



2026 ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Influencing and impacting state and federal
legislation.

ABSTRACT

A comprehensive strategy to ensure TCIA will be effectively engaged with policymakers, regularly producing timely, authoritative policy briefings, and have an established grassroots advocacy network to cover at least 10 targeted legislative districts by August 31, 2026.

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Background

Effective advocacy provides tree care professionals with the tools and confidence to engage with policymakers, advocate for their industry, and shape the regulatory landscape. Whether it's small businesses or larger companies, every TCIA member has a stake in how laws and regulations affect their work. Proactive advocacy helps make their voices count.

With this plan, we begin building a grassroots network that reflects the diversity and strength of the tree care industry—from family-owned businesses to national service providers. Success means having a well-informed, engaged membership that can mobilize quickly around key issues, whether it's workforce development, safety regulations, or environmental policy.

It also means creating a culture of advocacy where members see themselves not just as business owners or arborists, but as stakeholders in public policy. When TCIA members are showing up at town halls, submitting testimony, and meeting with legislators, that's when we know our advocacy plan is working.

This plan also seeks to make advocacy accessible. That means simplifying complex policy issues into clear, actionable messages and providing training that builds confidence in members who may be new to advocacy. Everyone has a role to play if our advocacy efforts are to be successful.

The goal is to create a seamless experience where members feel informed, empowered, and connected to the broader advocacy mission.

Building Blocks

Objectives and Results

To drive delivery of policy priorities for our members, this plan develops a comprehensive grassroots engagement strategy that

1. covers at least 10 targeted legislative districts,
2. builds sustained relationships with elected officials,
3. educates and engages members on our key issues and the legislative process,
4. and identifies and mobilizes grassroots advocates

Expected results include

- an improved ability to influence state and federal legislation
- effective engagement with policymakers and TCIA membership through regular production of timely, authoritative policy briefings
- increased member participation in advocacy

Member Policy Issues

Our advocacy will focus on key member issue priorities for our engagement efforts.

Currently those issues include:

- **OSHA Standard Adoption - Seeking a clear OSHA standard tailored to tree care work**
 - We urge Congress to encourage OSHA to promptly issue a proposed rule establishing a clear, tree care-specific workplace safety standard based on the ANSI Z133 consensus model.
 - This will provide clarity for small businesses, inspectors, and workers by addressing hazards unique to tree care operations.
 - As well as reduce fatalities, improve compliance, and create safer job sites across the country.
- **Practical Immigration Policy Solutions;** Targeted reforms are essential for workforce stability and public safety
 - Maintain the bipartisan 'Certified Seasonal Employer' exemption in the FY26 DHS Appropriations Bill to give long-Provide protections and compliance clarity for TPS recipients and employers.
 - Support the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act (EWEA) to create an H-2C visa program (85,000 annually) Implement an improved E-Verify system with protections for responsible employers.
- **Wildfire: Federal Standard of Care for Hazard Tree Pre-Inspections**

TCIA is urging Congress to include in the Fix Our Forests Act (S. 1462)

 - A minimum federal standard of care for hazard tree pre-inspections (ANSI A300).
 - Clarification that vegetation management contractors are not 'owners or operators'

These reforms will reduce wildfire ignition risk, stabilize insurance markets, and ensure contractors can continue this essential work.
- **Pesticide preemption**
 - TCIA is asking Congress to support state-level pesticide preemption in the 2025 Farm Bill—maintaining a consistent, science-based framework that protects tree health, public safety, and the environment for generations to come.
 - State-level action may also be required as needed.
 - **State and local issues as introduced at the state and local levels**
 - **Engagement, support, and election of pro-TCIA candidates**

Detailed background and TCIA position on these issues is available in our position papers and talking points memos.

Opportunities for Member Education

Currently, TCIA provides a wide array of education opportunities for our members. The plan includes integration of advocacy training into this well-established process. The plan's education elements will build awareness and understanding of the importance of our policy issues, the advocacy process, and the impact grassroots participation can have with the goal of driving increased member engagement in our advocacy activities.

The plan includes policy, advocacy, and mobilization education via

- Regularly scheduled webinars/on-line sessions
- In-person opportunities
 - EXPO sessions
 - WMC sessions
 - Local opportunities
- Fly-in preparation and participation

Communication Opportunities

TCIA's member communications channels are well-defined and maintained. The plan will utilize these channels while building and introducing a dedicated platform and stream of advocacy and action-related messages.

In addition, quarterly legislative updates to elected officials highlighting industry trends, workforce impact, and policy priorities will be added to the mix.

To be impactful and to engage and retain advocates, communication elements must be regular in their release, as well as consistent and compelling in their messaging.

Communication elements will align and leverage TCIA's current comprehensive multiple channel content strategy, including print and digital publications, podcasts, long form and short form written pieces, video and audio content, discussion forums, and social media.

Mobilization Opportunities

Education and communication can produce well-informed members. To produce change, our advocates at every level also need to be activated to mobilize, take action, and engage. The plan provides regular opportunities for member-advocates to engage in our advocacy efforts. A Member Engagement Journey map helps define the milestones along the way to becoming a full-engaged member-advocate.

The primary mobilization vehicle is the Quorum platform. Quorum is an AI-powered public affairs software that allows us to get information and execute strategy all in one place. With it, we will be able to identify, track and act on legislation at the federal, state and local level to maximize our interactions with members of Congress, staffers, and other stakeholders.

Policy Maker Relationship Building Opportunities

Identifying and prioritizing targeted legislative districts is essential for building a durable advocacy strategy. By focusing on a select group of districts, we can allocate resources more effectively, deepen relationships with key elected officials, and create a consistent presence that reinforces our credibility. Sustained engagement in these areas ensures that policymakers understand our priorities and view our organization as a trusted partner rather than a transient voice.

This approach also positions us to influence policy outcomes more strategically. Legislators are more responsive to advocates who demonstrate long-term commitment to their communities and constituents. Concentrating efforts in targeted districts allows us to cultivate champions for our issues, strengthen bipartisan support, and amplify our impact across the legislative process. In short, this targeted strategy transforms advocacy from reactive outreach into proactive relationship-building that drives results.

The plan seeks to identify at least 10 key legislative districts for this effort.

Criteria for Selecting Targeted Legislative Districts

Choosing the right districts is critical to maximizing the impact of our advocacy efforts.

The following criteria can guide our selection:

COMMITTEE INFLUENCE

Prioritize districts represented by legislators who serve on committees relevant to TCIA policy priorities. These members often have outsized influence on whether bills advance or stall.

LEADERSHIP ROLES

Target districts with legislators in leadership positions—such as caucus leaders, committee chairs, or ranking members—who can shape legislative agendas and negotiations.

ALIGNMENT WITH POLICY INTERESTS

Focus on districts where elected officials have demonstrated interest in issues related to the tree care industry or advocacy goals. Past voting records, public statements, and sponsored legislation are strong indicators.

POLITICAL COMPETITIVENESS

Competitive districts often have legislators who are more receptive to constituent engagement and coalition-building. These areas can offer opportunities for bipartisan relationship development.

GEOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC RELEVANCE

Select districts that represent regions where TCIA membership has a significant

presence—such as member businesses, employees, or economic impact. This strengthens our credibility and local connection.

EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

Leverage districts where TCIA already has some level of engagement or local champions. Building on existing connections accelerates trust and influence.

STRATEGIC DIVERSITY

Include a mix of urban, suburban, and rural districts, as well as representation from both major parties. This ensures broad support and resilience against political shifts.

District Scoring Framework

To make district selection actionable, the plan will apply a weighted scoring system based on the criteria outlined above. This includes assigning each district a score from **1 (low priority) to 5 (high priority)** for each criterion, then calculate a composite score to rank districts.

Criterion	Weight	Description
Committee Influence	25%	Legislator serves on key committees impacting your policy priorities.
Leadership Role	20%	Holds leadership positions or significant influence in the chamber.
Policy Alignment	20%	Demonstrated interest or voting record aligned with your issues.
Political Competitiveness	10%	District is competitive, making legislator more receptive to engagement
Geographic/Economic Relevance	15%	Strong organizational presence or economic impact in the district.
Existing Relationships	10%	Current connections or local champions already in place.

Formula:

Composite Score = $\sum(\text{Criterion Score} \times \text{Weight})$

For example, if a district scores **5** on Committee Influence, **4** on Leadership Role, and so on, multiply each by its weight and sum the results. The maximum possible score is **5.0**.

Core Plan Components

To accomplish these goals, the following core components will be utilized. Those shown in blue appear on the attached project plan milestone chart with completion dates defined.

Member-Driven Advocacy

- **District-Level Engagement:** Encourage members to build relationships with their own elected officials. Provide toolkits with talking points, sample emails, and guidance on scheduling meetings.
- **Advocacy Ambassadors:** Identify and train a group of passionate members to serve as regional advocacy leaders who regularly engage with lawmakers.

Consistent Communication

- **Quarterly Legislative Updates:** Send brief, well-designed updates to elected officials highlighting industry trends, workforce impact, and policy priorities.
- **Personalized Outreach:** Once identified, send tailored communications to each official's targeted district—mention local member companies, economic contributions, and community involvement.

Host Local Events

- **Site Tours:** Invite elected officials to visit member businesses in their districts. These are powerful, visual ways to show the impact of your industry.
- **Roundtables & Town Halls:** Organize small, informal gatherings with members and officials to discuss local issues and industry challenges.

Annual Advocacy Day/In-District Day

- Bring members to the state capital or Washington, D.C. for a structured day of meetings. Include training sessions, briefing materials, and follow-up plans.

Build Coalitions

- Identify and partner with allied organizations (e.g., environmental groups, small business associations) to amplify our voice and show broad support for shared priorities.

Recognize Champions

- **Legislator of the Year Award:** Publicly recognize officials who support our industry. This builds goodwill and encourages continued engagement.
- **Social Media Shoutouts:** Highlight positive interactions with lawmakers on our platforms to reinforce relationships and show appreciation.

Leverage Digital Advocacy Tools

- Regularly utilize [Quorum](#) to mobilize members quickly and track engagement.
- Create action alerts that make it easy for members to contact their representatives with a few clicks.

PAC Engagement

- Use the VFTPAC to support candidates who align with TCIA's industry's values and priorities.

Educate and Empower

- Offer [webinars or workshops](#) on how policy affects your industry and how members can effectively advocate.
- Provide [simple, nonpartisan resources](#) to demystify the legislative process.

Maintain Relationships Year-Round

- We won't just reach out when you need something. [Send holiday cards, congratulate officials on elections, and share positive news from your industry.](#)

Grassroots Advocacy Plan Timeline

Items/Actions	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Identify and define Member Issues													
Upper level/Federal Issues													
State and local issues													
Legislative Targets													
Identify 10 Districts													
Quarterly Legislative Updates to Districts													
Maintain regular communication, cards, etc.				Ongoing	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>
Member Education Opportunities													
Webinar													
Fly-In/In District													
On-site sessions/Roundtables													
EXPO													
WMC													
Member-Driven Advocacy													
Identify Member Advocacy Ambassadors													
Train Member Advocacy Ambassadors													
First Toolkit with talking points and info													
Updated Member Advocacy Toolkit Released													
Member Communication Opportunities													
Quarterly Legislative Updates to Members													Midterms
State of Report													
Scorecard and Recommendations													
Recognize Champions													
Social Media Shoutouts													
Legislator(s) of the Year													
Legislative Portal	Voter/Voice	Voter/Voice	Voter/Voice	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum	Quorum
Release new/updated site				Ongoing	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>	>>>>>
Release Take Action Opportunities													