

The Messenger and the Message: How to Be a Good & Impactful Advocate

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What We Do



Policy and Programs

- Carries out the vital work of educating policymakers and the field about key strategies and policies for ending and preventing homelessness.
- Keeps federal policymakers and legislators informed of the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the programs serving them.
- Leads advocacy efforts on a grassroots level.

Capacity Building

- Supports efforts to end homelessness by offering training and technical assistance tailored to communities' unique needs.
- Helps design and implement crisis systems, improve systems' performance, and utilize data to end homelessness, particularly with an equity lens.
- Provides online courses, trainings, and webinars to inform the field of best practices to end homelessness.

Homeless Research Institute

- Analyzes data to identify homelessness trends on national, local, and Continuum of Care levels.
- Publishes research that ensures policymakers, practitioners, the media, and the public have the best information about trends and emerging solutions to the problem.
- Uses an equity lens to identify disparities in homelessness data.

Lived Experience Innovation + Strategic Communications

Advocate!!!



Advocacy & Lobbying

Lobbying: an attempt to influence specific legislation. Activities that are in direct support of, or opposition to, a specific piece of introduced or proposed legislation.

Advocacy: is the process of stakeholders making their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the lives of others at the local, state, and national level.

References: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Advocacy

Advocacy: It also means helping policymakers and elected or appointed officials find specific solutions. Most nonprofits can and do engage in as much advocacy as possible to achieve their goals.

References: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Advocacy Activities

- ❖ **Inviting Members of Congress or state lawmakers to your hospital, or showing how state or federal funds have been used is not considered lobbying**
- ❖ **Sharing technical advice in response to a question from a lawmaker is not lobbying**
- ❖ **Educating a lawmaker about an issue while not promoting a piece of legislation is only advocacy.**

References: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Lobbying Activities

- ❖ **Writing to state lawmakers requesting funding for mental health services in the state budget**
- ❖ **Writing to your Member of Congress asking that he or she support a specific bill**
- ❖ **Meeting with a local, state or federal lawmaker in-person to encourage he or she to support or oppose a specific piece of legislation.**

References: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Yes, You Are Allowed to Lobby!

In general, no organization may qualify for section 501(c)(3) status if a substantial part of its activities is attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as lobbying). A 501(c)(3) organization may engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status.

Organizations may, however, involve themselves in issues of public policy without the activity being considered as lobbying. For example, organizations may conduct educational meetings, prepare and distribute educational materials, or otherwise consider public policy issues in an educational manner without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status.

References: Internal Revenue Service

Yes, You Are Allowed to Lobby!

If you are a local, state or federal government employee you can lobby as a concerned citizen.

Don't count the time you lobby as work time nor say you represent the views of your employer when engaging with lawmakers.

If you receive HUD funding you can lobby. However, you cannot request lawmakers to give your agency money. You can in general discuss the need for overall funding for HUD programs on a state-level as long as it is not a specific request to a particular organization.



Ways to Act

NAEH TAKE ACTION PAGE:

<https://endhomelessness.org/help-end-homelessness/take-action/>

Ways to Act

- ❖ **Attend** City Council and Board of Supervisor meetings to demand more investments in homelessness response in your communities.
- ❖ **Connect** with local and statewide advocacy organizations to stay in tune with what is happening.
- ❖ **Call** and/or **Write** to your local, state and federal lawmakers to demand action. Request meetings to voice your concerns. NAEH can assist with scheduling meetings with Congressional offices.



Housing = Human Dignity

THANK YOU!!!!!! 😊

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