

ADVOCATING WITHOUT FEAR: WHY NONPROFITS MUST ENGAGE ON ISSUES

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*IF YOU'RE NOT AT THE TABLE, YOU'RE ON THE
MENU. – MICHAEL ENZI*



YES, YOU CAN! SHATTERING MYTHS ABOUT NONPROFIT ADVOCACY

Often, people think that nonprofits can't lobby, but they can.



HERE ARE SOME REASONS WHY NONPROFITS SHOULD LOBBY TO CHANGE OR AFFECT PUBLIC POLICY:

- Nonprofits **traditionally serve constituencies and issues that have a limited voice in the policy process.**
- Nonprofits providing services frequently have **the best, maybe even only, information on the social needs** they exist to address.
- Nonprofit organizations are less subject to self-interested motivations, driven instead by a **commitment to a broad community of people or common interests.**

WHAT IS THE 20% RULE?

80
20

LOBBYING VS. ADVOCACY



HERE'S THE TEST! YES OR NO — NONPROFITS CAN:

- 1) Discuss issues with policymakers
- 2) Ask their supporters to write or call their elected officials
- 3) Testify at the Capitol in support or opposition to a bill
- 4) Host a candidate forum
- 5) Endorse a constitutional amendment or referendum
- 6) Contribute to a candidate's campaign
- 7) Create a voters guide
- 8) Encourage board members to talk to elected officials
- 9) Host a town hall meeting about a specific issue
- 10) Endorse a political party

WHERE TO START: IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

What is your community talking about?

What do you think that your community should be talking about?

- The power of the pivot



EFFECTIVENESS FIRST: MAKING FRIENDS, INFLUENCING PEOPLE



CROWDSOURCING: BUILDING POWER THROUGH COALITIONS



ADVANTAGES:

Enlarges your base of support; gives strength in numbers: you can achieve more together than you can alone.

Provides safety for advocacy efforts and protection for members who may not be able to take action alone, particularly when operating in a hostile or difficult environment.

Magnifies existing financial and human resources by pooling them together and by delegating work to others in the coalition.

Reduces duplication of effort and resources.

Enhances the credibility and influence of an advocacy campaign, as well as that of individual coalition members.

ADVANTAGES, CONT.

Helps develop new leadership skills amongst members.

Assists in individual and organizational networking.

Facilitates exchange of information, skills, experience, materials, opportunities for collaboration etc.

Brings together a diverse range of people and organizations.

Provides peer support, encouragement, motivation and professional recognition.

DISADVANTAGES:

Can be difficult to agree on common objectives.

Forming and managing a coalition can be a very time-consuming and bureaucratic process that can take away time from working directly on campaign issues and organizational tasks.

May be dominated by one powerful organization.

May require you to compromise your position on issues or tactics.

Shared decision-making can be slow and may paralyze progress.

DISADVANTAGES, CONT.

Can often be constrained by a lack of resources.

Potential for donor interference (e.g. a donor is interested in funding certain activities but there is a danger of planning activities only because you know you can get the funds).

You may not always get credit for your work.

If the coalition process breaks down it can harm everyone's advocacy by damaging members' credibility.

Coalition activities can be difficult to monitor and evaluate.

OVERCOMING OPPOSITION & THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE



POTENTIAL SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

- Internal (board/staff)
- External (Special interests, status quo)



EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT.

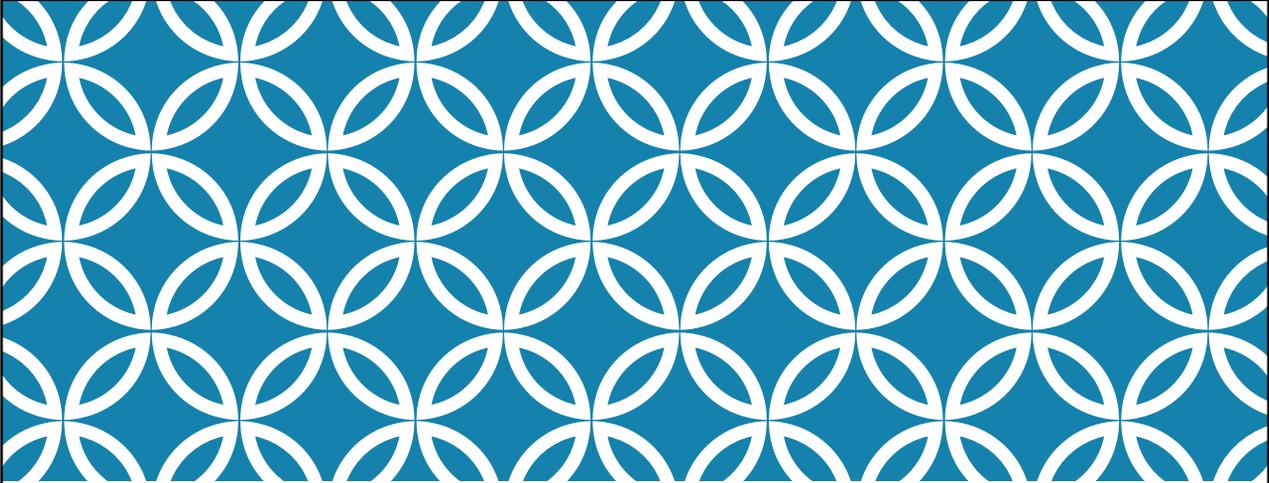
Be prepared to be consistent -- and persistent -- in order to affect change.



CASE STUDIES

- Medicaid Expansion
- Community Human Services Partnership
- Sexual Assault Response





QUESTIONS?

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