

ADVOCACY CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE (ACE)
PROGRAM



STAND UP FOR THE HEALTH
CENTER MISSION

“Our job is to teach people how to care about each other before they need health care.”

– Vernita Todd, VP & CSO
San Ysidro Health

ABOUT THE ACE PROGRAM

An Advocacy Center of Excellence, or ACE, is a Community Health Center that creates a culture of advocacy to ensure policymakers at all levels of government commit to investing in the affordable, equitable, and innovative care that health centers provide. ACE levels recognize consistent engagement and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to making advocacy an organizational priority. ACEs actively partner with the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) on federal policy issues, as well as their state Primary Care Association (PCA) on key local-level policy issues impacting health centers and their patients.

**There are three ACE levels – Bronze, Silver, and Gold.
Each ACE designation is valid for two years.**

ACE Bronze Requirements

To achieve **Bronze Status**, you must complete **all** of the following requirements:

| Bronze Requirements | Completed |
|---|-----------|
| Identify an advocacy coordinator at your organization | |
| Develop an advocacy work plan | |
| Pass an advocacy board resolution | |
| Host a National Health Center Week (NHCW) event | |
| Establish at least one social media account for your organization | |
| Register at least 20% of staff and board members as advocates at HCAAdvocacy.org | |
| Host a meeting or tour with at least one elected official (or their staff) annually. Meetings can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-person or virtual• Federal, state, or local officials | |

To achieve Silver or Gold Status, you must complete **all** Bronze requirements as well as a combination of additional tasks (see next page) to meet the following point totals:

Silver Status = 40 points

Gold Status = 75 points

ACE Silver & Gold Requirements

(Silver = 40 pts * Gold = 75 pts)

| Task/Achievement | Point Value | Completed |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Action alert response rate of 10% over a period of 6 months (HCAAdvocacy.org or state alerts) | 5 | |
| Register 50% of staff and board members as advocates at HCAAdvocacy.org | 5 | |
| CEO writes letter to elected officials or agency administrators about a health center topic | 5 | |
| Participate in a town hall with elected officials | 5 | |
| Testify or submit written remarks at local, state, or federal hearings on proposed legislation | 10 | |
| Establish an advocacy committee at your organization | 10 | |
| Action alert response rate of 15% over a period of 6 months (HCAAdvocacy.org or state alerts) | 10 | |
| Register 75% of staff and board members as advocates at HCAAdvocacy.org | 10 | |
| Submit an op-ed or essay to a publication (local media, blog, partner website, etc.) | 10 | |
| Post an advocacy video on social media and tag Member(s) of Congress | 10 | |
| Attend an in-district office visit with Member(s) of Congress (or their staff) | 10 | |
| Staff or board member attends NACHC's Policy & Issues Forum | 10 | |
| Participate in civic engagement efforts (voter registration, Census, etc.) | 10 | |
| Host staff or board member advocacy training at your organization | 10 | |
| Action alert response rate of 20% over a period of 6 months (HCAAdvocacy.org or state alerts) | 15 | |
| Register 100% of staff and board members as advocates at HCAAdvocacy.org | 15 | |
| Staff or board member participation in NACHC's Advocacy Leadership Program (ALP) | 15 | |
| Host a round table or candidate forum with elected officials (in-person or virtual) | 15 | |

Sample Resources

We are here to support you during the ACE application process. The following resources and templates are available to help you prepare your application materials:

- **Sample Advocacy Templates**
 - [Sample Advocacy Coordinator Description](#)
 - [Sample Advocacy Work Plan Outline](#)
 - [Sample Advocacy Board Resolution](#)
 - [Sample Advocacy Committee Bylaw Language](#)
- **Additional Resources**
 - [Advocate Sign-Up Sheet](#)
 - [Community Health Center Data](#)
 - [National Health Center Week Resources](#)
 - [Tips for Working with Elected Officials](#)

Find additional resources at www.hcadvocacy.org
Have questions? Email grassroots@nachc.org



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Additional ACE Information

The ACE Program's overarching goal is to demonstrate **meaningful engagement with elected officials at all levels of government**. As you complete your ACE application, please include any additional ways you are engaging in advocacy, even if they are not mentioned in our guidelines.

We are excited to celebrate all the work you do to stand up for Community Health Centers and will evaluate each application holistically.

Achieving ACE certification also provides access to a larger network of Community Health Center advocates across the country. Advocacy coordinators at ACE health centers will be invited to quarterly webinar discussions with your peers.

[APPLY HERE](#)



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