



## Advocacy & Lobbying 101

### Defined

**Advocacy:** the act of arguing in favor of something, such as a cause or policy

**Lobbying:** activities aimed at influencing policymakers on proposed policy measures

### What is Advocacy? What is Lobbying?

The words advocacy and lobbying are often confused. Advocacy encompasses a wide range of activities. Lobbying is a small part of advocacy; advocacy does not always involve lobbying.

Advocacy helps in building familiarity and trust between you and your elected officials. It is providing reliable information to policymakers. Advocacy is offering a personal perspective where public policy decisions are made. In short, advocacy means speaking up for what you believe is important and talking about the issue with the people whose support and influence can help your cause.

Lobbying is about making positive change to laws that affect you, your community, and the causes you serve. Lobbying is trying to influence the voting and action of policymakers; it is urging the passage [or defeat] of policy measures. Lobbying is citizen action at any level of government. It is part of the democratic process.

### Examples of Advocacy vs. Lobbying

- Informing legislators about the role of the arts in education is **advocacy**.
- Making general arguments about the importance of public support for physical education in schools is **advocacy**.
- Explaining to a legislator about the value of encouraging artist's gifts of their work to a museum is **advocacy**.
- Requesting a legislator's support for legislation that would mandate arts education in the school curriculum is **lobbying**.
- Asking a legislator to vote for an increase in the amount of time students spend in physical education or recess in a bill is **lobbying**.
- Urging a legislator to support a bill to allow artists a full value charitable deduction for the donation of their work is **lobbying**.

Almost all important changes in public policy and legislation begin with non-lobbying advocacy and end with lobbying the legislature. Building a relationship is the foundation for advocacy and lobbying. Your elected officials need to hear from you before there is a crisis, before you have a problem to solve. Developing that relationship with a legislator and creating an understanding, through advocacy, about your issue can lead to successful lobbying for legislation that becomes law.

*\*\* The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies aided in providing this synopsis \*\**



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