

# Project Spotlight: Students Run Philly Style



**Project Type:** Advocacy Strategy

**Timeline:** May – September 2024

## About the Client

Students Run Philly Style (SRPS) is a nonprofit organization that aims to transform young people's lives in Philadelphia by pairing them with mentors who support their development through the medium of long-distance running. As a key program objective, SRPS prepares young people for a full or half-marathon throughout the school year, and aims to support LGBTQ+ youth to participate fully in the running community. SRPS also partners with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and offers its programming as a formal diversion program designed to keep youth ages 11-17 facing misdemeanor or felony charges out of the juvenile justice system.



Photo Credit: Students Run Philly Style



## Project Scope

As SRPS increased its visibility as a leader in the youth running sector – particularly given its pioneering work in securing formal opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth to participate in citywide running events – the organization was invited to engage in policy advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening the sector, and impacting the communities they serve. However, as a nonprofit organization focused on direct service delivery, SRPS initially faced challenges in developing a set of policy advocacy tools, and an internal decision-making process to identify which advocacy activities were best suited to their strengths and expertise.

Over the summer of 2024, Anavi Strategies was brought on to support SRPS in developing an Advocacy Decision-Making Framework to guide its advocacy work over the coming period. The final deliverable contained a clear vision for SRPS's policy advocacy efforts, a suite of advocacy tools aligned with the organization's expertise and capacity, and a decision-making tool that SRPS could use to determine what kinds of advocacy opportunities hold the most potential for impact.

## Project Activities

### Document & Context Review

At the beginning of the process, Anavi Strategies reviewed SRPS's current strategic plan, along with a series of relevant organizational documents to better understand its service delivery model.

### Staff Advocacy Planning Sessions

Anavi Strategies conducted two full-team planning sessions which offered staff a baseline understanding of the purpose and organizational benefits of engaging in advocacy, outlined SRPS's goals and priorities in terms of its advocacy work, and identified potential challenges in developing a more robust advocacy strategy. Throughout each sessions, SRPS staff identified takeaways such as:

- *Advocacy efforts must be situated within a clear organizational mission and vision.*
- *Importance of balancing policy impact with opportunities for youth leadership development.*
- *Opportunities to build closer relationships with local and state-level elected officials.*
- *A clear decision-making framework can support organizations in prioritizing specific advocacy efforts in the context of many urgent social issues.*

### Development of Decision-Making Framework

Anavi Strategies developed a Framework to guide SRPS's advocacy work which contained: A) A clear vision for the organization's impact in terms of policy advocacy; B) A suite of advocacy tactics designed to both enhance the organization's policy impact, as well as continue developing key advocacy skills; and C) A decision-making tool to support the organization in determining which kinds of advocacy opportunities are best suited for SRPS to engage in.

## Results & Deliverables

SRPS's leadership and staff praised Anavi Strategies' work, finding the decision-making framework an integral component of their strategic plan for the next 3-5 years.

Acknowledging that many organizations face challenges in advocacy work, Anavi Strategies has made a standardized version of the Advocacy Decision-Making Tool available for free download on our [website](#). The tool is accompanied by a [blog](#) entry that highlights best practices for engaging in policy advocacy.

