

# How to Become a Policy Wonk

For each campaign you need to have one person designated as the “policy wonk,” who is able to answer detailed questions about your policy objective. But... what does it actually mean to be the policy wonk? And, how do you become the policy wonk?

## Here are six tips to help you become the policy wonk for your campaign:

1. Have basic statistics on your issue at the tip of your tongue. Most importantly, know your local survey data. You also should understand the statistics listed on your factsheet.
2. Read and understand the model ordinance from TALC for your policy objective. Be able to discuss the ordinance if people have questions. Call TALC at 510.444.8252 if you have trouble understanding any part of it.
3. Know the specifics of how your policy has been implemented in other cities and counties around the state. How many communities have passed this? How has their experience been? What were challenges and compromises made? Has it been successful?
4. Understand how your policy would fit into the operations of your specific city. What are some quirks about your city that would need to be taken into consideration? (Having rent control, or having no police department, for example.) Who would need to be involved in the ordinance implementation?
5. Understand what your policy makers concerns will be with the policy. What will your opponents say to him/her? Have a substantive response prepared and practiced.
6. Acknowledge the role of the policymakers in making key decisions for your policy implementation. Don't answer questions that you still need to figure out together with them. Let them know, for example, that you would like to be a resource for the city attorney to help figure out the answer to their question.

wonk |wä NG k| noun

a studious or hardworking person: *any kid with an interest in science was a wonk*

- a person who takes an excessive interest in minor details of political policy



*For all of these items, not only should you read and study the related documents and materials, but you should be prepared to talk about them. Practice explaining these issues to someone in your office and practice answering questions about your policy in a succinct & clear manner.*