

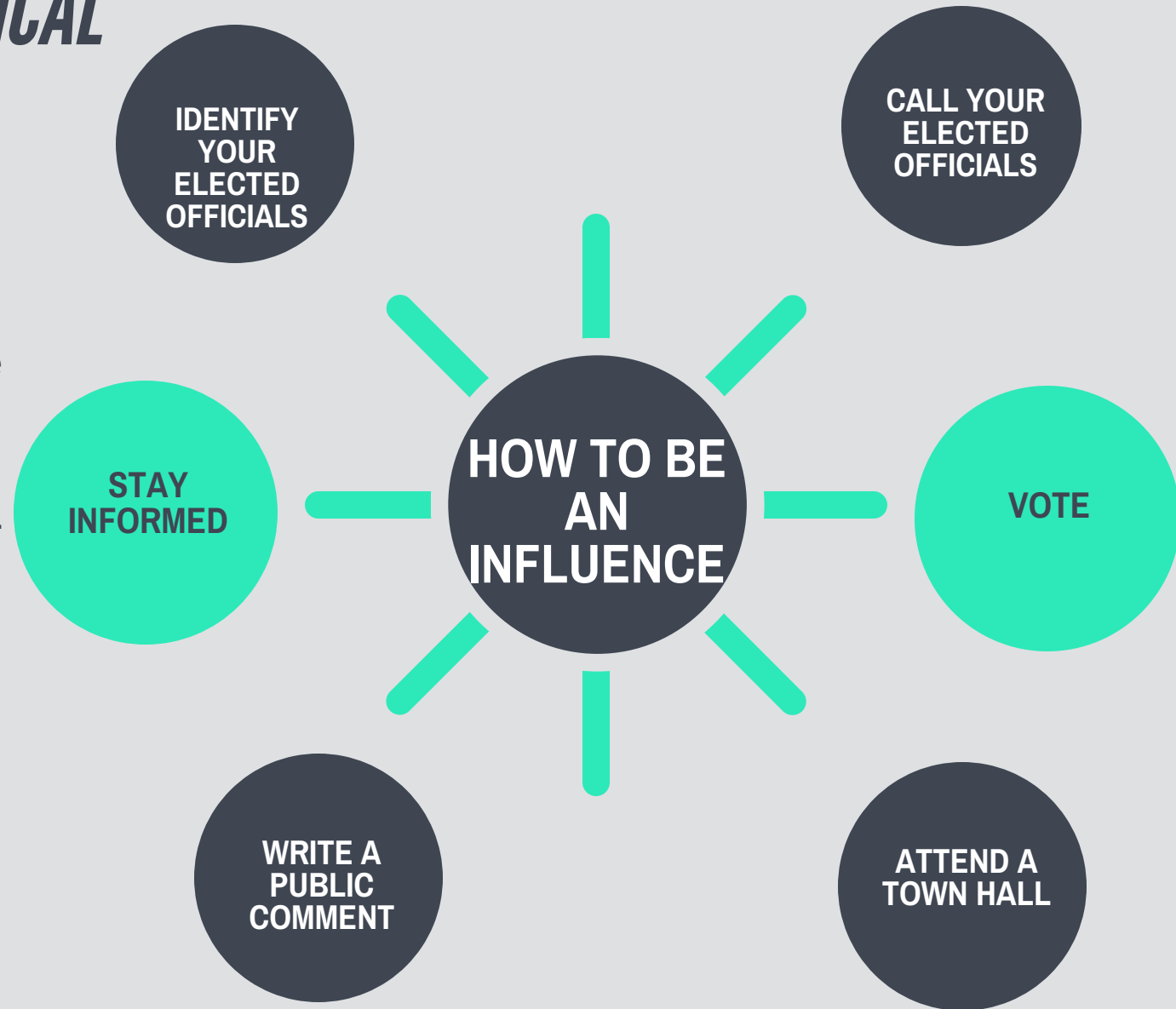


# ***HOW TO BE A POLITICAL INFLUENCE -***

## ***AS AN AVERAGE CITIZEN***

Navigating the American political system can be a little (or a lot) daunting. This article is meant to serve as a beginning guide to becoming more of a participating citizen.

The chart to the right includes four key ways to begin engaging. Each of the outer grey circles are accompanied by an info-graphic below that includes four steps and an explanatory paragraph. The green circles are things you must always do. References are in the fine print at the bottom.



**1. Find Your Districts:** <http://bit.ly/1XIN2mQ>

**2. Senators:**  
<http://bit.ly/1kyGkev>

**Representatives:**  
<http://bit.ly/2zZsgdV>

## IDENTIFY YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

**4. City Council:**  
<http://bit.ly/2jJg78H>

**3. County Officials:**  
<http://bit.ly/1AknTSs>

YOU ARE A POLITICAL INFLUENCE

# THE DETAILS

Perhaps surprisingly, there are MANY layers of people working on our behalf in the government as our elected officials. The top left circle provides a link to simply see which districts your vote is being counted in. The next three circles provide links to help you identify congressional, and then more local officials. Some concerns are best dealt with at one tier of government versus another. It is beneficial to know all of those whom represent you in the government to then strategize who will best serve your interests.

If you are looking for another state besides Washington, I suggest searching "your location" and "elected officials" to find who specifically represents you.

1. Locate the most direct number, or speak to an aide

2. Choose an issue and do your research

## CALL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

4. Introduce yourself including a zip code

3. Plan a script, include key points, but be concise

YOU ARE A POLITICAL INFLUENCE

# THE DETAILS

In a digital age we are often thrilled to speak to someone instead of a robot. Take the same approach when contacting your government. Your call will likely be handled by an aide or an assistant in the office of whomever you are calling. Be sure to be polite and patient with this person.

In the call you want to try to make yourself distinct and also be concise. Present facts and include a personal story as you are comfortable. Most importantly, inform the person you are speaking to on either, how you would like to the official vote, or take action on an issue that matters to you. By calling, you are holding the official accountable to their constituents, and it is a meaningful use of your influence.

References:

<http://www.ucsusa.org/action/phone-calls.html#.WhPM42Q-f-k>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/22/us/politics/heres-why-you-should-call-not-email-your-legislators.html>

1. Locate  
and mark  
your  
calendar

2. Prepare a  
question

## ATTEND A TOWN HALL

3.  
Be concise and  
make your  
statement  
unique

4. Follow-up

YOU ARE A POLITICAL INFLUENCE

# THE DETAILS

Town hall meetings are opportunities for elected officials to converse and engage with their constituents. These public gatherings are opportunities when citizens can ask questions, discuss, and voice concerns about regulations and decisions face to face.

When it is time to speak you want to prepare so you are poised and succinct. This can be done by familiarizing yourself with the town hall agenda, as it is available, and your elected officials' positions and platforms; in addition to doing research for your statement.

Be sure to demonstrate common courtesies. Thank the official, be polite, but make yourself stand out. You can do this by scripting an introduction, relevant facts and possibly a unique story. Finally, reach out after the event with a phone call, email, ect. Considerate persistence is key.

References:

<http://spinabifidaassociation.org/advocacy/top-10-tips-for-attending-a-town-hall-meeting-with-an-elected-official/>  
<https://townhallproject.com/>  
<https://fairus.org/activism-guide-how-attend-town-hall-meeting>  
<https://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/meeting-with-congress/town-hall-tips/>  
<http://archived.naccho.org/advocacy/upload/NACCHO-Top-Ten-Tips-for-Town-Hall-Meetings-April-12.pdf>

1. Read the  
entire  
proposal

2. Research  
and formulate an "in  
support" or "not in  
support" statement

## WRITE A PUBLIC COMMENT

3. Highlight  
and explain  
supporting  
facts

4. Draft,  
review  
& submit

YOU ARE A POLITICAL INFLUENCE

# THE DETAILS

Writing a public comment allows you to directly respond and influence proposed legislation. It is an opportunity for you to contribute knowledge and insight that may have been overlooked. [Federalregister.gov](http://Federalregister.gov) is the governmental database where keywords can search pending regulations. [PublicCommentProject.org](http://PublicCommentProject.org) is a guiding website on how to navigate and participate in the public comment process.

The key to an effective public comment is to provide a unique perspective supported by data, upon which agencies are required to respond. Public Comment Project describes this as a "peer review" of proposed regulations.

A public comment will require careful crafting and research. It is important to dedicate the time to making yours as flawless as possible.

References:

<http://eli-ocean.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/2/files/Written-Commenting.pdf>  
<https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/effectivecomments2015.pdf>  
<https://publiccommentproject.org/>