

**NAJIT
ADVOCACY
TOOLKIT
WORKBOOK**

“Change is never easy, but always possible.”

- Mary Kay Henry, SEIU International President

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Mindset and Focus Journaling Exercise: Use the prompts below to reflect on your mindset and focus as you consider the challenge of advocating for interpreters.

What specific workplace conditions or issues motivate you to consider advocacy?

Why do you want to see changes regarding the topics you listed above?

Look at the answer above and ask yourself why again. For example, if you wrote “We need better rates because I need to make more money”, ask yourself why you need to make more money. Repeat this process until your deepest motivations are revealed.

Imagine your advocacy efforts working out exactly as you hope. Describe your best-case result in the space provided.

Now, imagine a worse-case result for your efforts and describe it here.

In the real world, your initial advocacy results are likely to fall somewhere between your best and worst-case scenarios. With this in mind, ask yourself if participating in these efforts will be worth it even if your end result is less than ideal. Be sure to reflect on why you feel the way you do.

How do you feel when you consider advocating for yourself and colleagues? Why do you think you react in this way? How can these emotions help you? How might they hinder your efforts?

What fears come up for you as you consider advocacy? Are those things likely to come to pass? What would happen if you ignored your fears and just advocated anyway?

If you had a friend deciding to take on advocacy work, what advice would you give that person? How would you want that person to take care of themselves?

Tips Reflection Exercise: Advocating for interpreters in the courts is a complex and sensitive process. Here are a few dos and don'ts to keep in mind when engaging in such efforts. Read the following tips and then reflect on the suggestions in the space provided.

Dos:

Educate Yourself

- Find out how the budget for court interpreters works in your region. Learn who can help you and what steps can be taken to better your situation as quickly as possible .
- Research successful advocacy efforts in similar industries to understand effective strategies.
- Research and document the issues that are of most concern to the greatest number of court interpreters in your area.
- Use what you learn to formulate your strategies and demands.

Build Solidarity

- Build a sense of solidarity among your colleagues. Ensure that there is a shared understanding of the issues and a collective desire for change.
- Establish open lines of communication to foster unity and trust.

Develop Clear Goals

- Clearly define the goals of the advocacy effort. Whether it's related to rates, working conditions, or other concerns, having specific objectives will help guide the process.

Communicate Effectively

- Communicate openly and effectively with your colleagues and management. Clearly articulate your concerns and goals.
- Use various communication channels, such as meetings, newsletters, or online platforms, to keep everyone informed. Be persistent!

Seek External Support

- Explore seeking support from external organizations, such as labor unions or advocacy groups, that can provide guidance, resources, and assistance.

Prepare for Negotiations

- Prepare for negotiations by identifying potential compromises and solutions. Having a well-thought-out strategy will strengthen your position.

Remain Resilient

- Expect challenges and setbacks. Building a fair compensation for interpreters can take time, and resilience is key to overcoming obstacles.

Which of the foregoing recommendations seem doable to you, taking into account the environment and dynamic among colleagues in your region? Which recommendations could you implement immediately?

Which of the recommendations above seem least useful in your region? Which recommendations might you save for later in your efforts?

Don'ts:

Don't Ignore Legal Considerations

- Don't proceed blindly with no account for legal considerations. Labor and antitrust laws can apply in this context. Consider getting professional guidance in this area; understanding what you can and cannot do is crucial.

Don't Isolate Yourself

- Resist the temptation to do everything yourself. Build solidarity with your colleagues and consider differing opinions. Unity is essential; division will weaken your advocacy effort.

Don't Engage in Unethical Practices

- No matter how high tensions get, don't engage in unethical practices, such as spreading false information or using coercive tactics. Uphold integrity and transparency throughout the process.

Don't Neglect Communication

- Don't leave your colleagues in the dark. Regular updates and open dialogue will help maintain trust and keep everyone informed.

Don't Rush the Process

- Take time to build a strong foundation and gaining widespread support takes time and careful planning.

Don't Overlook Potential Solutions

- Don't be rigid in your approach. Be open to exploring alternative solutions and compromises that may address both employee and management concerns.

Don't Over promise

- Don't make commitments that cannot be fulfilled. Be realistic about what can be achieved through the organizing process. Help your colleagues manage their expectations.

Reflect on the suggestions above. Which ones seem most applicable to the situation in your region? Which have you NOT followed that you wish you had? How can you improve your situation despite mistakes you may have made along the way?

“In union there is strength.”

- Aesop

Building Allies Reflection Exercise: Think about who you hope to work with in your advocacy efforts, both within and outside your profession. Use the prompts below to brainstorm the network of allies you hope to build.

List interpreters with whom you could work to bring about change in your area. Think beyond the colleagues who share your language pairs or live in the same city.

List some organizations and professional associations you could ask for support in your efforts.

List some judges, attorneys, politicians, and civic leaders you could contact for support in your efforts.

Sometimes it is tempting to do everything on your own. List some activities you can delegate and people who would be qualified to take them on.

List some objections to advocacy your colleagues may have. What points can you make to overcome those objections and maintain unity?

What are some ways you can go about reaching out to your colleagues and other possible allies? Think about what you have seen other advocates do, such as letter-writing, emails, phone calls, texts. List some ways you and your team can contact and recruit supporters of your efforts.

Your Plan Reflection Exercise: Use the following prompts to reflect on the steps you can take now to begin your advocacy process.

My team and I want to see the following changes in our area _____

The first steps we will take toward the above are _____

The timeline we plan to follow is _____

Important cutoff dates we need to have in mind are _____

Some obstacles we anticipate are _____

We will take care of ourselves in this process by _____

The only limit to our
realization of tomorrow
will be our doubts of
today."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt