

Be a Maker

It's easy - Share your maker story TODAY!

Advocate!

5 Easy Steps:

1. Identify Your Audience

Identifying your audience is an important first step. Your audience can be anyone from elected officials to grandma; it's anyone you want to tell about how making impacts you and your community!

2. Prepare your "talking points"

Making touches many sectors - education, science, technology, engineering, the arts, mathematics (STEAM), manufacturing, job creation, innovation, entrepreneurship, safety, security, defense, and so much more. Once you identify your audience, find out what they're most passionate about, and create a short and concise list that describes how your maker community ties into those issues.

3. MAKE it personal

The impact of the maker movement can be most deeply felt through the stories of individual makers. Collect stories from makers in your community (make sure to ask permission to share them!), focusing on specific ways that they have enriched your community through making. Was there a student whose life was changed by being exposed to Maker education in their school? Or is there a business that was developed in your makerspace that is now responsible for the creation of jobs in your city? Tie in these stories to the list of talking points that you've developed for maximal impact.

4. Visit your legislators, and invite them to your spaces & events!

Your legislators want to hear from YOU, their constituents, about the issues that matter most to you. Let them know that you care about making by telling them in person. Make an appointment at their office, attend a Town hall, invite them to your space or organization's event, or do all three!

5. Share your passion with others!

Once you've mastered telling your maker story, consider sharing it with the world. You can share through media outlets, including social media or your blog, or you can go analog, by creating a small card or one page document to share that captures your story.

The Media

Who do I share my maker story with?

Local & community organizations

The local labor union, your daughter's girl scout troupe...

Elected officials

Congressional representatives, Mayor, Governor, PTA, Board of Education

Family, friends & colleagues

The woman on the bus, your teacher, the guy in front of you in the supermarket, your yoga instructor, and yes, grandma.

"The Maker Movement is a movement of people, not things."

- Kristina Holzweiss

President, Long Island LEADS

How can I find my elected officials?

Learn how to get in touch with your federal, state, & local elected leaders at:

<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

Tips for Maker Advocates

How to Visit a Member of Congress

1. Find Your Congressperson's Name and Contact Information

Members of Congress want to hear most from their direct voting population (their constituents). To be the most effective, you'll want to find the Congressperson that represents your congressional district.

Find your Congressperson at: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

2. Schedule a Meeting

Decide whether you want to meet with your representative at their DC/Capitol office or locally. Typically, the DC office will have more senior policy advisors while the local offices have people focused on local issues and constituent service. For state legislators, they and the policy staff will often be in the capitol when the legislature is in session, but based in the local office when it is not. State legislators are generally more accessible, particularly when the legislature is not in session. Call the appropriate office and identify yourself as their constituent (by district or ward number).

Ask to schedule a meeting with the official or someone on their staff familiar with the policy area of concern. Find out who schedules constituent meetings and ask for their direct email and phone numbers. Some offices may request a written meeting request.

3. Prepare for the Meeting

Research your elected official. Have information about how they've voted on issues that are relevant to your area of interest (for example, education or manufacturing, using the example above). Are they on a committee with jurisdiction in this area? Are they on the Congressional Maker Caucus? A useful source for the status of legislation is Congress.gov.

Plan how you'll describe your research and the issues you want to discuss. Send an email to the person you are meeting with reminding them what you want to discuss and who will be attending. If it concerns specific legislation, include the bill number. You may also want to include attachments with research that supports your proposals you intend to make during the meeting, but bring print outs on the day of the meeting – don't assume those documents will be read in advance. Make sure to avoid unnecessary jargon and don't "talk down" to legislators and their staff. These individuals are smart and well informed, although they most likely will not have advanced technical backgrounds. Define any necessary terms (for example, Arduino, Raspberry Pi in clear, down-to-earth language). And if you're going as a team, plan beforehand who will take the lead and how you'll each effectively share your main points.

4. Attend the Meeting

Be professional, on time, and flexible. The meeting can be held anywhere: hallway, cafeteria, elevator, outer office, member's inner sanctum. You'll likely be talking to a staff member—but be ready if the legislator comes in.

Be concise and succinct. You will have 15 quality minutes: limit your message and stay on point. Describe the importance of the issue to your life, work, employer, city or state with anecdotes or personal narratives. Let the office staff ask questions. Conclude and reiterate top points, making sure to capture any follow-ups or commitments.

IMPORTANT NOTE: ADVOCACY vs. LOBBYING - Advocacy is the process of stakeholders making their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the lives of others at the local, state, and national level. It helps policymakers find specific solutions to persistent problems. Lobbying, on the other hand, involves activities that are in direct support of or opposition to a specific piece of introduced legislation. While nonprofits can engage in some lobbying, the IRS has strict rules about what portion of their budget can go toward these activities. There are also prohibitions on any use of federal funds for lobbying. As a nonprofit, Nation of Makers is not a lobbying organization. Although we may support a given piece of positively impactful maker legislation, we will never request that you ask a representative or their staffer to support or oppose any specific piece of introduced legislation.

5. After the Meeting

At the end of the meeting, thank them verbally for meeting with you. Follow up by writing a thank you note to your legislator and the staff person who spoke with you, including any additional information you may have promised them. If the meeting went well, it is worth developing a continuing contact with the office.



Let Nation of Makers know about your advocacy work!
Email us at advocacy@nationofmakers.us

Find us at: www.nationofmakers.us