

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES



In order to get what you need, it is important to know what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and who to say it to, as well as what to do when you hit barriers. Here are some strategies that might help make the process more successful.

- Learn about the rules, regulations, entitlements and laws that support your desired goals and outcomes.
- “The powers that be” will respond more rapidly to someone who presents him/herself as an advocate. The connotation is “lawyer,” even though you are not. Use the word “advocate” when introducing yourself.
- When you have achieved any desired outcome, be sure to thank them in writing! Everyone appreciates being appreciated.
- Persistence! Call, call again, email, fax, write, follow-up with a call. The squeaky wheel gets the grease and the services.
- Get names! People miraculously develop better manners if they think you can track them down.
- Everyone has a boss! If you are not getting satisfactory results from someone, find out who their supervisor is. Go all the way to the board of directors, president, etc., if need be.
- There is never any excuse for rude treatment. Let the rude person know you are aware of this basic right. If they persist, use the previous two steps.
- Paper trails are critical. Document all names, incidents, what you were told, when, what you did, and what they did.
- Be very sparing when calling in favors; the “crying wolf” syndrome can take hold. If you ask for too many favors, you’ll soon find closed ears. Use all possible resources before saying “please do me a favor.”
- Waiting lists are a reality. Put your child on the list. You’ve got to be in it to win it!
- The early bird catches the resource. There is no such thing as too early, too soon, or jumping the gun.
- Never put all of your eggs in one basket; some of your eggs might be rotten. Brainstorm many options and back up possibilities.
- If all else fails, use the media: radio, television, newspapers, blogs, etc.
- Put the people who represent you to work. Contact your elected officials: City Council, Borough Presidents, Public Advocates, State Assembly, State Senators, Governor, Congress, Senators; even the President!