteers to an advocacy training workshop.
- They also plan to enhance their data collection capabilities by partnering with a local university's statistics department.
- To address their need for legal expertise, they reach out to a law firm known for its pro-bono work to establish an ongoing relationship.





## 8. How do you begin?

### What are your first steps?

Launching your advocacy campaign effectively requires careful planning and strategic first steps.

Here's a roadmap to get you started:

1. Conduct a Power-Structure Analysis
  - Map out the key decision-makers and their relationships.
  - Identify potential allies and opponents.
  - Understand the formal and informal processes for policy-making.
2. Hold a Strategy Planning Meeting
  - Bring together key stakeholders (staff, board members, key volunteers).
  - Review your objectives and resources.
  - Develop a high-level strategy and timeline.
3. Form a Dedicated Advocacy Team
  - Assign roles and responsibilities.
  - Ensure a mix of skills and expertise on the team.
4. Develop a detailed Action Plan
  - Break down your strategy into specific, actionable steps.
  - Assign deadlines and responsible parties for each action.
  - Create a timeline for the entire campaign.
5. Start Building Relationships
  - Reach out to potential allies and partners.
  - Begin cultivating relationships with key decision-makers.
  - Engage with local community leaders.
6. Gather and Organise Supporting Data
  - Collect relevant statistics on free-roaming dogs and cats in your area.
  - Compile case studies of successful programmes elsewhere.
  - Gather personal stories from community members.

## 7. Develop Your Core Message and Materials

- Craft your key messages.
- Create basic advocacy materials (fact sheets, presentations, etc.)
- Set Up Tracking Systems
- Establish methods to monitor your progress and impact.
- Set up a system to track interactions with decision-makers.

## 8. Conduct a Soft Launch

- Start with a few key activities to test your approach.
- Gather feedback and adjust your strategy as needed.

## 9. Prepare for the Long Haul

- Remember that advocacy often requires persistence.
- Plan for regular check-ins and strategy adjustments.

**Remember, thorough preparation sets the stage for effective advocacy. Take the time to lay a strong foundation before fully launching your campaign.**

### Starting strong

- Paws for Change begins their campaign by conducting a comprehensive power structure analysis of Bark View's local government.
- They then hold a full-day strategic planning meeting with their board and key volunteers. Based on this, they form an advocacy team led by their Executive Director and including their social media manager, top volunteer, and a sympathetic local vet. The team develops a six-month action plan, beginning with a series of one-on-one meetings with council members.
- They also start collecting data on the local stray dog population and success stories from similar programmes in other cities. Their soft launch involves a social media campaign to gauge public interest and gather personal stories from the community.



## 9. How can you tell if it's working?

### How will you evaluate?

Regular evaluation is crucial to ensure your advocacy efforts are effective and to allow for timely adjustments to your strategy.

Here's how to approach evaluation:

#### 1. Establish Clear Metrics

- Quantitative measures (e.g., number of meetings held, petition signatures gathered).
- Qualitative indicators (e.g., tone of media coverage, feedback from decision-makers).

#### 2. Track Your Activity

- Keep detailed records of all advocacy actions.
- Use a database or spreadsheet to log interactions with decision-makers.

#### 3. Monitor Policy Progress

- Track the stages of policy development.
- Record any commitments or statements made by decision-makers.
- Assess Long-Term Impact
- Monitor changes in the free-roaming dog and cat population.
- Track improvements in animal welfare indicators.

#### 4. Conduct Regular Reviews

- Hold monthly team check-ins to discuss progress.
- Perform quarterly in-depth evaluations of your strategy.

#### 5. Learn and Adapt

- Use evaluation findings to refine your approach.
- Be willing to pivot if certain strategies aren't working.

**Remember, advocacy often involves long-term efforts. While it's important to track short-term indicators, don't lose sight of your ultimate goals.**



## Learning and adapting

Paws for Change implements a multi-faceted evaluation strategy for their Dog Population Management (DPM) advocacy campaign:

- They set clear metrics: 20 meetings with city officials in 3 months, 50% increase in social media engagement, and 500 supporter emails to council members in six months.
- They create a scorecard to track each council member's stance on the DPM programme, updating it every six months.
- To gauge public opinion, they conduct a baseline survey of 1,000 Bark View residents on attitudes towards free-roaming dogs, planning to repeat it annually.
- They also monitor media coverage, aiming for 5 positive news stories in 4 months.
- For long-term impact, they collaborate with the city's transport department to track dog-related road accidents and with local vets to monitor sterilisation rates.
- The advocacy team holds monthly progress meetings and quarterly comprehensive reviews, ensuring they can demonstrate progress and make data-driven strategy adjustments.



## Good luck!

Congratulations! You've now explored a comprehensive toolkit for advocating on behalf of free-roaming dogs and cats. Remember, your passion and dedication to improving the lives of these animals can create real, lasting change in your community.

**As you embark on your advocacy journey, keep these key points in mind:**

- Clear objectives and well-crafted messages are your foundation.
- Know your audience and tailor your approach accordingly.
- Leverage your resources creatively and strategically.
- Build strong partnerships and coalitions to amplify your voice.
- Stay persistent - change often takes time, but every step forward counts.
- Regularly evaluate and adjust your strategies for maximum impact.

**Your efforts matter immensely.** Every meeting you secure, every supporter you mobilise, and every policy change you influence contributes to a better world for free-roaming animals. You're not just advocating for animals; you're shaping a more compassionate society.

**Remember, successful advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint.** There may be challenges along the way, but with patience, perseverance, and the strategies outlined in this toolkit, you have the power to make a significant difference.

**So go forth with confidence.** Your voice is powerful, your cause is just, and your potential for impact is immense. The free-roaming dogs and cats in your community are counting on you. Together, we can create a world where every animal is valued, protected, and given the chance to thrive.

Thank you for your commitment to this vital cause. Now, let's get out there and change the world, one advocacy campaign at a time!

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ICAM welcomes comments, questions, and feedback on its Advocacy Toolkit.

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