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### 10 STEPS TO BEING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

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**1. Believe in Yourself.**

You are important and worth the effort to protect your rights and interests.

**2. Decide What You Need.**

Think about what you need, such as money, services, or equipment.

**3. Know Your Rights.**

Get information from advocacy organizations and community groups regarding your rights. Ask about relevant policies, procedures, and laws.

**4. Be Prepared.**

Develop a plan about what you want to say. Prepare notes listing each of your concerns. Ask a friend or advocate for help if you need it.

**5. Use Good Communication Skills.**

Stay calm and express yourself clearly. Be a good listener. What you hear may be as important as what you say.

**6. Keep a Log.**

Make notes, including the name, title, and telephone number of each person you speak to and a summary of the conversation.

**7. Use the Chain of Command**

Be sure to speak to the person who has the authority to resolve your problem.

**8. Protect Your Rights.**

Do not accept an oral (in person or over the telephone) denial of your request. Submit a written application and ask for a written decision.

**9. Know Your Appeal Rights.**

Request clear information about your appeal rights in case you disagree with the written decision you receive.

**10. Ask for Help.**

Don't give up. If you need assistance, contact an advocacy organization.

**Remember to thank those who provide assistance!**

**CALL: 1-800-960-7705**  
<https://disabilityrightsla.org/>