



**VOLUNTEER**  
**ADVOCATE**  
HANDBOOK

# AN ADVOCATE'S PRAYER

I praise You, God, the Father of all creation.  
You are Justice and you created me to reflect who You are to the world.

I praise You, Christ, the Redeemer of creation.  
You restore justice and show me its path.

I praise you, Holy Spirit, the great Advocate of all created things.  
You empower me for the work of justice and lead me on the journey.

I confess my reluctance to turn my eyes toward those suffering in our world.  
I confess my withdrawal from engaging or praying for our nation's leaders.  
I confess my reliance on my own strength, to the neglect of my soul.  
God of mercy, forgive me.

I pray for life in all its fullness  
for children experiencing poverty, who will inherit Your kingdom;  
for our nation's leaders, who You have set in authority;  
and for our community of advocates, who You have called to this ministry.  
God of justice, hear my prayer.

Reveal Yourself, Father, Redeemer, Advocate.  
Protect us, strengthen us, guide us, and renew us.  
Make Your justice known in and through us.  
God of love, be glorified.

Amen.



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## WELCOME TO THE WORLD VISION VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE COMMUNITY

Thank you for joining our team! We're compelled by the love of Christ to speak up on behalf of the poor and oppressed, and we don't believe you're here by accident. We trust God has called you to partner with us and has equipped you uniquely for this work.

You're joining a select group of committed, passionate Volunteer Advocates backed by the force of the World Vision Advocate Network—84,000 voices strong, present in every state and all 435 congressional districts. These online advocates are actively calling, emailing, and influencing their members of Congress on social media to end extreme poverty. In concert with these online voices, **Volunteer Advocates make an even greater impact through faith-rooted, relational advocacy with our nation's leaders.**

Most of us begin this journey with little advocacy experience and, if we're honest, a little fear. But we share a common story: God gives us courage to step out in faith and find Him on the path of justice. You may not know how to develop relationships with your members of Congress just yet—but you'll learn alongside others in this community, and you may be surprised at how simple it can be.

This handbook will help orient you to World Vision's mission and why faith-rooted, relational advocacy is a vital and valuable way to create sustainable change for children in poverty around the world.

May you feel welcomed, supported, and commissioned for the ministry of advocacy as you explore your new Volunteer Advocate resources. We look forward to getting to know you as we work together to help end extreme poverty—for good.



## ADVOCACY THAT TRANSFORMS OUR WORLD

### Why we advocate

Advocacy is an essential element of World Vision's work, along with long-term community development and emergency response. As we work alongside communities and governments to build a better world for children, we also empower them to evaluate the policies, systems, practices, and attitudes that drive poverty, to ensure that transformation is sustainable and scalable.

### How we do it

Because we see advocacy as a ministry, we approach governments and leaders as our partners. We develop strategic relationships with the president's

administration and members of Congress, regardless of political party, on issues that affect vulnerable children. We often act together with other like-minded organizations to maximize our impact. And we lift up stories from the communities we serve, allowing the poor to speak for themselves.

The most beautiful part: Our advocacy here is mirrored around the world. Through our field work we also empower kids and communities to speak up in their own countries for their own rights and needs. We give them the tools they need to advocate with their own leaders and governments—for themselves and future generations.

### Our vision for advocacy

We look forward to a world where every child experiences Jesus' offer of life in all its fullness. Where kids are protected, cared for, and given the opportunities to become all God meant them to be. Where they grow strong in communities free of need and full of promise. Where families are valued, creation is preserved, and the most vulnerable live in security and confidence. Where they become responsible citizens of well-led nations. Where peace and justice reign and all have the right to contribute.

*We don't just wait for this world.  
We advocate for it.*





### Where we focus our efforts

In alignment with World Vision's development work, we advocate for children everywhere to experience the "life in all its fullness" that Jesus spoke of, so that:

- » **Children are safe.** In the last year, nearly half of the world's children—up to one billion—experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect. At least 30 million children have been displaced by humanitarian emergencies and conflict. We urge the U.S. government to holistically fight violence against children, including child labor and human trafficking, and to pass legislation that addresses the root causes of gender-based violence, conflict, and fragility so children can live free from fear and protected from harm.
- » **Children are healthy.** Deaths of children under 5 have dropped by half since 1990, but over 15,000 children still die every day, most from preventable causes. We're advocating for greater

U.S. investment in interventions and programs that save lives and make children strong—like healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries, proper nutrition, livelihood training, and access to clean water.

- » **Children have opportunity.** Our audacious goal, alongside partners around the world, is to help end extreme poverty by 2030. This requires U.S. leadership through robust foreign assistance funding. Even though U.S. foreign assistance accounts for less than 1 percent of the federal budget, it has recently faced disproportionate proposed cuts. We advocate to protect these programs that save lives and give children a better chance at hopeful futures.

➤ For more information about World Vision's current advocacy goals, visit our Volunteer Community Hub: [worldvisionadvocacy.org/hub](https://worldvisionadvocacy.org/hub).

### How we've made an impact

Over the last three decades, World Vision has worked to preserve, improve, and influence U.S. foreign assistance policies and programs that positively affect millions of lives around the world.

Advocates like you have helped pass important legislation, including:

- » The READ Act
- » The Global Food Security Act
- » The Girls Count Act
- » The Water for the World Act
- » The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act

➤ To learn more about advocates' successes and how these important bills help improve kids' lives, check out [worldvisionadvocacy.org/impact](https://worldvisionadvocacy.org/impact).



## FAITH AND RELATIONSHIPS: THE SECRET INGREDIENTS

We strongly believe that faith-rooted, relational advocacy is the most effective approach to influencing U.S. policy.

For us, advocacy is a ministry—this is what sets us apart. In all our efforts, we ask the Spirit to breathe life and light through us, so we can bring God’s renewal into a political environment that is often demanding. As we build relationships with members of Congress and their staff, we seek to connect with both their hearts and minds.

We pray for them—and sometimes *with* them, too. We speak truth, and challenge them when necessary. We bless them with care, courage, and local support. We empower them to make compassionate decisions and create lasting solutions to end extreme poverty.

And through it all, we invite God’s power and trust in His presence to use these relationships to transform lives, both around the world and here at home.

Over 90 percent of Congress publicly claims faith in Christ.

### THE POWER OF FAITH-ROOTED ADVOCACY



Advocates in North Carolina shared their passion for justice by tapping into the power of symbols. They met with a staffer from their congresswoman’s local office to discuss U.S. foreign assistance. World Vision supported them with talking points, meeting goals, and handouts, but the advocates drove the message home with some creative gifts: freshly baked bread and a pot of wheatgrass with a quote from Nobel Peace Prize winner Norman Borlaug: “**If you desire peace, cultivate justice, but at the same time cultivate the fields to produce more bread; otherwise there will be no peace.**”

These symbols made global hunger a more tangible reality for the congressional aide, exemplifying the power of faith-rooted advocacy. Statistics and talking points are important, but God often moves our hearts through images and symbols. If you approach your advocacy in prayer, God may show you creative ways to move the hearts of your leaders.



## HOW TO GET STARTED

As a Volunteer Advocate, you can adjust your advocacy style to fit your gifts and schedule. But for greatest success and impact, we recommend committing to the following activities (about one to five hours a month):

### Monthly training

#### 1 » Watch your email

We'll equip you with monthly skill-building primers so you can quickly learn the basics of traditional and faith-rooted advocacy tactics. We'll also alert you about conference calls and other training opportunities exclusively for Volunteer Advocates. It's just what you need to build your skills and strengthen your impact.

#### 2 » Explore helpful resources

At the **Volunteer Advocate Community Hub** you'll find all the monthly training primers, relevant news from Capitol Hill, our suggested engagement calendar, and more. Get started at [worldvisionadvocacy.org/hub](http://worldvisionadvocacy.org/hub).

#### 3 » Start with the basics

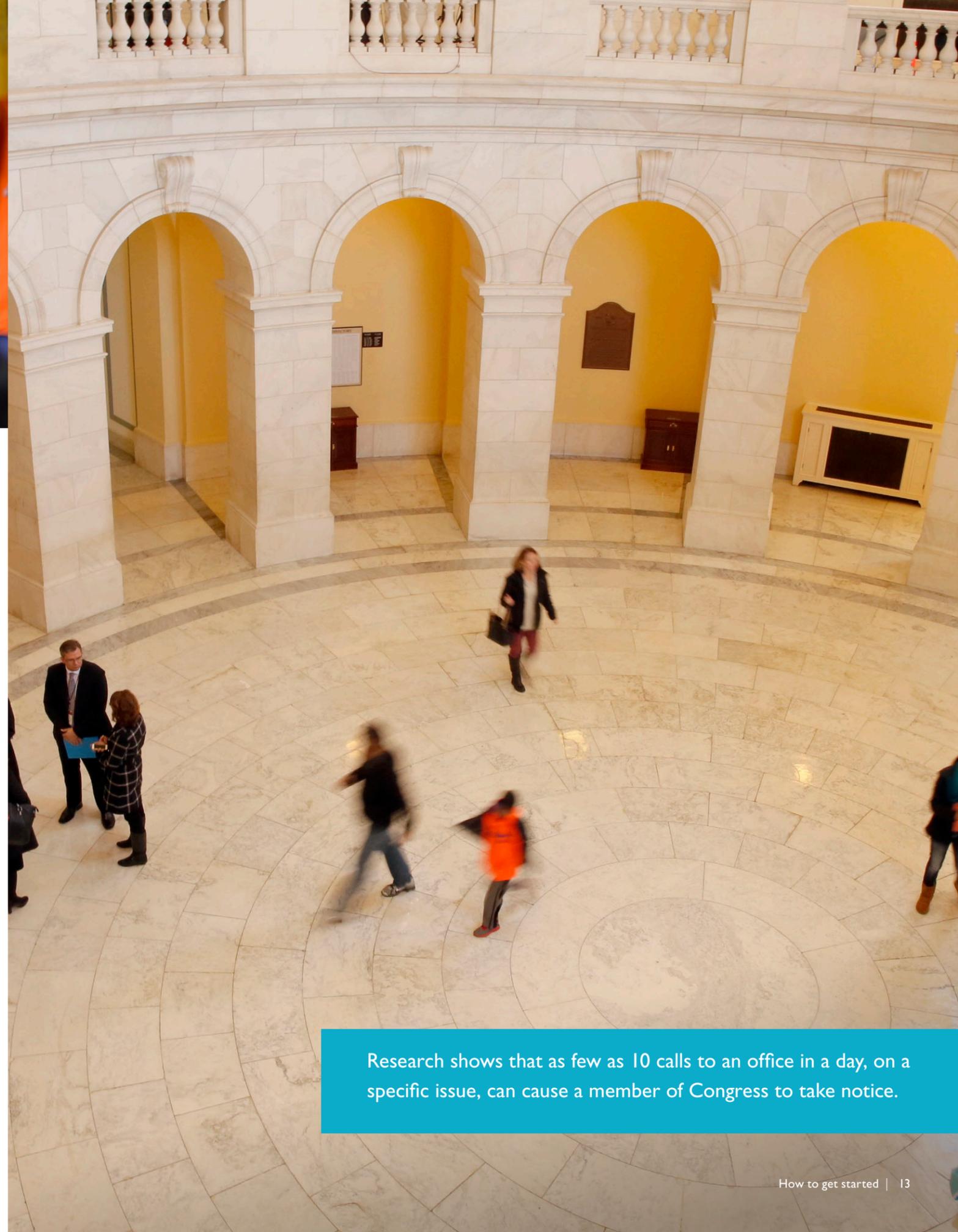
No matter what month you join our community, we recommend you start with Primers 1 and 2, which cover the foundations of relational advocacy and what we advocate for. After that, we'll help you link up to the community calendar and dive into the suggested activity for the month!

### Quarterly action

Connect with your members of Congress on at least a quarterly basis. Our monthly training and activity calendar will help guide you, but here are some ways you can make the biggest impact:

#### 1 » Start developing relationships with your member of Congress and their staff

This is the good stuff. The people-centered approach, ministering to your representatives and senators, is the most crucial element of being a Volunteer Advocate. It often includes building



Research shows that as few as 10 calls to an office in a day, on a specific issue, can cause a member of Congress to take notice.



a rapport through calls and emails, but the most effective way is meeting with them or their staff in-person at their district office (the one near you!). We'll support you every step of the way.

**2 » Submit opinion pieces to local newspapers**

You can significantly influence elected officials through opinion pieces, like letters to the editor, in local media. These can also elevate awareness of global poverty issues in your community. If you're not sure how to do this, no problem! We have drafts and guidance to help you write strategically, taking advantage of opportunities to influence congressional decisions.

**3 » Rally others around the cause of justice**

By participating in town halls and other forums, or activating your church and friend networks, you can build local support that your members of Congress will notice. Invite others with a heart for justice to get involved through prayer or strategic participation. Together, you'll show your representatives that their constituents care about being champions for kids in extreme poverty.

**Connect with the World Vision community**

**1 » Collaborate with other advocates**

One of the most rewarding things about being a Volunteer Advocate is learning and planning together when you're engaging your members of Congress on similar issues. Join periodic "cohort" calls and other conference calls on various advocacy topics. You can also join our prayer team to pray with and for other Volunteer Advocates and your members of Congress.

Learn more about others in this community at [worldvisionadvocacy.org/hub](http://worldvisionadvocacy.org/hub).

**2 » Join World Vision on social media with #WVAdvocacy**

 @worldvisionusa  
 World Vision USA

**3 » Plug in to World Vision's online advocate network**

Subscribe to our weekly blog updates and monthly newsletter at [worldvisionadvocacy.org/join-us](http://worldvisionadvocacy.org/join-us). You'll receive urgent action alerts and stories of impact to keep your advocacy fresh.

**Prayer and faith**

**1 » Nurture your faith**

Advocacy bears greater fruit when it's done in partnership with God. And effective advocacy also takes long-term commitment. That means spending time with God, reading His word, and fellowshiping with other believers are critical to prevent burnout. As Volunteer Advocates, we want to come from a place of spiritual health so we can be salt and light. Check out the "Nourish Your Soul" section of each monthly primer for a little inspiration!

**2 » Commit to prayer**

Regular, steadfast prayer is a crucial part of this ministry. Create a reminder to pray for your members of Congress and our advocate community regularly, and invite others in your church to pray with you. God will show you how to encourage and challenge your leaders in just the way they need.



**SPONSOR A CHILD**

If you don't already, we invite you to prayerfully consider sponsoring a child at [worldvisionadvocacy.org/sponsor](http://worldvisionadvocacy.org/sponsor). This meaningful relationship will put a face to the issues you advocate for. And you'll have concrete, personal stories to share with your representatives.

*"Volunteer advocacy with World Vision is so much easier than I thought it would be! With the guidance, training, and personal support from World Vision staff, I am empowered to advocate for children around the world [and] live out my faith ... I never realized I had this much influence with my elected representatives and that I could help change laws that impact millions of people!"*

—Anna K., World Vision Volunteer Advocate

## GOD HAS EQUIPPED YOU FOR THIS WORK!

You might not remember how a bill becomes a law, or have time to track the daily happenings of Congress—that’s OK! You don’t need to be a professional lobbyist to make a difference.

Many ancient saints—think Moses, Esther, Daniel—have gone before us in the pursuit of justice. They remained faithful to God’s calling despite the risks and uncertainties. Human and fearful just like us, they showed up anyway, standing before kings and leaders. Protecting the vulnerable. Trusting in God’s promises. And God did remarkable things through these ordinary people.

Still having doubts? Read on.

- » **“I’m intimidated by the process.”** Your member of Congress doesn’t expect you to be an expert. Plus, we’re here to support, encourage, and coach you every step of the way. You don’t need to have all the answers. Just share your heart and the stories of those you care about, and we’ll help you engage at the right times to make the biggest influence.
- » **“I’m too busy.”** The best part about volunteer advocacy is that it’s flexible, so you can do what works with your schedule. We’re also here to provide guidance and resources to make it as easy as possible.
- » **“Caring for the poor is the church’s responsibility, not the government’s.”** Did you know that if U.S.

poverty-focused foreign assistance were cut today, every church in America would have to raise nearly \$100,000 more each year to make up for the gap? Part of our responsibility as the church is to reduce the need for charity by making sure the systems that govern us protect the well-being of all.

- » **“My representative belongs to a different political party than I do.”** No matter what party they belong to, most members enter public service with a desire to do good. Even if you disagree with them on certain issues, you can still encourage them to take action for children in ways that align with their perspectives.
- » **“I can’t go to D.C. to meet with them.”** You don’t need to go to Capitol Hill to connect with your member of Congress. They have offices throughout your state and congressional district, with staff eager to meet with you. And the members themselves have “district work periods” where they travel home specifically to meet with constituents like you.

As you embark on this journey, more than anything else we want you to know and believe that **you can do this**. God has led you to this opportunity, and we’ll support you all along the way.

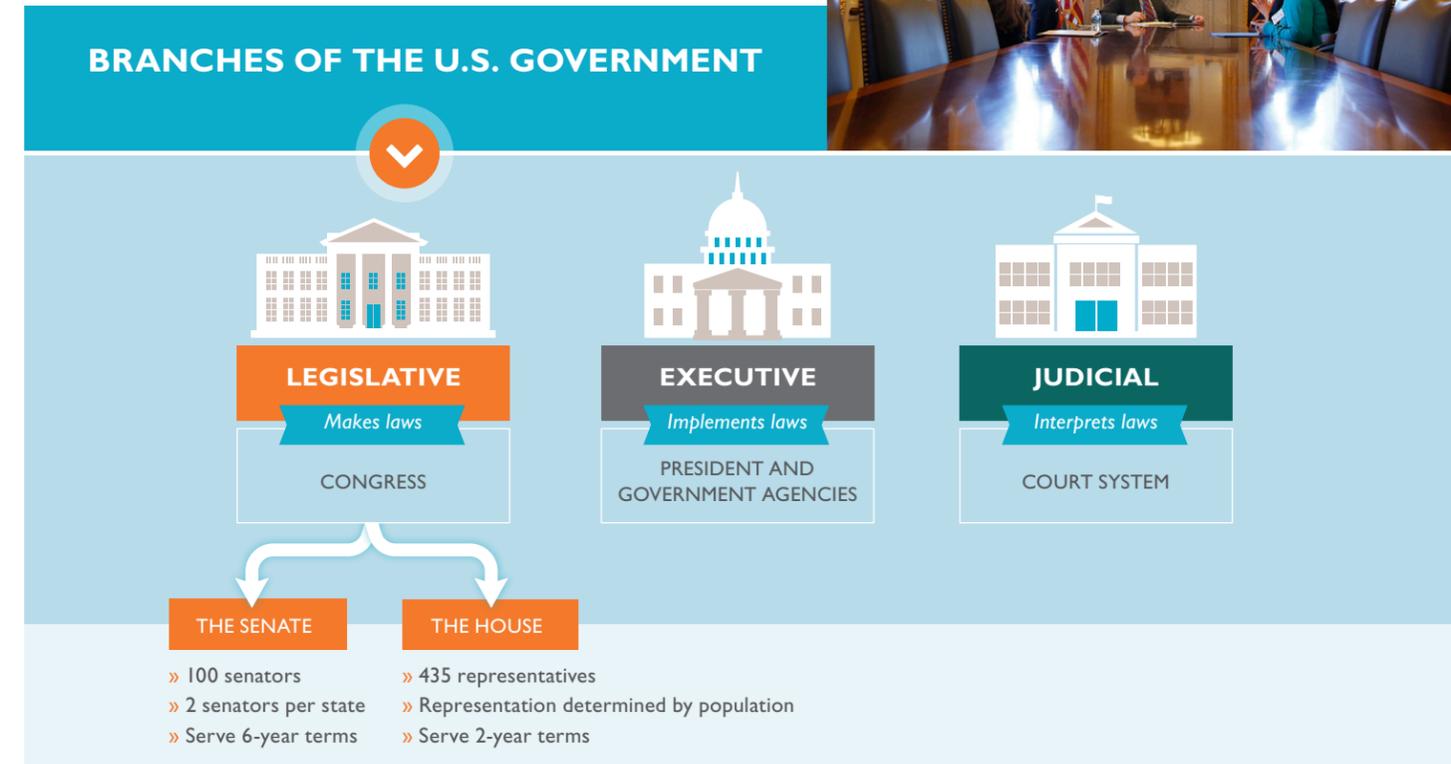
**You matter to members of Congress—so don’t be afraid to let them know what matters to you.**

### ADVOCACY: AN ACT OF FAITH

Changing laws and building congressional champions takes time. Pace your engagement so you don’t burn out, even when you face setbacks or discouragements. Manipulating or pressuring members of Congress may result in a quick win, but it won’t truly transform their hearts. Let God lead the words you say—when He’s with us, the results can far exceed anything we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

## U.S. GOVERNMENT 101

It’s OK if you don’t remember much about our government process. Here’s a quick refresher on the basics. We’ll provide additional information in your monthly training sessions, too.



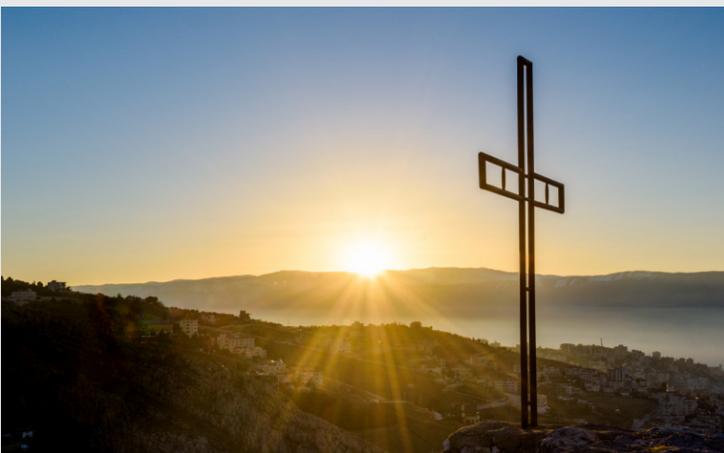
Members of the U.S. Congress serve full-time, year-round. They do business in two-year “sessions” that align with the calendar year, but the federal budget follows a fiscal year (October through the following September).

This means that legislation, once introduced, has up to two years to be debated, amended, passed, and signed into law. The budget, however, is usually proposed by the president in February and technically must pass Congress each year by September 30.

Members of Congress consider legislation first in relevant committees that have jurisdiction over specific topics, before allowing the full House or Senate to vote during “floor” proceedings. In your monthly trainings, you’ll learn which committees tend to see more legislation related to global poverty issues.

Bills can either authorize new funding or improve how the U.S. government spends existing funds. In partnership with coalitions, World Vision works to help craft legislation with congressional offices, increase support for positive legislation, educate and voice opposition to harmful policies or proposed budget cuts, and inform congressional decisions through meetings, committee hearings, and letters.

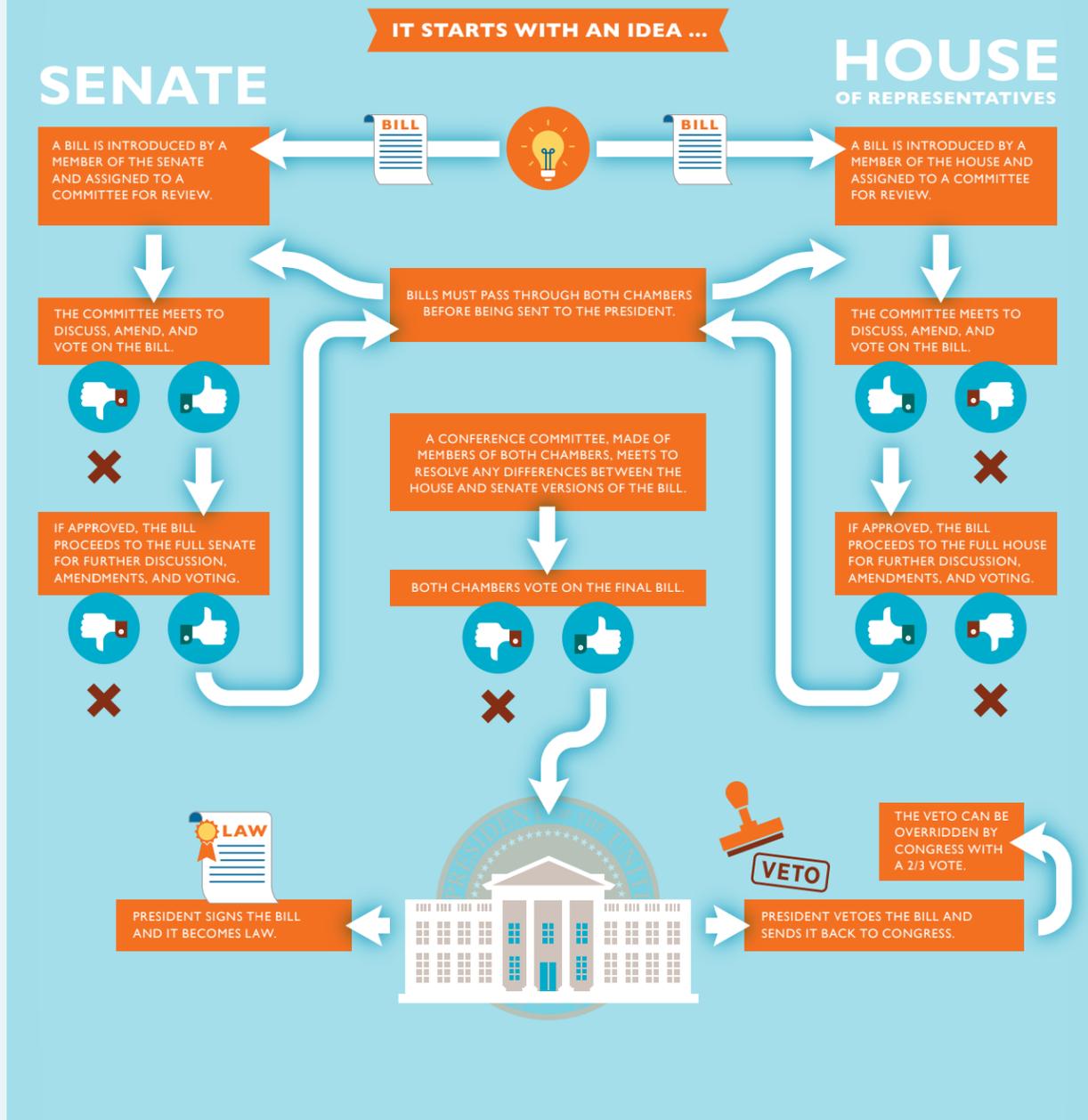
We also work to develop relationships with key U.S. agencies that implement foreign assistance programs or otherwise impact our work overseas. These usually include the U.S. Agency for International Development; the Departments of State, Agriculture, and Labor; and the president’s and vice president’s offices.



# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



## THE U.S. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



## FAST FACTS ABOUT U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE



- » The United States allocates just under 1 percent of the federal budget to poverty-focused foreign assistance—and with this small investment saves millions of lives each year.
- » These funds are managed by government agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department, and implemented through grants to organizations like World Vision, who are held accountable for results.
- » Public grants like these make up about 25 percent of World Vision's annual revenue and help us reach more children with life-saving support in the name of Christ.
- » We are the eighth-largest implementing partner of USAID and the largest implementing partner of the World Food Program.
- » Every year, the foreign assistance budget faces threats of significant cuts. Your advocacy helps educate your members of Congress about the good they're doing and the lives they're saving by protecting these vital funds.

The United States allocates just under 1 percent of the federal budget to poverty-focused foreign assistance.

- ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
- HEALTH
- CHILD PROTECTION
- WATER
- EMERGENCY RELIEF
- GENDER EQUALITY

THIS SMALL INVESTMENT SAVES MILLIONS OF LIVES EACH YEAR.

## KEY TERMS

**ADVOCATE** Someone who publicly supports an issue, cause, or group.

**AMENDMENT** A change or addition made to a bill or a law.

**APPROPRIATIONS** An amount of money dedicated to a specific purpose. An appropriations bill sets aside funding for specific spending.

**BILATERAL AID** Help given from one country to another in the form of financial assistance, programs, or products (e.g., food and shelter during emergencies, or long-term development assistance through partnerships with businesses or nonprofit organizations like World Vision).

**BILL** A proposed law that is authored by a member of Congress, considered, and voted on by the House and the Senate. Also called legislation.

**COMMITTEE** A group of congressional members with jurisdiction over specific issues such as the budget or foreign policy.

**CONGRESS** The legislative branch of government consisting of both the Senate and the House of Representatives—535 voting members in total (100 senators and 435 representatives).

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT** A geographical division in your state that determines who your elected representatives are.

**CONGRESSMAN/WOMAN** A member of Congress in the House of Representatives.

**CONSTITUENT** A voting member of a community with the power to elect representatives to Congress.

**COSPONSOR** A member of Congress who adds their name to legislation to show their support. This signals greater support than simply voting for a bill.

**DEVELOPMENT** A long-term approach to eliminating global poverty, different from and supplementing humanitarian relief work.

**FOREIGN AID/ASSISTANCE** Funding given from one country to another, or to multilateral institutions, to support global peace, security, and development efforts and to provide humanitarian relief in times of crisis. The U.S. currently allocates less than 1 percent of the federal budget to poverty-focused foreign assistance.

**GRASSROOTS** A general constituency that seeks to influence elected officials by organizing broad support or directly engaging elected officials through letters, calls, social media, in-person meetings, or local media.

**GRASSTOPS** Constituents who carry singular influence due to positions of leadership, wealth, or power.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES** The larger body of Congress, whose members serve two-year terms. In total, there are 435 voting members, and the number of representatives per state depends on population.

**HUMANITARIAN** A type of work or aid that helps those in dire situations, such as disaster, conflict, or extreme hunger.

**LAW** A bill that has passed through the Senate and the House of Representatives and has been signed by the president.

**LOBBYING** Seeking to influence someone in power, particularly in politics.

**MULTILATERAL AID** Funding given to international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to reduce global poverty. Multilateral institutions pool contributions from multiple governments and distribute funds to countries in need and organizations serving there, like World Vision.

**POLICY** A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures of a government. Laws passed by the House and Senate dictate and guide U.S. policies toward foreign assistance and global development.

**RECESS** A break in the congressional proceedings. Typically refers to longer breaks taken during holiday periods, when members of Congress are home in their district.

**SENATE** The smaller body of Congress, whose terms last six years. In total, there are 100 voting senators, each state represented by two.

**SESSION** The annual series of meetings of a Congress is called a session. Each Congress has two one-year sessions (e.g., the second session of the 115th Congress runs from January 3 to December 13 of 2018). Additionally, the Senate and House are each said to be “in session” when meeting on any particular day.

**SPONSOR** The member of Congress who introduces a bill.

## WORLD VISION 101

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God’s unconditional love for all people. We serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

We serve the world’s poor through a multi-faceted approach:

- » Transformational development that is community-based and sustainable, focusing especially on the needs of children
- » Emergency relief, assisting people afflicted by conflict or disaster
- » Promoting justice, seeking to change structures that drive poverty in communities



### FAST FACTS ABOUT WORLD VISION

- » One of the largest Christian humanitarian organizations in the world, working in nearly 100 countries
- » The world’s leading nongovernmental provider of clean water
- » Nearly 70 years of experience transforming lives in partnership with communities
- » Over 1,400 program areas around the world—including in the U.S.
- » 42,000 staff worldwide, with 95 percent working in their home regions



**TOGETHER  
WE’VE IMPACTED**

**200  
MILLION  
VULNERABLE KIDS  
BY TACKLING POVERTY**



**OVER 5 YEARS  
89%  
OF SEVERELY  
MALNOURISHED KIDS  
WE TREATED**

**FULLY  
RECOVERED**



**EVERY**

**60  
SECONDS**

**A FAMILY GETS WATER**

**A HUNGRY CHILD IS FED**

**A FAMILY GETS THE TOOLS  
TO OVERCOME POVERTY**



## GETTING IN TOUCH

Want to reach out? Looking for the answer to a specific question? Our World Vision Advocacy staff are happy to help. Just contact [advocate@worldvision.org](mailto:advocate@worldvision.org).



**Manager,  
Grassroots Organizing:**  
Amanda Mootz

**Location:**  
Federal Way, WA



**Advocacy Associate:**  
Cassie Paulsen

**Location:**  
Washington, DC

## OUR COMMUNITY PLEDGE

**Keep this pledge somewhere visible to remind yourself of your commitment to this ministry—and of God's promises to you.**

**I commit** to keep my eyes and heart open to the suffering in our world and to respond with compassion rather than cynicism, denial, or defeat.

**I affirm** that God's redemptive work in the world includes the restoration of broken relationships between the powerful and powerless, and the systems that govern us all.

**I accept** God's call to advocate for the vulnerable and oppressed, and I will use my influence in this democracy to work for a world where all are free from poverty and experience fullness of life.

**I believe** God has gifted me uniquely for the work of advocacy, and pledge to discover and use those gifts for the purposes of justice.

**I will respect** my members of Congress as partners, not as targets. I acknowledge they are made in the image of God, appointed by Him for public service—even if I disagree with their perspectives. I will engage them with kindness, courage, and respect.

**I will amplify** the voices of the poor and lead with their stories. I will not speak for them.

**I pledge** to pray before I act, and with humble expectation, I will look for God to transform the hearts of my elected officials, as well as my own.

**I will contribute** to the Volunteer Advocate community. I will share my experiences of success and challenge, seek to learn from others, and invite help when needed.

**I commit** to care for my own well-being and spiritual health, remembering that apart from Christ I can do nothing (John 15:5).

**I will invite** others to walk this journey with me—to pray for me, to add their voices, and to give me courage and guidance.

**I will persevere** when faced with setbacks, keeping my faith in things not yet seen. I will celebrate and share our community's victories, however small, so others within and outside the body of Christ may witness God's redemptive work in our world, and be drawn to join His kingdom.

Signature

Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness. Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.  
—World Vision's vision statement

... The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

—Galatians 5:6 (NIV)



**World Vision**<sup>®</sup>  
Advocacy

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World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. We serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.