

CAMPAIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

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Hunger-Free OK

The campaigns that are least likely to be successful are those that aren't able to pivot based on context. You need to have a clear understanding of the fiscal environment in which you're making your ask — your ask should look different if there's a surplus versus a deficit. And, you should make your ask intentionally, as too big of an ask may not be taken seriously, while too small of an ask means you're unlikely to get what you need for a successful program. Advocates also need to consider their messaging. Talk about your issue in a way that resonates across the political spectrum, taking note of whether a pragmatic or ideological approach is smartest for the environment you're working in. This extends to the outside game, too. If an ideological approach doesn't resonate with decision-makers, your organizers need to pivot accordingly. This also means advocates need to be careful about if and when they turn to negative messaging. Often, going negative too early (or even at all) can kill a campaign before it gets off the ground. Finally, advocates need to consider relationships. This could mean the relationships your lobbyist holds or the relationships you and your partners hold. Your lobbyist should have relationships with the people who will be decision-makers on your issue. You also want to ensure coalition clarity and alignment on its strategy and lines in the sand to balance the coalition's ideal ask with the need to be pragmatic given the circumstances in the legislature. This means that you need to trust your partners to be stewards of your relationships with your champions — legislators who vocally support your issues and should always be the people you turn to first before consulting other legislators. You need a clear understanding of what the relationship with your champion looks like and what they expect from you. Ultimately, selecting the right partners who you trust completely is crucial to a successful campaign.

