

**Citizen Advocacy Center – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala and Building Democracy TOGETHER**  
**Talking Points for Soliciting for Ticket Sales, Program Ads, Sponsorships, and Donations**

**Representative Accomplishments of the Citizen Advocacy Center:**

**Civic Education**

- CAC spearheaded the drive to require a civics education course in Illinois public high schools
- CAC provides in-depth civic and public policy immersion internships to more than a dozen high school, college and law students each year
- CAC provides more than 40 frequently updated lesson plans for civics educators
- CAC community lawyers present on topics that advance the understanding and practice of citizen engagement -- last year community lawyers reached more than 2,100 students and citizens

**Community Lawyering**

- CAC community lawyers offer citizens guidance through the complex rules and regulations that govern out local and state institutions
- CAC community lawyers respond to over 400 issues of citizen concern each year
- Common issues of citizen concern include: open and transparent government, public record requests and government compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, government violations of the First Amendment, economic development (including TIF districts and other economic incentives), zoning and land use, government procurement policies and practice, home rule, governmental ethics, ballot access and other election issues, census counts, lobbying, redistricting, governmental law including municipalities, school districts, counties, state, township, and special districts
- CAC community lawyers have been quoted by journalists in print and broadcast new articles over 70 times in 2018

**Government Accountability & Transparency**

- CAC community lawyers attend and monitor nearly 60 public meetings each year
- CAC publishes “best practices” reports, which are platforms for policy change
- CAC assists student journalists to know their rights with Press Rights for Student Journalists Act
- CAC champions legislative efforts to expand citizen engagement

**Issue Advocacy**

- CAC educates the public about the crucial role of the federal courts in protecting citizen rights
- CAC monitors legislative amendments to laws that protect citizen engagement, including the Open Meetings Act, the Freedom of Information Act, Illinois’ anti-SLAPP (strategic lawsuit against public participation) law, the Election Code, and many more

- CAC assists citizens to file requests for review with the Attorney General's Office to provide guidance on Illinois Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Act provisions

### **Citizen Advocacy Center's Mission:**

**The Citizen Advocacy Center is dedicated to building democracy for the 21st century by strengthening the citizenry's capacities, resources, and institutions for self-governance. We are committed to:**

- **Make government more accountable** to the people by increasing democratic protocols and by developing and empowering the voice of citizens;
- **Further the citizen's understanding of civic tools and public skill** in using these tools for societal problem solving;
- **Promote individual and community efforts to resolve contemporary societal problems** involving the rights and responsibilities of citizens, workers, shareholders, taxpayers, and consumers and the health, safety, and welfare of the communities we serve;
- **Stimulate citizen awareness of and action** on issues of public significance;
- **Improve access to government-held information**, access to the airwaves, access to the ballot, access to the courts;
- **Advance justice:** (a) by increasing the awareness of and commitment to community lawyering/advocacy; (b) by encouraging lawyers, professionals, and volunteers to build democracy at the local level; and (c) by replicating the work of CAC.