

When it comes to advocacy, knowing where to start can often be the hardest part. Be assured that you can start where you are right now with these resources and steps:

- **Think about your experience with vision.** Are you a patient who lives with vision loss and eye disease? Do you know someone—perhaps a friend, family member or loved one, or a colleague—who lives with vision loss and eye disease? Did you experience vision loss suddenly, over time, or have you always lived with it? What were the circumstances that led you to learn about your own risk of vision loss?
- **Consider what changed your steps from unawareness to awareness, reaction to action, accepting an outcome to wanting a change.** These details can help you to form your own advocacy goals as you also integrate your own experience to compel the change you want to realize.
- **Define the problem you want to solve.** What are you trying to accomplish? What is the ideal scenario that you seek? What can you compromise on, what can you live with, what is an immovable matter for you? Is the goal broad that can be accomplished in several ways or is the problem more narrow in scope that can be remedied with a singular action?
- **How will you get there and who can best help you?** Make sure you are asking the right people. For example, Congress can only pass laws at the *federal level* of government, so if you want to change something that is happening in your city, you may instead need to engage your city council or municipal administrator.
- **Build your case.** Do your research and stay informed. Find out if anyone else has tried to accomplish what you want to do. Talk to them, learn from them, or join their efforts. Learn the facts that not only support your case but also may undermine your case. Ask questions and listen to what others tell you.
- **Level-set your expectations but keep your hopes high.** Advocacy can be a long journey with many ups and downs along the way. You will experience setbacks as much as you will experience momentum. Keep going, reset when you need to, and try, try, try again.
- **Find allies.** Who else can help you amplify your efforts? Talk to them, listen to their experiences and viewpoints, ask if they want to help you. You can also lend your efforts to others who may already be engaged in an issue.
- **Celebrate the wins!** Every win—whether big or small—is worthy of a celebration.