

Advocacy and Lobbying Action Strategies for Nonprofits

Basic Level

- Have a discussion with your staff and board about whether or not you'd like to file the 501 (h) election
- Join a nonprofit trade association that will represent the interest of your organization at the city, county, state or federal level
- Identify the issues that will have a direct impact on your organization and/or the people/community you serve
- Follow the instructions given to you by these lead organizations on when to call, write, or take other types of action on the issues that are important to your organization
- Invite each of the legislators that correspond to the district where your nonprofit is located/provides services to see your work and/or go to their respective offices to introduce your organization to these legislators. This includes your city councilmember, County board member, state legislators, congressperson, and federal senators.

Engage in a Campaign as part of a Coalition

- Do all of the steps above including filing for the (h) election to allow your organization more leeway to lobby
- Determine how much staff/board/volunteer time you will allocate to this issue(s)
- Determine how much money you are willing to allocate for your work on this issue
- Participate in shaping the issue (i.e., what you are asking for) as part of a coalition of similar nonprofits that are interested in advancing/opposing this particular cause/item
- Investigate the rules requiring you to be a registered lobbyist for the legislative body you plan to lobby and register (if need be)
- Familiarize the key leaders of your organization with the issue on which you plan to lobby and rehearse what each of you plan to say to legislators when you meet with them
- Make sure the materials prepared by your coalition accurately represent the cause as you understand it
- Actively lobby your legislators and take part in shaping/opposing legislation in cooperation with others

Initiate a Campaign on an Issue that is Important to your Nonprofit

- Do all of the above
- Follow the 10 steps outlined in The Lobbying Strategy Handbook or refer to another publication that will guide you through the process of running a campaign from start to finish!

Action Strategies Worksheet

STEPS	STATUS	RESULTS
We have had a discussion with our staff and board about whether we will file the 501 (h) election		
The nonprofit associations that represent the interests of our work have been identified		
Our board and staff have had a discussion/made decisions about joining the nonprofit associations that represent our interests		
Our board and staff have had a discussion about which types of legislation will affect our organization/the people we serve/our community		
We have evidence of/confirmation that the issue we have identified is important to our organization/the people we serve/our community		
Our board and staff have discussed and determined the resources we are willing to dedicate to this effort		
We have identified all of the legislators who have represent the area our nonprofit serves		
We have initiated/held meetings with each of the legislators who represent the area(s) our nonprofit serves		