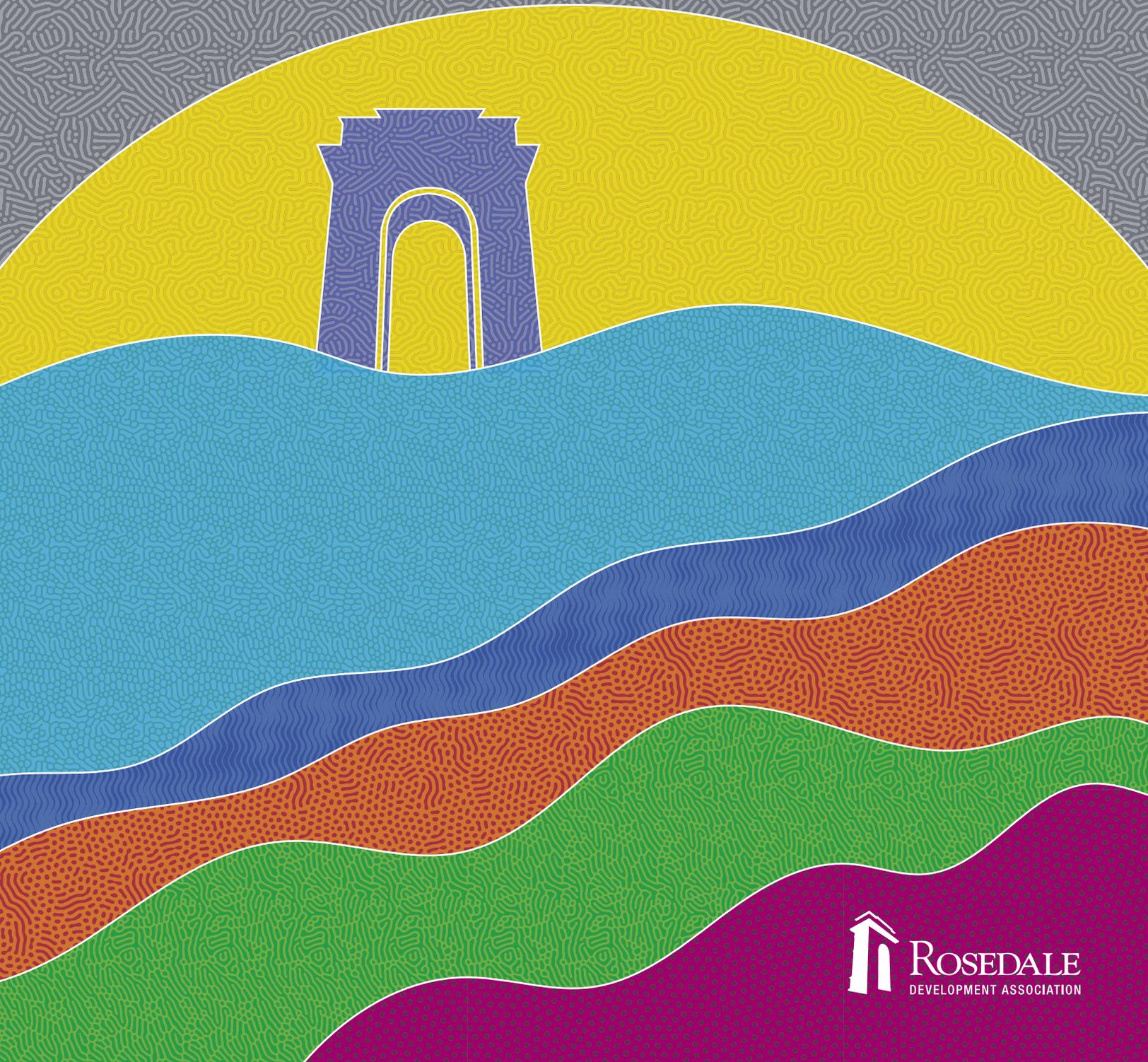


# MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN: MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

A YOUTH GUIDE TO ADVOCACY IN ROSEDALE



# MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN: MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

## A YOUTH GUIDE TO ADVOCACY IN ROSEDALE

**Have you ever dreamed about how to make your school, city, or state a better place?** Maybe there are rules that you don't think are fair, or times when you see a problem that needs to be fixed.

There is a way that anybody — especially you — can make those dreams into real change! This change can happen through advocacy. This guide will help you learn how to be an awesome advocate for the things, people, or issues that you care about the most.

### This guide includes:

- 1** **What is advocacy** and why is it important?
- 2** **It all starts with YOU!**: tools to decide what issues matter the most to you.
- 3** A **strategy guide** that helps you gain attention to your issue.
- 4** Local and state **decision maker maps**, showing you who is in charge and can help you make change around your issue.
- 5** Local **Process Maps** explaining the steps our local government takes to decide an issue.
- 6** A **Resource Guide** to help you become an amazing advocate.
- 7** **Definitions** for words you may see throughout this guide.



*Make change happen: a youth guide to advocacy in Rosedale* is produced by Rosedale Development Association as a part of the Advancing Rosedale Community Health (ARCH) Program. This guide is specific to governments and policies in Kansas City, KS. A PDF version of this guide with interactive links is available at [rosedale.org](http://rosedale.org).

# 1

## WHAT IS ADVOCACY?



**Advocacy is** when you speak up for someone or something. It can also mean defending someone's rights, needs, and interests. You can advocate for yourself or for others.



**Advocacy can happen** at different levels, with small acts (writing a postcard) or big bold statements (standing in front of large crowds).



A group of Rosedale youth shared their stories with the Wyandotte County Commissioners about their families' need for public transportation. They asked the Commission to fund a new bus line in Rosedale, and the Wyandotte County Commissioners agreed.

**Advocacy is your path to making change happen.**

IDENTIFY  
ISSUE →

BUILD  
STRATEGY →

ADVOCATE  
WITH OTHERS →

CHANGE  
HAPPENS



# IT ALL STARTS WITH YOU!

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ADVOCATE FOR?

**First you need to decide what you care about the most.** Where do you want to see change happen in your community? The following worksheet will help you figure out what issues are important to you. In each section there are blank areas to fill in your own examples.



# It all starts with YOU! worksheet

**Beliefs** are trust or faith in someone or something. You can believe in your friends, your abilities, or a cause.

| Agree                    | Somewhat                 | Disagree                 |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I believe all people should be treated equally and fairly.                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I believe sidewalks are an important part of the community to keep people safe and active.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I believe students should have access to the technology they need to succeed in schools.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I believe all people should have access to fresh food each day to properly nourish their bodies. |

**Values** are what you consider most important. For example, do you consider being on time important? Maybe spending time with your family is important to you.

| Agree                    | Somewhat                 | Disagree                 |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I value respecting others and kindness.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I value accepting responsibility even if I am in the wrong. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I value honesty and integrity.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I value individuality and openness.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I value community and welcoming all.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I value social awareness and leadership.                    |

**Motivation** is the feeling that pushes you to work on your goal. Making change can take a long time, so motivation helps you stick with it!

| If you:                             | Try:   |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Believe no one is helping           | Think how someone new could assist your cause.   |
| Feel the process is taking too long | Asking an adult for help organizing your tasks and keeping track of the progress you have made so far. |
| Have lost hope in change            | Look back at your beliefs and values and remember the reason why you are doing this.                   |

**How much time** can you give to advocating for an issue? Pick three days and a few times that work well for you.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Are you still having trouble deciding on what to advocate for?** Here are some ideas for issues you can advocate for:

- Changing the uniform policy for your school.
- Replacing old playground equipment with an all-ability playground.
- Making students safer by decreasing bullying at school.
- Starting a recycling campaign or a food drive at your school.
- Better quality or availability of school resources (textbooks, computers, wireless internet, etc.) for all students.



# STRATEGY GUIDE

**At times, advocating for yourself or others is easy;** all you must do is tell the person in charge about how you feel. But sometimes you must try hard and plan. Below you will find a guide on getting your opinion to the correct person.

## STEP 1 BUILD A COALITION

**Advocacy takes teamwork!** You need some great people on your team to make change happen. Begin reaching out to others (adults and youth) who may want to be part of this effort.

### Let's think about:

Who is IMPACTED by the issue?

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Who CARES about the issue?

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Who has TIME to join you in advocating for your issue?

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## STEP 2 FOCUS ON THE ISSUE

**Now that you have a team together**, come up with a one-sentence explanation of what your issue is and why you care about changing it. Make sure you all agree on this explanation before you move forward, and use details.

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## STEP 3 FIND A SOLUTION TO YOUR ISSUE

**With your team**, write down a short explanation of a solution to your issue. Be specific and use details.

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**Important:** As you talk to decision makers and experts who care about your problem, you may learn new things from them that can change how you understand both the problem and the solution.

## STEP 4 MAKE A PLAN

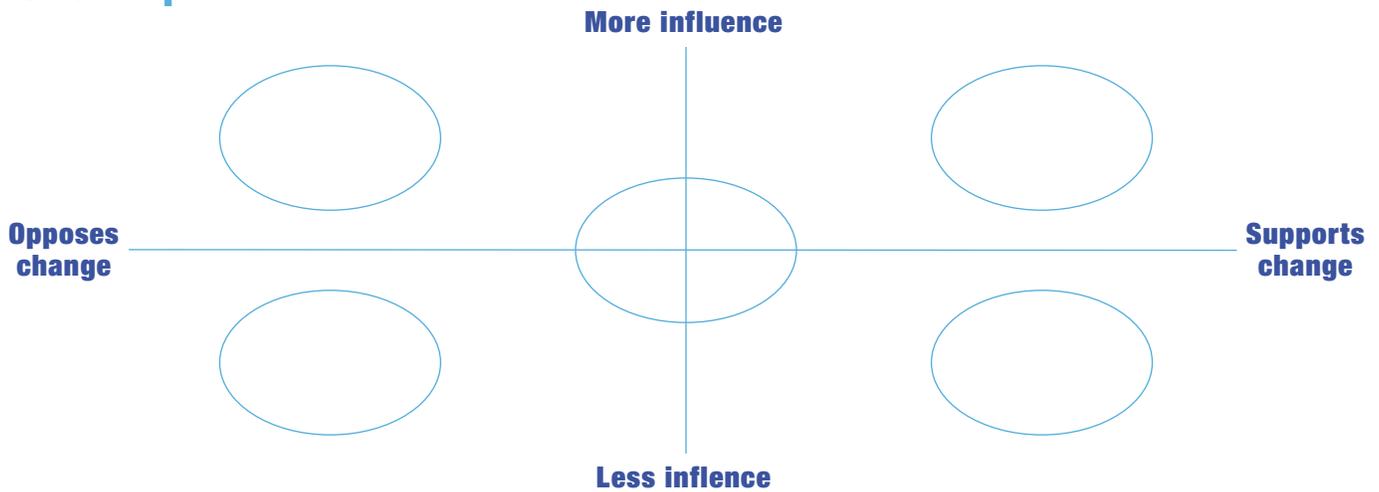
### Create a Power Map

A Power Map is a tool that helps a group visualize all the different people who are involved in making change happen with your issue. This [template](#) from The Change Agency can help your group create a power map.

To fill out the Power Map, think about:

- **Decision makers:** where do the people in power belong on the map? Use the decision maker map for help.
- **Experts:** who are the decision makers likely to listen to? For example, your principal may listen to teachers or to the PTO. Your School Board may listen to parents or to the USD 500 superintendent.
- **Public:** what do your friends and neighbors think about your issue?

## Power Map



## Framework Map

**Let's take a look at the three groups our advocacy is geared towards:** the public, experts, and decision makers. Decide where these groups or people fall on the framework map below — are they aware of the issue, willing to help, or ready to spring into action about your issue? Map out where the groups fall on the framework map, and this will help you know who to reach out to first.



Once we determine what each group thinks and feels about the issue, then we can plan on how to reach out to them to collaborate on the solution to your issue.

### STEP 5 CELEBRATE!

**Celebrating small victories** and progress toward your goals is when making change becomes fun! Victories help you feel even more motivated — you can do it!

# 4

## DECISION MAKER MAP

WHO SHOULD I BE TALKING TO?

**For most issues**, you will start by advocating to the decision makers closest to the issue. Depending on who makes the final decision about your issue, you may need to talk to different decision makers at different levels of power.



Use this chart to figure out which decision makers you should be talking to, and then contact them using the examples in the strategy guide.

| Issue involving:  | Level of Government                     | Decision Makers  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Schoolwide issues:</b><br>code of conduct, dress code, discipline policies<br><br><b>School culture:</b> school events, clubs, fundraisers, recycling, bullying, racism, injustice | Neighborhood, Building                  | Building principals<br>PTO or PTA  |
| <b>School district issues:</b><br><a href="#">school district policies</a> , school food, field trip and bus policies, school funding   | KCK School district, Archdiocese of KCK | <a href="#">USD 500 School Board</a><br><a href="#">KS Legislature</a><br><a href="#">Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas</a> |
| Streets, sidewalks, streetlights  | WyCo/KCK                                | <a href="#">Public Works, WyCo Commissioners</a>   |
| Parks, playgrounds  | WyCo/KCK                                | <a href="#">Parks and Recreation, WyCo Commissioners</a>   |
| Local policies and laws   | WyCo/KCK                                | <a href="#">WyCo Commissioners</a>   |

## Representing Rosedale

Adults in Rosedale have voted for the people to make decisions for us in the government. They are members of our community and work hard to listen and serve. Remember that these people work for you and want to hear your opinions. [Use this link](#) to fill out the tables below to know the names and contact information for the people who work in our government.

### Local

| District 3 Commissioner | At-Large Commissioner | At-Large Commissioner | Mayor |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|
|                         |                       |                       |       |

Here are some things Local Representatives do:

- Create schedules for public transportation, collecting trash, and clearing snowy roads.
- Oversee the schools, fire department, police, and emergency services in your area.
- Create plans for parks, signs, and road maintenance.

## State

| GOVERNOR | REPRESENTATIVE | SENATOR |
|----------|----------------|---------|
|          |                |         |

Here are some things State Representatives do:

- Control and oversee the hospitals around the state of Kansas.
- Oversee school curriculum (what you're taught in school).
- Create laws for the state of Kansas or vote for laws at the national level.

## Contacting decision makers

**Now that you've identified your issues**, the decision makers, and your strategy, it's time to reach out and speak up! Below is an example of how to communicate with decision makers.

**Hello [Decision maker],**

My name is [your name] and I live in your [district/city] at [cross street or area you live in].

It's important for decision makers to know that you live in the area that they represent! You can also include your school or any other information that is important to your issue

I am contacting you to tell you about [your issue]. [This issue] has been important to me and my community because [a personal detail or story about your connection to the issue]

A personal story is still one of the best ways of convincing someone to listen to you.

[I hope you will/please consider/can I count on you to] [specific request]. Please contact me at [your contact info] if you'd like to talk further.

The more specific you write, the better. For example, "repair the sidewalk between the A and B blocks of C street" is more effective than "support sidewalks."

**Thank you,**  
**[Your name]**

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO CONTACT DECISION MAKERS



### Written messages

Sometimes a letter or postcard is best. A handwritten note is special to receive, and shows you took your time to contact that decision maker. If you can, include a photograph of your issue.



### Social media campaigns

Social media posts that tag decision makers can be helpful in spreading awareness about your issue. If enough people interact with your posts, it can even launch a social media campaign!



### Video messages

Video messages are powerful when they are part of a big campaign where lots of people will be recording video messages or when showing a video of the issue to show how important it is.



### Face-to-face (or Zoom) meetings

Before the meeting, make sure to gather evidence in the form of **data** and **stories** that show how your issue is a big problem and how your solution will solve it. Also, decide who will share which evidence, and practice what you will say beforehand.



**Here is a video** on YouTube to help you understand how the government works:  
[Local & State Government - BrainPOP](#)

A PDF version of this guide with interactive links is available at [rosedale.org](https://rosedale.org).



# LOCAL PROCESS MAP

MY LOCAL ISSUE IS COMING UP FOR DISCUSSION – WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

## Local government

In **Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas**, a lot of issues are decided by the Unified Government Commission. There are 10 [Commissioners](#) elected to represent different districts, and the [Mayor](#) who is elected by the whole county.



The **Commission** is divided into smaller **Standing Committees** that discuss different types of issues and make recommendations to the larger Commission. The Commission makes decisions at public meetings on Thursdays at 7 p.m. If your issue is being talked about at a meeting, you can ask to speak by calling 913-573-5260 or emailing [UGClerkRequest@wycokck.org](mailto:UGClerkRequest@wycokck.org) before noon on the day before the meeting. You will be called when it's your turn and you can speak for three minutes.

## School District

Most issues having to do with schools are decided by the [Board of Education](#). Most meetings allow the public to speak to the Board. To speak about your issue, call 913-627-3880. You will be allowed to speak for three minutes.

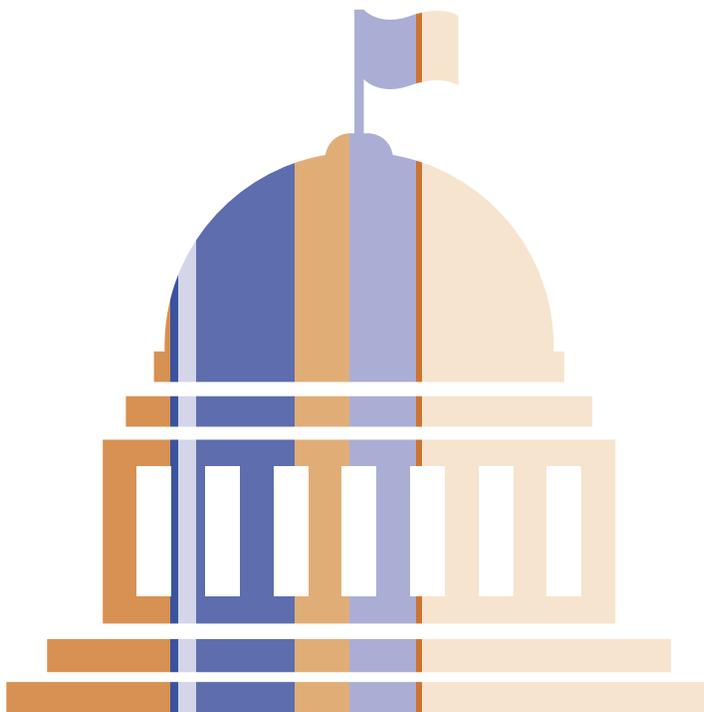


# RESOURCE GUIDE

**In this section** you'll find background information to help you become an expert advocate.

## Counting change

**Everything that the government spends money on** has to come out of the annual budget. Our commissioners use the money in the budget to solve problems around Rosedale. Here is the budget for the past year:



### 2020 Total UG budget: \$ 373,520,962

- Public Works - 87,069,321
- Other - 2,800,360
- Judicial Services - 10,895,117
- Internal accounts - 51,984,653
- General government - 28,780,760
- Community services - 36,663,951
- Mayor and commissioners - 1,061,990
- Public safety - 154,264,810

## Raising money

**Sometimes decision makers don't have the money** for the solution to your issue. An alternative is raising the money yourself. Here are some places you can start:

1

Organize a [fundraiser](#) in your community; whether you turn to your church, family, or neighborhood, enlist help and seek donations for any materials you might use for your fundraising efforts. You don't want to end up losing money!



2

If you are working with a neighborhood group, the [Neighborhoods Rising Fund](#) offers grants up to \$3,000 for community improvement projects. WyCo neighborhood groups are also eligible for a small annual grant through [Livable Neighborhoods](#).



3

If you are working with a nonprofit organization, like RDA, you can look into grants that might help fund your issue. A couple of local options are:

[Walmart Local Community Grant](#)

[Unified Government](#)  
[Hollywood Casino Fund](#)



### Master Plans

**A Master Plan is a set of rules or guidelines that a community uses** to figure out what kind of new development or projects they will be working on and how they will use the land around them. Rosedale has [two Master Plans](#) that were created with a lot of input from Rosedale citizens.

Make sure to check out the Master Plans to understand what guidelines a community has to follow.



# DEFINITIONS

**Advocacy:** Speaking up for someone or something about an issue. It can also mean defending someone else's rights, needs and interests. *Advocacy is an action.*

**Budget:** A specific amount of money that is promised to a particular purpose.

**Coalition:** Your dream team — a group of people working together toward a common goal.

**Commissioner:** An elected leader of a district who makes decisions about local issues.

**Role:** One of 10 people that together makes decisions for Wyandotte County and KCK.

**Examples:** Commissioners create a yearly budget to plan how to spend our money.

**Governor:** An elected leader of a state.

**Role:** Makes decisions for the whole State of Kansas.

**Examples:** Governors can declare a state of emergency, such as the Covid-19 mandates.

**Impacted:** People who are affected as a result of an action.

**Issue:** A problem that effects an entire group of people.

**Mayor:** An elected leader of a city or town.

**Role:** Makes sure citizens are safe and have everything they need.

**Examples:** Makes sure that police and fire departments are running smoothly, talks to businesses and city members, leads city council meetings.

**District:** Neighborhoods that are grouped together for government purposes. Rosedale is a district.

**Policy:** A set of principles, ideas or plans that guide decisions to achieve a certain outcome. Policies are important because they shape the way we do things, they determine how we behave, and how we experience our everyday lives.

**School Board:** A group of important community members that make decisions about education in a school district.

**Strategy:** A careful plan or method designed to achieve a goal.