

Advocacy Agenda

Project Development and Completion

Conceiving Your Project

Step 1: Identify an issue or project that resonates with the local community. An idea is unlikely to proceed very far without the support of your community. Take the time to canvas your local area- talk to neighbors, explore the region and see what is missing or lacking- and make a full assessment of tennis and related issues. Successful tennis facilities, programming, and varsity teams often are built out of strong community, governmental, and corporate partnerships. Cultivating such partnerships is a great start.

Things to consider:

- What does your community need most?
- Is there a need for youth activities?
- Do the public schools need support?
- Are there local health issues in your area?
- Is there a lack of access to public courts, or do old courts need to be refurbished?
- What do local decision-makers care about?

Step 2: Develop a clear idea

In developing a clear, concise idea, remember the following:

- What do you want and why do you want it?
- Know how you will define success. What is your desired outcome?
- How does your idea/plan address the concerns of local decision-makers?
- How does your plan positively affect the local community?
- Make sure your mission is specific and targeted

Step 3: Do your research

Be sure to research the local policy priorities and be prepared to show how tennis-focused programming can benefit your community as a whole. Explore the website of your local city or county government, focusing on the following:

- City
- Government structure
- Past minutes of city council meetings
- City council and board meeting schedules and timelines
- Five-year school construction plans

Formal advocacy during the development of capital projects and involvement in budget cycle can benefit from the strong presence of a Community Tennis Association in the following:

- Parks & School Districts
- Park master plans
- Current program offerings
- Board contact information
- Staff contact information
- Park budget information
- Proposed local bond referendums

Also consider what actions the decision-maker can take to move your proposal forward. Consider whether the decision-maker or decision-making body has influence over:

- Capital plans and funding
- Funding for operating expenses
- Local legislation
- Zoning regulations

Step 4: Identify potential obstacles

Being able to anticipate and solve issues in advance will make carrying out your project easier down the road. Some things to consider are:

- Who will oppose your mission and goals, and why?
- What are potential obstacles to getting the response you want?
- What do opponents want?

Community concerns: Public projects are often affected by budget constraints, complex and detailed bidding processes, multiple priorities and similar limitations. In some cases, public and institutional owners settle for inadequate, poorly designed or poorly constructed facilities which are then underutilized because they are unsatisfactory. Poorly designed and poorly built courts are not cost effective.

Determining the number and orientation of courts is important. Studies indicate that facilities should be planned based on the number of players within 6 miles or 15-20 minutes driving time from the site. For indoor facilities, a good “rule of thumb” is that most markets can support one indoor court for every 10,000 people.

Tennis courts should be oriented based on geographical location; balancing the extreme differences in the sun angles during the playing season and compromising between solar orientation and other factors.

Carrying Out Your Project

Coalition building on national and local levels: Developing allies within your issue

Step 5: Build a strong, broad-based coalition. A coalition is a group of organizations or individuals who work together for a common purpose. Having an organized CTA is a good start, but receiving strong support from school districts, state and local governments, and businesses is vital. By joining with others who have similar priorities, you create a sense that tennis has wide community support. Also, building a coalition increases your appeal and can create networking and partnership opportunities between you, your organization and your partner organization. Other benefits of a coalition are:

Coalitions can provide cost effectiveness; you can now share duties and resources.

Coalitions have greater potential to attract media attention.

Coalitions offer greater access to expertise by calling on a range of organizations and individuals.

Potential allies and supporters for a coalition include:

- Local tennis groups, such as CTAs and NJTLs, Tennis Service Reps and wheelchair tennis players
- Educational organizations such as local public schools and colleges, as well as tennis coaches, teachers, school boards and parent-teacher organizations
- Local park authorities, such as park boards, parks and recreational departments or the park commission
- Local business leaders, politicians and influential community leaders
- Healthcare agencies
- Law Enforcement groups
- Youth serving non-profits (e.g. Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA/YWCA)
- Media organizations

It is very important to have good relationships with other organizations that work on your issues. By collaborating closely, you demonstrate the strength of your movement. This guide offers numerous tips for working within a coalition.

One of the advantages of working within a coalition can be sharing the workload, such as calling and meeting with policymakers. If your lobbying effort requires you to meet with many policymakers, it is much easier to split up the meetings within the coalition. Coalitions are also a great place to strategize about the best ways to advance your causes, taking into account the needs of the various organizations that are involved with the process.

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If you are conducting an advocacy campaign on your own without consulting similar groups, you may unintentionally overlook arguments that other groups can contribute to the campaign. Remember that when working within and developing coalitions, it is a good idea to develop a specific goal for the coalition and work together until you reach that particular goal. Sometimes, coalitions work on too many issues and are not able to focus on attaining specific goals.

Collaboration with Public-Sector Decision-makers: Seek out external allies.

Capital projects are generally developed in the following structure:

- Comprehensive Master Planning
- Project Selection and Budgeting
- Project Design and Development
- Project Construction and Completion. Identifying local decision-makers and gaining their early support will be a huge boost to your project down the road. Meeting and engaging the decision-makers in your community is a crucial part of the advocacy process. Here are a few examples of local decision-makers who may be important to your mission:
 - Chamber of Commerce members
 - City council members
 - College presidents and trustees
 - County commissioners
 - Mayor or local executive
 - Planning and zoning commission members
 - Park and recreation board members
 - State legislators
 - School board or committee members

INFLUENCING DECISION MAKERS

Tips for Success

Develop your message

- Develop a specific target (New courts? New programs? Saving courts and programs?)
- Know the costs
- Know your weight (be able to quote the number of people/voters in your organization).

Know your audience

- Get the names of the officials you want to influence.
- Find out what roles the officials play.
- See if someone in your group or an allied group knows any of the Council or Commission members and can make introductions.
- Read your City/County strategic plan and budget and determine their goals.
- Learn the budget cycle.
- Learn about each official's interests that relate to your message (Economic development? Children? Crime?).

Learn how to count

- You only need a majority.
- Determine someone who will act as your "sponsor" on the Council or Commission to introduce motions.
- Meet separately with each Council/Commission member pitching your message toward their areas of interest.
- Assign someone to act as your spokesperson.
- Show support with a large, visible turnout (all wear the same color t-shirt or some such method of identification).
- Have all supporters registered to speak, but restrict the number of speakers to a few.
- Speakers can withdraw as means to show respect for the Council/Commission's time and so as not to repeat the message.

Put your money where your mouth is

- Be prepared to increase fees in order to pay for some of the services
- Apply for grants or help local officials apply for grants to pay for some of the services.
- Raise money locally to offset public funds, it shows the level of interest and support for the program and makes the decision easier.
- Showing lawmakers that your issue has widespread support among many types of groups is an important step in advancing your cause. Often, groups who do not work directly on an issue will nevertheless publicly support it. When you can gather together groups in support of your cause, you are multiplying your strength and are more likely to receive attention from policymakers and the press. Know the timing for planning and development of long-term capital projects. Tennis Advocates should follow the annual budget schedule closely to advocate for their projects at public hearings.
- Get local businesses involved – tennis tournaments bring large revenues to hotels, restaurants, and shops in your community.
- Strong tennis programs are investments in your community's future.
- Nearly 70 percent of all tennis is played on public park courts.
- Tennis programs boost commerce, rebuild communities, and create jobs.
- Tennis and after school programs provide a safe, positive environment for kids – making our communities safer.
- Tennis fights obesity, which is becoming an epidemic among our youth. Nationwide, an estimated 9 million children between age 6 and 19 are considered obese (15% of the nation's children). Among children 6 to 11, obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s.
- The majority of adults in the United States are either overweight or obese. This has tremendous ramifications on the health of communities across the country. Bringing awareness to the national health crisis is a good first step to improving health while enhancing the programs and services offered.
- Tennis helps kids and adults by keeping both their minds and bodies healthy.
- Participation in tennis is multicultural, multigenerational and involves people from all walks of life.
- Tennis is a lifetime sport.

The USTA/Midwest Section has trained Advocacy Consultants who are available to help you with your important local advocacy efforts – if you need assistance, please call Jeff Giles, Director of Community Development, at (317)577-5130 or jeff@midwest.usta.com or Steve Wise, Collegiate Coordinator, at (262)334-3601 or steve@midwest.usta.com.

Outreach to underserved communities is crucial in enhancing the lives of families who might not otherwise benefit from mixed use recreational space. A unified underserved community is foundational if your issue is competing for funds. Lawmakers are more likely to support one initiative out of many if they see that it draws support from a wide range of people.

Demonstrate to the policymaker that many diverse groups support your cause, and that your coalition partners will obtain grassroots support for the issue. Also, emphasizing the impact on the lawmaker's own district increases your chances of success.

To begin creating coalitions, start making contacts in your community. By networking with other groups, you can form relationships. If you already know the president of a health organization, for example, you can call your colleague and broach the idea of working together. Some ways to involve coalition partners include the following:

- Suggest they show their support by signing a letter that you plan to send to policymakers. This will show lawmakers that you have the broad-based support discussed above. "Sign-on" letters with many organizations listed as supporters are a great tool to use when meeting with policymakers.
- Invite members of the group to your next meeting so that they can learn about your issue and what you are doing. They may volunteer to help you, or they may attend just to become informed.
- Invite members of other organizations to join you in lobby visits or to attend or speak at events such as briefings or press conferences.
- Continue the relationship. After they have expressed support for your issue, keep members of other groups informed of the outcome of your lobbying efforts. An easy way to do this is to send updates via e-mail or fax. It is very important to keep coalition partners informed so that the next time you have a lobbying effort you can call on them again for their support.
- Seek out and join other coalitions that are working on issues related to your priority issues.

Meetings with decision-makers

- Times, locations, and agendas of City Council and County Commission meetings are public information and usually can be found on their web sites.
- You must sign up in advance to speak, and usually your organization will have only three to five minutes for a presentation.
- Make sure your coalition is well represented at the meetings – ask them all to wear the same color. At the beginning of your presentation, ask them to stand to show support.
- Provide any supporting documents and hand-outs to City/County staff before the meeting so that Council/Commission members will have time to review them and prepare questions.
- When meeting a Council/Commission member in his/her office, it is best that no more than two or three members of your organization attend. Have this meeting at least a week prior to the City Council/County Commission meeting.
- Follow-up immediately with a letter thanking them for their time and consideration of your request.

Executing your advocacy plan

- Set intermediate benchmarks for success
- Focus on achieving a series of short-term wins on the way to a long-term victory.
- Remain focused and vigilant, and upbeat and positive.
- Make priorities clear to all.
- Be prepared to answer questions about opposing views in a positive fashion.
- Be polite at all times.
- Stay in consistent communication with:
 - All coalition partners and volunteers
 - Local decision-makers
 - The media

National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Tennis in the Parks

- The NRPA is a 501(c)3 organization with a mission to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people.
- Tennis in the Parks (TIP) is a partnership between NRPA and the USTA that provides resources and support to communities who are committed to growing and improving tennis programs, infrastructure and advocacy efforts in their local communities.
- Search www.nrpa.org/usta for all the up-to-date tennis information.



The Case for Tennis

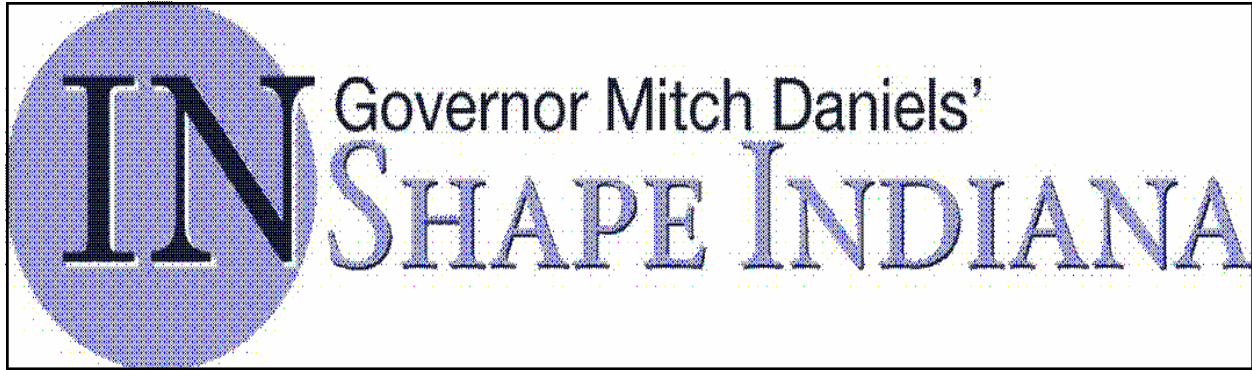
- As successful advocates, we must convince decision-makers that tennis facilities and programs will help them achieve many of their community related goals in the areas of education, fighting crime, healthcare, employment, and developing a health economy. It is important to emphasize facilities or programs that will benefit the community. Don't just think tennis; the most influential information could be related to issues such as multi-purpose athletic space, youth crime prevention, and physical health.
- Tennis is the only sport whose participation increased since year 2000.
- More people are playing. Participation has climbed steadily for the last six years. According to the Tennis Industry Association, 25.1 million people were playing tennis in 2007.
- Since 2000, tennis participation is up 12.2 percent (compared to golf up just 2.4 percent, hockey down 29.4 percent, baseball down 8 percent, and soccer down 2.7 percent).
- Tennis players take it seriously. The number of frequent players climbed to 5.25 million last year.
- More people are watching. TV ratings for the U.S. Open Series have doubled in four years.
- More people are playing. Sales of youth racquets are up 80 percent since 2003.
- Vibrant tennis facilities and programs boost commerce and culture, bring communities together, make them stronger and create jobs.
- Tennis programs and tournaments benefit the local economy through players and their families staying at hotels, eating at restaurants, and shopping during their stay.
- The Cleveland Clinic has called tennis "an ideal sport for a healthy heart."
- Tennis and educational after-school programs support the core mission of schools by increasing kids' attachment to school and improving attendance, thereby helping to improve academic performance.
- Tennis builds discipline, confidence, and independent thinking.
- Tennis teaches responsibility, respect and a strong work ethic.

Community Health Initiatives

Educational Benefits for Youth

- Tennis and education after-school programs support the core mission of schools by increasing kids' attachment to school, improving attendance and thereby helping improve academic performance.
- Along with its obvious physical benefits, tennis also builds discipline, confidence and independent thinking. Tennis teaches responsibility, respect and a strong work ethic. Tennis requires alertness and tactical thinking. It's also a great sport to improve hand-eye coordination and agility.
- Tennis is one of the few sports that can be played for a lifetime, and uniquely benefits children like no other sport.
- Through tennis, kids learn teamwork and social skills since interaction and communication are key to any successful doubles team.
- Kids learn to plan and implement strategies as they naturally learn to anticipate their opponents' moves, and can generate new brain cells through the motions performed in tennis.





INShape Indiana is Governor Daniels' health initiative. The state of Hoosier health is an important issue for Governor Daniels and is a major focus of his administration. Indiana ranks near the bottom of numerous health indexes. These negative statistics create numerous social and economic problems. The USTA/Midwest Section is a Varsity Level Partner with INShape Indiana. This relationship allows for increased awareness of the role tennis can play to promote health and fitness. More than 75,000 participants now have access to information about USTA flex leagues, as well as district and Community Tennis Association program offerings.

Created in 2005, INShape Indiana is a web based program designed to actively inform Hoosiers about the benefits of health and wellness. INShape Indiana is about helping Hoosiers make healthy choices by linking them to valuable resources and offering a fun challenge to improve their health and well-being. INShape Indiana is not another program; it is an initiative to coordinate the many efforts taking place across the state to combat obesity and smoking. It serves as a clearing house providing Hoosiers with the resources needed to cultivate a healthy lifestyle. INShape Indiana focuses on educating and encouraging Hoosier to move more, eat better and cease the use of tobacco products.

One way that INShape Indiana connects with tennis players is by providing nutrition information. Although we all know that a healthy diet is a vital part of sports performance, not all of us exhibit healthy eating habits after a long match or practice session. For example, healthy food is not always an easy option during a tournament or league play. By encouraging nutritious eating and providing information on how to set and meet these goals, INShape Indiana provides a beneficial service. This partnership is another example of tennis advocacy and relationships with state government.

Key Points about INShape Indiana:

- Administered online.
- Challenges participants to move more, eat better, and stop smoking.
- Current membership base of more than 75,000 Hoosiers.
- Serves as a resource for individuals looking to educate themselves on the importance of health and wellness.
- Uses quarterly programs aimed at increasing health awareness.
- Holds annual summits addressing the various health issues within our state.