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**Indiana YMCA Advocacy Champions**

Advancing the Cause

**Why?**

Around the state, YMCAs are improving their boards’ abilities to tell their Y stories within their communities, to policymakers, and beyond. In short, to advocate. The Alliance will partner with you in elevating advocacy as an important function of your board.

**why now?**

Advocacy is more than speaking about how we operate and market our programs and activities. It is the imperative work of safeguarding and advancing our future. Times are changing; in order for Ys to survive and overcome the issues challenging us (e.g. tax exempt status, staffing, child safety issues, etc.), it is critical that we leverage our collective voice to speak about the impact we have in our communities and how proposed policy changes can affect our ability to have an impact.

**what we can accomplish**

By being the Champion, here’s the leadership you’ll provide:

* Organizing board members to meet with elected and appointed officials to share about public policy issues that are important to the Y.
* Keeping policymaker connects strong through facilitation of local and regional and/or advocacy events and legislative visits for your Y
* Board participation in these signature YMCA Alliance advocacy events:
  + Indiana YMCA Statehouse Day (biennial)
  + Indiana YMCA Advocacy Week(s) (annual)
  + National Advocacy Days (annual 9-person delegation)
  + Alliance Public Policy Committee (1 staff and 1 volunteer from each Y neighborhood)
* Ensuring that your Y is meaningfully focused on advocacy at all levels of government through the development and growth of an Advocacy Taskforce with at least two (2) additional board members at each YMCA
* Model best practices of board advocacy for nonprofit sector
* Build momentum to proactively address issues important to YMCAs

**what’s required of you**

* Attend introductory Zoom meeting (February)
* Participate in check-in Zoom meeting (June)
* Attend debrief Zoom meeting (November)
* Participate in monthly advocacy activity (e.g. note to elected official, attend a county/town meeting, etc).
* Share your Y’s experiences to encourage neighboring Ys to move forward with their advocacy efforts
* Encourage board attendance at Alliance advocacy events

***“Advocacy helps nonprofits advance their mission, increase their funding sources, and solve community and societal problems.”***

-BoardSource