

# ADVOCACY IN YOUR COMMUNITY & CALIFORNIA

TIPS & TECHNIQUES TOWARD  
BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE





# URBAN FORESTRY ADVOCACY

- ✿ Why?
- ✿ What?
- ✿ Who?
- ✿ How?
- ✿ When?



# WHAT WE WILL COVER

## THIS IS NOT

- ✿ A course on how to start a phone tree or how to write to your congressperson
- ✿ A course on grassroots organizing

## THIS IS

- ✿ A session designed to help you – an Urban Forestry leader – learn to be an Effective Advocate in all that you do



## WHY ADVOCATE

- 🍀 Garner support
- 🍀 Influence policy
- 🍀 Secure funding





# CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

- ✿ Knows what he/she needs
- ✿ Can make it *compelling* to other people
- ✿ Can relate it to other issues





# HOW DO YOU DEFINE WHAT YOU NEED?

Start by understanding what stands between you and success. Is it:

- ✿ Permission to proceed?
- ✿ More people?
- ✿ More money? Different money?  
(i.e. do you need a bigger slice of the pie or a different pie?)
- ✿ Policy or legislation?
- ✿ Equipment (capital v. operating)?
- ✿ Access to an appropriate site?



# HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE WHAT YOU NEED?

- ✿ Carefully craft your language
- ✿ Avoid techno-speak and acronyms
- ✿ Keep in mind your audience may care for different reasons
- ✿ Use words that are proven to be effective



# EXERCISE I

In one sentence – it can be a long sentence – describe the MOST IMPORTANT need that you have in YOUR urban forestry project or program.





# WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Do you need

- ✿ Their permission?
- ✿ Their money?
- ✿ Their help?
- ✿ A policy change or new legislation?

## EXERCISE II

Based on your need identified in Exercise I, identify who your target audience would be – in a generic sense (e.g. general public, elected officials, public works directors).



# BE COMPELLING TO OTHERS

- 🍀 Know your audience
- 🍀 Focus on BENEFITS of your project, not technical details
- 🍀 Use their language
- 🍀 Solve their problem



## EXERCISE III

Take the need you identified in Exercise I and write down all the benefits the community would receive from it.



## EXERCISE IV

Take the need you identified in Exercise I and rewrite it using the BENEFITS you identified in Exercise III. Use the MOST COMPELLING terms you can muster. This becomes the basis of your ELEVATOR SPEECH.



## CHANGE THE TOPIC SENTENCE

Be part of something **BIGGER** such as

- 🌱 Public health
- 🌱 Climate change
- 🌱 Stormwater
- 🌱 Sustainable communities
- 🌱 Urban greening
- 🌱 Energy conservation
- 🌱 Air pollution reduction
- 🌱 Water quality improvement
- 🌱 Soil retention



# EXERCISE V

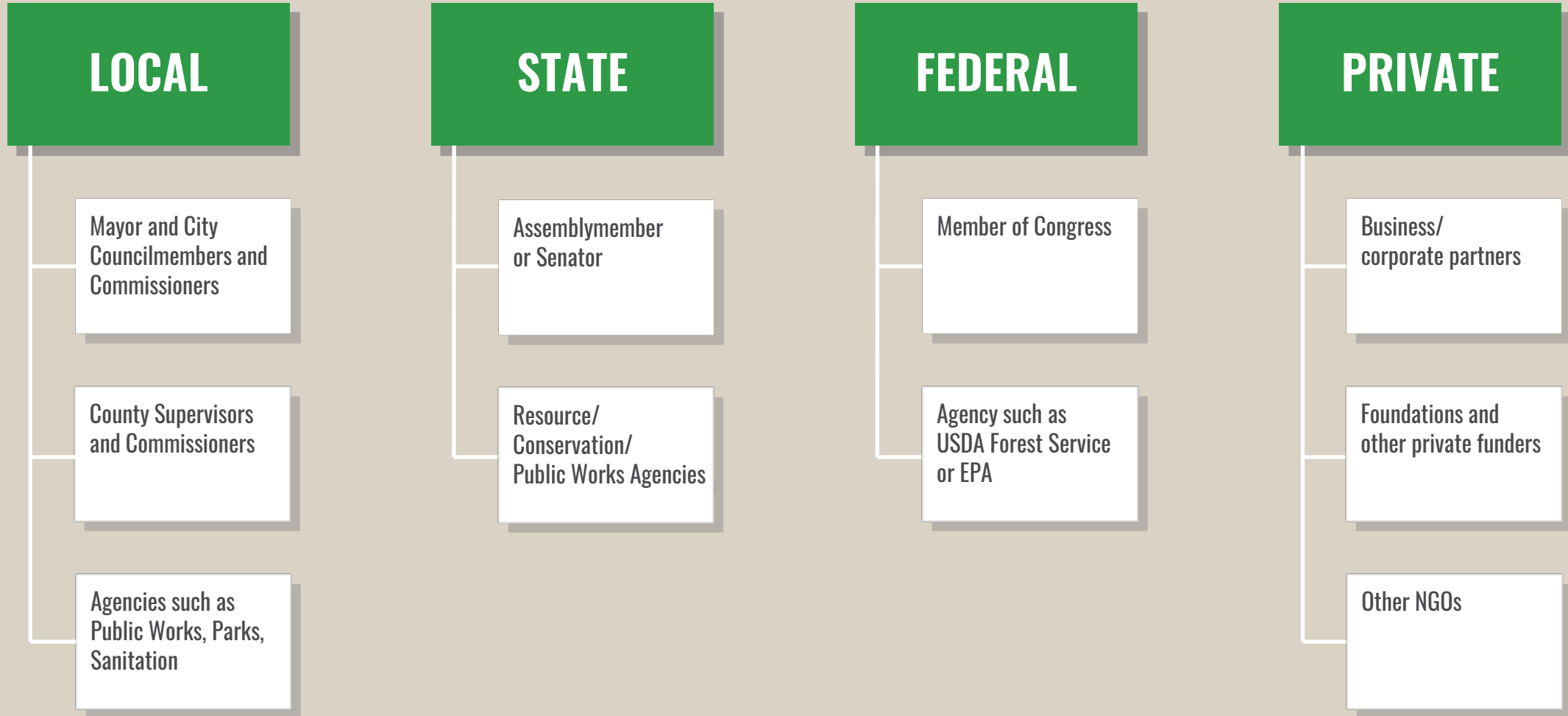
Take the need you identified in Exercises I and III and describe it yet again in terms OTHER THAN tree planting or urban forestry.

# EXERCISE VI

Write down three individuals, organizations, or entities that HAVE BEEN targets of your advocacy efforts.

Write down three more who SHOULD BE targets of your advocacy efforts.

# THE USUAL SUSPECTS





# THE INFLUENCERS

**COMMUNITY  
GROUPS**

**CHAMBERS  
OF COMMERCE  
& BUSINESS  
COUNCILS**

**OTHERS**

**ORGANIZED  
LABOR**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
GROUPS/NGOs**



# THE OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Who?

**YOUR  
BOSS**

**YOUR  
BOARD**

**YOUR  
BOSS'S BOSS**

**YOUR  
COWORKERS**

Why them?

- ✿ Advocacy begins at home.
- ✿ Institutional buy-in is essential to success, and without it, external advocacy is often for naught.

## EXERCISE VII

Go back to the list you developed in Exercise VI and expand it to include at least five groups of individuals you WILL target for advocacy after this training.





# THE EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

Cultivates relationships  
*before*  
he or she needs them



# THE EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

## Researches their audience

- 🍀 Interests
- 🍀 Priorities
- 🍀 Programs

## Listens as much or more than they talks

- 🍀 The applause meter goes up when they are talking
- 🍀 The more they talk, the more you learn

# ROLE PLAY

## SITUATION 1

- Imagine you are an urban forest advocate trying to convince the local electric utility to fund a project.

## SITUATION 2

- Imagine you are an urban forest advocate who is testifying before the City Council on budget cuts to urban forestry.



# **TYPICAL ADVOCACY SITUATIONS**

**MEET WITH AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES**

**MEET WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**BUILD COALITIONS**

# WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO APPROACH...

## An agency?

- ✿ Prior to and during an agency Request For Proposals (RFP) process
- ✿ When agencies are preparing budget proposals
- ✿ Note that these times are different at the local, state, and federal level

## An elected official?

- ✿ Prior to a Legislative Session
- ✿ During the Legislative Session if you need changes to a bill already introduced or for budget action
- ✿ Timelines are different at the local, state, and federal level

# TIPS FOR WORKING WITH AGENCIES

Do your homework  
to understand the  
agencies and  
individuals

**HOW MUCH MONEY DO THEY HAVE AVAILABLE?**

**WHAT OTHER PROJECTS ARE THEY INVOLVED IN?**

**WHAT IS THE AGENCY'S AUTHORITY & JURISDICTION?**



# TIPS FOR WORKING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

- ✿ Cultivate relationships before you need them
- ✿ Approach ALL elected officials who represent your region
- ✿ Approach those that serve on relevant policy or budget committees or likely allies *whether or not they happen to represent your area*



# TYPICAL ADVOCACY SITUATIONS

**START WITH PROGRAM OR FIELD STAFF IF NEEDED**

**15 MINUTES MAX – BE PREPARED & ORGANIZED**

**SHOW HOW YOUR NEEDS/PROJECT FITS INTO THEIR VISION & OBJECTIVES**

# TIPS FOR PITCHING YOUR PROJECT

- ✿ Go prepared
- ✿ Bring a concise description of the project
- ✿ Bring a map if appropriate
- ✿ Solid project
- ✿ Community support
- ✿ Complement the elected official's priorities



# TIPS FOR PITCHING YOUR PROJECT

- 🍀 Invite them to a project visit
- 🍀 Leave behind a one-pager outlining key elements of your project

**Planting trees.**  
**Capturing carbon.**  
**Cleaning the air.**  
**Creating healthy communities.**

In 2016, Invest from the Ground Up by the California Urban Forests Council joined forces with West Coast Arborists, Inc., and the Western Chapter International Society of Arboriculture. The shared goal was to make a difference in Californian communities by planting trees, and engaging residents to learn and care about the trees in their city.

The highly effective partnership received successive rounds of funding from California Climate Investments, CAL FIRE, and the High-Speed Rail Authority\*. The California Initiative to Reduce Carbon and Limit Emissions (CIRCLE) planted trees for three years, followed by the Cool Parks program focusing on public spaces. More information about each campaign is available at [investfromthegroundup.org](http://investfromthegroundup.org)



**9,500**

Trees planted by the completion of grants.



**23**

Nonprofit groups have helped deliver the programs in their communities.\*\*



**50**

Cities have partnered with and participated in the program and received trees.



**82,301**

MT CO2e of greenhouse gases sequestered.



**3,975**

Residents have thus far volunteered to plant trees & learn about tree care.\*\*

\* The High-Speed Rail Authority was a funder of the CIRCLE 3 program with planting activity focused along the rail corridor.  
\*\* More community groups and volunteers are expected as the Cool Parks program continues to work in communities.



# EXERCISE VIII

Draft an outline of what you would include in a ONE-PAGER to leave behind with an elected official (*use Exercises III and IV to start*).

# COALITION BUILDING

Working with coalitions and other partners can be a great way to gain and build support for your project.

**UTILITIES**

**WATER AGENCIES**

**PUBLIC WORKS AGENCIES**

**LOCAL NONPROFITS**

**ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS**

**BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS/  
INDIVIDUALS**

# REMEMBER:

Your program is only important to you...  
until others validate your work.

A coalition gives you:

- ✿ Credibility
- ✿ Broad support
- ✿ Political influence
- ✿ A better story to tell
- ✿ More funding opportunities
- ✿ More hands to do the work





# EXERCISE IX

Take turns describing your best advocacy experience

- ✿ What were you advocating? To whom?
- ✿ What were your best arguments?
- ✿ What made it a good experience?
- ✿ What lessons did you learn from that experience – *especially anything different from what we've discussed here today* – that might inform the thinking or actions of others in this group?

# HOW CAN YOU FUND YOUR PROGRAM?

**GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

**LOCAL & STATEWIDE  
BOND MEASURES**

**CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION**

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**COORDINATED PROJECTS WITH  
CO-BENEFITS & MULTIPLE  
REVENUE STREAMS**

**FOUNDATIONS & OTHER  
PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS**

**LOCAL CONSERVATION  
FEES/MITIGATION**

# DEVELOPING NEW FUNDING SOURCES

California has been successful in funding large-scale urban forestry programs through bond measures in the past. Look for grant opportunities that become available through:



**CAP & TRADE AUCTION  
REVENUES**

**TRANSPORT FUNDING**

**CLEAN ENERGY**

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**WATER BOND(S)**

**LOCAL MEASURES**

# RECAP

From this workshop, you should come away with NEW TOOLS AND PERSPECTIVES on how to advocate on behalf of your urban forestry projects and programs.

# RECAP

Specifically, you should now have:

- ✿ A compelling, concise argument or “elevator speech” about one of your pressing needs
- ✿ Some thoughts about how to market your needs in terms that reflect other people’s priorities
- ✿ Ideas about how to frame your project or program as part of a different or larger issue
- ✿ A short list of specific targets for your advocacy
- ✿ Tips on working with public agencies and elected officials
- ✿ Tips on coalition building





Find more resources at [caufc.org](http://caufc.org)