



Social Media Guide for Advocates

Many advocates want to increase their impact for the causes they support but aren't sure where to start. Doing more does not have to be overwhelming — there is an easy way to grow your impact at your fingertips! Use social media to engage your friends and family in advocacy and reach members of Congress in ways emails and phone calls can't.



Reasons to use social media to advocate for causes you care about

- 100 percent of Congress is on social media.
- Activate your personal network and connect with your members of Congress.
- Gain likes, shares, retweets, and more for your social media posts, which amplifies your voice and multiplies your impact .



Congress Pays Attention to Social Media

“In a poll of House and Senate offices by the Congressional Management Foundation, three-quarters of senior staff said that between one and 30 comments on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter were enough to grab their attention on an issue; 35 percent said that fewer than 10 comments were enough.”



Set up social media accounts

Sign up for Facebook:

1. Go to [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com).
2. Type in your information and hit “Sign Up.”
3. Once you sign up, you need to confirm your account through a code sent to your email or phone number. *Though providing a phone number is not required, it is recommended to help keep your account secure. If you are worried about having your phone number public, you can change that in your privacy settings.*

Sign up for Twitter:

1. Go to [Twitter.com](https://www.twitter.com).
2. Type in your information and hit “Sign Up.”
3. You need to verify your phone number when you sign up, but this number does not have to be shared publicly.
4. Next, you must select a username (also referred to as a handle) – this can be anything you choose, and Twitter will let you know if it is available.
1. Confirm all the other information on the page and click “Create My Account.”



Privacy settings for social media accounts

We understand advocates may be concerned about their privacy. Here are some instructions for securing your account. It is up to you to decide how private you want your account to be, but below are some tips!

Configuring Facebook Privacy Settings:

1. If you are not automatically prompted to set your privacy settings, you can find them by going to the top right-hand side of the page and clicking on the blue lock. There you can see a few options for changing your privacy settings.
2. For a quick fix: Select the “Privacy Check-up” option. This walks you through your basic privacy options.
3. For an in-depth check: Select the “See More Settings” option. Here you hand select what you want private, what your friends can see, and what you want public. To make sure you go through all the options, click through the tabs on the left-hand side such as “General,” “Security,” “Privacy,” and more.

To learn more, visit Facebook’s site that talks in depth about making sure your account is secure and how to only share what you want: facebook.com/about/basics/

When deciding how private you want your Facebook account to be, here are some things to consider:

If your Facebook account is private (only your friends can view your profile), you lack the ability to generate momentum around any advocacy posts you share because your posts won’t be visible to anyone who is not your friend.

Privacy on Facebook...

You are able to make individual posts public or private, the only risk you run is forgetting to change the privacy setting of a post. If this is the route you choose and you forget to change the privacy setting of a particular post, later you can edit your post to be public. This is the best option for someone who wants to keep their profile private but still wants to reach out to their members of Congress on social media.

To change the privacy setting of an individual post:

1. Create your post like normal.
2. Before you select “Post” select the drop down button on the left that will say either “Friends,” “Public,” or “Only Me.”
3. Select the privacy level you want for your specific post (this will not change your default post privacy settings).
4. Share your post!

Configuring Twitter Privacy Settings:

1. Click on your profile picture on the top right-hand side of the page and select “Settings.”
2. From there, tab through the different settings by selecting options on the left-hand side of the page (“Security and Privacy” is the second option).

To learn more, visit Twitter’s help section dedicated to answering questions about your account and privacy: support.twitter.com/categories/282

When deciding how private you want your Twitter account to be, here are some things to consider:

If your profile is private, only your followers can see your tweets and no one can retweet your posts. While this isn’t necessarily bad, it limits your influence as an advocate on Twitter. If you send a tweet to your member of Congress asking them to support a piece of legislation, for instance, no one can retweet you. But, if your account is public, people can retweet to show their support, which will tell your member of Congress that other people care about this issue too.

You might notice having a private Facebook profile doesn’t affect your advocacy as much as a private Twitter account. Both are highly effective tools for advocacy and are useful regardless of your privacy settings, so it is up to you to decide which platforms you use and how you use them. Figure out what is right for you, and remember, you can always update your privacy settings later.



Building a Network

Though you will likely have some friends or followers on Facebook and Twitter from your personal network, it is good to build your own advocate network on social media. Find your church on social media, or other people in your community who advocate for similar issues, and follow them. This allows you to learn from others, be inspired, and amplify your voice in these online communities. If there are people you advocate with, create a group on Facebook (this option is on the left-hand sidebar) so you can talk about your latest advocacy action and share tips you learn along the way.



Advocating on Social Media

Now that you are set up on social media, how can you use it to advocate for issues around global poverty? Find out below.

Advocacy on Facebook:



- **Share links so your friends can advocate.** Once you take advocacy actions on our [issues page](#), share the link so your friends can advocate too. This is easy and provides a great way to explain how fast and easy advocacy can be. In the post, share why you care about the issue or some of the statistics that show the need for the legislation, which is usually provided on the [issues page](#) or in issue fact sheets on the [resources page](#).
- **Tag friends who might want to advocate.** If you want to go a step further, tag friends who are passionate about the issues you are advocating for. To do this, write their name in the status box and they should pop up; otherwise, select the “Tag Friends” option on the bottom left-hand side of the status box. When your friends are tagged (depending on how private your settings are) their friends will see the post too, likely generating more impact!
- **Write on your members of Congress’ wall.** This is a great way to get your member of Congress’ attention. You can post a picture from an in-district meeting and thank them for their time and support on the issues you discussed. Or you can use it to ask for support on a particular piece of legislation. Though not all members allow public posts on their wall, one benefit of writing directly on their wall is anyone visiting their page will see it and can easily show their support by liking it or sharing their agreement in a comment. If your member doesn’t allow public posts, or if you want another way to engage your member of Congress on Facebook, see below.
- **Tag your members of Congress in a post.** If you can’t write on your member of Congress’ wall because of their page settings, create a status update and tag your member of Congress in it. All you have to do is type in their name and their account will pop up. If they aren’t showing up, select the button on the far left of the status box that says, “Tag People in Your Post.” Use this like you would if you were writing on their wall – send thanks, ask for support, or be an encouraging voice.

Advocacy on Twitter:



- **Share links so your followers can advocate.** When you take an action, share the link in a tweet to encourage others to advocate with you. This is an easy way to make people aware of the issue. Tweet about the action or share a compelling stat and then direct people to the link! Tip: make sure to use hashtags when relevant, this is especially key on Twitter (read more about that later).

On Twitter...

- **Tag followers who you think would care.** If you want to go a step further, when you share a link, also tag someone in the tweet. Tag people by typing “@” and then write out their Twitter handle (this is the same as their username). This can be found on the left-hand side of any Twitter profile, under their name. Tagging someone alerts them of the tweet. Because tweets are said to last only a few minutes, tagging them ensures someone sees the tweet even if they aren’t on Twitter when your post is published, and it makes them more likely to interact by clicking on the link or retweeting it.
- **Tag your members of Congress in a tweet.** You can ask your members of Congress to support legislation just like you would in an email or Facebook post, only remember you are limited to 140 characters! Tag them as described above and make sure to get in the piece of legislation’s name, its number (if possible), and how you would like them to support it (vote yes, co-sponsor, etc.). This is also a great place to thank your congressional member for support, whether it’s sharing a picture from a meeting or acknowledging that they co-sponsored a bill. Not only is it a great way to show your appreciation, but it is helpful for members of Congress to see positive support on social media — often they receive only negative feedback.

Tips for using Facebook and Twitter:

- **Use #hashtags wisely.** The point of hashtags is to create and contribute to conversations on particular topics, so try to join a conversation and see if your post gets some buzz! By joining or starting a hashtag conversation you give people a way to search for your topic, which raises your viewer potential and thus increases your impact. Though it is better to use hashtags that are already getting traction, you can create your own hashtag, if needed, for a particular issue. Simply put the “#” symbol before a word or phrase. If you are talking about a particular piece of legislation or issue, there are likely already hashtags being used. To find out what is being used, do some keyword searches on the platform you are using, check out websites you know are advocating for the issue, or reach out to someone who might know (we are happy to help!).
- **You don’t have to be an expert.** Many people think they can’t advocate because they don’t know enough about policy, but this should not stop you — your voice matters! The most important thing to focus on is your passion for the issue. [World Vision’s Advocacy Team](#) provides information and links, [graphics and photos to share](#), and even [drafts of social posts directed at your members of Congress](#) to guide you, as long as you bring your passion.

On Facebook and Twitter...

- **Share your story.** Always remember, one of the most important parts of advocacy is sharing why you care — make it personal and help members of Congress and your social network understand why they too might care about the issue. Part of your story is that you are a constituent. When you tell your member of Congress your story and it is attached to a profile confirming that you are in their area, you become more than a few words on a screen, which adds a personal touch that email can't. Sharing your story online is also great because your story may help someone else understand the need for advocacy in a new way. You never know when your story will touch or inspire someone else!
- **Do your research.** Check out our [resources page](#) to read fact sheets, [read blogs](#), or join our conference calls to learn about the different issues you can advocate for. Sure, you don't have to have all the facts — and no one expects you to be an expert, but the more you know, the better equipped you are to talk to others about why passion should translate into action. Whenever you advocate, and especially when you encourage your network to advocate, make sure you understand the basics of what you are supporting. If you have questions you can't find the answer to, [reach out — we are happy to help!](#)
- **Don't be afraid of a conversation.** Though it may seem intimidating to put your opinion out there in support of a piece of legislation, it can open up good conversations around poverty, [foreign assistance](#), and our [biblical call to advocacy](#). Opening up a conversation is the best way to help people understand why these issues matter to you and that anyone can make a positive impact.
- **Remember to thank people.** Whether it is your friends and family who tell you they took action or your member of Congress acknowledging your post or supporting a bill, everyone likes to be thanked. It is also a great way to continue the conversation and positively reinforce any action that took place.

For more information about social media and advocacy checkout some resources from our blog at worldvisionadvocacy.org/blog:

- [Study shows: Congress pays attention to social media](#)
- [Engaging the Next Generation](#)
- [An Advocate's Influence](#)
- [Six Tips to Advocate Socially](#)