

Advocacy for Nonprofits Training



-
1. Advocacy to what end?
 - a. Identify issues
 - b. Using the road map
 - c. Best practices
 2. Why build an alliance?
 - a. Considering partners

Hand-outs included:

1. Road Map
2. Make a Difference in 3 Hours Per Week
3. Public Policy Planning Checklist
4. Benchmarking Tool
5. Why Build and Alliance?
6. Cooperation, Coordination, Collaboration Compared
7. The Three R's of Good Collaboratives
8. New Partnerships
9. Benefits Worksheet
10. The Collaboration Challenge

Appendix:

Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices for Public Interest Lobbying



CLPI ROAD MAP FOR ENGAGEMENT IN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION...	
WILL	1) Understand why legislative advocacy is important to meeting your mission? 2) Have a commitment to advocacy?
KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS	3) Understand the rules governing nonprofit advocacy? 4) Understand legislative processes ? 5) Understand rules for funding advocacy? 6) Understand key policy issues related to your mission? 7) Understand strategy options?
INFRASTRUCTURE	8) Have a policy on advocacy activities/or public policy engagement? 9) Have a governance structure for advocacy? 10) Have a decision-making process for advocacy? 11) Have a policy agenda ? 12) Have communications & tracking systems?
RESOURCES	13) Have financial resources devoted to advocacy? 14) Have dedicated/designated staff for advocacy? 15) Have relationships with: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> Policymakers Government Agencies Base Constituencies Media </div> <div> Public Other Nonprofits Coalitions/Alliances Other </div> </div>

STRATEGY

GOALS/OUTCOMES	PUBLIC POLICY	ORGANIZATIONAL
Long-term Intermediate Short-term		
DECISION-MAKERS Who are the Decisions-Maker(s)? Message(s) to Decision-Maker(s): Messengers: -Who -Internal Message(s) to engage them Tactics/Activities: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> Direct Lobbying Admin. Advocacy Coalitions/Alliances Media </div> <div> Grassroots Lobbying Grassroots Organizing Voter Education Other </div> </div>		OPPONENT(S) Who are your Opponent(s)? Message(s) of Opponent(s) Messenger(s) Tactics/Activities
EVALUATION	PUBLIC POLICY	ORGANIZATIONAL
Indicators Tools		

SMART AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC INTEREST LOBBYING

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www.clpi.org

MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUR CAUSE IN 3 HOURS PER WEEK

Lobbying, advocacy and playing an active role in the public policy process are not just for experts! Your organization can raise public awareness of your cause, build relationships with government and help shape laws and policies that affect its mission by dedicating at least one staff person or volunteer to spend just 3 hours per week doing public policy work. Following are activities a member of your team can do to make a difference. They are listed in an order designed to help organizations and their staff persons who may be new to public policy, develop the capacity to take action and gradually increase their impact.

To start you might want to skim through all three steps and decide where you want to focus. Don't worry about completing all of these activities at once or in a set amount of time. The idea is to select activities that you *can* do immediately. A rule of thumb is that the more you do the better and more proficient you will become. Also, please note that many of these activities may be carried out at relatively low cost.

Remember to ask questions. Everybody has to start somewhere. If you have a question about any of the following or any other aspect of public policy work feel free to contact Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest. We are here to help.

STEP 1: PREPARE YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR PUBLIC POLICY

1. GET MOTIVATED AND EDUCATED.

Visit the Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest website to learn more about why lobbying and voter education are important ways to serve your mission at www.clpi.org.

2. GEAR UP FOR PUBLIC POLICY.

Secure a telephone, fax machine, Internet, and email capability for use in your work. If you do not have access to a computer, it will help to have, at minimum, a place to file important information.

3. STUDY THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

You don't have to be an expert but it will help to be at least somewhat familiar with the process by which a bill becomes a law. Focus on the budget process as many nonprofits receive a significant amount of funding from local, state, and federal grants and contracts. For an

explanation of the federal legislative process see: the House of Representatives web site at, <http://thomas.loc.gov>. For an explanation of the federal budget process and timetable, see the Citizens for Budget Reform web site, <http://www.budget.org/USABIS>. Information about state budget processes and timetables may be available from the National Association of State Budget Officers at www.nasbo.org

4. REVIEW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT.

Meet with your executive director and board chair to develop a comprehensive list of the ways government, at all levels, affects your organization's ability to provide services. For example, you will want to answer questions such as: How do various laws and regulations affect the way we provide services to the community? What are the rules associated with grants and

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contracts? How do these rules affect our ability to educate and provide information to government agency staff and elected officials?

5. CREATE A WHO'S WHO LIST.

Make a list of the government officials, including elected representatives, judges, and agency staff that make policy decisions about the laws, regulations, and rules you have already listed. The purpose here is to build a master list of persons who are in positions of influence with regard to your programs and services. Be sure to gather complete contact information for entry into a database to be used for future correspondence.

6. PREPARE YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

A dedicated committee of your board of directors can be supportive and influential in developing positive relationships with government. In 3 hours you can discuss the potential benefits of a board committee on public policy with your Chairperson and query board members to determine their interest in helping build your organization's public policy capacity.

7. CONNECT PUBLIC POLICY WITH GOVERNANCE.

Develop an agenda of items for discussion and decision at your next board meeting. Aim to inform your board how public policies affect those you serve and your organization's ability to provide services. At the next meeting of your board of directors, enlist several members to comprise a public policy committee that will work with you to develop and promote appropriate public policy goals that are consistent with your mission. Be sure to discuss the findings of your research on how government policies currently affect your mission.

8. TAKE STOCK OF YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES.

Make a list of key persons who work, volunteer, or are served by your organization, including members who would be willing to contact their elected officials on behalf of your cause.

9. DIVERSITY HELPS.

Invite and encourage persons from disadvantaged groups to participate in your public policy work. Multiple perspectives will strengthen the process and outcomes of your efforts.

10. DEVELOP USEFUL DATA.

Develop a local success story that demonstrates the good work of your organization. If your program was made possible because of certain laws and/or funding from government, include such information in your story. The connection between government action and a positive impact on your community will be well received by elected officials and agency staff, and also be useful in your future lobbying efforts.

Prepare a short questionnaire for your members and those you serve to get information about the impact of your programs. The data will be helpful in future testimony before legislative committees, lobbying visits, communications with the media, and to include in your annual report.

11. LOOK FOR ALLIES.

Contact your state association of nonprofits or umbrella organizations that represents your cause before the state legislature or federal government to gather recent information about your issues and ways you might get involved. Visit www.nana.org to locate your state association. Visit <http://www.independentsector.org> to identify a national organization with related public policy goals.

Make a list of other charities in your region that provide similar services. Contact them to find out if they also work on similar public policy matters. If so, find out if they participate in any coalitions of nonprofits and how you can get information about joining. Remember, public policy work is not a solo activity. Getting the change you want in public policy will occur most readily when you join with other groups in coalition.

12. KNOW YOUR POLICYMAKERS.

Research the interests of your elected officials to find out if they have professional or personal ties to your cause. Usually local officials' offices provide biographical information. You also may want to ask their local staff about the officials' charitable and philanthropic interests.

13. DEVELOP A PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA.

Now that you have identified several members of your board to work with you on public policy matters, it is time to have a meeting to identify the two or three most important long-term changes in laws and/or regulations that would benefit your cause and organizational capacity. Have a clear number one priority so you will be able to maintain focus. Write them down. Next to them, describe in a few sentences, if these changes occurred, how those you serve would benefit. Be sure to select a chairperson to provide leadership for the committee, to run committee meetings, and present the committee's agenda at board meetings.

14. REVIEW THE LAW.

You don't have to be an attorney to learn the legal opportunities and limits of charities' participation in the public policy process. Lobbying is legal. Supporting candidates for office is not. Learn the basics at the Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest web site, www.dpi.org

To order several helpful publications about the laws governing nonprofit lobbying and permissible voter education activities, visit our website at www.dpi.org and the following web sites: Independent Sector www.IndependentSector.org and Alliance for Justice <http://www.afj.org/pubs.html>.

15. BRIEF YOUR ATTORNEY(S) AND ACCOUNTANT(S).

Too often, attorneys and accountants in their earnest efforts to guard their charity clients from legal harm, will warn against any advocacy, lobbying, and voter education activities. It is prudent to brief your counsels on your new public policy work. Provide information about the laws governing lobbying and voter education from the CLPI web site to make sure they understand the legal opportunities for public policy participation.

16. ASSESS YOUR CAPACITY TO TAKE ACTION.

Review your organization's decision-making structure to make sure that you can act quickly enough to keep pace with the legislative process. Educate your board so that they will be a catalyst and facilitator for your public policy work. Remember bills will become laws without regard to when your board or key committee meetings are scheduled. So, general individuals should be designated to make key legislation related decisions when required, between meetings.

STEP 2: BECOME A VOICE FOR YOUR CAUSE AND A VEHICLE FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

17. BUILD A PUBLIC POLICY PRESENCE.

Attend a coalition meeting of another organization working on similar public policy issues. Your presence will send a strong signal that your organization cares about the issue.

18. BECOME A SOURCE OF RELIABLE INFORMATION.

Create a packet of information about your organization, including its mission and services, and your public policy agenda along with a letter

to each of the key elected officials and government agency staff whose decisions affect your cause. Send the packets with a note that you will follow up to schedule an informational meeting to discuss their position with regard to your public policy priorities. Your packet will serve as a helpful informational tool for many audiences.

REMEMBER: Building credibility is vital to the long-term strength of your public policy efforts.

If you are not sure of your facts about the issue, don't fudge; admit to what you don't know and get back as soon as possible with the correct information.

19. BEGIN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICYMAKERS.

Use one of your 3 hours this week to meet with one of your elected officials or a key agency staff person to inform them of the policies your organization supports and to learn how your organization may work cooperatively with them to achieve your public policy goals. Ask one of your board members to attend the meeting with you. If you find out that the official or representative you are meeting with is not in agreement, be polite, agree to disagree, but maintain mutual respect, honesty, and open lines of communication.

20. BECOME A VEHICLE OF DEMOCRACY FOR YOUR COMMUNITY, CONSTITUENTS AND VOLUNTEERS.

Use one of your hours this week to invite volunteers and people served by your organization to meet with you to discuss your organization's public policy agenda and to learn how they may contribute to your decision-making and promote it with policymakers. Use another hour to think about the types of examples of community benefits your members, clients, and volunteers might help develop, along with you, for use in public policy work. Meet with them and enlist their support for future meetings with elected officials and grassroots lobbying efforts.

STEP 3: INCREASE AND SUSTAIN YOUR ADVOCACY

21. MEET FACE TO FACE.

Meet with one of your legislators at their local offices to lobby on behalf of, or in opposition to, legislation that would affect your cause. Bring a board member. NOTE: There is no form of communication as powerful as meeting in person.

22. KNOW THE STAFF.

Often, the staff of a legislator may be the most knowledgeable person in the legislator's office about your issues. Find out which staff person works on your issue and get to know them. In many cases, state or local legislators will have one staff person or none. Members of Congress usually have many staff. Send staff your information packet. Meet with them as appropriate. On occasion, invite them to speak to your members.

23. USE THE TELEPHONE.

Make telephone calls to your elected officials about pending legislation, regulations, or other priority public policy matter to describe how a change in law would affect your programs and constituents. Urge your members and volunteers to do likewise by mail or broadcast fax.

24. WRITE A LETTER.

Recent surveys show that a well-written letter from a constituent is one of the most influential ways of communicating with a legislator. Be sure to include how your members, community, and those you serve would be affected by a proposed change in the law. Send a copy to the legislator's staff and to the chair of your public policy committee.

Email is not necessarily effective. Recent surveys show that some legislators treat email with the same value as a regular paper letter and others treat it with low value, like bulk mail communications. When in doubt, back up your email with a paper letter.

25. TESTIFY.

Your organization has expertise that is needed by legislators before they make decisions about the budget, regulations, or new laws. Find out when the appropriate committees in your state legislature are holding hearings on subjects related to your mission and ask for permission to provide testimony in person. Remember to include your testimony, data about the impact of

your services along with your recommendation for action on the public policy issue.

26. DEMONSTRATE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUES.

Provide a one-hour tour of your programs for one of your elected officials. Be sure to have a board member on site to show their support.

27. COVER ALL THE BASES.

Contact local, state, or federal government agency staffs that you work with to let them know how pending legislation or regulations will affect your ability to deliver your programs. Write a similar letter to your Governor.

28. SHARE INFORMATION AND BE INCLUSIVE IN DECISION-MAKING.

Convene a small meeting of your key board members, constituents, and volunteers with one of your elected officials to explain how pending public policy may affect your constituents and community.

29. GIVE CREDIT WHEN CREDIT IS DUE.

Write a letter of congratulations to one or more of your elected officials when they act in a helpful way to your cause. Remember to thank all those who volunteered time and money to help your public policy efforts.

30. PROVIDE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

Host a speaking opportunity to provide an opportunity for an elected official to articulate his or her support for your cause and position on important legislation. You may also want to delegate the tasks of developing an analysis, organizing constituents and/or others served by

your organization, to a volunteer who has demonstrated reliability and leadership in public policy work.

31. INFORM THE MEDIA.

Write a letter to the editor of your local or regional newspaper about how a pending public policy issue would affect your cause.

32. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA.

The media can be a powerful ally in your public policy efforts. In one hour you can meet with the writer who covers the beat most closely related to the work of your organization. Also meet with a member of the editorial board of your local paper to pitch a story idea about community needs that your organization confronts through its public policy work.

33. INFORM AND EDUCATE YOUR PUBLICS.

Write an article for your next newsletter about a public policy issue and how it may affect your cause. Be sure to let your readership know how they can be supportive and receive more information.

34. INITIATE GRASSROOTS SUPPORT.

In two hours you can write an action alert to your volunteers, donors, members, and constituents urging them to contact their elected representatives about policies and pending legislation affecting your cause. Check in with the CLPI web site for information about writing action alerts. In one hour you can begin sending it out. Remember to thank those supporters who do contact their legislators in response to your request.

Public Policy Planning Checklist

Infrastructure planning

- Dedicate one staff person or volunteer to work at least 3 hours per week on public policy issues and building relations with government. See [Make a Difference for Your Cause in 3 Hours Per Week](#), by the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest.
- Identify office space, computer, printer, copier, telephone and email address that may be used for lobbying and other public policy activities.
- Prepare a section of website for description of key public policy issues.
- Gather lists of potential allies including constituents, clients, donors, board members and people in the community that support your organization and might be a source of volunteer action in your public policy and lobbying work.

Issues planning

- Identify the current and future needs from government as it fulfills its mission.
- Identify the laws, regulations and public policies that affect the work of your organization.
- Identify the government officials that have influence over the laws and regulations that affect the work of your organization.
- Contact associations in your field of service to put you in contact with someone who works on public policy issues of interest to your organization.
- Identify how current laws and regulations might be changed to help your mission and services. Write a paragraph about what life would be like for your organization/community if public policy were changed in your favor.

Funding resource planning

- Identify part of your organization's general operating support that may be used for lobbying and set aside a portion for public policy and lobbying related activities.
- Make sure your organization has taken appropriate legal steps necessary to lobby including taking the [501\(h\) lobby election](#) by 501(c)(3) organizations under the Internal Revenue Code. Determine if you need to register as a lobbyist, or file as an organization that lobbies with the appropriate state government office that regulates nonprofits, i.e., the Attorney General's office, or the IRS. See CLPI materials for more information.

- Become familiar with the basics about lobbying and public policy activity using foundation grant funds. See “[Four Important Facts About Lobbying with Foundation Grant Funds](#),” by the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest.

Volunteer and Board planning

- Based on your issues planning, prepare to engage the board and key volunteers in public policy work vital to the services you provide.
- Use the discussion guide with the video to engage your board in a discussion of the connection between key public policy issues and the needs of your constituents and programs.
- Review your strategic plan and identify how changes in public policy may affect the goals and direction of your organization.
- Review your mission statement and values. Develop rationale for working on public policy issues that connect to the beliefs and goals of your organization.
- Form a small committee of staff, board members, clients, residents and other volunteers to discuss and plan appropriate next steps in the public policy arena.

Action planning

- Use “[Make a Difference for Your Cause in Three Hours Per Week](#),” by the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest as a reference tool for carrying out activities.
- Attend a coalition meeting or convene a meeting of organizations that share your concerns to discuss the problem and plan how, collectively you can work together to shape public policy.
- Schedule brief meetings with your city, county, state and federal legislators as appropriate to discuss the policy changes you and your coalition are seeking. Bring a board member and a person that receives benefit from your services with you.
- Follow through on the next steps from meetings with legislators or other government officials. Keep the pressure on to schedule a meeting.
- Contact your state association of nonprofits at <http://www.ncna.org/> or the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest <http://www.clpi.org/> for further assistance or questions.

SMART AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC INTEREST LOBBYING

Benchmarking Chart

Democracy depends on citizen participation, and nonprofit organizations provide one of the most effective vehicles for engaging people in the democratic process. Since 1998, the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI) has helped nonprofits across the country, working on every issue and cause, to understand that nonprofit lobbying and advocacy are not only legal, but also critical to achieving their missions and making democracy work.

CLPI promotes, supports, and protects 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocacy and lobbying to strengthen participation in our democratic society and advance the missions of charitable organizations.

In 2006-07, CLPI led a process and convened the National Summit on Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices for Public Interest Lobbying at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Pocantico Conference Center to:

- Define and lift up “public interest lobbying” as core to nonprofit work.
- Identify and advance smart and ethical practices in public interest lobbying.
- Strengthen the CLPI Action Network to enrich and expand the climate for public interest lobbying.

The idea to develop “Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices for Public Interest Lobbying” arose at our 2005 CLPI Action Network Retreat, and it gained relevance in light of the Abramoff scandal, the resulting increased scrutiny of lobbying in general, and the ripple effect that has further impacted nonprofit lobbying. Nonprofits – guardians of the *public interest* – must seize the opportunity to proactively define our efforts in terms of both ethical and strategic principles for public interest lobbying as a vehicle for better public policy and, ultimately, lasting systemic change.

Using the Principles and Practices

From the start, CLPI intended for the principles and practices to be useful to nonprofits in their core work, not just an intellectual exercise or research project. Further, we see them as (1) aspirational – we know that no single nonprofit will excel at all of the practices at every moment, and (2) invitational – not the basis for standardization or certification.

Thus, we invite nonprofit lobbyists to use the following principles and practices to benchmark and continuously improve their own efforts to advance public interests and improve public policy. Consider incorporating them into strategic planning, staff and volunteer training, and other organizational capacity building, as well as opportunities for dialogue with coalition partners, constituents, board members and other stakeholders. To view the full report on the development of these Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices in Public Interest Lobbying, visit www.clpi.org.

The Principles and Practices

The following principles, as well as the process for identifying them, are described in greater detail on the following pages:

- ⇒ Public interest lobbying adds civic value to the community today and in the future.
- ⇒ Public interest lobbying is inclusive and expansive, engaging the community and particularly those most affected by the public policy being advocated.
- ⇒ Public interest lobbying is credible, trustworthy, and fact based.
- ⇒ High-quality public interest lobbying is multi-faceted and adaptive.

Principle 1: Public interest lobbying adds civic value to the community today and in the future.

<i>Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:</i>	<i>Progress to date</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Practice 1A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists promote democracy by including, educating, and empowering a diverse spectrum of voices in the public policy debate.		
Practice 1B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists take a broad and long-term vision of social change, even as they may pursue the specific focus of one nonprofit.		
Practice 1C: By acting with integrity, public interest organizations and their lobbyists enable ongoing, mutually beneficial relationships with constituents, policymakers, and coalition partners and strengthen public trust in all nonprofits.		

Principle 2: Public interest lobbying is inclusive and expansive, engaging the community and particularly those most affected by the public policy being advocated.

<i>Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:</i>	<i>Progress to date</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Practice 2A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists hold a core belief in participatory democracy as well as the right and ability of average citizens to make decisions about their lives and communities.		
Practice 2B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists engage constituents at all levels of the process – from setting the agenda and shaping strategy to meeting with policymakers and assessing results. Note: public interest lobbying firms build this capacity in their nonprofit clients.		
Practice 2C: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists create feedback loops to report back to constituents and incorporate continuous input.		
Practice 2D: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists bring authentic stories to the policy-making process, without exploiting or co-opting the people reflected (i.e., getting people to do something without giving them a full range of information or opportunity to participate).		
Practice 2E: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists engage the media to reach policymakers and the public.		

Principle 3: Public interest lobbying is credible, trustworthy, and fact based.

<i>Smart & ethical practices to operationalize this principle:</i>	<i>Progress to date</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Practice 3A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists comply – and keep up-to-date to ensure compliance – with all local, state, and federal lobbying laws and regulations.		
Practice 3B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists select and advance policy positions through objective quantitative and qualitative research and data, including personal stories that exemplify the need for and impact of the intended policy change.		
Practice 3C: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists know and understand all sides of their policy issue, as well as potential ripple effects and unintended consequences.		
Practice 3D: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists use information strategically but do not intentionally mislead with information to enable a policy victory.		
Practice 3E: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists maintain trust by following through and doing what they say they will do.		

Principle 4: High-quality public interest lobbying is multi-faceted and adaptive.

<i>Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:</i>	<i>Progress to date</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Practice 4A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists aggressively and strategically attempt to protect helpful and reform harmful public policy, not just make a point. By developing their capacity in a broad range of activities and tactics – research and analysis, communications, coalition building, educating the public, convening, direct lobbying, grassroots organizing and lobbying, litigation, etc. – public interest organizations make use of tools that are appropriate to what they are trying to accomplish.		
Practice 4B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists take informed, calculated risks that do not harm their constituents, coalition partners, or others.		
Practice 4C: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists are accurate, timely, and nimble.		
Practice 4D: Public interest organizations & their lobbyists continue learning & honing their capabilities.		

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Why Build an Alliance?



1. Increased Effectiveness -

To integrate services or to solve complex community problems

- Expanded services or geography
- Customer friendly
 - Example: Donation seems more effective to uninformed donor
 - Example: Chamber of commerce doesn't know which group to call.
- More Power/ Larger voice in the community
 - Advocacy campaigns need larger numbers
 - Relationship with legislators is stronger
- Focus is on strengths

2. Increased Efficiency

- Shared staff & functions may reduce cost
- Back Office/ Staffing Consolidations
 - Technical staff:
 - Technology support, specific expertise –
 - Engineer or construction supervisor, etc.
 - Fundraising
 - Clerical
 - Databases
 - Office space – copy machines, computer server, phone systems
- Increased usage and less duplication of services
- Smoother system functioning

Benefit of being both small and large

3. Finds creative solutions to complex problems

Example: Union Project windows

Creates an easier entrée for larger businesses or funding

Cooperation, Coordination, Collaboration Compared

Cooperation

- Primarily focused on sharing information and increase awareness.
- Often a one-time event or low long-term commitment.
- Authority is retained by individual organizations.

Example:

A group of training providers share information about dates and subject matter of training. They may co-sponsor or divide tasks. Human service agencies have better understanding of where and how to refer clients

Example:

After-school program uses efforts from literacy organization, sports recreation group, and computer training programs to provide a holistic approach at the community center.

Coordination

- Requires some planning and division of roles
- Focused around specific effort or program
- Single level of organization is involved

Collaboration

- Partners pool or jointly secure resources and share the results and rewards
- Affects multiple levels of the organization (i.e. program staff, administration & boards)
- Changes the standard operating procedures
- Usually takes 3-5 years to see demonstrable results in outcomes.

Example:

Organizations providing homeless services work together to create new system for helping homeless persons all the way from outreach to permanent housing. May involve new system-wide intake processes, data collection forms, re-alignment of services offered, community wide goals & outcomes, etc.

New Partnerships



Goal <i>How can our mission be advanced more through the partnership?</i>	Type of Organization/ Specific Org.	How would our partner benefit?	Win		How can our mission be advanced more through the partnership?

Benefits Worksheet



Areas for partnering	Specific benefits our nonprofit seeks
Resources: (May eliminate duplication or increase usage)	
Enhanced program services	
Expanded services or geography	
Increased Knowledge or information	
Increased Revenue	
Access to human capital—volunteers, board members, etc.	
Shared staff resources	
Facilities	
Goods	
Power & Recognition:	
Issue awareness	
Visibility	
Relationships	
Experts – technology, financial, research, legal etc.	
Access to new groups & people:	
Other	

Adapted from Meeting the Collaboration Challenge; Leader to Leader Foundation

The Three R's of Good Collaboratives



1. Results oriented

- Is it clear what outcomes the collaboration will achieve?
- Do partners understand how their organization will benefit?
- A clear definition of results creates the common ground and agenda for the group
- Define measurable results (both intermediate and long-term)
- Each partner has identified self-interests for involvement in the group.
- Partners are willing to contribute something to achieve these goals
- Single result shouldn't be increased income—built to fail

2. Relationships that are deft

- Have they built in ways to build and sustain relationships between organizations?
- Are roles clearly defined?
- Do members trust & respect each other?
- Be as creative as possible in maximizing mutual gain
- Outline role of leaders, process for incorporating new members
- As trust is built, new possibilities for mutual benefit emerge
- Processes promote openness and accountability
- Initiative has a champion—someone who lends credibility and clout

3. Resilient structures

- Do they have strategies for decision-making, clear accountability patterns?
- Each board of directors has signed a letter of agreement supporting the collaborative.
- Governance agreement outlines goals, roles, decision making processes, structure, communication protocol, etc.
- Evaluation & feedback loops are built in

The Collaboration Challenge

Seven C's of Strategic Collaboration



Connection with Purpose and People

- To what extent are individuals personally and emotionally connected to the social purpose of the collaboration?
- Have individuals been able to touch, feel, and see the social value of the collaboration?
- What level and what quality of interaction exist among senior leaders?
- To what extent do personal connections and interactions occur at other levels across the partnering organizations?
- How strong are interpersonal bonds?

Clarity of Purpose

- What is the purpose of the collaboration?
- Do both partners have written collaboration purpose statements?
- Has each partner determined the different functions and relative importance of the partnerships already existing in its collaboration portfolio?

Congruency of mission, strategy, and values

- How well does each partner understand the other's business?
- What are the missions, strategies, and values of each partner?
- What are the areas of current and potential overlap?
- How can each partner help the other accomplish its mission?
- To what extent is the collaboration a strategic tool for each partner?
- Have the partners engaged in shared visioning about the future?

Creation of Value

- What resources of each partner are of value to the other?
- What specific benefits will accrue to each partner from the collaboration?
- Do benefits outweigh costs and risks?
- What social value can be generated by the alliance?
- What new resources, capabilities, and benefits can be created by the collaboration?
- Are resource and capability transfer two-way?
- Are benefits equitably balanced between the partners?
- Has the value exchange and creation depreciated? If so, to what extent?
- Is it time to end the collaboration?

Communication Between Partners

- What level of respect and trust exists between the partners?
- Is communication open and frank, and is critical communication constructive?
- How is communication between the partners managed?
- Does each partner have a partner relationship manager?
- What channels and vehicles are used to communicate internally?
- Are there potential dissenters, and can they be converted?
- How does the alliance communicate externally?
- Do the partners have a coordinated external communication strategy and program?
- Is the partnership underpublicized?

Continual Learning

- What has each partner learned from the collaboration about how to work with another organization more effectively and create greater partner and social value?
- How has this learning been incorporated into the collaboration?
- Is there a process for routinely assessing learning from the collaboration?
- Is complacency stifling innovation?

Commitment to the Partnership

- What is the level of organizational commitment to the partnership, and how is this commitment demonstrated?
- What is the trend in investments (personal, financial, institutional) in the partnership?
- Are the partners' expectations of one another high?
- What is the composition of each partner's collaboration portfolio, and where does this alliance fit within those portfolios?
- Are the portfolios consistent with the partners' collaboration capacities?

Adapted from the Collaboration Challenge: How nonprofits and businesses Succeed Through Strategic Alliances by James Austin, Jossey-Bass, 2000

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This report was written by the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest's staff based on materials prepared for and the discussions that took place at the CLPI National Summit at Pocantico on Smart & Ethical Principles & Practices for Public Interest Lobbying. The report reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, its trustees, or its staff. The fund's support for the Summit and publication of this report, therefore, does not imply endorsement of its contents by the Fund. Such support does signify that the Fund believes the report to be worthy of public consideration.



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Democracy depends on citizen participation, and nonprofit organizations provide one of the most effective vehicles for engaging people in the democratic process. Since 1998, the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI) has helped nonprofits across the country, working on every issue and cause, to understand that nonprofit lobbying and advocacy are not only legal, but also critical to achieving their missions and making democracy work.

CLPI promotes, supports, and protects 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocacy and lobbying to strengthen participation in our democratic society and advance the missions of charitable organizations.

In 2006-07, CLPI led a process and convened the National Summit on Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices for Public Interest Lobbying at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Pocantico Conference Center to:

- Define and lift up “public interest lobbying” as core to nonprofit work.
- Identify and advance smart and ethical practices in public interest lobbying.
- Strengthen the CLPI Action Network to enrich and expand the climate for public interest lobbying.

The idea to develop “Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices for Public Interest Lobbying” arose at our 2005 CLPI Action Network Retreat, and it gained relevance in light of the Abramoff scandal, the resulting increased scrutiny of lobbying in general, and the ripple effect that has further impacted nonprofit lobbying. Nonprofits – guardians of the *public interest* – must seize the opportunity to proactively define our efforts in terms of both ethical and strategic principles for public interest lobbying as a vehicle for better public policy and, ultimately, lasting systemic change.

Using the Principles and Practices

From the start, CLPI intended for the principles and practices to be useful to nonprofits in their core work, not just an intellectual exercise or research project. Further, we see them as (1) aspirational – we know that no single nonprofit will excel at all of the practices at every moment, and (2) invitational – not the basis for standardization or certification.

Thus, we invite nonprofit lobbyists and advocates to use the following principles and practices to benchmark and continuously improve their own efforts to advance public interests and improve public policy. Consider incorporating them into strategic planning, staff and volunteer training, and other organizational capacity building, as well as opportunities for dialogue with coalition partners, constituents, board members and other stakeholders. You can use the accompanying benchmarking chart to help you outline your progress and next steps for applying these Smart and Ethical Principles and Practices in Public Interest lobbying. Visit www.clpi.org for a copy of the chart.

Don't the principles and practices apply to *all* lobbying?

While we received a lot of encouragement for this process, we also heard some valid and healthy skepticism. Some feel that lobbying is lobbying, and that nonprofits do not need to qualify or distinguish the “public interest” variety. Indeed, the last two principles, in particular, should apply to all lobbying.

Others feel that “public interest lobbying” is distinct from, though not better than, mainstream lobbying, just as “nonprofit management” is a particular form of management, and that we should embrace the opportunity to distinguish ourselves. The first two principles may point to the unique character of public interest lobbying.

A note about “smart and ethical”

While individual principles and practices might emphasize either the smart or the ethical, taken collectively they enable a nonprofit to be both smart and ethical in its public interest lobbying.

The Principles and Practices

The following principles, as well as the process for identifying them, are described in greater detail on the following pages:

- ⇒ Public interest lobbying adds civic value to the community today and in the future.
- ⇒ Public interest lobbying is inclusive and expansive, engaging the community and particularly those most affected by the public policy being advocated.
- ⇒ Public interest lobbying is credible, trustworthy, and fact based.
- ⇒ High-quality public interest lobbying is multi-faceted and adaptive.

Principle 1: Public interest lobbying adds civic value to the community today and in the future.

Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:

Practice 1A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists promote democracy by including, educating, and empowering a diverse spectrum of voices in the public policy debate.

Practice 1B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists take a broad and long-term vision of social change, even as they may pursue the specific focus of one nonprofit.

Practice 1C: By acting with integrity, public interest organizations and their lobbyists enable ongoing, mutually beneficial relationships with constituents, policymakers, and coalition partners and strengthen public trust in all nonprofits.

Principle 2: Public interest lobbying is inclusive and expansive, engaging the community and particularly those most affected by the public policy being advocated.

Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:

Practice 2A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists hold a core belief in participatory democracy as well as the right and ability of average citizens to make decisions about their lives and communities.

Practice 2B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists engage constituents at all levels of the process – from setting the agenda and shaping strategy to meeting with policy makers and assessing results. Note: Public interest lobbying firms build this capacity in their nonprofit clients.

Practice 2C: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists create feedback loops to report back to constituents and incorporate continuous input.

Practice 2D: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists bring authentic stories to the policymaking process, without exploiting the people reflected or co-opting them (i.e., getting them to do something without giving them a full range of information or opportunity to participate).

Practice 2E: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists engage the media to reach

policymakers and the public.

Principle 3: Public interest lobbying is credible, trustworthy, and fact based.

Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:

Practice 3A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists comply – and keep up-to-date to ensure compliance – with all local, state, and federal lobbying laws and regulations.

Practice 3B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists select and advance policy positions through objective quantitative and qualitative research and data, including personal stories that exemplify the need for and impact of the intended policy change.

Practice 3C: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists know and understand all sides of their policy issue, as well as potential ripple effects and unintended consequences.

Practice 3D: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists use information strategically but do not intentionally mislead with information to enable a policy victory.

Practice 3E: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists maintain trust by following through and doing what they say they will do.

Principle 4: High-quality public interest lobbying is multi-faceted and adaptive.

Smart and ethical practices to operationalize this principle:

Practice 4A: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists aggressively and strategically attempt to protect helpful and reform harmful public policy, not just to make a point. By developing their capacity in a broad range of activities and tactics – research and analysis, communications, coalition building, educating the public, convening, direct lobbying, grassroots organizing and lobbying, litigation, etc. – public interest organizations make use of tools that are appropriate to what they are trying to accomplish.

Practice 4B: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists take informed, calculated risks that do not harm their constituents, coalition partners, or others.

Practice 4C: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists are accurate, timely, and nimble.

Practice 4D: Public interest organizations and their lobbyists continue learning and honing their capabilities.

CLPI's Process and Approach

As a first step in the process of developing these principles and practices, we approached a long-time CLPI supporter and champion of nonprofit advocacy, Ben Shute of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. He encouraged us to apply to the Fund's prestigious Pocantico Conference Center to host a CLPI convening to outline the principles and practices. We were delighted to be selected and to receive further support from the Fund for our efforts. And so we began the process in earnest in Fall 2006.

From the start, CLPI intended for the practices that emerged from this process to be aspirational and invitational, used to stimulate people's thinking in their own work – not to serve as the basis for certification or standardization. We encourage public interest lobbyists to use the practices to benchmark and continuously improve themselves.

Likewise, CLPI recognized this initial effort as a starting point for the field's ongoing inquiry and exploration of practices that reflect and advance public interest lobbying. As in all its endeavors, CLPI remains non-partisan and politically non-ideological as it seeks to create new knowledge to advance the nonprofit sector's collective interests.

Learning from other "good practices" efforts in the nonprofit sector, we sought to make the CLPI effort:

- ⇒ **Inclusive**, involving people beyond the staff or a small planning group.
- ⇒ **Systematic**, building upon current knowledge in the field and moving from hypothesizing to data gathering to consensus building.
- ⇒ **Efficient** in the use of resources (i.e., time and money).
- ⇒ **Practical**, resulting in a usable tool for the field, not just a research project or intellectual exercise.

With these process goals in mind, we created a streamlined process with three key elements:

1. Focused data gathering, which included a literature search, 25 interviews, and 5 focus groups with **nonprofit advocates and practitioners**.
2. The CLPI National Summit at Pocantico in September 2007, a gathering of 25 **nonprofit thought leaders** to help discern the principles and practices based on CLPI's synthesis of key topic areas and guiding questions.
3. A **national planning team** to guide all of our efforts.

Defining “Public Interest”

The national planning team wisely cautioned the CLPI staff that defining “public interest” would be messy and difficult, challenging our desire to avoid sounding sanctimonious and to remain non-partisan and politically non-ideological. Further, the task of defining “public interest” or “public interest lobbying” poses a challenge because our understanding is only partly intellectual; as with other powerful and profound notions, such as “social justice” or “democracy,” our understanding is also partly intuitive. Any shared definition that arises from this process will be, at best, a working definition with some inherent ambiguity.

With these cautions in mind, however, we feel that it is important for us, as the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest, to take on the challenge of defining “public interest lobbying.” We also will keep in mind these intentions:

- The principles we develop should be aspirational and invitational, not judgmental, sanctimonious, or partisan.
- We will avoid equating “public interest” with “nonprofit,” recognizing that tax status alone does not define the “public interest,” and acknowledging that for-profits also can take “public interest” actions.
- We will aim to be transparent about our process, naming its inherent limitations, the tensions and messiness that arise, and our learnings as the process evolves.

How others define “public interest”

An initial literature search on “public interest” (and the related “common good”) yielded, not surprisingly, lots of debate and little consensus on definition.

Barron’s Dictionary defines “public interest” as:

Values generally thought to be shared by the public at large. However, there is no one public interest. Rather, there are many public interests depending upon individual needs.

Woodstock Theological Center’s articles on the “ethics of lobbying” suggest that the “public interest” is neither knowable nor timeless but in fact discovered through a process of inquiry and debate. One of the Woodstock pieces suggests that the “public interest” is “what we seek to discover through deliberation and argument,” which are the fundamental practices of democracy. In this way, the “public interest” is about the “how,” not the “what.”

Our literature search, as well as interviews and focus groups with nonprofit advocates and practitioners, unearthed some underlying tensions in any effort to define “public interest”:

- Some define “public interest” as pertaining to the whole, the public at large, or the largest and broadest portion of the public, while others see it as a specific to those with the greatest need and/or who have been historically under-represented, under-served, or otherwise marginalized.
- Some define it as common or shared interests, while others see it as an aggregation of individual interests.
- Some see it as inherently driven by ethics, while others say that any work on behalf of “public interest” is ultimately about systems change.

- Some define it by its opposite, i.e., it is not self-interest, while others see everything as self-interested and thus suggest we should aim for enlightened self-interest.
- Some see “public interest” as requiring a broad vision, while others insist that public interest organizations must maintain a focused mission.

While not irreconcilable, these tensions suggest that our efforts to define “public interest” require attention to nuance and complexity as well as an ability to hold paradox.

A more recent source, the new book *Seen but Not Heard* (Aspen Institute, 2007), based on the Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy Project shepherded by CLPI, OMB Watch, and Tufts University, includes the following:

As one healthcare leader in Boston said, ‘We act to improve the public good. The for-profit community lobbies to make a profit; there is always a self-interest. We lobby to protect the people we serve; there is no self-interest, only a public interest.’ That sentiment was consistently echoed across the country by large and small nonprofits, by urban and rural groups, and by those who are actively engaged in public policy and those who are not engaged. Regardless of the accuracy, there is a presumption that the public understands that advocacy by the nonprofit sector is far different than advocacy by the business community.

So, while respecting the desire by some to not set up our sector as better than the business community, we consistently hear that the nonprofit sector is different in the following ways:

- Public interest organizations are not primarily driven by money – but we recognize it’s critical to our success and that facilitating market solutions can bring about sustainable change.
- Public interest organizations do not hoard access to power – but we are not afraid of power and realize it is necessary to achieve our goals.
- Public interest organizations do not believe that the ends justify the means or focus on winning at all costs – but we do aim to win.

And, in fact, we heard from nonprofit lobbyists themselves that they believe nonprofits engage in “special interest” lobbying when nonprofits seek funding or other support only for their own organizations rather than to address root causes or effect systemic change. So, “public interest” characterizes an orientation or a set of behaviors, not simply a tax status.

Again, CLPI recognizes that defining “public interest” requires ongoing dialogue. We offer the principles and practices included above as one contribution to that evolving conversation. We hope that all those in the nonprofit sector engaged in lobbying -- board members, executive directors, staff, volunteers, and funders -- find these principles and practices useful, inspirational, and aspirational.

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