

# Policy Advocacy in Rhode Island: Tips for Care Teams



Legal Key works alongside our partners to help people get the support they need—whether it's boosting their income, applying for benefits, appealing a denial, or dealing with a possible eviction. This kind of help is crucial to make sure individuals and families get the services and benefits they're legally entitled to.

Policy advocacy is another important form of support. It asks critical questions: What laws are helping or harming communities? Who is working to change them? Policy advocacy has led to meaningful reforms, such as allowing tenants to seal eviction records and prohibiting employers from asking about prior convictions on job applications. **Here's how to get started:**



1

## Know Your Employer's Policies

Before engaging in policy advocacy, know your employer's policies. Are you advocating on their behalf or as a private individual?

2

## Look for Who Is Already Organizing

Start by finding local or national groups already working on your issue. Join their efforts—it's a great way to learn advocacy, support shared goals, and be more effective as part of a group.

3

## Identify Bills Proposed in the General Assembly

The Rhode Island General Assembly meets for regular session from January through June. By viewing what bills have been proposed and who is testifying, you can identify where you might best support advocacy around issues of importance to you.

- [View scheduled committee hearings](#) (website generally updated weekly)
- [Track bills that have been introduced](#)
- [Search by topic by filtering by category](#)

Picking one committee to follow can give you a good idea about what is being proposed, and a sense about how the legislature works.

4

## Get to Know Your Representatives

You can identify your representatives in the General Assembly or US Congress here. By calling them, getting to know them or their staff, and attending community meetings or town halls you will be able to advocate directly about what is important to you.

By advocating for good policy, you are helping to ensure that your voice and experience are reflected in the policy making process.

## Examples of Policy Advocacy

Starting in 2010, a coalition of RICARES, DARE, the RI ACLU, and Open Doors worked to "ban the box" on job applications in Rhode Island. After years of advocacy, their efforts led to a law passed in 2013. A brief history of the advocacy can be found [here](#).

[Healthy School Meals for All](#) is a multi-year campaign to ensure every Rhode Island child has access to nutritious school meals. It began with Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell's push to end "lunch shaming." While her bill hasn't passed and was reintroduced in 2025, the Governor added funding to cover reduced-price meals. It remains a priority of the [Rhode Island Food Policy Council](#).

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