

Good Trouble: How to Advocate for Change

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Leadership | Equity | Advocacy | Development*



Martha Collins is a Strategy Partner with LEAD 180, a consultancy firm dedicated to advancing public interest and building collaborative communities.

Before starting LEAD180, Martha dedicated her career to working for social justice organizations that focus on building power with marginalized communities.

Martha is passionate about advocacy and has become known as the “Nonprofit Lobbyist”. She has served on several local and national nonprofit boards.

Recently, Martha became a founding board director with the *Nonprofit Academy of Wisconsin, Inc.*, a local group aimed at helping nonprofits deliver their mission better.

Training Objectives

1. YOU WILL brush up on your knowledge of what the law allows you to do in the public policy arena as a nonprofit.
2. YOU WILL examine real-life examples of nonprofit policy work.
3. YOU WILL explore ways you can engage in state and local policy work.

Icebreaker Question*

Have you ever lobbied or been an advocate for an organization, cause or an issue?



What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is “active support” for a cause, idea or policy; the public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy; the profession or work of a legal advocate.



Lobbying is a form of Advocacy

Other forms of advocacy includes:

- Educating policy makers and the public
- Encouraging voter registration
- Organizing communities on issues



Lobbying is legitimate and protected

Congress has stated that influencing legislation is an appropriate and legitimate activity for charitable organizations. In 1976, it passed legislation giving public charities the right to lobby up to defined percentages of their annual expenditures. Those limits are much larger than how many 501(c)(3) organizations limit themselves.

But. . . Wait!?! We can't lobby, right???

Influencing legislation – or “lobbying” – is a key advocacy strategy that nonprofits can use to stand up for their mission. In fact, by not lobbying, many 501 (c)(3) organizations are not taking full advantage of their rights under federal tax laws, which set out generous lobbying limits.

*You work every day to advance our mission.
Lobbying is a key strategy to accomplish your goals!*

Why should YOU lobby and engage in advocacy efforts?

- Builds policies that improves people lives in places where they live
- Raises awareness of social issues and programs
- Informs public debate
- Voices of silent minority heard on centers of power
- Fosters action and participation in the democratic process

Direct Lobbying vs. Grassroots Lobbying

Direct Lobbying consist of:

- Any communication
- With a legislator
- That expresses a view about specific legislation



***Not considered a lobbying contact
without a discussion about specific legislation***

***Not considered a lobby contact without a call to
action, which is engaging the public to act in support
or against***



▶ Grassroots Lobbying consist of:

- Any communication
- With the general public
- That expresses a view about specific legislation
- And includes a call to action!

Nonprofits Can Educate and Lobby!

- It is **not lobbying to educate legislators** about your program and your community's experiences!
- It is **not lobbying** to invite key legislators to visit your program and talk with your staff and program participants.
- <http://elections.wi.gov/guidelines/1511-LobbyingLicense>
- You **do not need to register as a lobbyist** if you:
 - ✓ Represent the views of an organization as an unpaid volunteer;
 - ✓ Represent the views of an organization that pays you, but convey those views only to your own legislators; or
 - ✓ Represent the views of an organization that pays you and you convey those views to many or all legislators but do so less than 4 days within a 6-month period.

Community Partnership & Buy In*



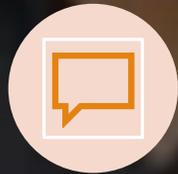
Asset mapping exercises



Historic timeline & milestones



Neighborhood social networks



Community listening sessions



Focus groups



Community leaders & champions



Stakeholder surveys



Advisory boards

Community Listening Sessions



The USDA is seeking participants for the Thrifty Food Plan Listening Sessions. These hearings are great ways for individuals to play a role on the national stage and impact policy. The SNAP/FoodShare benefit allotment is based on the Thrifty Meal Plan.

As the Farm Bill discussions are starting, they are holding listening sessions to hear from SNAP recipients and SNAP Outreach professionals about whether to raise the monthly SNAP allotments.

Community Leaders & Champions

The United States Department of Agriculture announced Tuesday it would extend universal free lunch through the 2021-2022 school year, in an effort to reach more of the estimated 12 million youths experiencing food insecurity.



Tactics for Engaging the Public

Hands-on
virtual
trainings

Stakeholders
elevator
pitches

Collect
petition
signatures

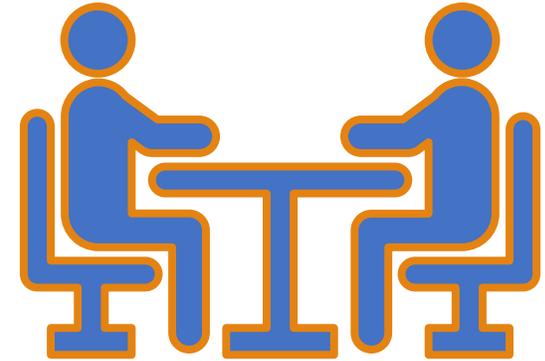
Customer
surveys

Direct mail
opportunities

In person
engagement
activities

Group Discussion*

This past year, what has been some creative ways your organization invited, encouraged and facilitated a two-way exchange of information and ideas between the organization and the public/elected officials?



Public Access: Educational Information

Advertisements

Annual Reports

Annual Appeals

Articles

Billboards

Blogs

Brochures

Case Statements

Case Studies

Data/Research Reports

Email Blasts

Fact Sheets

FAQ – Frequently asked questions

Flyers/pamphlets/posters

Manuals or handbooks

News Releases

Newsletters

Photos and Photo essays

Podcasts

Position Statements

Project Reports

Public policy alerts

Public Service Announcements

Success stories

Survey results

Testimonials

Training session curricula & materials

Twitter feeds

Videos

Webcasts

Websites

Testimonials & Success Stories



**VIRTUAL TOWN HALL
ON PANDEMIC-EBT
BENEFITS FOR
SCHOOL-AGED
CHILDREN**

**Friday, March 19
9:30 - 10:30 AM**

At meeting time, please visit:
FeedingAmericaWI.org/EBTTownHall
Passcode: 688573
Webinar ID: 914 0834 8300



It's up to YOU!

- It is vital that you educate about your issue.
- Don't assume policymakers & their staff know what you (and people impacted by your issue) know
- Legislators deal with many different programs - your expertise can help them understand how these programs work for Wisconsin.

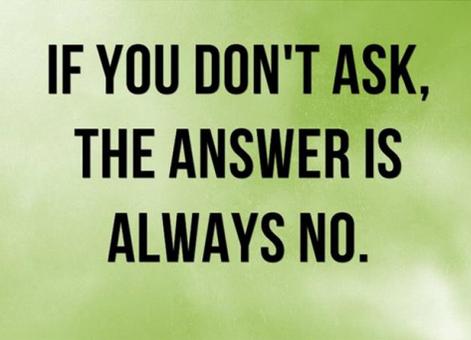


Don't Ask = Don't Get

Make it clear -

When you ask, the legislator should know:

- what, specifically, you'd like them to do,
- when you want them to do it and
- why it is important.
- If you are meeting with staff, what is the first thing they should tell their boss?



**IF YOU DON'T ASK,
THE ANSWER IS
ALWAYS NO.**

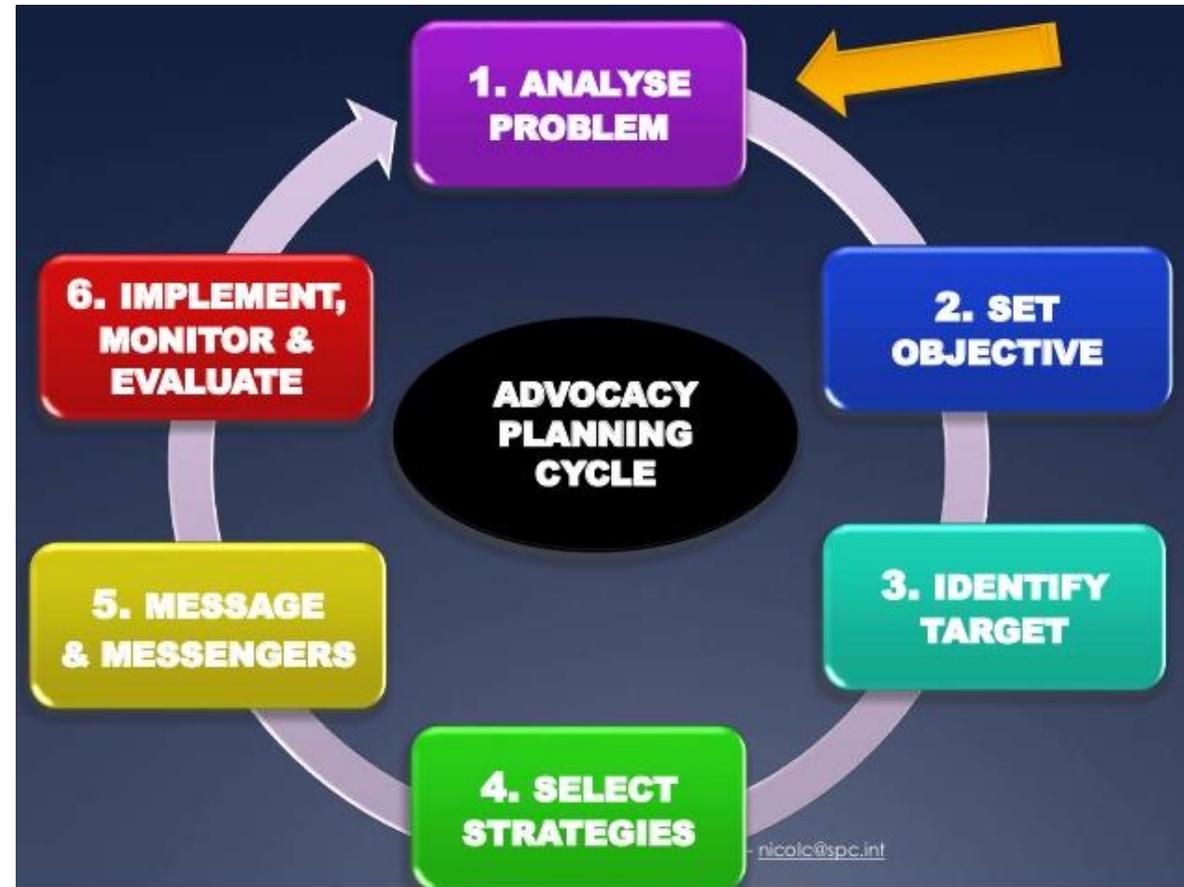
Make it actionable.

- You can't do anything with their "support" but you can do a lot with their vote.

Do not use passive language.

- ✓ "Do you think" or "Would you be interested in" don't help you get the answer you're looking for.
- ✓ When you leave the office, do you know the answer to your question?

Advocacy Planning Cycle



3 Things to remember....

➤ **COMMUNICATE**

The dialogue begins with the invitation, encouragement, and facilitation of two-way exchanges of information and ideas between the organization and the public.

➤ **ENGAGE**

Engagement for every nonprofit looks different, but keep in mind that buy-in from community members will gain relational equity and assist in creating long lasting change.

➤ **EDUCATE**

What tools are effectively telling your organization's story? Are you involving people with diverse backgrounds to ensure that the final product is relevant and accessible to all?

5 Things John Lewis taught us about getting in good trouble...

1. Vote, always!
2. Never too young (or too old) to make a difference
3. Speak truth to power
4. Become a racial equity broker
5. NEVER GIVE UP!

Source: [Five things John Lewis taught us about getting in "good trouble"](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/five-things-john-lewis-taught-us-about-getting-in-good-trouble/2013/08/26/) (brookings.edu)



Become A Nonprofit Lobbyist!

The **Nonprofit Academy of Wisconsin** offers education and support for nonprofit organizations and leaders. Our nonprofit excellence curriculum uses the *Standards for Excellence[®]: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*.

Attend all 3 trainings and receive a
Certificate of Completion!



For more details or listing of upcoming programs, please visit: www.npawi.org



For more details about the Institute, please visit: <https://standardsforexcellence.org/>

Let's stay connected!

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