

Quick Tips for Advocacy Engagement



- Establish relationships prior to a granting cycle. Involve advocates early when deciding whether to pursue a certain line of research. Then include advocates in the design process and the preliminary planning phase. This ensures the best use of advocates with the most benefits to you.
- Involve advocates even though it may not be a required component of the grant mechanism. It can only benefit your research and your chance of getting funded.
- Multiple advocates may provide you with diverse viewpoints.
- As a courtesy, communicate with your advocates as soon as you receive notification from the funding agency, whether or not your proposal was funded.
- Keep expectations and communication open and clear with your advocates.
- Provide relevant background material to advocates prior to meeting with them to present your research. Generally, advocates prefer to have more of your application than less, and in plenty of time to "look up" complicated concepts.
- Be receptive to questions and feedback to enable advocates to be informed, active participants in your research. This will result in more substantive, meaningful contributions, both now and in the future.
- Offer advocates a tour of your lab. Introduce them to your research team. Let your lab team know that research advocates are participating in your activities and define their role as colleagues and partners who have expertise and experience that most lab members don't have. Encourage all participants to respect the perspective that advocates bring to your activity.
- Provide your advocates information on local expense reimbursement, directions to your laboratory, parking details, and other logistical information.
- The role of advocates is more than just to help you get your proposal funded. Be sure to follow through on commitments to involve advocates that were made in your grant application.
- Once funded, set a schedule of quarterly meetings and/or calls to review progress, get feedback, share findings and work together in other ways.

- Discuss options for compensation as part of the grant application. Travel and/or honoraria should be discussed at the outset of advocate engagement.
- Know that advocates are eager to learn more. Suggest articles for them to read prior to meetings to better understand concepts or reference them during your meetings. Share journal articles that may be of interest to advocates regarding your area of research.
- Provide suggestions for training opportunities to advocates: lectures, workshops, and symposia-continuing education is key so that advocates can integrate fully into the research community. Understand that Breast Science Advocacy Core provides grant opportunities to advocates for attending symposia and workshops.
- Understand that for advocates, this role is not a career but a volunteer activity, often, in addition to a career. Be respectful of advocates' time and commitment to your research activities.
- Advocates value being appreciated and recognized for their efforts. Name advocates involved in your research in the "Acknowledgements" section, on your published papers, posters, and presentations.