



# NAACP STATE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY MONTH (SLAM) TOOLKIT

A GUIDE FOR STATE CONFERENCES TO ORGANIZE,  
MOBILIZE, AND WIN IN MARCH

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS SLAM?

State Legislative Advocacy Month (SLAM) is a coordinated, nationwide effort each March in which NAACP State Conferences organize advocacy actions to influence state-level policy that directly impacts Black communities and communities of color.

Building on the success of State Legislative Advocacy Week, SLAM expands advocacy from a single moment into a month-long strategy, allowing State Conferences to meet legislative timelines, mobilize more members, and sustain pressure where it matters most: state legislatures.

### SLAM empowers State Conferences to:

- Advocate for policies aligned with NAACP priorities
- Engage legislators during active sessions
- Elevate community voices
- Build long-term relationships with decision-makers

## ADVOCACY 101: WHY STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY MATTERS

In our continuing fight for social justice, the policies and laws enacted at the state level have profound impacts on our communities. State governments shape many of the policies that most directly affect daily life, including:

- Education (K-12 and higher education)
- Voting rights and election administration
- Criminal justice and public safety
- Health access and equity
- Housing and economic opportunity
- Environmental justice

### Through state-level advocacy, the NAACP can:

- Influence legislation before it becomes law
- Educate lawmakers using data and lived experience
- Amplify voices often excluded from policymaking

SLAM is designed to ensure advocacy is strategic, coordinated, and impactful, not reactive.



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## SECTION 1: PRE-SLAM PLANNING

### 1.1 Setting Objectives

State Conferences should begin SLAM planning by:

- Identifying 2–3 priority state policy issues
- Confirming bills, resolutions, or budget items tied to those issues
- Understanding where those items are in the legislative process
- Identifying legislators and committees with decision-making power

Clear objectives allow advocates to focus their time and energy where it can have the greatest impact.

### 1.2 Building Your SLAM Team

Each State Conference should form a SLAM Organizing Team, which may include:

- SLAM Lead / Coordinator
- Policy Lead
- Logistics Lead
- Communications Lead
- Youth & College Liaison

Volunteer teams may support:

- Legislative outreach
- Member mobilization
- Event logistics
- Documentation and reporting

Engaging branches, youth councils, and college chapters is strongly encouraged.

### 1.3 Logistics & Scheduling

Unlike a single lobby day, SLAM allows flexibility. State Conferences should:

- Select one advocacy dates in March
- Decide on in-person, virtual, or hybrid engagement
- Secure meeting locations near the state capitol or virtual platforms
- Coordinate activities across regions or branches if needed

## SECTION 2: TRAINING & ADVOCACY MATERIALS

National NAACP staff will provide:

- Advocacy trainings (live and/or recorded)
  - Training #1 For the Love of Blackness: Turning Policy into Power
  - Training #2 State Legislative Advocacy Month: Strategy, Storytelling, and Sustained Pressure



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- Policy briefs and talking points
  - Health Equity - Fighting back against ACA & Medicaid Cuts
  - Environmental Climate Justice - Stop Dirty Data Center
  - Inclusive Economy - Advocate for housing programs
  - DRY ICE - Stop expanding funding and resources for ICE
- Legislator meeting templates
- Advocacy infrastructure guidance

State Conferences should also develop state-specific materials to address local policy priorities. Advocates should be trained to:

- Clearly explain policy issues
- Share personal and community impact stories
- Make direct, non-partisan policy asks
- Understand appropriate advocacy conduct

## SECTION 3: COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTION

### 3.1 Internal Communications

State Conferences should:

- Provide regular planning updates to members
- Share SLAM goals, schedules, and expectations
- Distribute information packets before advocacy actions

Clear communication ensures advocates arrive prepared and confident.

### 3.2 External Communications

External engagement may include:

- Formal meeting requests to legislators
- Press advisories or press releases
- Social media promotion
- Community outreach

Legislators' calendars fill quickly during session; early outreach is critical.

## SECTION 4: EXECUTING SLAM ADVOCACY ACTIONS

SLAM actions may include:

- State Capitol Advocacy Days
- Scheduled legislative meetings
- Town halls or community forums
- Rallies or press events
- Coordinated calls, emails, or digital advocacy

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## 4.1 Advocacy Day Structure

If hosting an advocacy day:

- Conduct registration and check-in
- Hold an opening briefing to review goals and agenda
- Divide participants into advocacy teams
- Track meetings, issues discussed, and commitments made

## 4.2 Legislative Meetings

Advocates should:

- Be concise and prepared
- Focus on selected policy priorities
- Make a clear ask (support, oppose, amend)
- Take notes for follow-up

## SECTION 5: DOS & DON'TS WHEN MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

### DO

- Research legislators' positions and committees
- Be clear, respectful, and professional
- Use data and personal testimony
- Follow up with thank-you notes and materials

### DON'T

- Be unprepared or confrontational
- Engage in partisan activity
- Criticize other lawmakers
- Lose contact after the meeting

The goal is to build relationships, not just win a single vote.

## SECTION 6: UNDERSTANDING THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The legislative process in the United States federal government is complex, just as the process in state governments. However, there are similarities in many areas including bill introduction, committee consideration, and signing into law. Also, the points where advocacy is necessary and effective are also similar.

This short guide provides a basic overview of the federal legislative process, but mirrors many of the processes used to create public laws in state government.

### Step 1: Drafting a Bill

- **Origins:** A bill can be proposed by anyone, but only a member of Congress (either in the House of Representatives or the Senate) can formally introduce it.
- **Content:** A bill is a written document that outlines a new law, resolution, or amendments to existing laws.



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## Step 2: Introduction

- House or Senate: The bill is introduced in either the House or the Senate. The member of Congress sponsoring the bill presents it to their respective chamber, and the bill is assigned a unique identifying number. Sometimes a bill can be supported by multiple cosponsors.

## Step 3: Committee Review

- Referral to Committee: Once introduced, the bill is referred to the committee that focuses on the bill's subject matter (e.g., education, health).
- Examination (Mark-up): The committee examines the bill, may hold hearings to gather information, and then votes on whether to pass the bill onto the full chamber.

## Step 4: Floor Debate

- Debate: If approved by the committee, the bill is debated on the floor of the House or Senate. Members can discuss, amend, and debate the bill.
- Vote: After debate, the chamber votes on the bill. If it passes, it moves to the other chamber (House to Senate, or Senate to House).

## Step 5: The Other Chamber

- Similar Process: The other chamber (House if the bill started in the Senate, and vice versa) goes through a similar process - committee review, debate, and voting.
- Amendments: This chamber may make amendments to the bill.

## Step 6: Reconciliation

- Agreement on Text: If both chambers pass different versions of the bill, a conference committee made up of members from both chambers meets to reconcile differences.
- Final Approval: The reconciled bill is sent back to both chambers for a final vote.

## Step 7: Presidential Action

- To the President: Once both chambers pass the same version of the bill, it is sent to the President.
- Options: The President can sign the bill into law, veto it, or take no action.
- Veto: Congress can override a presidential veto with a two-thirds vote in both chambers.

## Step 8: Becoming Law

- Signed or Veto Overridden: A bill becomes law if it is signed by the President or if a presidential veto is overridden.
- No Action: If the President takes no action for ten days while Congress is in session, the bill automatically becomes law.

This is a simplified overview of the federal legislative process. Each step involves detailed procedures and rules, but this guide provides a basic understanding of how a bill becomes a law in the United States federal legislative branch.

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## SECTION 7: IDENTIFYING & ENGAGING LEGISLATORS

Advocating to the legislators who are aligned with a relevant caucus, sit on the committee that specializes in relevant subject matter, or your representative is a very powerful way to advance your policy perspective.

### Step 1: Know Your District

Before you can find out who your representative is, you need to know the congressional district you live in. Your congressional district is determined based on your residential address.

### Step 2: Use Online Resources

There are several online tools available to help you find your state, local and federal representative. The most common is to go the state government's website, which commonly has tools to find and contact your state representative. The state's website will also have a portal to look up a specific bill, as well as find out which legislators sit on what committees. If you are advocating on a 'healthcare' issue, it makes sense to focus on members of the 'health' committee.

### Step 3: Contact the Legislator

Once you have found out who your representative is, or the legislator(s) who handles the issue you are advocating on, you can contact them to schedule meetings, express your opinions on legislative matters, ask for assistance in matters with state agencies, or to attend local events.

### Additional Tips

- Official websites and social media pages of legislators are convenient ways to keep track of the issues and current events that they care about. They also can be used to interact with the legislator.
- Stay Informed: Representatives can change due to elections, redistricting, or other reasons. It's a good idea to periodically check and confirm who current legislators are, which is also important to keep track of issues once the legislative session ends.

## SECTION 8: POST-SLAM FOLLOW-UP & ACCOUNTABILITY

After SLAM actions, State Conferences should:

- Send thank-you notes to legislators
- Share requested follow-up materials
- Debrief internally
- Track commitments and outcomes
- Submit SLAM reports to National

National staff will consolidate reports to:

- Identify best practices
- Highlight wins
- Track legislative progress nationally

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## SECTION 9: SAMPLE EMAIL TEMPLATE

### SAMPLE EMAIL:

#### Meeting Request for State Lobby Week – NAACP [YOUR STATE CONFERENCE]

Dear Honorable [Legislator's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am the [Your Position, e.g., State Advocacy Coordinator] for the NAACP's [Your State] Chapter. Our organization is steadfast in its mission to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

I am writing to respectfully request a meeting with you on [Date], in conjunction with our upcoming State Lobby Day. This day is dedicated to addressing issues that significantly impact our communities in [Your State], particularly in the realms of [issue 1, issue 2, and issue 3]. We would like our discussion to focus on [briefly outline specific state-level issues or bills]. Your leadership and perspective in the state legislature are crucial, and we are keen to share our community-based insights and recommendations for policies that promote equality and justice in [Your State].

Your dedication to serving the people of [Your State] aligns with our goals of fostering a society free of discrimination and inequality. We are optimistic that this meeting will be a meaningful step towards our shared aspirations for a just and equitable [Your State].

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to engaging with you on these pivotal issues. Please let us know your availability, or contact us at [Your Contact Information] for any further details or to arrange the meeting.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Position, e.g., State Advocacy Coordinator]

NAACP [Your State] Conference

[Your Contact Information]

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## SECTION 10: AMPLIFYING YOUR IMPACT

State Conferences are encouraged to:

- Download the SLAM promo graphic [here](#).
- Share photos and stories from SLAM on your social media pages
- Use the hashtag: **#NAACPAdvocates**
- **Direct audiences to [naacp.org/advocacymonth](https://naacp.org/advocacymonth)**
- Tag elected officials and NAACP platforms
- Follow @NAACP on social media
- Submit photos, and video for potential national amplification by emailing [communications@naacpnet.org](mailto:communications@naacpnet.org)

Advocacy is stronger when it is **visible**.

### Suggested Social Messaging:

#### Pre-Promotion:

**Option 1:** March is State Legislative Advocacy Month! Join us as we organize, mobilize, and advocate for policies that uplift Black communities. Together, we can influence change where it matters most: in state legislatures. #NAACPAdvocates Learn more at: [naacp.org/advocacymonth](https://naacp.org/advocacymonth)

**Option 2:** State Legislative Advocacy Month (SLAM) is here! This March, we're turning advocacy into action by organizing efforts to influence state-level policies that directly impact Black communities and communities of color. From { Insert issue area 1 } to { Insert issue area 2 }, we're making our voices heard on the issues that matter most. Join us in this movement for justice and equality. Together, we can make a difference. #NAACPAdvocates

Learn more at: [naacp.org/advocacymonth](https://naacp.org/advocacymonth)

#### Post-Promotion:

**Option 3:** March was powerful. During State Legislative Advocacy Month, we { INSERT ACTIVITIES } and advocated for policies that matter most to Black communities. Our collective advocacy doesn't stop here. Together, we'll keep building power and pushing for justice in 2026 and beyond. #NAACPAdvocates

## CONCLUSION

State Legislative Advocacy Month is an opportunity to transform advocacy from a moment into a movement. Through coordinated planning, clear messaging, and sustained engagement, State Conferences can build power, influence policy, and advance justice across the country.

**March is our moment. Let's use it.**

**[DOWNLOAD ASSETS HERE](#)**