



ADVOCACY: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advocacy can mean different things to different people. Use Advocacy & Communication Solutions' Advocacy Glossary to familiarize yourself with general terms, so you can be more effective in your advocacy efforts.

Advocacy

is an umbrella term, and involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause.

Lobbying

is a focused form of advocacy, with the purpose to influence legislation. Only some methods of advocacy are considered lobbying.

Issue advocacy

refers to an organization communicating its views on issues of social or economic concern that are related to the organization's charitable purposes.

Communication:

a conversation (in person or by phone), letter, email, fax, or other creative mechanism to convey a message.

Legislator:

a member of a legislative body or his/her staff. In addition, executive branch officials who participate in the formulation of legislation are considered legislators (such as the governor or mayor when vetoing or signing a bill). Members of administrative bodies, however, such as school boards, sewer and water districts, housing authorities, zoning boards, and other special purposes bodies, whether elected or appointed, are not considered legislators.

Public:

anyone but a legislator or member of an organization. Communications to an organization's members are considered direct lobbying. For this purpose, a member is someone who has given more than a small amount of time or money to the organization.

Expresses a view about specific legislation:

a bill or resolution that has been introduced in a legislative body or proposed legislation such as identifying a problem and presenting a specific solution to the problem. Specific legislation includes budget appropriations and taxes, and attempts to influence the confirmation of judicial and executive branch nominees. Proposed legislation may qualify as specific legislation even if it has not yet been introduced, been written down, or even fully fleshed out. Specific legislation does not include rulemakings/promulgation of regulations, executive orders, litigation, or attempts to enforce existing laws.

Call to action:

a specific means of encouraging the communication's recipient to take lobbying action. A call to action must comprise one of the following actions:

1. tell the recipient to contact a legislator;
2. provide information on how the recipient can contact his/her legislator, such as providing the phone number or address;
3. provide a mechanism for enabling the recipient to contact his legislator, such as a postcard, petition, or email form; or
4. identify a legislator who will vote on the legislation as being opposed to or undecided about the organization's view on the legislation, a member of a legislative committee who will vote on the legislation, or the recipient's legislator.

Sources: Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI), Alliance for Justice (AFJ), Tim Delaney and Lori McClung

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