U.S. PAIN FOUNDATION ADVOCACY TRAINING

Advocacy Project Starter Guide & Personal Planning Workbook

A simple, step-by-step guide to choosing and planning your advocacy project

HOW THIS WORKS

During the training, use this guide to choose and plan a project. Your proposed project must be approved by Cindy.

After the training ends, you will have four months - November through February - to complete at least 10 hours of work toward your approved project. At the end of each month, you will report to Michele what you specifically did and how much time you spent.

IMPORTANT

Your project does NOT have to be completed in 10 hours. The 10 hours are your starting point - a chance to begin practicing advocacy. After completing the requirement, you decide whether you want to continue.

LEARN → PREPARE → CONNECT → ACT → FOLLOW UP

HOW TO USE THIS ELECTRONIC WORKSHEET

Please type your answers directly into the shaded boxes. Do not print and complete it by hand. Save your completed Word document with your name in the filename, then email the completed document as instructed during the training.

1. Start With an Issue

Do not worry about creating the whole project yet. First choose an issue that matters to you.

Which area interests you most? Check ONE or TWO.

☐ Access to pain treatments and care
☐ Insurance barriers, including prior authorization or step therapy
☐ Access to multidisciplinary pain care
☐ Medication access or medication policy
☐ Health care provider education
☐ Chronic pain research or data
☐ Telehealth
☐ Access to headache treatment
☐ Medical cannabis policy
☐ Another U.S. Pain Foundation-supported advocacy issue: _____

EXAMPLE

Broad issue: Insurance barriers

More focused issue: Prior authorization requirements that can delay access to pain treatments in my state.

The issue that interests me most is:

Click here and type your response.

Why does this issue matter to me?

Click here and type your response.

Make it more specific. What particular problem do I want to focus on?

Click here and type your response.

Who has control or authority over this issue?

☐ My state government
☐ The federal government
☐ My local city or town government
☐ An insurance company
☐ A health care system
☐ Somewhere else
☐ I am not sure yet

2. Connect It to U.S. Pain Foundation

Your project should align with a U.S. Pain Foundation advocacy priority, position, or area of interest.

☐ Chronic pain data and research
☐ Individualized, coordinated, multidisciplinary pain care
☐ Access to a broad range of pain treatments and therapies
☐ Health care provider education
☐ Telehealth
☐ Insurance barriers, including prior authorization and step therapy
☐ Balanced opioid policy and appropriate access
☐ Medical cannabis policy
☐ Headache disease related issue
☐ Medication, treatment, or medical-device access
☐ Another U.S. Pain Foundation-supported pain policy issue

My issue connects to U.S. Pain Foundation's advocacy work because:

Click here and type your response.

3. Learn What Is Already Happening

You do not need to become an expert. Learn enough to understand where your advocacy might fit.

Is there a current law, bill, policy, regulation, or program connected to my issue? If yes, what is it?

Click here and type your response.

Is an organization or coalition already working on this issue? If yes, who?

Click here and type your response.

Who may have the power to influence this issue?

☐ State legislators
☐ State agency
☐ State healthcare provider licensing board
☐ Members of Congress
☐ Federal agency
☐ Insurance company
☐ Local officials
☐ Another decision-maker
☐ I am not sure yet

4. Project Idea Menu

These are examples to help you think. You do not have to choose one of them.

Possible Project	What It Could Include
Research an issue AND take action	Learn how your state handles an issue, identify who can influence it, then take an appropriate advocacy action.
Follow a piece of legislation related to your idea	Learn what a bill does, who sponsored it, where it is in the process, and how it affects people with pain; then take an appropriate action.
Educate a policymaker about chronic pain in general or about a specific issue you care about	Prepare your lived-experience story and key talking points, then communicate with an elected official or staff member.
Get to know your legislators at the state level	Learn who represents you and what committees or health issues they work on; then introduce yourself as a constituent and chronic pain advocate.
Explore an insurance barrier	Learn how prior authorization, step therapy, coverage, or treatment access is handled; identify who can influence it; then act.
Connect with a coalition	Find a coalition working on an aligned issue, learn about its work, attend a meeting if appropriate, and explore how the patient voice can contribute.
Submit testimony or public comments	Find an appropriate hearing, bill, agency proposal, or public-comment opportunity; prepare and submit comments.

Another project idea I am considering:

Click here and type your response.

5. Turn Your Issue Into a Project

ISSUE → PROJECT → GOAL → STEPS

ISSUE = the problem you care about.

PROJECT = the specific advocacy work you will begin.

GOAL = the larger change you hope to help move forward.

STEPS = the concrete things you will actually do.

EXAMPLE

Issue: Prior authorization can delay pain treatment.

Project: Learn about prior authorization reform in my state and begin advocating for policies that improve access to care.

Goal: Help improve timely access to appropriate treatment for people with chronic pain.

Possible steps: Review current law; identify a bill and decision-makers; connect with a coalition; prepare talking points; contact a legislative office; follow up.

My ISSUE - What specific problem will I focus on?

Click here and type your response.

My PROJECT - What advocacy work will I begin?

Click here and type your response.

My GOAL - What larger change would I eventually like to help move forward?

Click here and type your response.

IMPORTANT

Your goal may take months or years. You are NOT expected to accomplish the entire goal during your 10 hours.

6. Plan Concrete Advocacy Steps

Use this simple roadmap. Your steps may change as you learn more - that is okay.

LEARN - What specifically do I need to learn?

Click here and type your response.

PREPARE - What do I need to prepare - for example, my story, talking points, an email, or testimony?

Click here and type your response.

CONNECT - Who will I connect with, and how will I make that connection?

Click here and type your response.

ACT - What concrete advocacy action could I take?

Click here and type your response.

FOLLOW UP - What could I do after taking that action?

Click here and type your response.

BE SPECIFIC

Too vague: "Research prior authorization."

Specific: "Review my state's current prior authorization law and identify any current legislation that would change it."

Too vague: "Contact legislators."

Specific: "Identify the appropriate legislative office, prepare three talking points, and email the office to request a meeting."

7. My Proposed 10-Hour Roadmap

You are not promising that everything will happen exactly this way. This is a starting roadmap. Estimate the time for each step so your plan includes different kinds of advocacy work - not 10 hours of general research.

Step	What I Specifically Plan to Do	Estimated Time
1	Click here and type.	Click here.
2	Click here and type.	Click here.
3	Click here and type.	Click here.
4	Click here and type.	Click here.
5	Click here and type.	Click here.
6	Click here and type.	Click here.

Estimated total: _____ hours

CHECK YOUR PLAN

Before submitting, make sure your plan: focuses on a specific issue; connects to U.S. Pain Foundation advocacy; includes concrete steps; includes more than research; and gives you an opportunity to take advocacy action.

8. Get Ready to Complete Your Project Proposal

Practice proposal: Complete the same participant questions as the official form below. When ready, transfer your answers to the separate electronic Project Proposal Form for Cindy's approval.

Name:

Click here and type your response.

Project Working Title:

Click here and type your response.

1. What issue do you want to address?

Click here and type your response.

2. How does this connect to a U.S. Pain Foundation advocacy priority or position?

Click here and type your response.

3. What is your proposed advocacy project?

Click here and type your response.

4. What is the larger goal you hope to help move forward?

Click here and type your response.

5. What kinds of advocacy activities do you expect to do as you begin this project?

Click here and type your response.

Examples: learn about a specific law or policy; identify decision-makers; connect with a coalition; prepare talking points; contact a legislative office; attend a meeting; submit comments or testimony; follow up.

NEXT STEP: Complete the separate Project Proposal Form electronically and submit it as directed. Cindy must approve your project before the four-month project period begins. After the training ends, Michele will email you a separate progress form at the end of November, December, January, and February.

Ten hours isn't the finish line for your advocacy project. It's your starting line.