

Advocacy 101

November 20, 2015

Community Schools
Forum

Naperville, Illinois



Public Policy Defined

Public policy is the combination of goals, laws, rules, and funding priorities set by public officials that determine how government meets needs, solves problems, and spends public funds.

- Marcia Avner, Minnesota
Association of Non-Profits

Why Advocacy?

- Government funding represents primary source of support for many agencies
- Target beneficiaries rely on public resources for income and benefits
- Providers are often subject to government regulation
- Agencies have data and expertise that has value to policy makers

Examples of Advocacy

- issue identification, research and analysis
- education of the public on crucial issues
- lobbying for or against legislation
- coalition building
- grassroots organizing and communication with local leaders
- testifying before governmental bodies
- influencing governmental agencies at all levels

Public Policy is Something You're Already Doing!

- Have you testified before your city council or county commissioners?
- Do you work on an area homelessness commission?
- Do area elected or appointed officials turn to you for information on the needs of the community?
- Do you partner with your school district or local government on a particular program or initiative?
- If the answer is YES to any of these, then you're already doing public policy! Why not be intentional and organized about it?

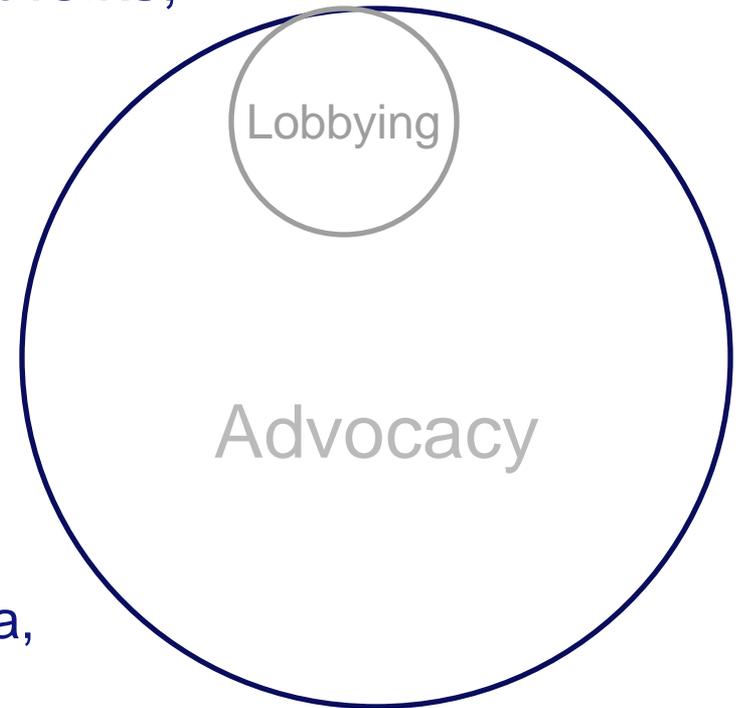
Areas of Advocacy

Administrative / Regulatory / Executive branch - relationships with all levels of non-elected government folks; importance of rule-making

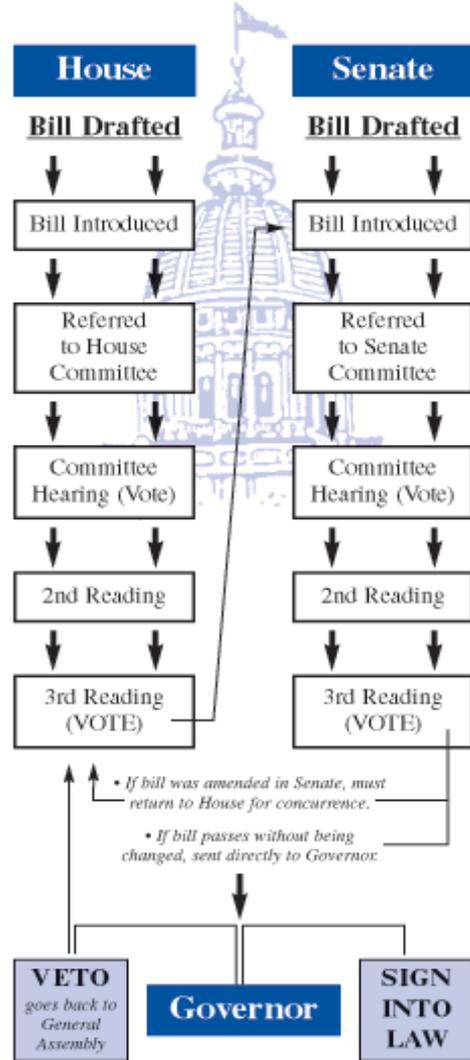
- Requests for information
- Rulemaking
- Contract administration
- Funding opportunities

Legislative

- Federal
- State
- Local – City / County Council, Referenda, School board



How A Bill Becomes Law





Grassroots Lobbying

State your position on specific legislation to the general public and ask them to contact policymakers.

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Direct Lobbying

State your position on specific legislation to policymakers or urge your members to do so.

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Lobby Day Meeting with Gov. Quinn



What is the most important thing to know?

Lobbying by a 501(c)(3) organization is legal!

- Tax code has always allowed some lobbying by nonprofits.
- 1976 Public Charity Lobby Law (PL 94-455) and subsequent regulations specify rules for nonprofit lobbying.
- In 1990, IRS established guidelines for complying with 1976 lobby law under Section 501(h) and 4911.

But Beware!

501(c)(3) organizations
cannot:

- Endorse candidates!
- Align with political parties!
- Contribute to candidates or parties!

What you can do

Respond to Action Alerts with calls or emails

Guest editorials/letters

Help find and prepare individuals to testify

Educate your board, volunteers and staff

Map your relationships (“Kevin Bacon style”)

Promote and interact at every opportunity



United Way of Metropolitan Chicago: Sample Letter to the Editor



Please feel free to send this or a personalized version of this letter to your local papers. Please sign your name and your city where you are from.

To the Editor:

I understand that the State of Illinois is struggling with a serious budget crisis and that some responsible sacrifices must be made. But cutting critical services for families and communities when they are needed most is not the answer.

Our communities are already scrambling to deal with last year's funding cuts that eliminated millions for essential services that help families and create jobs.

Further reductions would be disastrous and undermine efforts to strengthen the economy and put people back to work.

Governor Rauner and the General Assembly need to hear loud and clear that there must be NO MORE CUTS to human services in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget. If additional revenue is needed to protect these programs, they must



Facebook/Twitter Text

Stop budget cuts hurting kids, seniors and families in Illinois! Visit www.uw-mc.org to learn more!

Live United! Stay informed of issues affecting social services in Illinois. Visit www.uw-mc.org

Help create lasting change in our communities! Inform yourself on the Illinois budget issue by visiting www.uw-mc.org

Over 5,000 people were placed in jobs in the 2009 Fiscal Year. Don't let those numbers change; don't let Illinois cut half of services that put people back to work. Visit www.uw-mc.org

Over 92,500 people were made safe from violence and abuse in 2009. Make sure these people get the shelter they need in 2010. Visit www.uw-mc.org

Fight for IL children and families. Visit www.uw-mc.org to learn more about what you can do to stop budget cuts.

Contact your elected officials at www.uw-mc.org and urge them to PROTECT programs for our children, disabled, unemployed and elderly!

Did you know every \$1 invested in community-based programs returns \$6-\$8 to the taxpayers, significantly reducing the burden on our welfare system, health care system, schools, courts and prisons? Visit www.uw-mc.org to learn more about the Illinois budget.

Did you know 900,000 Illinoisans turned to food banks last year, with one in six being a senior citizen? Visit www.uw-mc.org

Child abuse prevention saves taxpayers \$7, primarily in health care, special education, and criminal justice costs. Help the children, visit www.uw-mc.org

Drug treatment programs save taxpayers \$7 in criminal justice and health care costs. Visit www.uw-mc.org to learn more about Illinois' budget.

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Affordable housing returns \$5.45 to the taxpayers and generates an additional \$9.60 in economic growth; job training programs generate \$4.60 in benefits, and high-quality early learning programs generate \$7.13 in benefits. Visit www.uw-mc.org to learn more about Illinois' budget.

Helpful Websites

www.thomas.gov - The Library of Congress

www.senate.gov – U.S. Senate

www.house.gov – U.S. House of Representatives

www.ilga.gov – Illinois General Assembly

www.illinois.gov - State of Illinois

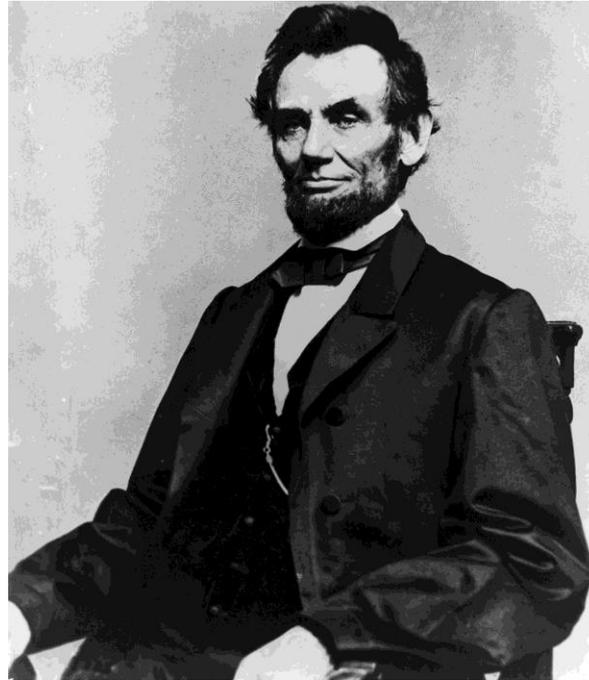
www.councilofnonprofits.org – The National Council of Nonprofits

www.afj.org – Alliance for Justice

www.independentsector.org – Independent Sector

www.irs.gov/- look up IRS Nonprofit Charity Division

QUESTIONS?



“Being elected to Congress, though I am very grateful to our friends, for having done it, has not pleased me as much as I expected.”

- Abraham Lincoln,

1846

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