



Wallace Center
AT WINROCK INTERNATIONAL



**FOOD SYSTEMS
LEADERSHIP NETWORK**

Policy and Advocacy for Food Systems Change

April and May 2022

In partnership with Equity Advocates and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Hosted by the Wallace Center's Food Systems Leadership Network

ZOOM TECH -- WEBINAR

- **All participants are muted** and off video
- **Audio** – bottom left corner, “Join with Computer Audio”
- **To ask a question** – Q&A option on the bottom of your toolbar
- **Use the chat box** – Comments? Reflections? Challenges? Share them in the chat box!

Food Systems Leadership Network

- A national peer learning community of people and organizations working towards more just, equitable, and sustainable food systems
- Online community + platform: www.foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org
- Facilitated by the Wallace Center



Connects and fosters relationships of solidarity and trust among food systems leaders – through mentorship, peer coaching, and network building



Strengthens individual and collective leadership capacity through systems leadership training, technical assistance, and building organizational effectiveness



Inspires and catalyzes innovation and collaboration across communities for greater impact through incubators, accelerators, cohort approaches and member-led initiatives



Advances racial equity individually and systemically through developing shared analysis, shifting narrative, and centering equity in network practices

Policy & Advocacy for Food Systems Change Series

Building our collective knowledge and power for enacting policy change

Date	Session Title	Trainer
April 5	Advocacy to Build an Equitable and Sustainable Food System	Equity Advocates
April 6	Best Practices for Meeting with Elected Officials	Equity Advocates
April 7	Q&A Session / Office Hours	Equity Advocates
April 20	Farm Bill 101	National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
May 2022	Policy and Advocacy for Food Systems Change: A Conversation with Seasoned Leaders	Paula Daniels (Center for Good Food Purchasing), Kate Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald•Canepa, LLC), & Edna Rodriguez (RAFI International)

Equity Advocates – Introductions



Gabrielle Blavatsky
Equity Advocates
Policy Director



Leah Kabran Eden
Equity Advocates
*Grassroots Advocacy
Director*

Introductions

Equity Advocates fights the underlying causes of food inequity through policy and systems change.

We partner with NY nonprofits working to alleviate hunger and poverty, and provide them with the tools they need to be more civically engaged—including policy education, advocacy training and coalition building.



Our Racial Equity Statement

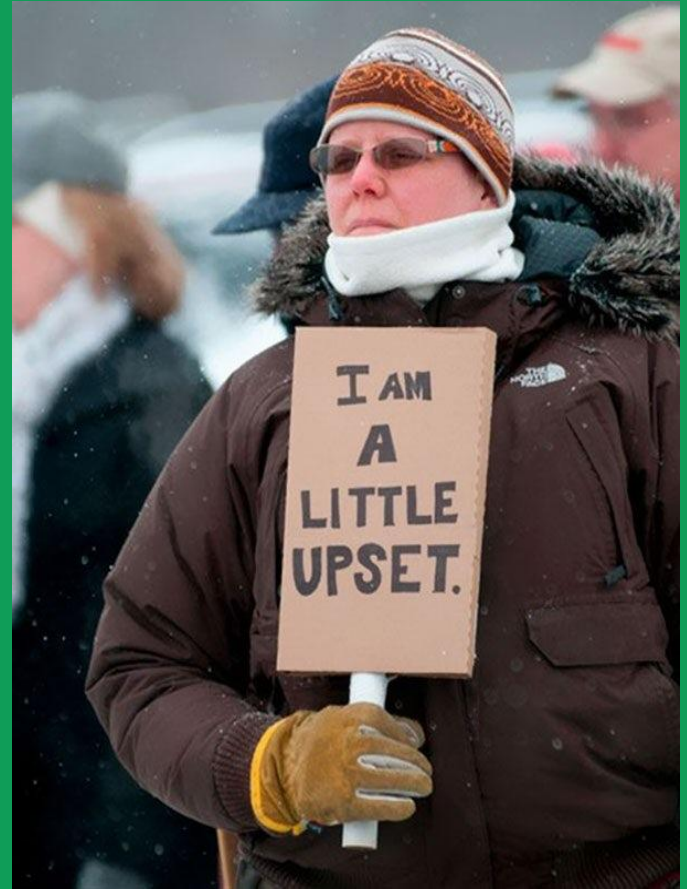
Equity Advocates believes access to healthy, affordable food is a basic human right and understand that the food system has been created and maintained by historical and ongoing racial inequities.

- Core to our mission and program structure is elevating the voices of community food leaders who have traditionally been disenfranchised and lacked the resources and access to drive policy change.
- We actively recruit, support, connect and organize those most impacted by food inequity to ensure that they have a seat at the policymaking table.

Our goals

- Review what advocacy means & why food systems leaders should care
- Understand different advocacy strategies
- Identify various ways you can engage in advocacy & factors to consider

What is advocacy?



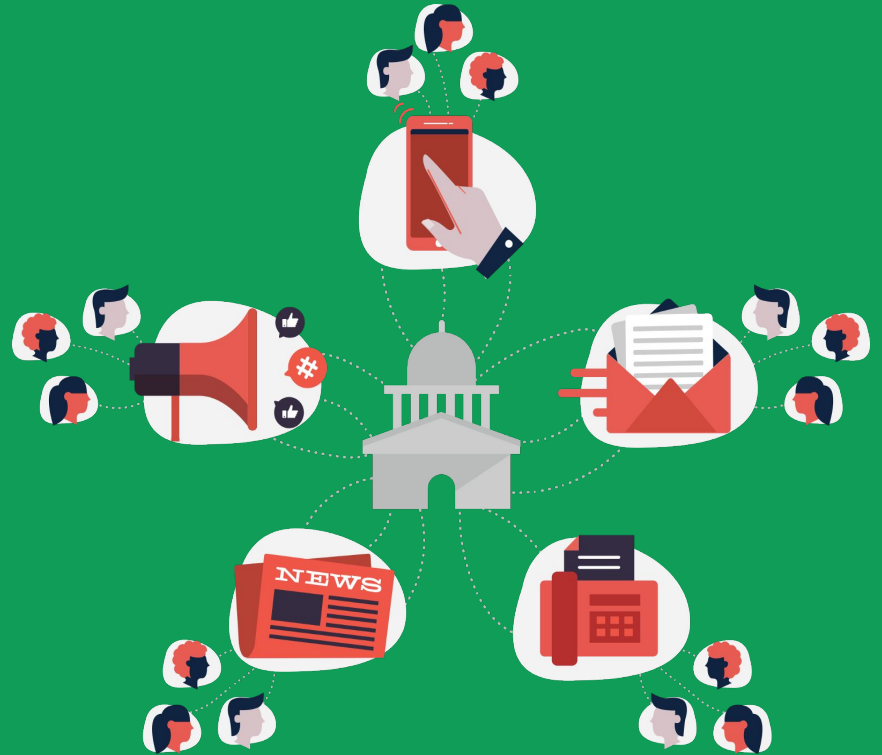
Advocacy has a broad definition

- Advocacy is taking a position on an issue and sharing it with someone who can do something about it to bring about systemic, lasting change.
- Encompasses a broad range of activities to influence public policy.

Advocacy helps advance systemic change

- The changes we want to see in our communities and food system require public policy change.
- Raise public awareness of an issue, promotion of a cause.
- Scale successful program models, improve program admin.
- Create new policy or funding changes to support innovative solutions.
- Shift the traditional power dynamics in policy making process.

Advocacy strategies



Lobbying

An attempt to influence the introduction, change or vote on a piece of legislation.

- Direct Lobbying targets legislators.
- Grassroots Lobbying targets the general public with “call to action.”
- 501(c)(3) public charities *can* engage in lobbying, but must comply with generous IRS lobbying limits.



Educating Legislators

Educate policymaker on impact of a specific policy or issue without encouraging a position.

- Leverage your expertise to educate about a social issue.
- Share program data with elected official to highlight impacts.

Co-chair of House Hunger Caucus visits the Bronx to learn more about food insecurity

Feb 23, 2022, 8:58pm • Updated on Feb 24, 2022

By: News 12 Staff



Raising public attention on a social issue or potential effects of a specific policy, without encouraging a specific position.

- Conference, op-ed, social media, newsletter.
- Conduct or publish a study about a particular issue or program impact.

Opinion

For Students to Recover and Thrive, New York Should Ensure Free School Meals Statewide

September 20, 2021 | by Liz Accles & Julia McCarthy

Tweet Like 0 Share



Community Organizing

Engaging people most impacted by an issue to identify shared problems & solutions as a way to build power.

- Creating open processes that distribute power more equally.
- Building the leadership capacity of those directly impacted by issues.



October 17, 2021

Gabrielle Fialkoff, Commissioner
NYC Parks Department
The Arsenal, Central Park
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Dear Ms. Fialkoff,

As people who care deeply about green spaces across New York City, we are in the midst of an exciting moment. Key transitions across the City government and within the Parks Department itself offer us an important opportunity to work together to strengthen communities and provide stronger support for green spaces across the city.

On behalf of community gardeners across the City, we urge you to ensure that each level of the City government understands the importance of supporting community gardens and their stewards. Community gardeners provide their neighborhoods with tangible resilience, create food access, foster life-giving connections between people and nature, strengthen community bonds, engage youth, empower seniors, and foster biodiversity and environmental resilience.

Coalitions

Individuals and groups that commit to collective action to advance a common policy goal.

- Align priorities and develop clear asks.
- Build broad political support.
- Share advocacy intel and resources, members can play different roles.



Power dynamics in advocacy

Pay attention to ways that forms of oppression and power dynamics may show up in your advocacy strategies and activities.

- Build advocacy strategies that center BIPOC voices and leadership.
- Ensure members of directly impacted communities inform policy priorities and advocacy strategies.
- Conduct storytelling with dignity and agency.
- Create inclusive and accessible advocacy strategies and materials.

Implementing advocacy strategies



Legislative advocacy

Legislative advocacy includes efforts to influence the introduction, change, or repeal of a piece of legislation.

- From influencing lawmakers' vote to helping write legislation.
- This may include lobbying or other communications with policymakers.

Introduced by Council Members Espinal, Torres, Greenfield, Salamanca, Grodenchik, Richards, Reynoso, Maisel, Gentile, Cornegy, Menchaca, Cumbo, Deutsch, Treyger, Johnson, Williams, Garodnick, Levin, Levine, Chin, Vacca, Lander, Eugene, Koslowitz, Cohen, Constantinides, Cabrera, Rose and Kallos (by request of the Brooklyn Borough President).

A LOCAL LAW

In relation to requiring the department of city planning, department of small business services, and the department of parks and recreation to develop urban agriculture website

equity advocates

Testimony Submitted by
Gabrielle Blavatsky, Co-Founder and Policy Director, Equity Advocates
Before The New York City Council Committee on Land Use

Developing a Comprehensive Urban Agriculture Plan June 11, 2019

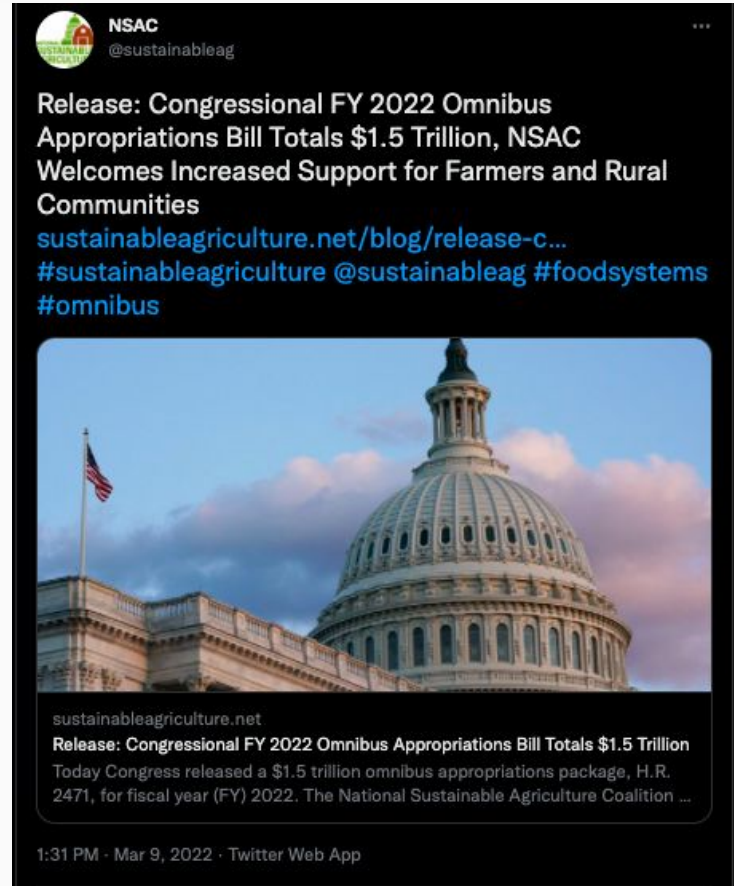
My name is Gabrielle Blavatsky and I am the Co-Founder and Policy Director of Equity Advocates. Thank you to Chairperson Rafael Salamanca as well as the members of the City Council Committee on Land Use for holding today's hearing. We submit this testimony and urge the City to incorporate the following elements into local law 1058 to ensure accountability and equity in the development and implementation of the plan:

1. **Establish a city-wide task force** composed of City agencies, support organizations, and at least half of the members made up of gardeners and farmers representing a variety of types—for reviewing the development and implementation of the Plan.
2. **Host and promote community engagement opportunities** at all stages of the task force's planning and plan development process.
3. **Provide funding** to support the community engagement plans and development the urban agriculture plan.
4. **Regular updates to the plan** are essential and should be required to ensure that the plan continues to address the needs of different urban agriculture stakeholders.

Budgetary advocacy

Budgetary advocacy includes efforts to influence how public money is spent.

- Funding for govt programs, services and operations.
- Budget cycles have built in opportunities for practitioners to share data and stories.



Legal advocacy or litigation includes efforts to advocate for your cause from within the court system.

- Typically last line of defense as way to overturn harmful law
- Requires specific expertise, legal team



Regulatory advocacy

Regulatory advocacy is efforts to influence rules that Govt agencies create after a bill has passed. Includes:

- Influence implementation, RFPs, reporting requirements.
- One-on-ones with agency leadership, public comments.



Regulatory advocacy—Wallace Center Examples

Host Listening Sessions

- Hear of a program under development (ex. Regional Food Business Centers, Local Food Purchase Assistance Program)
- Host listening sessions with folks on the ground who are impacted
- Compile feedback, vet with participants, then send to AMS

Provide TA and Share Recommendations

- Provide support to organizations applying for USDA grant funds
- Based on common challenges and gaps, share with AMS how to improve access

Regulatory advocacy—Wallace Center Learnings

- Keep it brief and very direct! Share info in 2-3 pages, bullet points
- Be thoughtful about the agency's stated goals in the programs you are trying to influence and frame your input as helping them reach those goals. Be a helper and they will come to you for help!
- Center leadership of those most impacted by the agency's decisions and create opportunities for them to tell their own stories.

Approaches to How YOU Advocate



Insider Political Strategies

- An “Insider” approach is engaging in cooperative advocacy tactics in formal policy making spaces often by those with access to power.
 - Meet decision-makers, work with legislative allies.
 - Partner with policymaker to draft or advise on bill language.
 - Participate in Govt advisory board, develop recommendations.



Outsider Political Strategies

- An “Outsider” approach is engaging in more confrontational tactics designed to create public pressure on policymakers.
 - Social media, op-eds, open letters critiquing the Govt.
 - Organize rally, walk-out or boycott.



Building Insider—Outsider Strategies

- Approach and tactics aren't predetermined, they can shift with:
 - new Administration and changing political realities
 - needs of the advocacy campaign



Capacity & proximity determines what level of advocacy to engage in

- **High engagement = Leading & Owning**
 - Develop policy platform, create & lead campaign strategy, draft legislation, meet with multiple target elected officials
- **Medium engagement = Contribute & Endorse**
 - Participate in coalition, provide testimony, support others' campaign activities, meet with single target elected officials
- **Low engagement = Follow & Support others**
 - Sign a petition, letter or platform, share social media messages



Policy and Advocacy for Food Systems Change Virtual Series



April 5: Using Advocacy to Build an Equitable and Sustainable Food System with Equity Advocates

April 6: Best Practices for Meeting with Elected Officials with Equity Advocates

April 7: Office Hours with Equity Advocates

April 20: Farm Bill 101 with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

May: Panel Discussion with seasoned food systems policy leaders



Join us!

Contacts

Equity Advocates

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