

Regional Advocacy Toolkit

Why you should advocate:

Public officials across the country are making ongoing, difficult decisions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including whether or not to open aquatics facilities. Your voice matters and can make a difference with these public officials in convincing and assuring them that reopening pools for purpose-driven aquatics with strict safety precautions is the right decision for the health, safety and welfare of their citizens.

While public officials make these ongoing decisions for many industries, we must be proactive for advocacy to be most effective in ensuring aquatics facilities remain open. Check news and updates regularly about state and local decisions and don't wait to advocate and make your voice heard!

Here are some tips & guidelines for advocacy activities:

- ***How to submit a Letter to the Editor to your local paper:***
 - Tips when writing your Letter to the Editor:
 - Include 2-3 key points you'd like to get across.
 - Keep safety messaging top of mind. Continue to hammer home the idea of putting the participants' safety first.
 - Make sure your message and call-to-action are clear.
 - Make it personal and make it local – tell your story!
 - Don't attack the opposing opinion, instead focus on providing facts and statistics to support your opinion and counterarguments.
 - Keep your letter to under 200 words.
 - Instructions on how to submit your Letter to the Editor to the local paper:
 - Find your local paper [here](#).
 - Contact your local paper or search on their website for instructions on how to submit your letter. Some papers have online submission forms and some may instruct you to email in your letter.
- ***How to get a story on local television broadcast:***
 - Create your "pitch." Decide what message you want to convey to a television audience. Write an email that includes:
 - Your three key points you'd like to get across.
 - List the days and times you're available to be interviewed by a TV station show or reporter.
 - Include all of your contact information to the end of your email: your full name, cell phone and email.

- Google the TV station and look for the “contact us” section. Some stations will provide the newsroom phone number and some will have an online form to fill out. Either way, be sure to fill out the forms and call the number, ask for the assignment desk, and ask for the best person to talk to and send an email to about your story idea.
- Wait for 24 hours for a response and then follow up.
- ***How to amplify your message on social media***
 - Be positive and show we want to be a part of the solution:
 - Post photos, videos and news stories of successful and safe reopenings, aquatics facilities following state and local guidelines, and share best practices.
 - Applaud local elected officials in the region that are taking steps in the right direction to reopen pools and encouraging smart policies for safe return to the water. Be sure to tag their accounts if using social media.
 - Tag Aquatics Coalition for shares and retweets and check out the accounts for sharegraphics and other content ideas.
 - Facebook: [@AquaticsCoalition](#)
 - Twitter: [@Aqua_Coalition](#)
 - Use hashtags in your posts, i.e. #SaferReturnToSwim
- ***Remember, make sure your message is concise, fact-based, local and personal. Continue to drive home the point about safety being most important.***
- ***Here are some additional resources:***
 - [Aquatics Coalition page](#) for talking points, guidelines, sample advocacy letters and other resources.
 - [National Governors Association website](#) for resources and updates on state and local responses to COVID-19.
 - More specific statistics and data:
 - [Unintentional drownings facts & stats](#) (CDC)
 - [CDC data visualization tool](#) (filters down by drowning deaths by year, state, and demographics)
 - [Health Benefits of Water-based Exercise](#) (CDC)