



# Advocacy 101

Making Systemic Changes  
United Way of Rhode Island and Horizon Healthcare Partners

# Your Presenters



**Karen Jeffreys**  
Director, Communications  
and Community Partnerships



**Kyle Bennett**  
Senior Director, Policy  
and Equity



**Elijah McLean**  
Program Officer,  
Education Policy



**Peggy Desjarlais**  
Program Officer, Housing  
and Economic Policy

# Introduce Yourself

Hello! My name is



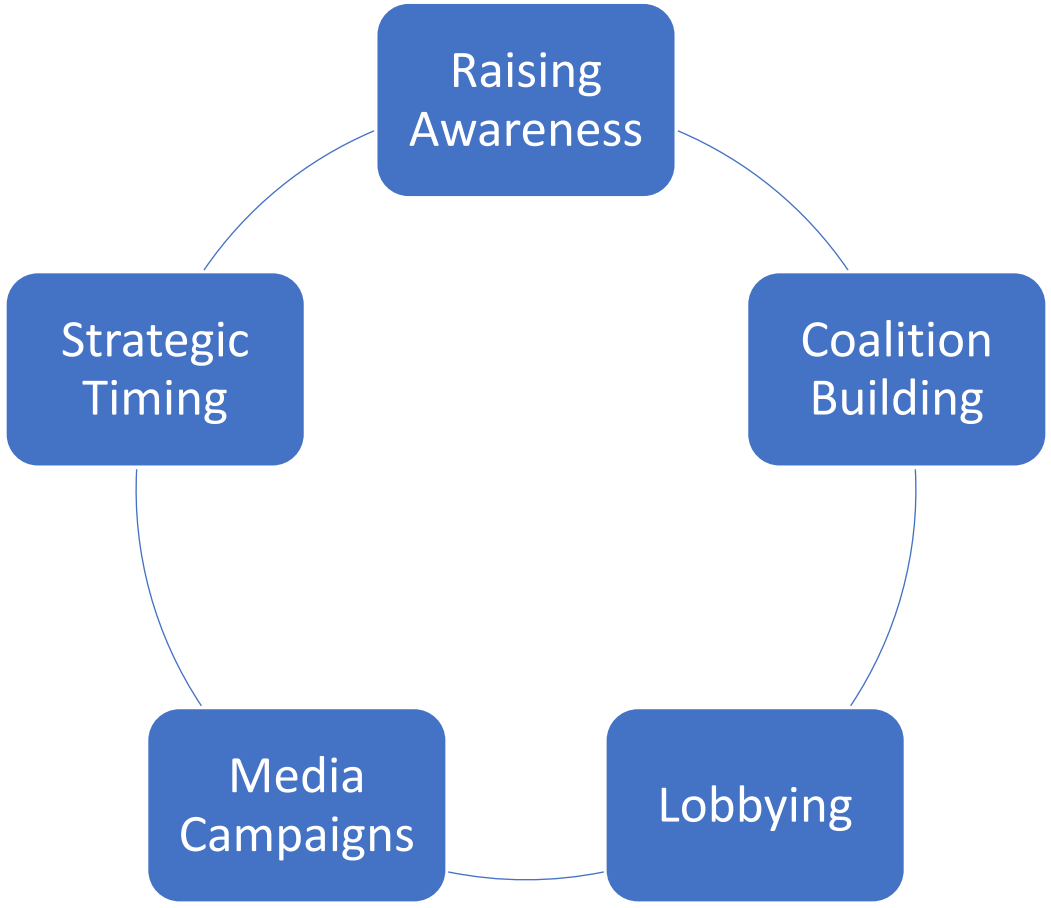
- Use the chat feature to share your name and organization
- Tell us: what you are passionate about advocating for?

# Goals for Advocacy 101



- Build basic advocacy skills
- Develop understanding of democratic processes
- Learn about upcoming behavioral health legislation
- Promote civic engagement
- Give confidence to beginners in their advocacy journey

# What is Advocacy?





# State of Rhode Island

## Executive

Governor

State Departments

- Executes laws, Proposes budget
- Administration of the State: DHS, DCYF, RIDE, EOHHS, RIPTA, DoH, DOT, DLT, DEM, EMA

## Legislative

Senate

House of Representatives

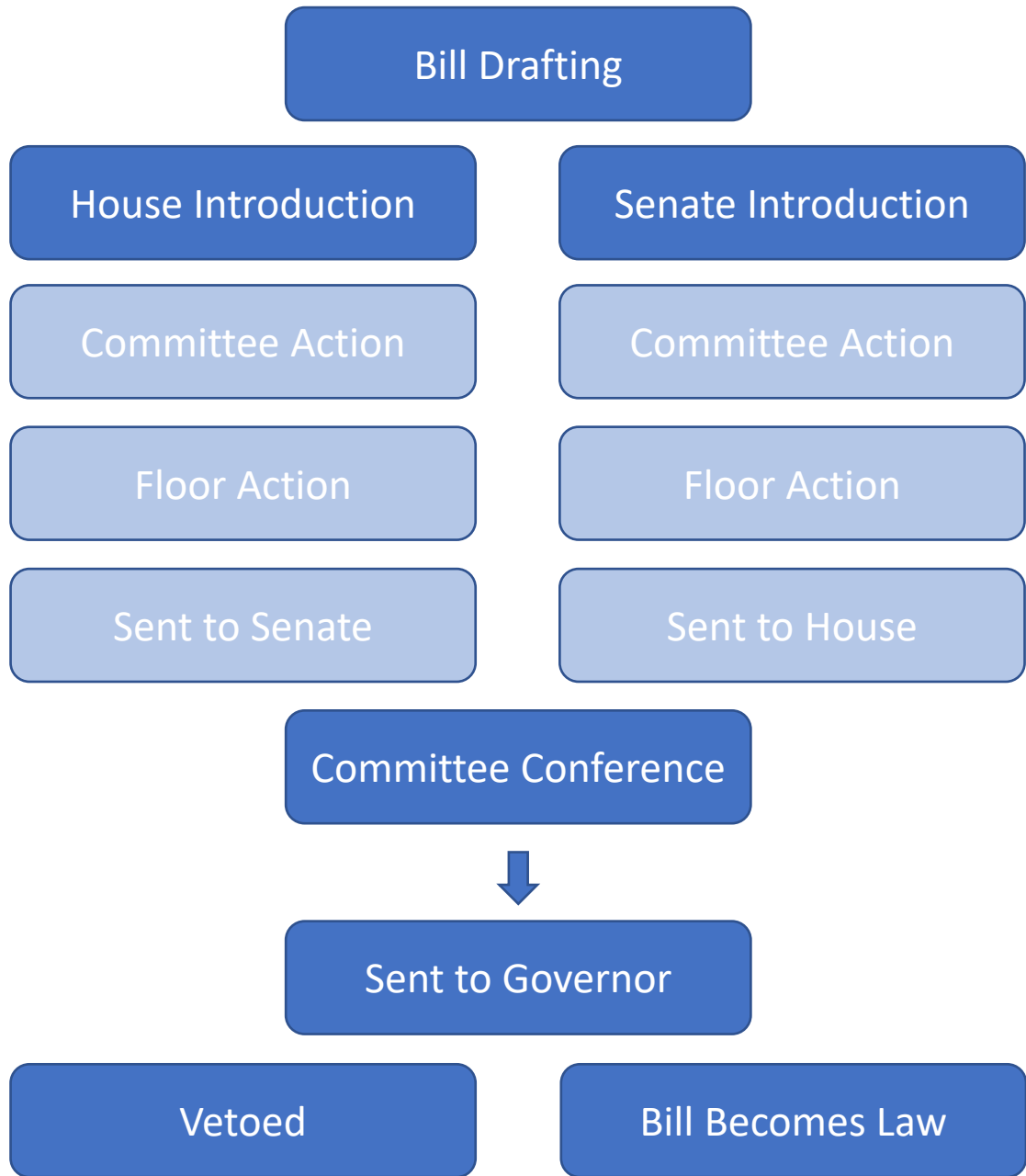
- Creates laws, Develops budget
- Represents population

## Judicial

Supreme Court

Lower Courts

- Interprets laws
- Superior Court, Family Court, District Court, Workers' Compensation Court, Traffic Tribunal



Track Legislation at  
[status.rilegislature.gov](http://status.rilegislature.gov)

# Behavioral Health Legislation

- What are the behavioral health legislative priorities?
- What does behavioral health legislation affect?
- Other legislative priorities





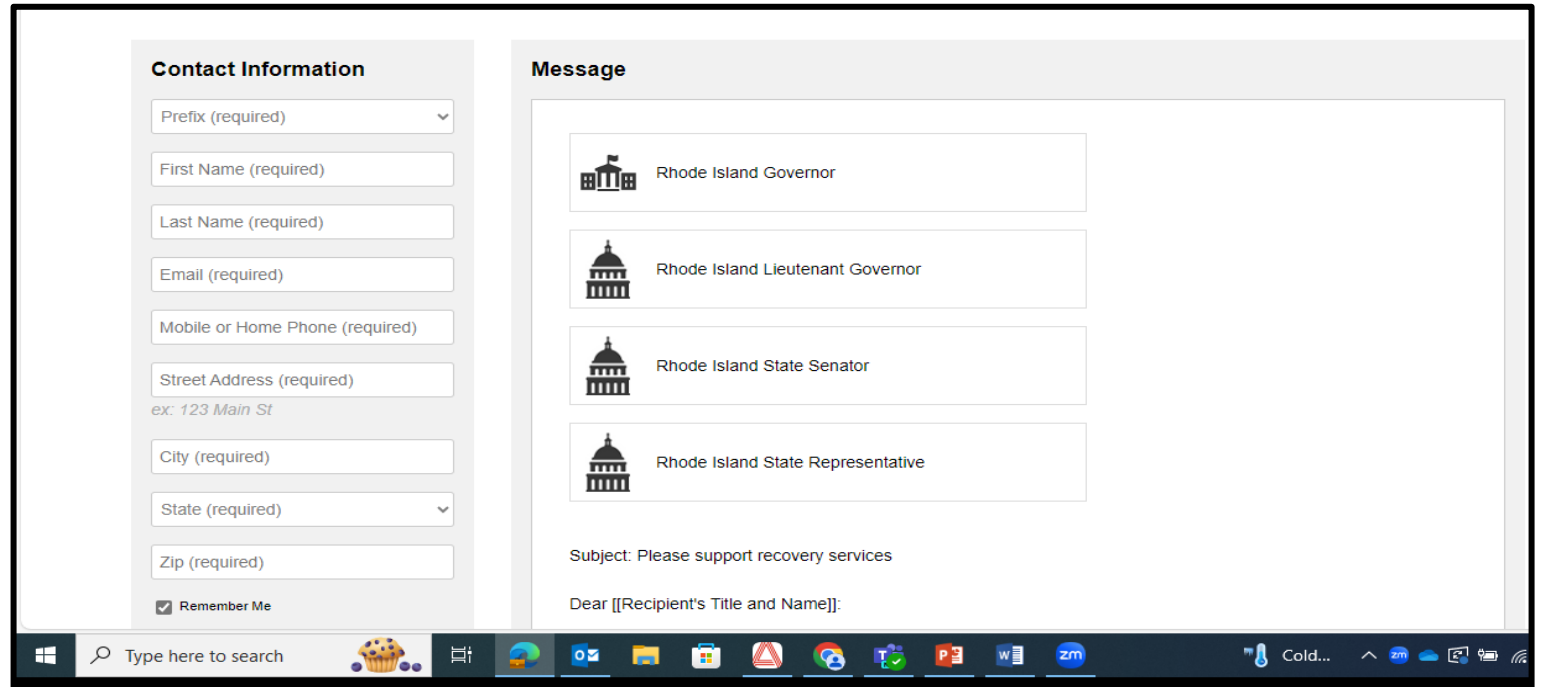
# What You Can Do

- Advocate
  - Behavioral Health Funding
- Attend events
- Meet with your legislators to advocate
- Tell your family and friends about the importance of mental health and why funding is critical
- Vote in elections



# What You Can Do: Softedge

- [Softedge](#)
- Capabilities
- Check out how easy it is...



The screenshot displays a web form for contact information and a message template. The form is divided into two main sections: "Contact Information" and "Message".

**Contact Information**

- Prefix (required) [dropdown]
- First Name (required) [text input]
- Last Name (required) [text input]
- Email (required) [text input]
- Mobile or Home Phone (required) [text input]
- Street Address (required)  
*ex: 123 Main St* [text input]
- City (required) [text input]
- State (required) [dropdown]
- Zip (required) [text input]
- Remember Me

**Message**

The message template includes a subject line: "Subject: Please support recovery services" and a salutation: "Dear [[Recipient's Title and Name]]:". Below the salutation, there are four selectable options for the recipient's title, each with a small icon of the Rhode Island State Capitol building:

- Rhode Island Governor
- Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor
- Rhode Island State Senator
- Rhode Island State Representative

The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and system tray icons.

# Upcoming Events

- March 11, 12pm MHARI and NAMI Rhode Island virtual policy briefing
- March 22, 7:45am Legislative Breakfast at Thrive Headquarters for Kent County Legislators
- May 1, 1pm State House Lobbying Day with Horizon Healthcare Partners



# Resources

- Kyle Bennett  
kyle.bennett@unitedwayri.org
- Karen Jefferys  
kjeffreys@hhpartners.org
- Elijah McLean  
elijah.mclean@unitedwayri.org
- Peggy Desjarlais  
peggy.desjarlais@unitedwayri.org
- [RI General Assembly](#)
- [United Way of RI ADVOCATE](#)
- [Horizon Healthcare Partners](#)