



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Volunteer Action Network Toolkit:

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

Welcome

Volunteers are at the heart of Compassion & Choices' advocacy, education and outreach efforts. We're delighted to welcome you to the Volunteer Action Network! Our success hinges on the generous participation of supporters like you — volunteers from across the country who contribute their time and talents to help people nationwide access the full range of end-of-life options.

Our toolkits will help you match your interests and skills to the most impactful actions you can take as a Compassion & Choices volunteer. Particular attention has been given to resources that promote effective advocacy and are more likely to make change happen.

Mission and Vision

Our mission is to improve care, expand options and empower everyone to chart their end-of-life journey.

Compassion & Choices envisions a society that affirms life, accepts the inevitability of death, embraces expanded options for compassionate dying and enables everyone to choose end-of-life care that reflects their values, priorities and beliefs.

We're so grateful that you're willing to help us work toward our mission and vision!

Training

Our [Volunteer Resource Center](#) is your 24/7 online portal for training resources, including toolkits that cover:

- Basic Lobbying
- Communicating With Legislators and the Media
- Petitions, Tabling and Canvassing
- Passing a Local Resolution
- Hosting a House Party
- Hosting a *Finish Strong* Book Club Discussion
- Hosting a Video Screening with Q&A
- Introduction to Medical Aid in Dying

The National Volunteer Program manager can provide any assistance you may need regarding trainings, materials or website help while you are volunteering with Compassion & Choices. Please call AJ Hetzler at 406-552-2916, Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (Mountain time) for volunteer support.

Policies and Agreements

Below are two agreements that should be signed online before you begin official volunteer assignments or speak publicly on behalf of Compassion & Choices. If you are unsure whether you should complete these online agreement forms, contact National Volunteer Program Manager AJ Hetzler at 406-552-2916 or email volunteer@compassionandchoices.org.

[Compassion & Choices Volunteer Media Policy](#)

[Compassion & Choices Confidentiality Agreement](#)

Advocacy and Outreach Goals

Compassion & Choices' Goals in Jurisdictions Where Medical Aid in Dying Is Authorized (OR, VT, MT, WA, CA, CO, HI, NJ, ME and Washington, D.C.):

- Educate citizens on their full range of end-of-life options, including medical aid in dying and how to access the law.
- Educate doctors and other medical providers on how they can support their patients who inquire about or want medical aid in dying.
- Encourage healthcare systems, hospitals and hospices to adopt policies and procedures that are supportive of patient choice.
- Integrate and normalize medical aid in dying in existing healthcare systems so that people can access the end-of-life care they want from their own medical providers.
- Prevent and overcome barriers to access, and help ensure patients and providers understand the law and can choose the option the law provides for.

Compassion & Choices' Goals in States Where Medical Aid in Dying Is Not Yet Authorized:

- Grow our supporter base and create a robust volunteer advocacy network to take action to pass and protect medical aid-in-dying legislation.
- Raise awareness, educate and develop relationships with key stakeholders in the medical community, including state medical societies.
- Connect with potential bill sponsor candidates, lawmakers and their staff to provide technical support on medical aid-in-dying legislation.
- Find and recruit storytellers who are willing to share their personal experiences and advocate for Compassion & Choices' work.

Specific strategies and goals in every state vary and are directed by the Compassion & Choices field staff, local action team leaders, legislators and other partners leading the effort in that state. If you don't know your field staff point of contact, contact National Volunteer Program Manager AJ Hetzler at volunteer@compassionandchoices.org to find the appropriate staff contacts.

Volunteer Activities

In Your Community

- Supply your local senior center, senior living and other community places with our outreach resources and informational pamphlets.
- Table at health fairs or farmers markets to distribute information on end-of-life options and to find more supporters for the movement.
- Host a fundraiser or friendraiser.
- Organize a book club discussion of *Finish Strong* by Compassion & Choices President Emerita Barbara Coombs Lee.
- Hold a video screening on end-of-life issues (we have several titles to recommend) with a Q&A session.
- Become a public speaker and organize free local events to educate your community on end-of-life options, medical aid in dying and Compassion & Choices.
- Coordinate opportunities for other Compassion & Choices volunteers to provide local presentations.

Media

- Share your story and work with Compassion & Choices to raise awareness in your state.
- Identify other storytellers willing to share their stories.
- Call in to a radio show to voice your support for patient-directed end-of-life care.
- Write an op-ed or letter to the editor of a local, state or national paper or magazine.
- Educate your network by regularly sharing our news and Facebook posts.
- Be a social media voice for the movement on Facebook and Twitter.

Advocacy

- Start or join an action team in your state.
- Contact your lawmakers to discuss medical aid-in-dying legislation and then stay in touch.
- Speak up at town hall meetings and at legislator meet-and-greets.
- Attend community events and initiate discussions about medical aid in dying.

- Testify at legislative public hearings (if applicable).
- Participate in lobby days (if applicable).

Medical System

- Coordinate events to educate healthcare professionals and systems (hospitals, medical groups, hospices, healthcare associations) at grand rounds, in-services and conferences on all end-of-life options or medical aid in dying.
- Identify the policies and procedures on medical aid in dying of healthcare systems in authorized states.
- Educate and develop relationships with your state medical association and component associations to adopt supportive or engaged neutral positions on medical aid in dying.
- Be an internal champion and subject matter expert at your hospice, clinic, hospital or facility.

Help Us Track Volunteer Efforts

Visit the Volunteer Resource Center and use our [online tool](#) to log your volunteer activity so that we can record and celebrate it! Bookmark the link below to visit the tool and note your efforts.

Why Volunteer?

- Leave a legacy by being part of this movement and adding to the momentum.
- Engage in democracy and the political process.
- Learn about people and politics.
- Help change policy and society.
- Make new friends and expand your social network.
- Educate and empower others in your community.
- Help people access the full range of end-of-life options in their state.

Thank you

Once again, we're so grateful that you've chosen Compassion & Choices as a place to invest your time, energy and talent as a volunteer.