

## **ORGANIZE A LETTER-WRITING EVENT**

Gathering together with members of your faith community to write letters, postcards, or emails to elected officials is an effective and fun way to advocate. Careful forethought and planning should go into such an event. Here are some steps you can follow:

1. Identify 2-3 people to coordinate the event.
2. Be sure to communicate plans with leadership (council, faith leader, etc.) in your faith community.
3. Publicize the event within your community at least a few weeks in advance. Use flyers, newsletters, announcements, and social media to get the word out. Include details such as date, time, location.
4. Decide what issue or bill you want to write about. Stick to one or two issues.
  - Consult with FAN about possible topics. This could change depending on the time of year you hold your event; if you want to write to City Council, the State Legislature, or Congress, etc.; and what issues are important to your faith community.
5. Prepare (in consultation with FAN):
  - A draft or sample letter (no more than one page). People can use this draft and expand on it or take the ideas from the sample letter to make it their own.
  - A background/fact sheet (one page) on the selected bill or topic(s).
6. Find a place in your faith community to hold the event. Choose a visible place, preferably with a wireless internet connection available if folks choose to write emails instead.
7. Prepare the necessary materials:
  - Blank paper (or postcards), writing utensils, envelopes, and stamps
  - Copies of the sample letter and the background sheet
  - Addresses/contact information of the elected officials to whom you are writing
  - Laptops (if folks would prefer to send emails, or want to do more research on the topic)
8. Other considerations:
  - How can you engage the youth of your faith community in the event? Just because they may not be of age to vote doesn't mean policies don't impact them! They have a voice!
  - During faith services, consider bringing the completed letters up to the front during the program as an "offering" of letters or to bless them.
9. Follow-up after the event.
  - Find out if anyone received a response from the elected official/s.
  - If a response was received, publish an excerpt of the response in your faith community's weekly email alert/bulletin/newsletter.
  - As a result of this event, take a collective look at the responses received by your elected officials. Decide what (if any) further course of action to take next.