

# Strategies and Tactics for Stronger Science Advocacy

As a science advocate, you understand how to influence policy by lobbying your elected officials and educating the public. But are your strategies evolving to meet this moment in time? Many science advocates have begun to address the histories of exclusion and violence against marginalized groups by diversifying their organizations and movements and attempting to make them more inclusive.

Advocates also face the challenge of maintaining interest levels that spiked in response to the Trump administration's anti-science agenda. The March for Science, for example, mobilized 1 million people in more than 600 cities around the world to resist the [Trump administration's attacks on science](#). Similarly, membership in the Union of Concerned Scientists [Science Network](#)—scientists interested in helping to mobilize other scientists—grew to a historic high of 26,000. With a new administration now in place, how can organizers of scientific engagement sustain participation while building inclusive leadership?

The Union of Concerned Scientists [Working Group on Strengthening Science Advocacy](#) drew from existing research and the experience of science organizers across a range of movements to develop the following ideas you can adopt to diversify and strengthen your civic engagement.

## Building Relationships and Solidarity

- Build connections and collaborations with [groups seeking to ground their claims in scientific evidence](#). Alliances between [scientific experts and community groups](#) help make environmental justice movements successful.
- Support [scientific organizations](#), which can help mobilize and build unity among scientists.
- Support the leadership of organizers from multiple marginalized groups who can help [bridge differences among groups, recruit, sustain organizing, and enhance a group's legitimacy](#).
- Establish effective connections among advocates. A key element of successful groups in scientific intellectual movements has been their ability to build solidarity among members. [Emotional connections are essential](#) both within groups and with audiences you want to mobilize.
- [Draw support](#) from broad formal and informal networks of scientists.
- Look to [social movements outside the educational and scientific realms](#) for insights and ideas on how to build successful campaigns.
- Recognize the [history of racism in science](#) and [how the sciences have contributed to racism](#), and work to [prioritize anti-racism in science](#) and [science advocacy organizations](#).
- Seek to build unity and consensus while [recognizing diversity and accepting dissent](#).
- Support youth organizing and foster youth leadership.
- Assemble materials on the role of science in democracy for high school, college, and graduate school curricula.

## How Science Can Support Communities and Address Inequities

- Challenge the [underrepresentation of historically marginalized groups in the sciences](#).
- Support the work of [groups pushing for ethics in the scientific and medical fields](#) and efforts to democratize the sciences. Embrace [interdisciplinary engagement that questions the ethics of research](#) and the context in which it takes place.
- Involve [communities affected by science](#) in the research. Leverage existing community structures to enhance local leadership and build capacity. Research that aligns with the values and priorities of a community may have more sustained impact and longevity.
- [Embrace ideas and value knowledge](#) emerging within communities. Promote their leadership in advocacy.
- Acknowledge historical context and the current community dynamics that can impact relationships, partnerships, and collaboration.
- Embrace the ideas of [justice and responsibility](#) in research. Consider how research impacts the lives of economically and politically vulnerable groups. Involve groups affected by research in decisions about whether and how the research is done.
- Use research to [support activist and movement goals](#). Build on the [history of solidarity](#) between scientists, health professionals, and progressive movements.

- Seek and allocate funding to train communities and help them conduct their own research (i.e., civic science).
- Advocate for data transparency policies that allow research on health and other social and economic disparities.
- Push for funding of research in the public interest and the public institutions that support and use this research. Resist the erosion of public education and research institutions.
- Identify [sources of opposition to science](#) and evidence-based policymaking, and the spreading of scientific misinformation.
- Target geographical regions where people have exhibited skepticism toward science but are also feeling the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.
- Develop and employ tools for increasing government and corporate transparency, including public information requests, legislation requiring the disclosure of public documents, and measures to end corporate secrecy.

## Effective Tactics to Get You Started

- Maintain activity in diverse venues. Work to influence policymakers, mobilize scientists, and educate broad and diverse audiences.
- Think broadly about who you want to organize. Scientists are important voices in efforts to defend and promote science, but they are not the only group that cares about science.
- Combine multiple tactics and activities, from demonstrations and social media mobilization to research that will support community organizers.
- Prepare scientists and science advocates to engage with media outlets. Build and strengthen relationships with journalists to encourage the dissemination of science, scholarship, and policy recommendations.
- Capitalize on the energy generated since 2017. [Turn protest and network participants into organizers](#) through training and leadership development.
- Cultivate group cohesion among science advocates through recreational activities, sustained interactions, and [inclusive practices](#). This will boost creativity, innovation, and policy influence.
- Prepare the public to [recognize and fight against scientific misinformation](#).

## How Your Organization Can Support Other Science Advocates

- Promote [public engagement and advocacy by scientists](#).
- Enhance [the ability of science professionals to inform and shape policies](#). Encourage science grounded in equity through programs and trainings.
- Recognize and work to address unequal power dynamics in scientific fields. Foster practices in which scientists and decisionmakers work with marginalized communities to develop and implement policies that will improve the lives of the people in those communities.
- Build relationships with federal, state, and local policymakers. Establish science advocacy organizations as trusted sources of information.
- Mobilize members to participate in advocacy and engage with communities.
- Support the work of scientists seeking to develop long-term relationships with communities to help them identify and solve the issues they face.
- Adopt anti-racist and anti-sexist policies, including codes of conduct and disciplinary responses to violations.

# [ Union of Concerned Scientists

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[www.ucsusa.org/scientisttoolkit](http://www.ucsusa.org/scientisttoolkit)

*The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future.*

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