Advocacy Primer

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Who's In the Room?
Objectives...

• Give examples of different types of advocacy museums can engage in
• State key differences between lobbying and advocacy

Objectives...

• Describe different types of advocacy tools/approaches, and their benefits
• Develop ideas for advocacy activities on issues important to the field/community

What is advocacy?

"Advocacy is a broad term covering a range of activities that seek to bring about systemic social change."

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"About Nonprofit Advocacy, Independent Sector
www.independentsector.org/advocacy"
Confused?

Advocacy IS NOT Lobbying

Advocacy IS NOT Lobbying
Lobbying is only a subset of what you may do as part of advocacy

What is Advocacy, Really?

Advocacy is
educating
explaining
speaking out
gathering support
promoting
(either directly or through allies)
About/for an issue you care about
What is Advocacy, Really?

Advocacy is sometimes...
...in direct support of or opposition to a specific bill, law, referendum, or ballot measure (pending or proposed)

This is lobbying

It is just one type of advocacy.

What is Advocacy, Really?

Advocacy is not...
...direct service. For example:
• teaching a visitor how to use the Internet for research
• offering an art history or STEM class to local school children
• digitizing documents or photographs

Seeking media coverage & much more!

Building relationships
Framing/messaging
Researching issues
Educating stakeholders
Mission
Building
Supporting
Visiting
Speaking
Lobbying
Informing
Messaging
Writing
Coverag
So, are you engaged in advocacy?

Advocacy vs. Lobbying: A Visual

Advocacy
- Different approaches to educate and inform on important issues
- Includes:
  - Educating policy makers/media/public
  - Building relationships with policy makers over time
- No limits to advocacy in the broad sense described here

Lobbying
- Communication intended to influence specific legislation (pending or proposed law or bill)
- Two types:
  - Direct: Your directly contact lawmakers
  - Grassroots: Ask supporters to contact lawmakers (Call to Action)
- 501c3 allowed to do to an "insubstantial" degree, rules for public employees vary by state.

Sources:
- impactaround.org/resource/fast-facts-about-advocacy-lobbying

GOAL: Educate lawmakers or public about issues important to your mission/those you serve.

GOAL: Influence passage or defeat of legislation.
Know the Rules

If you are an employee of a public agency, check your State Board of Election site for more information, and/or discuss with your legal or government affairs team. You are likely restricted in terms of what’s allowed, and it varies by state.

Activity...

- Write one reason Advocacy is important
- When done, stand up, push in your chair, and wait for instruction

INSTRUCTIONS:
- Find someone to share your idea with
- Swap notes and find someone else
- Lather, rinse, repeat
- When I say “FREEZE,” stop and share an idea out loud

We advocate to...

- Advance our mission
- Assure important issues are on the table
- Ensure ability to continue our work
- Safeguard a favorable funding/operating environment
- Cultivate supporters for help
- Help the voiceless

- Ensure equitable access to services/resources
- Prevent policies that hurt us/our communities
- Change hearts and minds
- Drive positive change in society
- Make sure “sides”/aspects of issues are being presented/considered
Who can/should advocate?

“There is a mystique surrounding advocacy – that you have to be an expert on your issue, or an expert in the way the process works. Not so.

Advocacy is like anything else: beginners are not expected to know as much as professionals, and the more you do it the easier it gets.”

Nancy Amidei, in So You Want to Make a Difference: Advocacy is the Key!
From: councilofnonprofits.org/nonprofit-advocacy-easy

Who can/should advocate?

- Institutional Leadership/CEO
- Staff
- Coalitions/networks
- Professional associations
- Board members
- Friends groups
- Other passionate stakeholders
Help Advocates Help You...

You may need to:
• ASK them to help
• Educate them how
• Provide the proper tools

“If you care about an issue, then you can be an advocate.”
From Stand for Your Mission, “What You Need to Know”

Other Tools...
• Research & analysis of issues
• Stakeholder analysis/mapping
• Issue messaging
• Educating public/stakeholders
• Mobilizing networks and coalitions
• Media Advocacy (Public Relations)
• Building relationships with lawmakers
Activity
- Research & analysis
- Stakeholder analysis/mapping
- Messaging
- Educating public
- Mobilizing networks
- Media Advocacy
- Relationships with lawmakers

1. Divide into small groups (2-4 people)
2. Choose advocacy goal
3. Identify ways to use each approach toward your issue

Assessment
- ACT! Quick assessment
- Should take 10-15 minutes to complete
- First, read FAQs
- Please answer candidly and honestly
Discuss with a Partner:

• For an indicator that you are **strong** in...
  • Why are you strong in that indicator?
  • Have you invested in it?
  • Do you have staff/board strong in that area?

• For an indicator that you are **weak** in...
  • Why are you weak in this area?
  • What would it take to build your capacity in this area?
  • Are there partners/coalitions to help you strengthen this area without building the capacity in-house?

“Successful advocacy does not require stepping into the quagmire of partisan politics. It simply means using our voices as committed and informed champions for our missions.

  Speaking the truth in a calm but unwavering voice.

  Reminding decision-makers of our **shared values and beliefs**.

  Sharing tested solutions to community problems.

  Helping community leaders understand the **impact of their decisions**.

But more than anything else, it requires standing for what we know to be true. It requires using our voices.”

Stand for Your Mission DISCUSSION Guide

Where do I start?

1. Engage in a conversation about advocacy and how decisions outside your organization influence your mission.
2. Educate staff/supporters about key issues that influence your organization’s work.
Where do I start?

3. Understand activities you ARE or are NOT allowed to do.
4. Identify gaps in your advocacy capacity and steps to address them.
5. Join groups that monitor advocacy issues that might support or threaten your mission.

Reflection & Commitments to Action

• What is ONE ISSUE area you will engage in further advocacy efforts?
• What is ONE ACTION you will take to strengthen your advocacy efforts in the next 3 months?
• Who will you share this information with?

“Start where you are; use what you have; do what you can.”

Arthur Ashe