

Framework for Effective Communication with Elected Officials

1) Give your message a compelling human context by describing:

- **Your personal connection to your organization. Of all the things you could do, why have you chosen this?**
- **Why does your organization do what it does? What is the secret to its transformational power? What drives the theory of change? What results does this produce?**
- **If time permits, offer a compelling story of transformation that epitomizes your organization.**

2) Describe the things your organization has done to stretch to meet the increased need and demand brought on by the recession, even in spite of cuts to your funding.

- **Staff volunteer extra hours and take on extra jobs.**
- **You have leveraged more volunteers to meet the need.**
- **You have cut expenses and overhead to become more efficient.**

3) Link these actions to values held by the public.

- **This kind of commitment, flexibility, and dedication is expected – it's in the nonprofit DNA.**
- **But there is a breaking point – there are limits to everything.**

4) What we need from our elected officials:

- **Be specific – increase in a line item; regulatory approval; support of a revenue enhancer, linking revenue with a particular program, etc.**

5) Link your appeal to an appropriate Metaphor Project (<http://www.metaphorproject.org> argument that:

- **Acknowledges their pain in a hyper-partisan political world, but**
- **Appeals to a theme everyone can rally around.**