

# Advocacy Community Building Basics



# Training Topics

- Advocacy program goals
- Advocacy program operations overview
- Community building tactics
- Managing growth

# Advocacy Program Goals



# Focused on Relationship Building

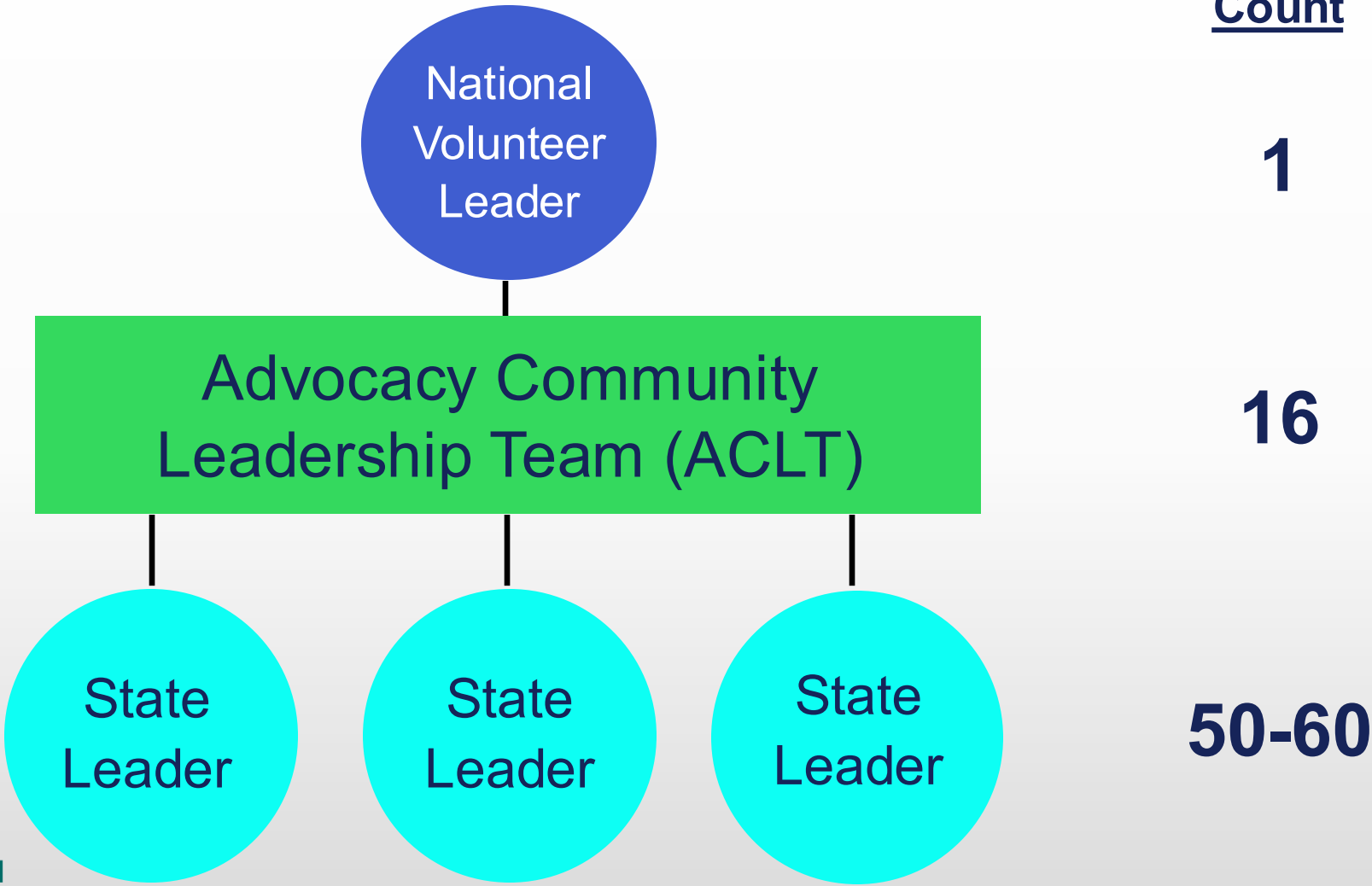
- Our program's goal is to **motivate advocates to build long-term relationships with legislators and staff** that help earn support for NAAF's issue agenda
- Volunteer advocacy leaders are **empowered to build and grow local advocate communities** who work together to engage legislators



# Grassroots Advocacy Program Operations Overview



# NAAF Advocacy Community Leadership



# Leadership Roles and Activities

- The **National Volunteer Leader** and the **ACLT** support **State Leaders'** efforts to build advocate communities in each state
- **NAAF's Communications Director, Gary Sherwood**, manages the Advocacy Program. He supports leadership and:
  - Directs nationwide advocate recruitment programs
  - Engages advocates by providing issue education, training, and progress reports
  - Mobilizes advocates to contact their legislators
    - To most effectively build relationships, NAAF prioritizes scheduling advocate meetings with legislators and staff



# State Leader: Chief Community Builder

- The State Leader's **main responsibility is building the advocacy community** in their state
- State Leaders organize advocate communities to:
  - Assist with local advocate recruitment efforts (e.g., via the Walk Program)
  - Complete regular meetings with legislators and their staff
  - Maximize participation in mobilizations to communicate with legislators
  - Support state legislative initiatives (with NAAF approval)



# Community Building Tactics



# Welcome Communications

- As new advocates are added to the database, **their State Leader is alerted**
  - State Leaders can access their advocate lists through NAAF's advocacy database
- State Leaders can send each new advocate a **welcome communication(s) introducing their local advocacy community**

# Welcome Communications (cont.)

- The initial communication can be a **personal email**
- If the new advocate provides their phone number, the State Leader can also place a **brief welcome call**
  - This will likely result in leaving a voicemail

# Send Group Communications Regularly

- Building a community culture requires **consistent State Leader engagement**
  - Start with a goal of completing 2-3 group communications monthly
- Keep communications simple
  - Forward a national communication (e.g., a newsletter or issue update) with a personal note
  - Inquire if anyone has questions or feedback about an issue or their experience with NAAF



# Send Group Communications Regularly (cont.)

- Ask about the group's preferences and **consider introducing communications channels tailored to them**, like:
  - A WhatsApp group
  - A group text
- Consider creating a monthly check-in meeting
  - Provide updates on the state advocacy group's growth and NAAF's progress on federal or state issues
  - Thank advocates for their time and effort
  - Schedule as a Zoom/Google Meet session
  - Look for opportunities for community members to meet in person



# Send Group Communications Regularly (cont.)

- National NAAF advocacy programs will provide communications opportunities including:
  - Helping **organize advocate recruitment** programs (e.g. via a local walk)
  - **Personalizing mobilization communications** asking advocates to contact legislators via email, phone, petition signature, etc.

# Engage on State Legislative Issues

- Organizing local advocates to help pass state-level alopecia legislation can help grow the state's community
- Before beginning communications on a state issue, **discuss it with Gary Sherwood** to ensure it supports NAAF's legislative strategy
- NAAF's **federal issue agenda takes priority**
  - If a federal issue requires advocates' attention, state issue communications will be paused



# Relationships Drive Engagement

- Advocates' relationships with the State Leader and other community members will motivate them to help grow the community and build relationships with legislators

# Managing Growth



# Use the Support Network

- As problems or challenges are identified in a state, **State Leader and ACLT can work together** to address them
- As needed, **talk with the National Volunteer Leader and Gary Sherwood** to address problems and questions

# Taking Advantage of Growth

- As the state's community grows, State Leaders should take note of the most enthusiastic advocates
  - NAAF staff is always looking for recommendations for candidates to fill leadership vacancies
- If certain areas of a state are growing faster, and it would be more effective to create a local team to manage that area, contact Gary Sherwood

# Questions?

Please contact  
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