Advocacy Tool Kit

Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse (MAPSA)

OUR MISSION. The Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse is the only statewide grassroots network that advocates for unified voice for substance abuse prevention in Maine.

MAPSA ORGANIZES

MAPSA organizes substance abuse education to the Maine Congressional Delegation

MAPSA PROTECTS

MAPSA protects the Fund for Healthy Maine.

MAPSA PROVIDES

MAPSA provides support to members while building understanding the substance abuse is a public health issue minim veniam.

MAPSA WORKS

MAPSA works with law enforcement, public health professionals, coalitions and others to ensure that the general public is aware of the various substance abuse prevention issues in the state.

Contact us
295 WATER STREET, SUITE 200, AUGUSTA MAINE 04330 | 207.621.8118 | WWW.MAPSA.ORG

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Introduction

The Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse (MAPSA) is a statewide grassroots network created in 1999 to provide an advocacy voice for substance abuse prevention.

MAPSA represents service providers, agencies, coalitions and individuals who have an interest in and a commitment to substance abuse prevention.

This guide serves as a tool for our members, community coalitions and key stakeholders to advance education and advocacy efforts forward on behalf of Substance Abuse Prevention. Please visit our website for updates, trainings and cutting-edge resources: www.masap.org/site/prevention.asp

Getting Advocacy off the Ground

Advocates plead in favor of a cause. They work—often in the face of opposition—for the things that matter to local communities.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY? BEFORE DIRECT ACTION COMES PLANNING, AND BEFORE PLANNING COMES AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT NEEDS TO BE PUT IN THE PLAN. ADVOCACY IS ACTIVE PROMOTION OF A CAUSE OR PRINCIPLE.

- Advocacy involves actions that lead to a selected goal.
- Advocacy is one of many possible strategies, or ways to approach a problem.
- Advocacy can be used as part of a community initiative, nested in with other components.
- Advocacy is not direct service.
- Advocacy does not necessarily involve confrontation or conflict.

SOME EXAMPLES MAY HELP CLARIFY JUST WHAT ADVOCACY IS:

- You join a group that helps build houses for the poor—that's wonderful, but it's not advocacy (it's a service).
- You organize and agitate to get a proportion of apartments in a new development designated as low to moderate income housing—that's advocacy.
- You spend your Saturdays helping sort out goods at the recycling center—that's not advocacy (it's a service).
- You hear that land used for the recycling center is going to be closed down and you band together with many others to get the city to preserve this site, or find you a new one. Some of you even think about blocking the bulldozers, if necessary. That's advocacy.

Advocacy usually involves getting government, business, schools, or some other large institution (also known as Goliath) to correct an unfair

or harmful situation affecting people in the community (also known as David, and friends). The situation may be resolved through persuasion, by forcing Goliath to buckle under pressure, by compromise, or through political or legal action.

For some people, advocacy is a new role.

SEVERAL INGREDIENTS MAKE FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY, INCLUDING:

- The rightness of the cause
- The power of the advocates (i.e., more of them is much better than less)
- The thoroughness with which the advocates researched the issues, the opposition, and the climate of opinion about the issue in the community
- Their skill in using the advocacy tools available (including the media)
- Above all, the selection of effective strategies and tactics

For some people, advocacy is a new role. It may be uncomfortable—particularly if confrontation and conflict are involved. But, for others, advocacy is more attractive than setting up and running service programs in the community.

Advocacy can be glamorous: the David vs. Goliath image, manning the barricades, making waves. But the decision to put major resources into advocacy is not one to be taken lightly. If it doesn't work—if you stick your necks way out and don't succeed—not only will you fail, but you may do so in public, discrediting your cause, perhaps making conditions worse for the people you set out to help.

DOES ADVOCACY ALWAYS INVOLVE CONFRONTATION?

Advocacy can be confrontational, but conflict is usually a bad place to start. Good advocates know they must think very hard about any confrontation that's going to be necessary. That's one reason for careful planning of strategy and tactics. Even if the issue seems as clear as a bell, and your choice of actions seems just as obvious, it's a good idea to take another long, hard look.

WHY AND WHEN WOULD YOU CHOOSE ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is best kept for when "routine" work such as gathering support for a cause, raising money, and recruiting members of a community initiative or program won't get you where you want to go.

In most cases, it's a good idea to think twice before launching yourselves

When you have enough enthusiasm and energy to last for what could be a long haul.

(or your group) as advocates, because it's a strategy that's more effective if there isn't too much of it around. Imagine a city where there were public demonstrations every day, where City Hall was besieged constantly by groups with special petitions, resolutions, and assorted agitations. The community would quickly develop advocacy fatigue. So would the advocates.

The best time to start planning for an advocacy campaign is:

- When your direct experience or preliminary research shows you cannot achieve your goals in any other way;
- When you are sure you have (or will have) the capacity to carry it through;
- When you have enough enthusiasm and energy to last for what could be a long haul!

SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR ADVOCATES

Once you go public with an advocacy campaign, you may draw the attention of a number of people, not all of whom will wish you well. If things go wrong, you could end up looking very silly in the local news, which would not be good for your future campaigns. Even worse, in some circumstances a wrong step could land you in court. At the very least, there's a risk of spinning your wheels if you don't go about the many tasks of advocacy efficiently.

For example, to look at a worst-case scenario, think of what could go wrong with a campaign to promote better health for the poor:

- You accuse the local hospital of turning away a sick patient, without checking your facts. The hospital proves that it treated the man, but he discharged himself early.
- You push your allies out of shape by launching a press release that uses their name, without checking the wording with them first.
- You announce a big demonstration outside the hospital, and only three people show up.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

You probably already have a pretty good idea of what the issue or problem is. For example:

- You are aware of a growing problem of homelessness, particularly among people with small children;
- You feel that not nearly enough is being done in your community to prevent youth smoking;
- Your group is afraid that a new industrial park up river will pollute the water.

Part of your research will involve an analysis of who has power. Remember, advocacy is about power—who can influence things that matter. You will need to know where the power of your opponents lies, and how you can most effectively influence or confront it.

Who are your allies? How can you identify them?

RECOGNIZING ALLIES

If you are the only people in town who want something done about the problem you have identified, your cause could be in trouble. It's one thing to fight city hall: much harder to take on a whole community of hostile or indifferent people. If there are only a handful of people on your side, it may be all too easy for those in power to dismiss you as the lunatic fringe. One of your jobs will be to make that "fringe" start to look like a representative slice of the whole population affected by the issue—more like the dog and less like the tail. Then people in power will take notice.

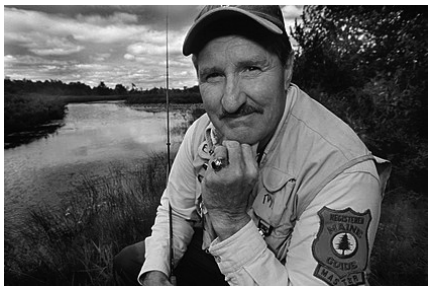
Somewhere, there are allies—people who can band together with you and give your cause bulk, visibility, and clout. The question is how to identify them? In section 19 you will learn about power mapping. It will tell you how to pinpoint those groups and agencies in town that have the power to help your group. This map will also help you identify specific ways in which these potential allies can help.

Of course, you'll need to be careful about who you invite on board—some allies may bring baggage that you don't need. We'll help you balance potential benefits against potential risks, and come up with some useful backers who will help, rather than hinder, your cause—in the power mapping section.

In addition to deciding whether other groups have an interest in your cause, it's important to find out if an alliance with them is in your interest. For example, suppose you are planning to make life difficult for retailers who sell cigarettes to kids, and you know that the American Cancer Society, a couple of local youth groups, and a pair of enlightened churches have the same goals. Just how can you best help each other? Do you want a close relationship? Suppose these people are limited by their own charters in the type of action they can get involved in? Suppose they might want to take over the direction of the whole campaign? Suppose they are with your interests on some matters, and against you in others?

IDENTIFYING OPPONENTS AND RESISTANCE

Although it's possible to advocate without having an opponent (for example, you may be working largely to overcome ignorance and inertia), most advocacy campaigns have a recognizable Goliath—or even several big (and potentially mean) kids on the block. Who are your opponents? Why are they putting up resistance? And what can you do about it?



Once you have a plan, you'll know where you are going, and how to get there!

There's not much point knowing the names of your opponents unless you also know why they are opposing you. Sometimes, this may not be for the most obvious reasons, so you'll need to know what's going on.

Starting with the cause for resistance is often more fruitful than starting with a list of people you expect to be bad guys: you may get some surprises. For example, a big developer might turn out to support your drive for more low-cost housing, because he recognizes that the presence of homeless people in the neighborhood can deter rich people from buying his expensive houses. Similarly, people from whom you might expect support might turn out to oppose you. Perhaps a big agency that seems to share your goals is bent out of shape because you seem to be trespassing on their turf or accusing them of ineffectiveness in the past. You can't take anything for granted.

ENCOURAGING INVOLVEMENT OF POTENTIAL OPPONENTS AS WELL AS ALLIES

Once you have a plan, you'll know where you are going, and how to get there. That will give you confidence, and that confidence will give you clout. Armed with that, you may be able to approach certain groups or individuals whom you thought were opposed to you. Maybe they still are, but you may find that you can find help in unexpected quarters. Now that your plan makes you more business-like, people may decide to cut a deal. Or, now that your position can be made clear to others as well as to yourselves, you may find that although a certain group still may oppose you on some issues, you are on the same side of others.

DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR ADVOCACY

Planning for advocacy is often a complex program because we have to deal with power and opposition. As you know by now, an advocate will usually have to overcome obstacles much greater than "mere" inertia, or lack of funds, which are often the main barriers where other types of community development projects are concerned. In advocacy situations, there are likely to be well-prepared opponents waiting in the tall grass. And they will need to be out-planned.

For a useful analogy, we'll invite you to think of the overall campaign as a building project:

- Your vision and mission is to provide a place to live that is warm and safe.
- Your objective is to build a house.
- Your strategy will take the form of blueprints for the house.
- Your action plan will include the specifics: who will pour the concrete for the foundation, put up a frame, add the roof, et cetera, and when will they do it.

And all will go together as part of one big action plan.

TO SUM IT UP

Advocacy is exciting work. You get the pleasure of fighting the good fight, and sometimes, the thrill of victory. In order to have that, though, you need to get through all of the day-to-day details and specifics. You'll need to keep an eye on the forest while working on the trees individually. By going through the following sections carefully, we think you will be better prepared to bring about the changes that matter to your community.

COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

http://ctb.ku.edu

RESOURCES

Altman, D., Balcazar, F., Fawcett, S., Seekins, T., and Young, J.(1994). *Public Health Advocacy: Creating Community Change to Improve Health*. Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention. Palo Alto,CA.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S.(1991) *Organizing for Social Change: a manual for activists in the 1990s*. Minneapolis, MN. Midwest Academy.

(1996). How—and Why—to Influence Public Policy. *Community Change*, 17, 1–40.

Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems. "Advocating for Policy Change." *Tip Sheets from 20/20 Vision Education Fund*.

Advocacy Terms 101

Terms you'll encounter when you become an advocate. It helps to know what it all means.

FACT SHEETS

Documents that provide information In order to sway opinion

TALKING POINTS

Documents with specific messages that can be used with the media or legislators

GRASSROOTS

Ordinary people who care about an issue

GRASSTOPS

Experts or opinion leaders who can deliver your message

LOBBYIST

A person who is specifically employed … for the purpose of and who engages in lobbying in excess of 8 hours in any calendar month

CAMPAIGN

Is just another word for an advocacy plan

ADVOCACY

- Educating key decision makers on issues that are important to you
- Being an information source
- Arguing for a cause

LOBBYING

Communicate directly with any official for the purpose of influencing the approval or veto of a legislative action when reimbursement for expenditures or compensation is made.

No Federal or State appropriated funds shall be expended by an organization for influencing or attempting to influence, as prohibited by state or federal law, an officer or employee of any Federal or State agency, a member of Congress or a State Legislature, or an officer or employee of Congress or a State Legislature in connection with any of the following covered actions: the awarding of any agreement; the making of any grant; the entering into of any cooperative agreement; or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any agreement, grant, or cooperative agreement. The signing of this Agreement fulfills the requirement that providers receiving over $100,000 in Federal or State funds file with the Department (Example OSA) with respect to this provision.

If any other funds have been or will be paid to any person in connection with any of the covered actions specified in this provision, the Provider shall complete and submit a "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" form available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/#forms.

ORGANIZING

Bringing together people who are interested in supporting or opposing a political action

COALITIONS

The result of successful organizing. Coalitions often come together for a specific campaign and then disband

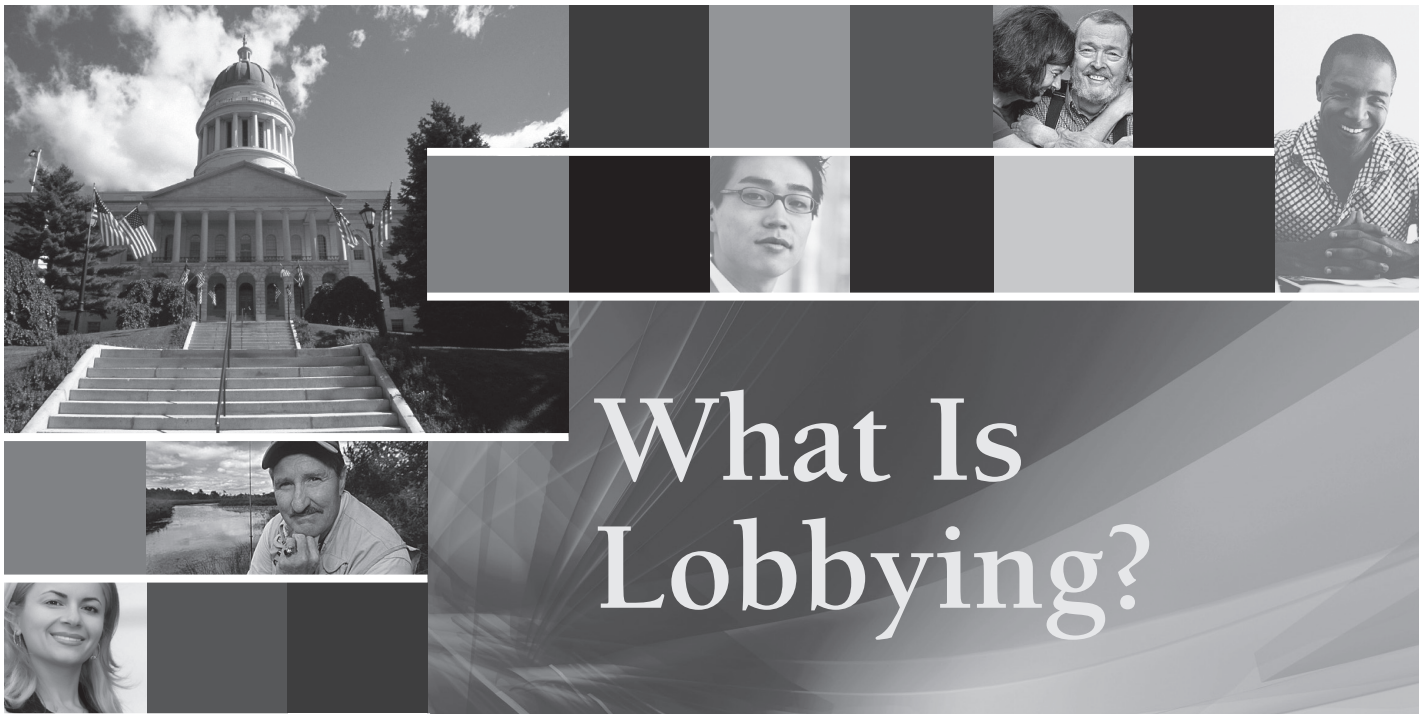
MEDIA

Earned Media

- Press Releases
- Letters to the Editor
- Editorial Boards
- Op Eds

Paid Media

- Advertisements
- Direct Mail



What Is Lobbying?

Lobbying can be a tricky course to navigate. Here are some FAQs and answers to help steer you in the right direction.

THE ETHICS COMMISSION STAFF FREQUENTLY RECEIVES QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF "LOBBYING." LOBBYING IS A TERM DEFINED IN MAINE STATUTES (TITLE 3 M.R.S.A. §312-A) AND GENERALLY REFERS TO COMMUNICATING DIRECTLY WITH AN OFFICIAL IN THE LEGISLATURE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING LEGISLATIVE ACTION, INCLUDING TIME SPENT PREPARING AND SUBMITTING ORAL OR WRITTEN PROPOSALS, TESTIMONY OR ANALYSIS CONCERNING ANY LEGISLATIVE ACTION. It also includes communicating with the Governor for the purpose of influencing the approval or veto of a legislative action.

The determination whether an individual is engaged in reportable "lobbying" depends partly on whether the lobbyist is being compensated in some manner by an employer whether though billing or as a regular salaried employee, and whether in the form of payment for the lobbyist's time, or reimbursement of expenses. Activities on the lobbyist's personal time do not constitute lobbying.

This memo is intended to offer consistent guidance to lobbyists and employers in determining when an individual has completed 8 hours of lobbying in a calendar month (requiring registration) and what activity must be included in the monthly and annual reports. The guidance is not binding—only statutes and rules are legally enforceable—but it reflects the Commission's interpretation of the statutes governing lobbying in Maine and may be relied upon by the Commission in considering specific complaints or questions that may arise in the future. All lobbyists and employers are encouraged to read the statute carefully (Title 3 M.R.S.A. §§311–326), including in particular the definitions in §312-A, and to

adhere to its provisions. If a lobbyist has questions regarding disclosure procedures, however, they are encouraged to contact Commission staff at 287-4179 prior to filing a report.

DOES LOBBYING INCLUDE…

… Sitting at a legislative hearing, work session or waiting for an opportunity to communicate with Legislators?

Yes. If the employer is compensating the lobbyist for being there, it is considered lobbying whether the lobbyist is speaking, listening, or waiting.

…Travel time to the State House or other event for the purpose of communicating with Legislators or staff?

Yes. Travel time is included and counts toward the 8-hour lobbying threshold, provided that the purpose is to meet with Legislators and the lobbyist is being compensated for the travel time. If the purpose of the trip includes personal or other business reasons such that the lobbyist is not being compensated for it as part of lobbying work, then the travel time is not included.

…Speaking to a Legislator about general issues of interest to the employer that may influence legislative action in the future even if the conversation does not relate to specific legislation?

In most cases, yes. This includes informational meetings or seminars to educate Legislators, which might influence the outcome of a decision before the Legislature in the future. In deciding whether these communications constitute lobbying in any particular instance, the question the lobbyist should ask is, "If this individual were not a Legislator, would I be speaking to her or him about this matter?"

…Research for expected legislation or specific LD?

Yes. Research on a general issue that does not relate to any existing or anticipated legislation, however, is not lobbying.

…Grassroots lobbying, such as encouraging constituents to contact their legislators?

No. The statue defines only direct communication as lobbying. Encouraging constituents to communicate with their legislators is not lobbying. However, the time spent by a lobbyist in organizing a coordinated effort to have constituents contact their legislators, such as by preparing a postcard, standard email communication or written statement for constituents to use, may constitute lobbying even if the lobbyist is not the one communicating those words directly to legislators.

Ten Reasons to Lobby for Your Cause

For many of us, lobbying is something other people do.... But lobbying ... is something all of us should do if we believe in a good cause....

FOR MANY OF US, LOBBYING IS SOMETHING OTHER PEOPLE DO—PEOPLE WHO WEAR FANCY CLOTHES AND BUY POLITICIANS LUNCH AT EXPENSIVE RESTAURANTS. BUT LOBBYING, OR MORE SIMPLY, TRYING TO INFLUENCE THOSE WHO MAKE POLICIES THAT AFFECT OUR LIVES, IS SOMETHING ANYONE CAN DO. AND IT IS SOMETHING ALL OF US SHOULD DO IF WE BELIEVE IN A GOOD CAUSE AND IN A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT. READ ON TO FIND OUT WHY.

1. You can make a difference.

It takes one person to initiate change. Gerry Jensen was a single mother struggling to raise her son in Toledo, Ohio, without the help of a workable child support system. She put an ad in a local newspaper to see if there were other moms who wanted to join her in working for change. There were. Over time, they built the Association for Child Support Enforcement, or ACES, which has helped change child support laws not just in Ohio, but across the country. One person—a single mother—made a difference.

2. People working together can make a difference.

Families of Alzheimer's patients working together, through the Alzheimer's Association, convinced the government to invest resources into research for a cure. Other individuals formed Mothers Against Drunk Driving and convinced dozens of states to toughen up their drunk driving laws. As a result,the numbers of drunk driving deaths are lower. Additionally, many people find healing from tragedy by telling their stories and working to prevent it from happening to others.

3. People can change laws.

Many of us think that ordinary individuals can't make a difference. It is hard to change laws and policies. But it can be done. It has been done, over and over again in our history, in the face of great obstacles. People lost their lives fighting racist "Jim Crow" laws. They won. Women didn't even have the power of the vote—as we all do today—when they started their struggle for suffrage. Our history is full of stories of people and groups that fought great odds to make great changes: child labor laws, public schools, clean air and water laws, social security. These changes weren't easy to achieve. Some took decades. They all took the active involvement—the lobbying—of thousands of people who felt something needed to be changed.

4. Lobbying is a democratic tradition.

The act of telling our policymakers how to write and change our laws is at the very heart of our democratic system. It is an alternative to what has occurred in many other countries: tyranny or revolution. Lobbying has helped keep America's democracy evolving over more than two centuries.

5. Lobbying helps find real solutions.

Services provided directly to people in need, such as soup kitchens, emergency health clinics, and homeless shelters, are essential. But sometimes they are not enough. Many food pantries, for example, needed new laws to enable caterers and restaurants to donate excess food so the kitchens could feed more people. Family service organizations working to place abused children into safe homes needed changes in the judicial system so kids did not have to wait for years for a secure place to grow up.Through advocacy, both changes were implemented. People thinking creatively and asking their elected officials for support can generate innovative solutions that overcome the root-cause of a problem.

6. Lobbying is easy.

Many of us think lobbying is some mysterious rite that takes years to master. It isn't. You can learn how to lobby—whom to call, when, what to say—in minutes. While there are a few simple reporting rules your organization needs to follow, it isn'tcomplicated. Countless numbers of people have learned how. Lobbying is easier and more effective when many committed people work together. One person does not have to do everything or know everything.

7. Policymakers need your expertise.

Few institutions are closer to the real problems of people than nonprofits and community groups. They see problems first-hand. They know

Every professional lobbyist will tell you that personal stories are powerful tools for change.

the needs. They see what works and what doesn't. They can make problems real to policymakers. They care about the problems. Their passion and perspectives need to be heard. Every professional lobbyist will tell you that personal stories are powerful tools for change. People and policymakers can learn from your story.

8. Lobbying helps people.

Some people become concerned that lobbying detracts from their mission, but quite the opposite is true. Everything that goes into a lobbying campaign—the research, the strategy planning, the phone calls and visits—will help fulfill your goal whether it be finding a cure for cancer, beautifying the local park, or helping some other cause that helps people. You may not personally provide a direct service, but through your advocacy work, you enable thousands of others to do so.

9. The views of local nonprofits are important.

Increasingly, the federal government has been allowing local governments to decide how to spend federal money and make more decisions than in the past. This change gives local nonprofits even more responsibility to tell local policymakers what is needed and what will work. And because more decisions are being made locally, your lobbying can have an immediate, concrete impact on people in need.

10. Lobbying advances your cause and builds public trust.

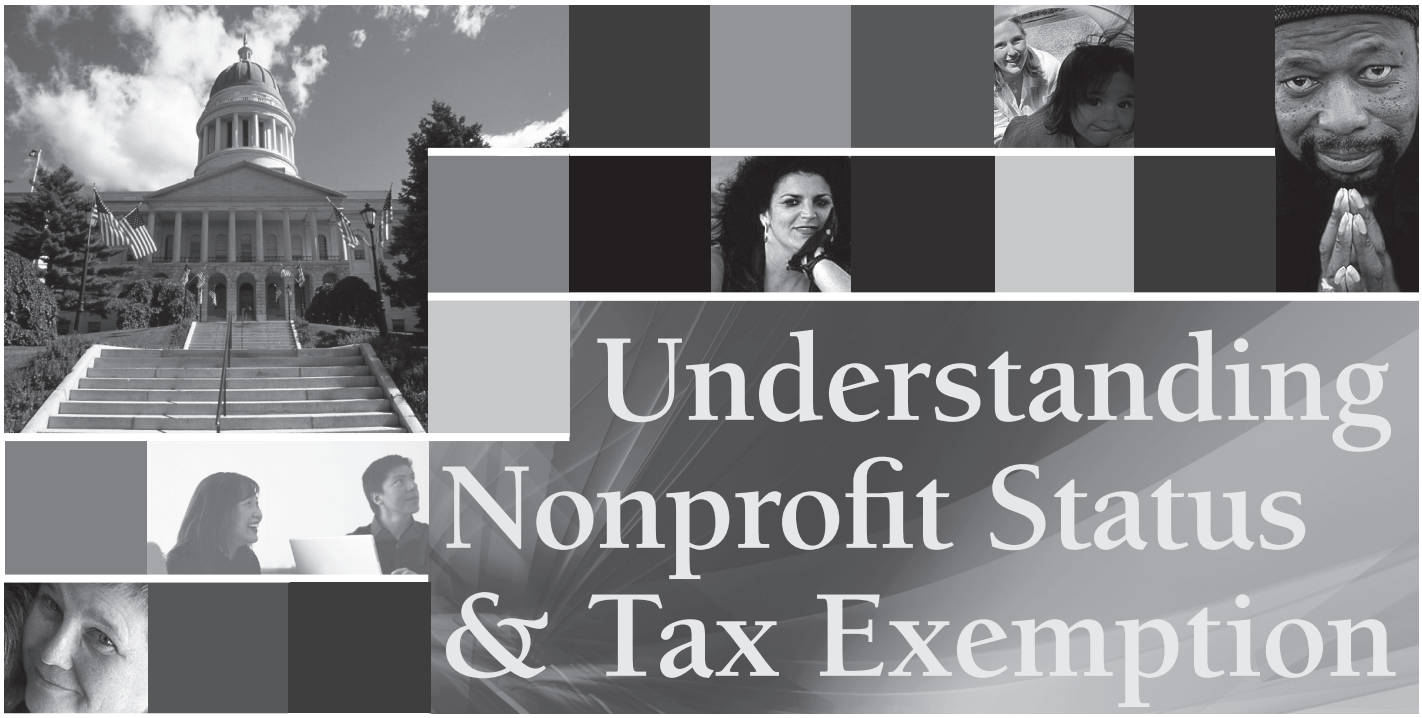
Building public trust is essential to nonprofit organizations and lobbying helps you gain it by increasing your organization's visibility. Just as raising funds and recruiting volunteers are important to achieving your organization's mission so is lobbying. You miss out on an important opportunity to advance your cause if you don't think as much about relationships with local, state, and federal government.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following publications can be purchased online at www.IndependentSector.org or by calling 888-860-8118.

Nonprofit Lobbying Guide

Playing by the Rules: Handbook on Voter Participation and Education Work for 501(c)(3) Organizations



Understanding Nonprofit Status & Tax Exemption

Contributed by Jenette Nagy and Chris Hampton
Edited by Phil Rabinowitz and Kate Nagy

There are many different kinds of nonprofits. Which one is right for you?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NONPROFIT AND TAX-EXEMPT?

Are nonprofit and tax-exempt statuses the same? No, but they are closely related. Nearly all organizations that are nonprofit wish to be tax-exempt as well, so the terms are often confused. Many charitable organizations, for example, are nonprofit organizations and are recognized by the federal government as being tax-exempt. But becoming nonprofit and becoming tax-exempt are different processes, done at different times (usually), and by different government agencies.

To apply for federal tax-exemption, you need to have been granted nonprofit status first. Further, not all nonprofits are eligible to be tax-exempt. Let's look at each term individually.

Nonprofit Status

A nonprofit organization in its simplest variation, is any organization for which those who control or support it do not earn a profit. This doesn't mean that a nonprofit can't make a profit--quite the contrary is true. A nonprofit organization can produce goods and services, and it can earn a profit while doing so. It can even invest those profits (in the stock market, for example) in hopes of earning more money. However, all of the money made must go back into the organization--there is no "profit sharing" among members. Generally speaking, these organizations don't have any owners.

A first important distinction to make is that granting nonprofit status is done by the state, while applying for tax-exempt designation—such as 501(c)(3), the charitable tax exemption—is granted by the federal government in the form of the IRS.

This is one reason that nonprofits are known more and more commonly as "not-for-profits." They may make a profit to help them stay in business, but making money is not their reason for being.

Individual states, and not the federal government, grant official nonprofit status. They may do so in slightly different ways, and give slightly different advantages for obtaining it. However, the federal government can recognize your nonprofit status. If you want to apply for tax-exemption, for example, you must be recognized as nonprofit by the federal government.

There are three types of nonprofit organizations that are recognized for this purpose by the federal government:

- A corporation,
- An unincorporated organization, and
- A trust.

Corporation

Becoming a corporation is perhaps the most common choice for community organizations. For incorporation, the organization must be structured according to specific state laws. These laws include having a "creating document" commonly known as the articles of incorporation, and rules of operation which are commonly known as bylaws. Usually, there is a board of directors and officers, and state laws (usually) limit the liability of members in varying degrees.

Often, *incorporation* is the best choice for a community organization. Part of this is simply a matter of perception, or of comfort, of the people with whom you work. People are familiar with corporations; they're used to working with them, and often perceive corporations as serious and dependable. Also, the limitations on personal liability mentioned above can be quite helpful.

What does this personal liability protection mean? Quite simply, if someone feels the organization or one of its members has harmed him, only the organization may be sued, and not individual members if you have this protection. For example, if a potential employee feels she has not been hired because she is hearing-impaired, she can sue the organization as a whole, but not the person who interviewed her. Likewise, if the organization's director gets in an accident and hurts a passerby on the way to a coalition meeting, the organization, but not the director, may be sued.

It's important to note, however, that the limits of this liability do vary from state to state, and you should be aware of the laws that govern what you do. There may be circumstances in which direc-

tors or members of corporations may face personal liability. Some insurance companies offer additional insurance for directors and officers of nonprofit corporations.

Unincorporated Organization
An unincorporated organization is a group much like a corporation, and often has similar bylaws and purposes. Although the name seems to suggest otherwise, it is still a formal structure with an official structure. However, a constitution or other policies may take the place of the articles of incorporation, and there is no protection against personal liability. Additionally, much less reporting to the state occurs.

Trust
A trust generally has more narrow interests than a corporation or an unincorporated group. Many laws which govern trusts are created with charitable trusts (i.e, groups that give away money) in mind. Because of this, becoming a trust is rarely appropriate for a community group.

Going into depth on each of these types of organizations is beyond the scope of the section; for detailed information on each of them, you might speak with an attorney, or read *Starting and managing a nonprofit organization: A legal guide* (see Resources at the end of this section).

And of course, you can certainly be a nonprofit organization in the loose sense of the word without ever filing papers, having a board, or any of those things. For example, a neighborhood group could be very effective without ever incorporating, or having a board, or even elected officers. It's still a nonprofit in practice, though, even if the law does not recognize it. We'll discuss the advantages and disadvantages of becoming officially recognized later in the section.

Federal Tax-Exempt Status

Organizations that are exempt from federal taxes are described sections in the United States Tax Code. The best known type of tax-exemption is 501(c)(3), also known as the "charitable tax exemption." This designation allows exemption from federal corporate and income taxes for most types of revenue. Also, organizations designated as 501(c)(3) are able to solicit tax deductible contributions. 501(c)(3) is most appropriate for many community organizations, and (except where indicated otherwise) it will be used interchangeably with the term *tax-exempt* for the remainder of this section.

However, before we move on, we should mention that there are a total of 26 exemptions under the tax code for different purposes, and some

community organizations might find one of them more appropriate. For example, a group that is involved in heavy lobbying or political advocacy work would be unable to apply for 501(c)(3) status, as it isn't allowed under that statute. So a group heavily involved in social welfare that wants to lobby extensively for political candidates, for example, might find 501(c)(4) status (which deals uniquely with social welfare organizations) more appropriate for their purposes.

So before deciding to become 501(c)(3), it's a good idea to sit down and study other possibilities with an expert. Together, you can decide on the type of exemption that best meets your needs. That way, you won't be trying to push a square peg into a round hole. More information on the different tax exemptions, as well as other technical details not discussed in this section, may be found on the IRS website. See Resources at the end of this section for a link to the page.

Generally, an organization becomes tax-exempt by applying for the status. This is a fairly long process. The application form (Form 1023 for 501(c)(3) organizations; Form 1024 for others) is approximately 30 pages, and the IRS suggests that it (1023) will take about eight hours to complete--and that's after you have done record keeping (on expenses, revenue, and the like) and learned the law. It usually takes several months to be granted status.

However, several weeks after you complete and mail the forms, the IRS will send you a letter saying your status is "pending." This letter is usually enough proof for funders and others who might require proof of your exempt status.

When status is granted, the IRS will send a "letter of determination" that your organization can then use to prove its tax-exempt status on a more permanent basis. You might need the letters to show to foundations when applying for a grant, for example, or when you are applying for state tax-exemption. (Next Section)

Additionally, however, there are two ways of having tax-exempt status without filing: *automatic recognition* and a *fiscal conduit*.

Automatic recognition

Some organizations are automatically recognized as having 501(c)(3) status; they don't need to file. These groups include:

- Subordinate organizations that are evaluated by parent groups, or are covered by a group exemption;
- Churches, parts of churches, or associations of churches; and
- Organizations that are not private foundations and normally have gross receipts of not more than $5,000. For example, a

group of citizens trying to convince the city council to create bike lanes on major streets might fall into this category. This recognition is particularly helpful for small grassroots groups who don't have the experience, time, and money necessary to file for exemption.

Even though these groups are automatically tax-exempt, they may choose to file anyway, in order to have the official letter of determination on file. This often makes it easier to solicit contributions and ask for exemptions from state taxes.

Fiscal conduit
A fiscal conduit is an organization that is already incorporated and tax-exempt that administers funds and performs other administrative tasks for your group. Also called a "lead agency," they can be invaluable in helping out with the organization of your group, reimbursing contractors, and sharing space. Local United Ways and public health departments are two examples of groups that often serve as fiscal conduits.

A fiscal conduit may be what you need at the very beginning. The lead agency can do all the paperwork for you, and provide other kinds of less tangible support that can really help you, at least at the start. Why not use that support if it's available?

State tax-exemption
State exemptions can include many different things, including exemptions from sales tax, income tax, and property tax. Again, these laws vary, so check with the Secretary of State's office for rules for your state. In some states, however, the requirements are the same as those of the federal government, and showing proof of 501(c)(3) status is enough to exempt you from many state taxes.

State exemptions can include many different things, such as exemptions from sales tax, income tax and property tax.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF NONPROFIT AND TAX-EXEMPT STATUS?

There are quite a few advantages to having the official status. These include:

For nonprofit status:

If you want to assume fiduciary responsibility for all of the funds and to contract directly with the state, you will need to be an incorporated nonprofit organization.

- As an incorporated nonprofit organization, you'll be able to take advantage of reduced postal rates for many purposes.

- And, as an officially recognized nonprofit, you can apply for federal tax-exemption, which leads to many more advantages.

For federal tax-exempt status:

- As we mentioned above, you are freed from many taxes, and potential donors can make tax-deductible contributions. The latter is a powerful advantage for many groups who survive mainly on contributions and grants.
- You can apply for grant funds directly. Almost all foundation or government grants require evidence of federal tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status. If you don't have it, you will need some kind of fiscal conduit in order for your grant application to be considered.
- Your group now becomes more independent, free (or at least freer) from the potential control of fiscal agents or others who have helped you before, even if they have been generally sympathetic.
- The independence you gain can be a psychological boost to your organization

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF NONPROFIT AND TAX-EXEMPT STATUS?

Although applying for official nonprofit and tax-exempt statuses can be very helpful, there can also be some disadvantages to doing so. They include:

- Incorporation creates another level of complexity, responsibility, and regulation that a volunteer-based organization may not be prepared to handle. For example, your organizations must send an annual tax-return to the IRS.
- Filing for incorporation and tax-exemption takes time and money. For example, at this writing (in 1998) the fee for filing for federal exemption is $500 for most groups, and $150 in a limited number of cases. Fees for tax advisors (legal and accounting) can also be substantial.
- For a group in the very beginning stages, incorporation and tax-exemption may not be necessary. It's often best to focus on doing the work, and developing a track record of success. Incorporation and related issues can become a distraction; they can be taken up later.
- Incorporation and federal tax-exemption may limit certain lobbying and advocacy activities. For example, you cannot (as an organization) support candidates for public office.
- The community may perceive creating another nonprofit organization as an additional level of bureaucracy.
- Tax-exempt organizations are taxable, to the extent that they par-

ticipate in activities unrelated to the performance of tax-exempt functions. While this isn't exactly a disadvantage, it is something you should take into consideration.

INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX: http://ctb.ku.edu

PRINT RESOURCES

Colombo, J.D., and Hall, M.A. (1995). *The charitable tax-exemption*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Galvin, W. R. (1996). *Organizing a non-profit corporation*. [Brochure]. Boston, MA: Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Call (617) 727-9640 to request a copy. Much of the information in this is specific to Massachusetts. Contact the Secretary of State's office in your state to see if similar information is available.

Hopkins, B.R. (1989). *Starting and managing a nonprofit organization*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

John Snow, Inc. *Creating partnerships that work: A developmental manual for Ryan White title II HIV Health Care Consortia*. Boston: Author.
Available from John Snow, Inc., 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. While this source is geared toward HIV issues, the points it raises are generic.

Overton, G.W. (Ed.) (1993). *Guidebook for directors of nonprofit corporations*. Chicago, IL: American Bar Association, Section of Business Law

INTERNET RESOURCES

"Information for tax-exempt organizations" on the IRS web page: http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/
You can download application forms from their page. The application form for 501 (c)(3) is number 1023; other 501 status sheets use form 1024. The IRS web page also contains helpful tips and walks you through the application process.

You can also call the IRS at 1-800-829-4477 to listen to recorded tax information. A touch tone telephone is required. Topic 350 is tax-exempt status for organizations. This number may change. If so, listen to the directory of topics for the new topic numbers. For additional forms and publications, call 1-800-829-3676 (1-800-TAX-FORM). You may want to request Service Publication 557, "Tax-exempt status for your organization," which can be used in conjunction with forms 1023 and 1024.

Legal and Tax Answers for Nonprofit Organizations (http://www.exempt-law.com/)
This website will help answer your questions about the many legal and tax issues

that affect nonprofit organizations in the United States.

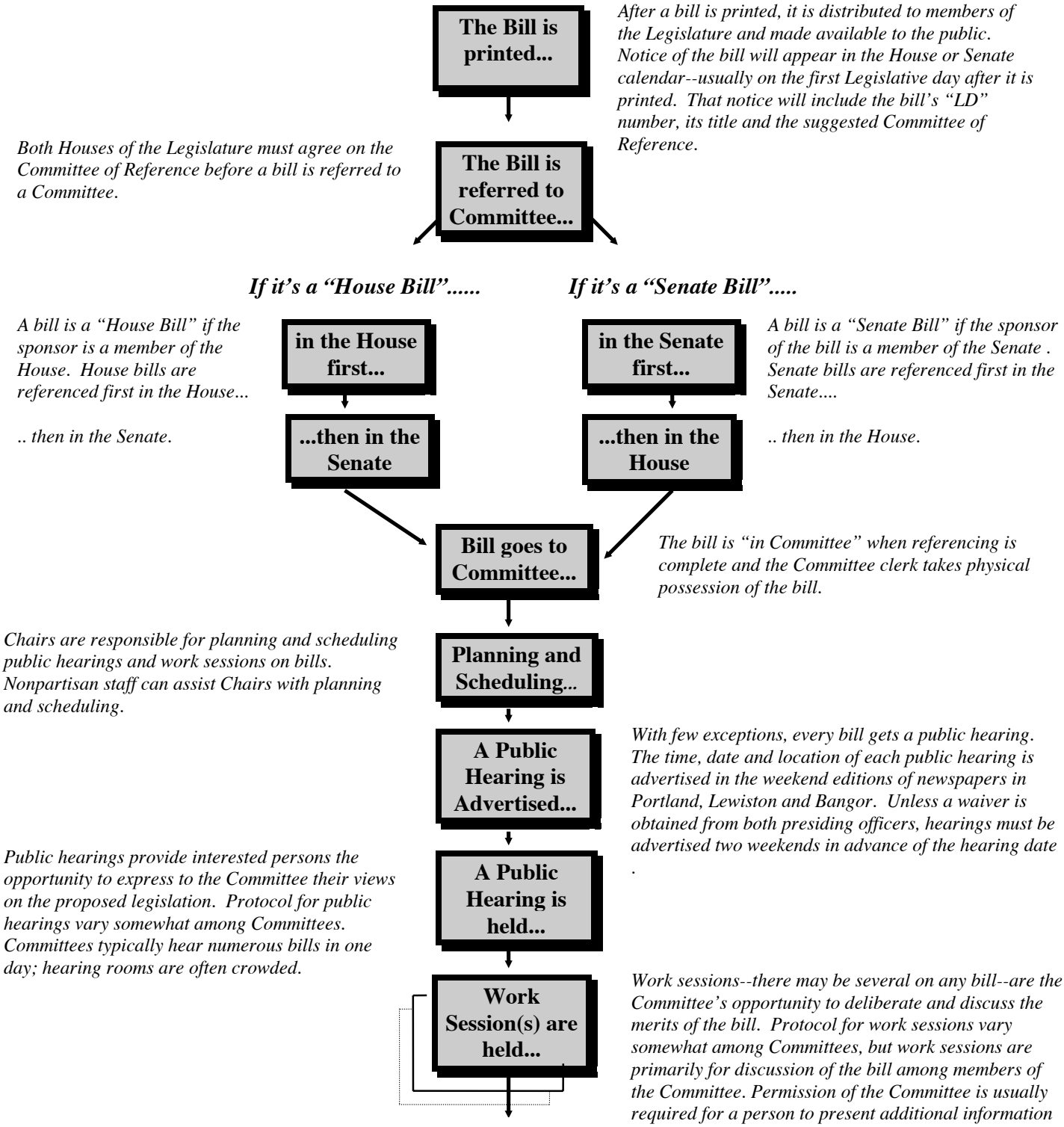
The American Bar Association Network (http://www.abanet.org/)
This website has links to inexpensive legal help in your area.

The Tides Center and The Tides Foundation (http://www.tides.org/)
This website is dedicated to the promotion of non-profit organizations.

United States Postal Service (http://www.usps.gov/)
From this site, you can download U.S. Postal Service Publication 427, to understand if you qualify for reduced postal rates (and if so, how to get them).

How a Bill Becomes a Law

THE FLOW OF LEGISLATION THROUGH THE COMMITTEE PROCESS



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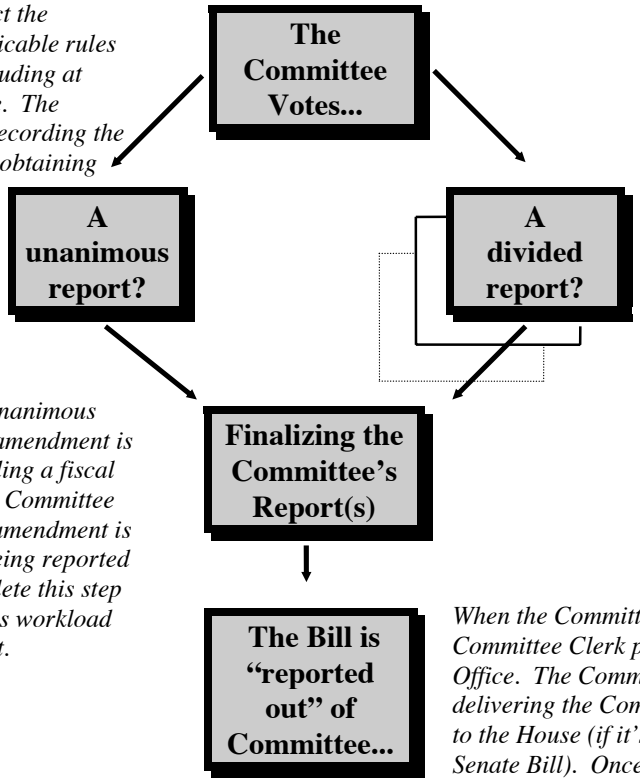
Chairs entertain motions and conduct the Committee vote(s) according to applicable rules of order. A quorum (7 members including at least one Senator) is required to vote. The Committee Clerk is responsible for recording the vote, for preparing the jacket(s) and obtaining signatures of committee members, as required.



If the Committee vote is not unanimous, one or more minority reports are required. All reports on any legislative document must be submitted to the Legislature at the same time. Each report in a divided report requires a separate vote.

Unless the Committee's report is a unanimous "Ought Not to Pass", some form of amendment is usually required--even if it's just adding a fiscal note to the bill. After the vote(s), the Committee Analyst ensures that the Committee amendment is properly drafted and prepared for being reported out of Committee. The time to complete this step varies, depending on the Committee's workload and the complexity of the amendment.

When the Committee's amendment is complete, the Committee Clerk picks up the amendments at the Revisor's Office. The Committee Clerk is then responsible for delivering the Committee's report(s) in their signed jackets to the House (if it's a House Bill) or to the Senate (if it's a Senate Bill). Once a bill is "reported out of Committee", the Committee may take no further action on it unless the bill is sent back to committee by both bodies.

Testifying at a Legislative Hearing

YOUR ELECTED STATE LEGISLATORS ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR VIEWS ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION. SPEAKING AT A PUBLIC HEARING IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO LET THEM KNOW YOUR OPINION. HERE IS SOME INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE LEGISLATURE'S PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS.

If you plan to speak at a public hearing, it is often useful to prepare and distribute your comments in written form.

INFORMATION ON PUBLIC HEARINGS

There are 3 ways to find out when and where public hearings are being held:

1. Notice of public hearings will usually be printed 1 or 2 weekends ahead of the hearing in the following newspapers: the *Bangor Daily News Weekend Edition*; the *Maine Sunday Telegram*; and the *Lewiston Sunday Sun*. The notice will include the Legislative Document (LD) number, the title of the bill and the hearing date, time and location.

2. The Legislature's web page contains the public hearing and work session notices. The address is: http://janus.state.me.us/legis.

3. If you can't get the information you need from newspapers or the Internet, you can call the Legislative Information Office at 287-1692 or 1-800-301-3178 (TTY 287-6826). Call this office also if you plan to attend a public hearing or work session and you have any special needs. It is helpful to reference the Legislative Document in "LD" number when you call for information about a bill.

PREPARING TESTIMONY

If you plan to speak at a public hearing, it is often useful to prepare and distribute your comments in written form. This helps you make clear and

concise comments, and ensures that committee members who are not present at the public hearing have the opportunity to receive your input. In preparing testimony, written or not, make sure you introduce yourself and, if you represent an organization, give the name of the organization. State whether you support the bill, oppose it or are offering suggestions to improve it, and then explain your reasoning. If you do provide written testimony, bring at least 20 copies and give them to the committee clerk before you testify. Photocopiers are available in the Law and Legislative Reference Library in Room 200 of the State House for a nominal charge.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Most committee hearings are held in the State House (the Capitol) or on the second floor of the Cross Office Building. The buildings are connected through an underground connector which can be entered from the ground floor of either building. The committee hearing times and locations are posted on the third floor of the State House and on the second floor of the Cross Office Building.

PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES

Speaking order

At the beginning of each hearing, the presiding committee chair will call the public hearing to order and announce the bill to be heard. The legislator who sponsored the bill will introduce the bill, after which, the presiding chair will ask if any other cosponsors wish to testify. Once sponsors and cosponsors have had the opportunity to speak, public testimony is invited. Generally, the public may present testimony in one of three categories in the following order: those favoring the bill, those against the bill, and those neither for nor against the bill but who wish to offer information about the bill.

NOTE: The committee may be hearing several bills during a public hearing. Generally the bills are heard in the order in which they are advertised. However, the schedule is subject to change and the length of the hearing on most bills is difficult to predict.

Your turn at the podium

When it is your turn to testify, advance to the podium and sign in. Address the committee as follows: “Senator Smith, Representative Jones and members of the committee.” Introduce yourself, indicate who you represent and whether you support the bill, oppose it or are offering suggestions to improve it, and then explain your reasoning. If other speakers have already made your point, let the committee know that you agree with the previous remarks of other speakers, but try to avoid repeating the tes-

timony of previous speakers. When you finish, remain at the podium for a moment, in case committee members want to ask you questions.

Comings and Goings

Many hearings last throughout the day, and many legislators are members of more than one committee. Legislators may need to leave and re-enter the room if they are scheduled to be at a public hearing or work session in another committee. However, they will receive any written information, which is a good reason to provide written testimony.

Decorum in Committee Proceedings

Please direct your comments to the committee, not to the audience, and give your courteous attention to other speakers, regardless of their views. Don't applaud or indicate pleasure or displeasure with anyone's remarks. Only members of the committee may ask questions of persons who testify.

Work sessions

After the public hearing, a work session is scheduled at which committee members discuss the bill and decide whether to recommend its passage. The public may speak at a work session only if a committee member requests further public input and the presiding chair grants permission. Work sessions on a bill are generally held on a day other than the day of the public hearing. If you would like to find out when a work session will be held, ask the clerk how to do that.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Bills (LDs) and Amendments
Single copies of bills and printed amendments are available upon request at no charge in the Legislative Document Room (Room 102, State House).

Legislative Internet Web page
Bills, calendars, schedules and other bill related information are available on the Legislature's web page at: http://janus.state.me.us/legis

Bill Status Information
Legislative Information Office, Room 121, State House
287-1692 / TTY# 287-6826

Committee Clerks
Every committee has a committee clerk who provides administrative support to committees and can answer specific questions regarding public hearings, work sessions and meeting times and places. Clerks may be reached in the committee room or office, by phone or e-mail or by calling the Legislative Information Office.

To leave a message for a House member during session call 1-800-423-2900; for a Senate member call 1-800-423-6900

Senate and House Calendars
Calendars of legislative matters to be discussed in the Senate and House are published each day the Legislature is in session and are available at no charge in the Legislative Document Room. They are also available on the legislative web page.

Laws and Rules
Copies are kept in the Law and Legislative Reference Library, Room 200, State House, 287-1600.

Phone Numbers
To leave a message for a member of the House during session call 800-423-2900 and to leave a message for a member of the Senate during session call 800-423-6900. Be prepared to leave a concise message.

Parking
Free parking is available in the parking garage on the corner of State Street and Sewall Street or where spaces are marked "General Parking." Unauthorized cars will be towed if parked in handicapped parking spaces or any other restricted parking space. One and two hour visitor parking is available on the west side of the Cross Office Building. The visitor entrance to the State House is on the west side of the building.

Special Services
If you plan to attend a public hearing or work session and have any special needs, please call Legislative Information at 287-1692. They will make every effort to accommodate your request. Handicapped parking is available between the State House and Cross Office Building and on the west side of the Cross Building.

Meeting with Members & Staff

Helpful tips on what to do when you want to meet with your US Senator or Representative

THE MEETING IS THE FIRST STEP IN DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL STAFF. REMEMBER, AFTER THE MEETING, FOLLOW UP!

SCHEDULING A MEETING

To schedule a meeting with your Senator or Representative:

- Call the member's DC office and ask to speak with the scheduler. Tell him or her that you are calling on behalf of your organization. State that you will either be in Washington, DC on a certain day or that you'd like to meet with your member or senator in the office nearest you. Contact information is listed below, and can also be obtained by calling the U.S. Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121 or by visiting http://www.house.gov/ or http://www.senate.gov/.
    - Sen. Susan Collins (202) 224-2523
    - Sen. Olympia Snowe (202) 224-5344
    - Congressman Michael Michaud (202) 225-6306
    - Congresswoman Chelli Pingree (202) 225-6116
- The scheduler will likely ask you to fax or e-mail your request for the meeting to them. E-mail is preferable because it allows you to exchange information like prospective meeting times and schedule changes quickly. Tell the scheduler that you will send the request shortly, and that you will follow up with them after they receive it. Make sure to write down the spelling of the scheduler's name, e-mail address and fax number for future reference. Also ask for the names, e-mail addresses and fax numbers of the legislative assistants (LAs) who deal with issues similar to yours.

GUIDELINES FOR MEETING WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

- Introduce yourself.
- Start with a compliment.
- State your case clearly and concisely.
- Make it local.
- Provide facts.
- Namedrop.
- Be a good listener and control the conversation.
- Take notes.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it, and promptly follow up with the answer after the meeting.
- Make the "ask" (e.g., help us reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising).
- Offer your help.
- Say thank you.
- Follow-up with a prompt "thank you" letter.

- Fax or e-mail a request for your meeting to the scheduler and cc the appropriate staffers. We have provided a sample meeting request letter. While you send the letter to the scheduler and LAs, you should always formally address the letter to the member of Congress. Please submit meeting requests in writing, even if you are a friend of the member. The scheduler will appreciate the notice, and the scheduler is the gatekeeper.
- Request a 30-minute meeting with your legislator. You may be given a shorter appointment, but any time is better than none. While it is best to meet directly with your legislator, you can schedule an appointment with the LA(s) if the member is unavailable.
- In the request, include your phone number(s) and e-mail.
- Confirm with the scheduler that the request has been received. You may have to leave a message on voice mail.
- Follow up on the status of the request until the meeting is confirmed. This will probably require multiple phone calls.
- Don't be disappointed if your member is not available. Schedule a meeting with staff if possible.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

Before the meeting:

- Meet with other members of your organization attending the meeting ahead of time to hone your message and review the talking points.
- Be prepared to provide background information about your organization, such as information about your grants, programs, your community profile and prevalence data, etc. You should also be prepared to respond to questions.
- If you go with colleagues, identify a spokesperson or lead speaker.
- Identify who will answer specific types of questions.
- Assign someone to be a note taker.
- Determine who will draft and send a follow-up letter.
- Remember to dress as for an interview or business meeting. A professional appearance will strengthen your message and boost your credibility.
- Assemble appropriate fact sheets and other material to leave with the member. Don't inundate him/her with paper: just include the essentials.
- Send a follow-up e-mail or fax confirming your appointment. Remember to include your name, address and daytime phone number, cell phone number, the names of individuals accompanying you, and information about your organization.

WHAT TO DO IN THE MEETING

The following guidelines apply specifically to meeting with a member of Congress, elected official, or staff. In general, they are also applicable for meeting with influential individuals (e.g. prominent local individuals, the chief of police, school board and city council members) as you seek to build your grasstops contacts and expand the influence of your organization.

- Introduce yourself. Tell your member or staff person about your organization, where it is located and who you serve. Make sure to mention that you're a constituent. If you have any family, social, business, or political ties to the legislator, mention them as well. Briefly explain your organization and members.
- Start with a compliment. If possible, thank the member for a good stand he or she recently took on an issue. At a minimum, thank him/her for taking the time to meet with you.
- Take the initiative by stating clearly and concisely the issue you want to discuss—the startling increase in distilled spirits ads on cable television at the same time binge drinking and liquor consumption is increasing among girls. Follow with facts about why he or she should take your position and what action he or she should take.
- Stress how the issue will affect the member's district or state, and, if possible, tell a personal story that highlights why you care about the issue.
- Namedrop. Mention supporters, any other organizations, important individuals, government officials, and legislators who support your position.
- Be a good listener and control the conversation. After you make your pitch, allow the member to respond. However, politely bring the conversation back to the issue at hand if the member goes off on a tangent or tries to evade it.
- Answer any questions to the best of your ability, but if you don't know the answer, admit it. Provide the information promptly in a follow-up letter or phone call to staff.
- Ask a direct question to which the legislator can respond "yes," such as, "Can we count on you to support _____?" Press politely for a commitment, unless the member is clearly opposed to your position or to making a commitment.
- Offer to serve as a resource for your member. Let him or her know that you are willing to provide information and statistics on the subject. If the staff/member asks a question that you cannot answer, let them know you will follow up with the answer to the member's office.
- Always thank the member and staffer for their time at the end of the meeting, even if they did not agree with your position.
- Immediately after the meeting (or during the meeting if there

is a note-taker), write down any information you learned about the member's position or concerns so you can share it with your coalition and use it to develop your strategy.

- Always follow up with a prompt "thank you" letter. In the letter, reiterate your key points and any commitments the member made to you. Include all follow-up information you promised to provide.

Elected Officials

How to find them, how to call them, and tips for working with them

HOW TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

1. Start at the State Homepage: www.maine.gov
2. Click "How Do I..?""…Contact my legislator"
3. Click "Find Your Elected Officials"
4. Then select your town or city from the drop down menu, or type in your zip code
5. You will then be taken to a list, with links for more information like e-mail addresses, of your federal and state elected officials.

CALLING YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

To Leave a Message:

1. All State Senators: leave a recorded message at 1-800-423-6900, or to talk to a staff person call 287-1540.
2. All State Representatives: leave a recorded message at 1-800-423-2900, or to talk to a staff person call 287-1400.

At Their Home:
It is okay to call state legislators at home—they expect this. Home phone numbers may be obtained through the Office of Legislative Information at 287-1692, or by following the instructions above.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

(*Adapted from The Maine Women's Lobby*)

They Strongly Agree With Your Position

- Thank them

- Ask them to take a lead/active role on this issue a) in the Legislature among their colleagues, b) in the media, c) in the community
- Ask for advice on whom else you should talk to, what supporting arguments they think are effective, and any special legislative strategy they think you should use
- Ask if they will "lobby" undecided legislators
- Thank them again

They Agree With Your Position

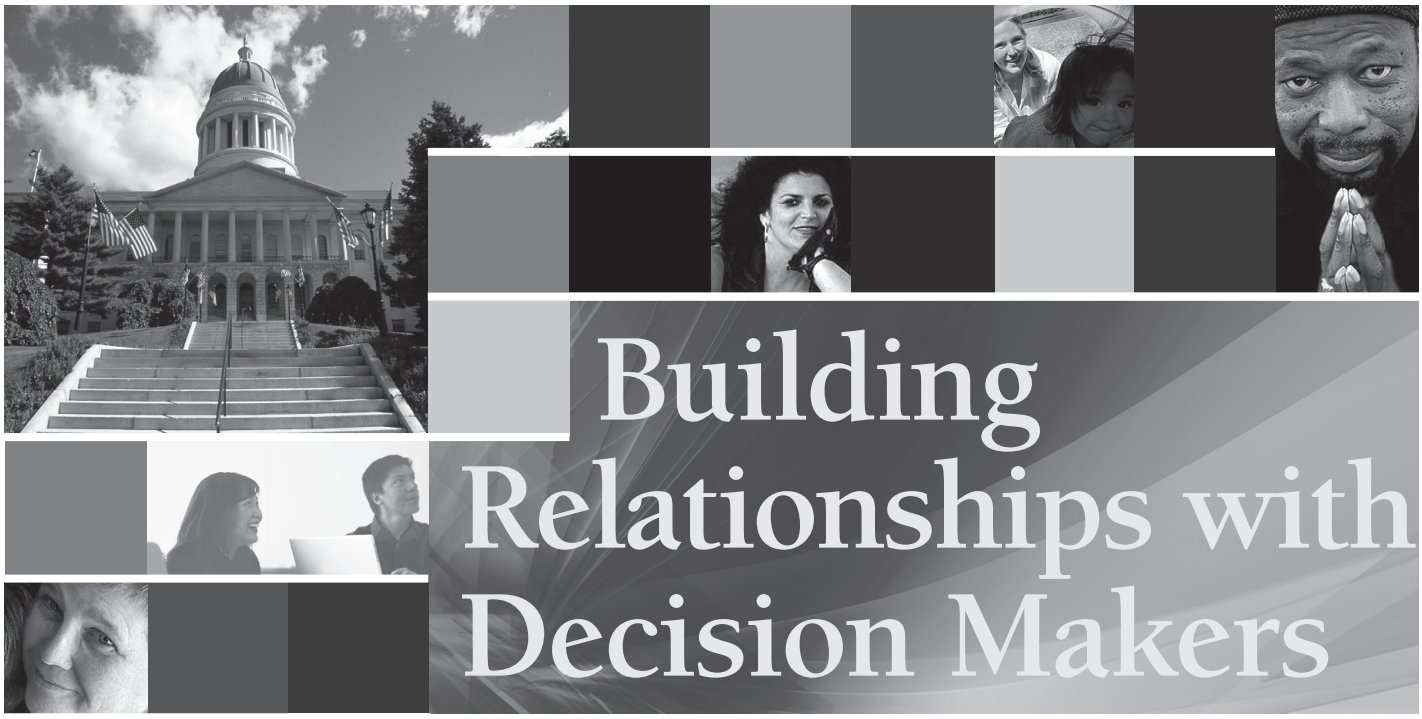
- Thank them
- Assure them of your continued interest in the issue and your con tinued support of their position
- Ask if they would be willing to help in any way beyond their vote (follow tips above)

They Are Undecided

- Inform them of your interest
- Present your argument as concisely and clearly as possible
- Ask them what their reservations are. Determine if they are political, personal, due to a lack of information or any combination. Alter your strategy accordingly
- Offer to get any information they would like
- Ask them if there are other individuals/organizations they would like to hear from
- Get back to them; keep in touch until they have made up their mind

They Are Against Your Position

- Determine how strongly they are opposed. If not too strongly, try and persuade them to change their mind
- If they strongly disagree, write them and let them know of your opposition to their position, but don't waste your time and energy trying to move an immovable object.



Building Relationships with Decision Makers

Everything you need to know about the ins and outs of policy development, and your part in influencing it.

MAPSA

INFLUENCING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1. **State why a policy needs to be developed or modified. This may include:**

   A. Basic needs are not being met (e.g., People are not receiving the health care they need)

   B. People are not being treated fairly (e.g., People with disabilities do not have access to public places)

   C. Resources are distributed unfairly (e.g., Educational services are more limited in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty)

   D. Current policies or laws are not enforced or effective (e.g., The current laws on clean water are neither enforced nor effective)

   E. Proposed changes in policies or laws would be harmful (e.g., A plan to eliminate flextime in a large business would reduce parents' ability to be with their children)

   F. Existing or emerging conditions pose a threat to public health, safety, education, or well-being (e.g., New threats from terrorist activity)

2. **Study the issue or problem a policy change would affect.**

   A. Outline the facts, myths, and values associated with the issue. Find out:

      1. The results of previous research about the issue or problem

      2. How similar issues have been resolved through policy decisions in other places or organizations

      3. What those who are affected by the issue think "should be" in an ideal situation

      4. What people believe is maintaining the problem, true or not

Public laws and ordinances at city/county, state/province/tribal, or national levels (e.g., a local ordinance to assure shelter for all who need it will be presented to the city council)

Regulatory policies at city/county, state/province/tribal, or national levels (e.g., a state law that seeks to protect water quality and imposing penalties for waste or toxins flowing into water sources will be introduced to the Public Health and Welfare Committee of the state legislature)

B. List who or what is affected by the current state of affairs. Ask:

   1. How are they affected? (e.g., 50% of those seeking shelter in a local homeless shelter are turned away for lack of space)
   2. What needs to be done differently to lessen the problem? (e.g., Screenings for learning disabilities could to be done with all children to identify learning problems early and address them)

C. Define the issue or current policy in neutral terms and generate possible policy related solutions (e.g., There are too many children of the working poor who have no health insurance coverage, and there should be a policy that guarantees that all children receive adequate health care)

3. **Based on knowledge about the issue or problem and who it affects, indicate the type and context of policies to be developed. This would likely include:**

   A. Public laws and ordinances at city/county, state/province/tribal, or national levels (e.g., a local ordinance to assure shelter for all who need it will be presented to the city council)

   B. Regulatory policies at city/county, state/province/tribal, or national levels (e.g., a state law that seeks to protect water quality and imposing penalties for waste or toxins flowing into water sources will be introduced to the Public Health and Welfare Committee of the state legislature)

   C. Executive orders from elected officials (e.g., an executive order will be sought by the governor to set a state day or community service for all government employees)

   D. Business policies and organizational rules and bylaws (e.g., a business policy to permit employees flextime to volunteer to be a mentor for a child or other community service will be presented to the Board of Directors)

4. **State what your group will do to influence each of the stages of policy development (e.g., agenda setting). What broad goals do you need to achieve to be effective?**

   A. Bring the issue to the attention of the public and decision makers and frame the issues and available policy options (e.g., Secure policy debate on the issue of healthcare for all, develop and secure consideration of policy options for extending insurance coverage to include child wellness checks and other preventive services) [agenda setting stage]

   B. Influence the adoption of a preferred policy option (e.g., Educate/ lobby decision makers about the cost benefits of tax incentives for businesses that assure a living wage for their employees) [policy adoption stage]

   C. Assure effective implementation of adopted policies (e.g., As-

sure that regulations for worker safety are strictly enforced) [policy implementation stage]

D. Assess the effects of adopted policies and adjust as needed (e.g., Examine whether policies to assure fair treatment of minorities have reduced instances of discrimination) [policy evaluation stage]

5. **Identify resources and assets to be used for policy development, including:**

   A. The number and kind of people who are available and committed to working on the problem or issue

   B. The financial resources anticipated and currently available

   C. The communication technologies, facilities, and other material resources available

   D. Additional needed information and support

   E. Other assets that can be used to support the effort (e.g., relationships with influential policymakers and those who have spear headed similar efforts)

6. **Indicate potential allies and opponents of policy development efforts.**

   A. Identify likely allies and how they will support the effort (e.g., Members of interest groups affected by the issue; elected and appointed officials, board members of businesses with a record of supporting related issues). Consider:

   B. Those individuals or organizations who share common values or are engaged in related efforts

   C. Those who can provide the type of support you will need, e.g., sharing resources or lobbying efforts, providing financial support

   D. Identify likely opponents and how they might resist or oppose the effort because of the consequences of your proposed policy

      1. State the likely purposes of the opposition, including:

         - To oppose or block intended changes (e.g., policy change)
         - To intimidate (e.g., the policy advocates, their allies, elected officials)
         - To reduce effectiveness (e.g., substituting less effective alternatives)

      2. Outline tactics that may be used by the opposition, including (The D's):

         - Deflect (e.g., not our responsibility)
         - Delay (e.g., long wait for additional review)

Identify likely opponents and how they might resist or oppose the effort because of the consequences of your proposed policy.

- Deny (e.g., no real problem)
- Discount (e.g., problem not as bad as portrayed)
- Deceive (e.g., claiming no data available on the problem)
- Divide (e.g., try to get some group members to oppose others)
- Dulcify or appease (e.g., offer a less effective alternative)
- Discredit (e.g., labeling advocates as "soft headed liberals")
- Destroy (e.g., effort to harm those who support change)
- Deal (e.g., encourage acceptance of an alternative)

3. Indicate how the opposition can be countered, including to:
   - Understand your opponent and their perspective/goal
   - Turn negatives into positives (e.g., turn the opponents' discrediting tactics into an issue)
   - Set the agenda or reframe the issue (e.g., not the smoker's rights, but the right to breathe clean air; not freedom from government, but freedom from want)
   - Publicly state your opponent's strategy (e.g., they are trying to deny the problem and pass responsibility off to others)
   - Keep opponents off balance (e.g., raise new charges)
   - Learn from the past (e.g., understand the response to the proposed change elsewhere)
   - Be willing to compromise (e.g., accept the best possible alternative)

7. **Identify targets and agents of policy change efforts and their assets and interests.**

   A. Describe the targets of change (i.e., those who would adopt or implement policies) and what they can do for the policy change. State their interests. [Targets might include elected and appointed officials and business leaders who can affect the distribution of resources and the regulation of commerce, the environment, and other public goods.] Know:

      1. What issues have been important to them in the past (e.g., family, health or safety, local businesses, quality of life issues)
      2. To whom do they answer or from whom do they need support to maintain their position (e.g. are they elected with support from a particular segment of the community, they are appointed by particular officials)

   B. Describe potential agents of change (i.e., those who would influence policymakers) and what they can contribute to the policy change efforts. State their interests.[Agents might

include policy advocates and lobbyists, special interest groups, the broadcast and print media, elected and appointed officials or their staff]. Know:

1. With whom are they influential (e.g. policymakers who could vote on or propose policy, the broader community's opinion)
2. Why they would work with you to accomplish your goal

C. For both targets and agents of change, prepare answers to anticipated questions about:

1. Why they should support your proposed policy or position
2. How they benefit from such involvement (e.g., voter popularity, support from a influential organization)
3. How the issue affects them or those they care about
4. How this stance could (potentially) cost them

8. Depending on the broad goal of your policy development efforts (see #3), choose the strategies and action plan to be used. These may include:

A. Policy research and investigation

1. Study the issue (e.g., research how water quality affects children's health outcomes)
2. Gather data on public opinion (e.g., survey local households about traffic problems on their street)
3. Request accountability (e.g., determine what factors and persons maintain the current policy on disseminating information about reproductive health in the schools)
4. Demonstrate commercial benefits (e.g., show how extending clinic hours reduces unnecessary emergency room visits)
5. Document complaints of those affected (e.g., ask unemployed residents about barriers to getting new jobs)
6. Act as a watchdog (e.g., speak up about how an issue affects you or your community)

B. Relationship building and education of decision makers

1. Give personal compliments, and public support (e.g., write a letter to the editor in the local newspaper applauding council members' efforts to address homelessness)
2. Arrange celebrations (e.g., have a party in the park to celebrate newly refurbished recreational equipment)
3. Develop or refine policy options and proposals for implementation (e.g., arrange a meeting to present feedback from residents about a proposed policy change affecting

Make sure to research policies.

local property values)

4. Establish contact and request participation (e.g., call policy makers and volunteer your organization's knowledge and analysis of the issue)
5. Prepare fact sheets (e.g., compile a fact sheet on rates of domestic violence in your city and the availability of supports)
6. Offer public education (e.g., make brief presentations at local forums to increase the visibility of your issue to the public)
7. Provide constructive feedback (e.g., propose alternative policies)
8. Educate (lobby) decision makers (e.g., meet with decision makers and their staff to present fact sheets and local survey results)

C. Mobilize public support

1. Sponsor a public hearing (e.g., arrange a public forum at a local school to discuss increasing gang-related incidents in the schools)
2. Conduct a letter-writing campaign (e.g., call local residents and ask them to write local council members regarding the trash pick up and sanitation)
3. Conduct a petition drive (e.g., create a petition of support for a newly proposed policy to require benches at local bus stops and approach people at the local mall and supermarket to sign it)
4. Conduct a ballot drive (e.g., conduct a ballot drive to assure a public vote on a proposition for community improvement efforts)
5. Register voters (e.g., place registration booths at local supermarkets and post offices to increase registered voters in your area)
6. Engage the media (e.g., conduct a press conference to bring attention to the lack of rehabilitation centers for female drug users)

D. (If necessary) Make your presence felt

1. Criticize unfavorable actions (e.g., call into a local talk show and state why you think that a cap on health insurance reimbursements is unwise)
2. Express opposition publicly (e.g., write a guest editorial in the local newspaper stating why you and your organization are fighting the newly proposed selling off of public park land for private development as a fund raising strategy)

Use available resources and allies.

3. Remind those responsible (e.g., contact those who have voted for a policy and inform them of the resultant negative consequences)
4. Establish an alternative program or system (e.g., establish a model respite care program for care and caring at the end of life in your community)
5. Organize public demonstrations (e.g., picket outside of city hall to bring attention to the numerous ozone alert days in the past year and their impact on local residents' respiratory health)
6. File a formal complaint (e.g., draft and file a complaint about the poor management of city dumpsters in public spaces)
7. Arrange a media expose' (e.g., convince a local newspaper reporter to attend a public forum where you ask policy makers questions about their voting records on issues related to fair hiring practices)
8. Initiate legal action (e.g., pursue legal action against a company for refusing to hire employees over the age of fifty regardless of credentials)

9. **Review whether the planned policy goals, strategies and actions fit the situation. Consider whether they:**
   A. Are timed well (i.e., Is this a good time to raise the issue?)
   B. Use available resources and allies (i.e., Does it take advantage of the group's strengths? Engage its allies? Deter opponents?)
   C. Fit the group's style (i.e., Are group members comfortable with the approach?)
   D. Are flexible (i.e., Does it permit adjustments with changing situations)
   E. Are likely to work (i.e., Does it correct the original problem or inequality?)
10. **Create an action plan to carry out your policy efforts (who is going to do what by when). Describe:**
   A. What specific action will occur (e.g., conduct a letter-writing campaign)?
   B. Who will carry it out?
   C. When the plan will be completed or for how long it will be maintained?
   D. What resources (e.g., money and staff) are needed?
   E. Who should know what about this (e.g., local media will be informed of your efforts in order to increase your visibility)?
11. **Influence the adoption of a policy or how it will be implemented.**
   A. Identify precedents (or analogs) for policy option(s) that have

been adopted and implemented in other similar situations.

B. Describe how the policy option(s) met the interests of potential targets, agents, and opponents.

C. Describe the critical features to be preserved in the policy option(s) including:

1. Information about what to do, why to do it, and with what anticipated costs and benefits for whom
2. Facilitation and support that reduces the time, effort, and other costs for those responsible for implementing it
3. Regulation and monitoring that helps assure compliance or implementation of critical elements.
4. Incentives that reward change and improvements.

D. Gain an audience with those who can propose the policy or who will be active in forming its implementation.

12. Assess the evaluation of the policy development effort.

A. Clearly state what indicators will signify "success" (e.g., in adoption of desired policy options; in more faithful policy implementation; in achieving longer-term outcomes).

B. Describe how measures of success will be obtained (e.g., record reviews; interviews with implementers and those affected) .

C. Indicate how the group will make sense of the results (e.g., how data will be analyzed; how those affected will be involved in interpreting the information).

D. Describe how the information will be used to improve the policy (e.g., provide feedback to elected and appointed officials on outcomes; conduct retreats for legislative staff to review progress and make adjustments on implementation or set new policy goals).

13. (As appropriate) State the circumstances under which you will close out the policy development effort.

A. If you have been successful at negotiating a favorable policy or ensuring implementation, celebrate with those affected and invested in the issue.

B. If opposition is significant, consider:

1. Postponing action (e.g., if there are insufficient votes for a bill supporting construction of low-income housing, then postpone the vote).
2. Mediating differences with opponents (e.g., meet with land developers and discuss how they can build without disrupting water resources for local farmlands).
3. Making a deal or a compromise to achieve part of your goal (e.g., if there are not funds or support to expand

drug rehabilitation services for women, ask if a percentage of existing services can be guaranteed for women clients).

COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/dothework/tools_tk_content_page_249.htm

Using Media Advocacy as a Tool

Who, What, Where, When, Why and How

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ARRANGE NEWS AND FEATURE STORIES?

They say that when a dog bites a man, that's nothing new. But if a man bites a dog, that's news. Our communities produce a lot of news, and lots of it doesn't even get in the newspapers. But you don't have to bite a dog to get in the newspaper. This section will help you to attract the media to what you do and to get your story in the news.

You can use news stories and feature stories to highlight your initiative in the media. Before we go any further, let's establish the difference. Feature stories don't necessarily have to have a hot-news aspect—although they are often based on red-hot news. They usually have special layout treatment (color pictures, illustrations, front page of sections, box around them, etc.), and are lengthier than average news stories.

News stories, on the other hand, are more straightforward. They try to address the issue quickly and objectively. An ideal news story answers six basic questions: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW. For example, the following is the lead (first paragraph) of a story. Can you identify those elements here?

> "A professor at the University of Kansas, claiming lack of environmental awareness on campus, started a recycling campaign yesterday with his students' help at the Ecology and Biology Department."

Who: a professor at the University of Kansas
What: started a recycling campaign
When: yesterday
Where: at the Ecology and Biology Department

Why: lack of environmental awareness on campus
How: using his students' help

Feature stories are longer than hard-news stories, so the reporter can go more in depth about how things come to be the way they are. For example, you can have a hard-news story on the new alcohol-abuse program you're starting, or have a feature story on the people you've helped, with pictures, a profile of your initiative, its reason for being, and its plans for the future. It's usually up to the editor or the reporter to decide in which format your story will be published, but if you think your initiative will benefit more from a feature story than from a hard-news blurb, advocate your cause.

However, don't feel bad if reporters reject your idea at first, or propose a different angle for it. Sometimes, a little adjusting will work wonders for you and the way your initiative will be portrayed. Sometimes you may be put off repeatedly for months and then reporters suddenly are on deadline and want to talk to you at 1:00 in the morning. Be patient and you'll be rewarded. Of course, if you're being put off indefinitely and it just feels like you're in a continual holding pattern, move on, because your time is precious. Address your contacts more aggressively if you think that will work, or take your story to another contact. Whatever you do, be tactful; you don't want to make enemies out of your contacts.

WHY SHOULD YOU ARRANGE NEWS AND FEATURE STORIES?

Why do you want to get your initiative's story in the paper or on TV? There are several good reasons. For example:

- To gain increased publicity. A story in the newspaper or in the local news is a free way of getting advertisement. You will be amazed at the number of people who will be interested in your activities after they read your story in the newspapers, watch it on TV, hear it on the radio, or see it on the web. Besides, a story has more credibility than paid publicity (for information on paid publicity, check Chapter 6, Section 9: Using Paid Advertising).
- To promote community awareness of your overall initiative. News stories are a vital part of the "conversation" on which communities thrive. By making sure your activities are well-represented in the local media, you ensure that your organization maintains a role in this "conversation." More information on this topic can be found in Chapter 6, Section 10: Creating Newsletters.
- To attract attention -- and possibly funding -- from policy makers and other "movers and shakers" in your community. And that's what you want all along -- people to know what you do and offer some sort of support, recognition and participation. Other initia-

WHAT IS NEWS?

Usually, news is what you see. What you know is background and what you feel is opinion. Don't try to arrange a story based on your opinions.
If you feel strongly about something, or have strong opinions about a subject, write to the editor or write an opinion editorial (op-ed piece). If your opinion is interesting enough, the publication may choose to do a story based on it.
For example, suppose you're organizing a local blood drive and for some reason it is receiving poor or no coverage. It's in your best interest to write a letter or op-ed so that your community is informed about it. You may also want to try writing the story yourself and trying to get it published.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOUR INITIATIVE CAN BENEFIT FROM A WELL-PLACED INTERVIEW:

A local newspaper ran an interview with the director of The Literacy Project, an adult literacy project in Massachusetts. As a direct result, the organization heard from a number of potential students and volunteers, and also received a number of contributions. Eventually, with other stories in the paper, the organization was recognized as a community resource. The project also placed a number of adult literacy stories and an editorial into a large statewide newspaper. All this together contributed to an increase in state funding for the field.

tives may identify with you and join forces, some organization may sympathize with your cause and make a donation, the state health bureau may want to work with you. With a well-placed story, the sky is the limit for you.

HOW SHOULD YOU ARRANGE NEWS AND FEATURE STORIES?

So, what does arranging news and feature stories involve? Simply put, it includes getting the media interested in what you're doing so that you get space in publications and on the air. Arranging news and feature stories involves contacting the media, nurturing a relationship with your media contacts, and keeping your contacts informed about what you're doing. It involves knowing the issue inside and out, and it involves believing in -- and convincing others of -- its importance to the community.

WHEN SHOULD YOU ARRANGE YOUR NEWS OR FEATURE STORY?

When is the best time to contact the editor of that weekly magazine, the program manager of that radio station or the producer of that newscast? As soon as have your act together! Try not to contact the media until you have most of the details organized.

If your story is well timed, that's even better. Remember that timing is very important when trying to arrange a news or feature story. Take advantage of national dates and seasonal activities. You may try to arrange a story to coincide with an event, an initiative, or a special day or week related to your issue and your organization. For instance, what day would be better for the Forest Fire Prevention group to launch their new program than Earth Day? National AIDS Awareness Day is probably a great occasion to let people know about a project going on at your county's AIDS prevention group. If you look into it, you may discover a day or an event that might just match what you do. Find out about it and plan accordingly.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT?

Reporters are always looking for news. If what you do is unique, interesting and new, it's probably fit to print. But don't give up if you're not involved in any red-hot news at the moment. Especially in small communities, newspapers will often print anything of community interest. They're always looking for local news and a fresh angle. If you're in a larger market that is covered by state or national media, it may be tougher to get your story in, but if you can explore the human aspect of it, you may catch the media's attention.

As a general rule, you want to contact the people with decision power to give your story a go. These people are probably a phone call away and

you can take advantage of that. You can also contact the media outlet you chose and ask which reporter covers the subject under which your story would fall.

You want to reach the broadest number of people possible.

Most of the time you'll be directed to the reporter who will cover your story. It's hard to generalize how reporters are and how they work, because just like people in general, they vary a great deal. Typically, they want the story done as much as you do, so you share a common interest. Be polite, clear and helpful when you are put in contact with a reporter. Be ready to answer all questions and have additional background information at hand. For instance, if your initiative is throwing a fund-raising ball, the reporter will probably want to know how much it will cost to throw the ball, how much money you expect to raise, how much money you raised on previous balls, what the attractions there are going to be (Band? Prizes?), how many people you're expecting, etc.

But arranging your story is not only about contacting people. It's about contacting the right people. You have to consider which publication or medium fits your interest better. Chances are that Guns and Ammo magazine will not be interested in a gun-control campaign story. On the other hand, it's likely that the On Health web magazine will be interested in a anti-lung cancer initiative. When targeting media for your story, bear in mind also the number of people that may read, watch or hear that publication or show. You want to reach the broadest number of people possible.

HOW CAN YOU "SELL" YOURSELF?

Once you decide where you want your story to be published or aired, you have to be ready to "sell" your story -- to convince the reporter that your story is something people will care about. When presenting your story for potential publication, don't tell them; show them. That is, don't only tell the reporter what your story is about, but show to him or her how it affects audiences in general. Show you have knowledge about your community. If you are starting an initiative on disability rights, give the reporter statistics about how many people in the community could benefit from your services, give names of people involved with your project that can be interviewed, suggest an angle for the story, and offer names of people who might provide endorsement to your initiative. Maybe your initiative is something new in town, or is setting a new trend—don't just tell them that; show them!

While planning to pitch your story, "So what?" is a question that you must bear in mind at all times. Assume that people are constantly asking "So what?" while reading a story on your work. Give a sense of purpose to what you want published or aired. The best way to answer that is presenting human interest in your story. Offer something that people can relate to.

Stories that fail to answer the "So what?" questions will not attract readers'

A very common way of getting your story out there is a press release.

attention, will not be read to the end, or will simply be skipped altogether. You don't want that to happen to your story, so keep yourself in constant check. Ask yourself if you're being clear enough, how relevant what you're doing is, if your point is coming across. If your story is about organizing an effort to contribute to a memorial fund, ask yourself why the average reader should care. Is it because of the nature of the fund? Is it because it's a community effort? What is the human factor you are going to focus on?

Here are some other things that make what you're doing potentially newsworthy:

1. ***Human interest.*** People want to read about other people and what they do and say. This is an element that relates to our natural curiosity. Stories with this ingredient are sure to capture attention. Focus on a particular person's story or on a human angle.

2. ***Affect.*** If what you're reporting has an impact on your readers' lives, you can be sure it's news. It doesn't have to happen locally to affect you. Stories about environmental welfare are as important as stories about your local city dump's sanitary conditions.

3. ***Proximity.*** Usually, people are more interested in what happens close to them. Local stories are most likely to grab attention. However, with the globalization of the world, people are becoming more and more interested in what happens in distant places.

4. ***Timeliness.*** Generally speaking, the fresher the news, the better. People want to know what is going on right now. Of course, there are timeless stories that can be written at any time; these are most likely to be feature stories.

5. ***Prominence.*** Famous people, places and institutions always have a place in the news. If you throw a party, your friends will know. If a famous actor throws a party, it'll be in every magazine.

A very common way of getting your story out is to prepare a press release. A press release is a brief written summary or update alerting the media about your group's news and activities. In it, you should provide all the basic information about your story, some background information, and a way to contact you. However, writing a press release doesn't guarantee that your story will be picked up. Press releases are not always a priority on the reporter's list, and you should contact reporters personally to make sure they didn't put yours at the bottom of a drawer.

You can also consider holding a press conference to get your news out and have somebody write about it. Press conferences are generally geared toward hard news, so before you consider arranging a press conference, make sure your story is timely, significant, prominent, and relevant.

If you're dealing with print media you may try to get your picture in the press. Pictures can work wonders for your story. Suggest pictures, graphics and illustrations to go with your story. Features will benefit the most from visual elements. Illustrations and photos can and should be used as creatively as possible. It helps if you provide the pictures, but sometimes newspapers prefer to send their own photographers. In some communities, newspapers rely on local amateur photographers to provide pictures for their stories. Keep in mind that illustrations and pictures in a feature must tell the story. If you think a picture is fundamental to your story and you don't have one, remember to mention that to the reporter.

Finally, depending on the size of your group or initiative, you may not have time to do all the media contacts by yourself. Your best bet, then, is to hire a public relations person to do the job, if that's an affordable option for your initiative. Competition to get a story in the news can be tough, and hiring a professional to do the job may help your cause. A public relation person can create a specialized marketing program designed to fit the needs of your initiative. A PR person can also help you with creatively structuring your message, packaging your information, targeting media selection, and customizing and personalizing media presentation.

THE ART OF BEING INTERVIEWED

Once you spark the reporter's interest in your story, it's likely that he or she will want to interview you. Interviews are strange animals, and no two are alike. They depend on the rapport you establish with the reporter, on the subject, and on how newsworthy your story is. Here, we'll give you some tips on what to do -- and what not to do -- during an interview with the media.

First, make sure that you know what you're talking about. Be helpful and articulate. Decide on key points you want to get across and try to work them in every chance you have. Be courteous, explain what you need, what you're expecting to see in the story, and what you are about. Don't be too aggressive or demanding.

Be prepared to answer all possible questions on your event or initiative. The information you need to have ready includes:

- Dates and times
- Names of the people involved
- Your objective
- Prices
- Locations
- Contact information

It will also help if you have a couple of quotes "ready." That is, some re-

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU'RE MISQUOTED?

Sometimes, reporters will take the liberty of editing your interview. That's quite a usual practice, aimed at making you sound better. However, sometimes this editing can cause you harm. If your edited quote captures the gist of what you said, let it go. However, if what you read doesn't sound like you, or was flat-out fabricated, you should take action. Treat everyone with respect, apologize for whatever is your fault, but take steps to correct the error right away and restate your initiative's real intentions and ideas. Such steps might include sending a request for a correction on the next issue, writing a letter to the editor, or writing a column explaining that what was attributed to you doesn't reflect your actual views.

mark to which you gave some thought beforehand, so that if the reporter asks you for a statement, you are not caught stuttering on the phone.

Here are some pointers for you to keep in mind before and during the interview:

- Prepare yourself for the questions in advance. If possible, ask for a sample.
- Be familiar with the topic of the interview.
- Dress appropriately.
- Don't be afraid of sounding ignorant by asking to repeat questions.
- Never answer rudeness with rudeness.
- Before wrapping the interview, make sure you made your point clear. Recap with the interviewer if necessary.
- Watch and listen.
- Stay relaxed and be yourself while watching what you say.
- If you cite names, occupations and addresses, get them right.
- Think about ideas for pictures.
- Try not to use jargon; readers understand simple English better.
- Prepare some catchy responses that address things you particularly want to highlight, and look for opportunities to throw them in.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, just admit it and offer to find it out.
- Be sure to steer clear from stereotypes and biases—being offensive is rarely effective.
- Be attentive to all the parts of the interview. At times, the most important question for the story may be buried in the interview.

The reporter is probably going to use a tape recorder to enhance the accuracy of the story. Reporters will usually ask for permission to use a tape recorder and once you grant the permission, be extra careful with what you say. Behave as if you're being recorded, whether you are or not. Don't be frightened and silenced by a tape recorder, though. Speak naturally, and give it a break when it's necessary to change tape sides.

Remember that what you want is to grab the readers' or spectators' attention. To do that, the simplest ways are the best. Keep your sentences short, your introduction brief and to the point, and your approach straightforward. Don't bore the listener and don't digress too much.

A word of caution: Don't say anything you don't want to hear on the news or read in the paper tomorrow morning. Quotes can be taken out of context, jokes can end up in the headline, and a badly placed word can

tarnish your organization for a long time. Watch out for any libelous and offensive statements. If you want to be off the record (that is, say something that is not official part of the interview), you have to say so before you start talking, not after. Off-the-records statement might still be used, although not attributed to you. You'll be on the safe side if you assume that everything you say is on the record and could be used by the media.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AFTER THE STORY HAS RUN?

Your work isn't done after your story is out. You'll want to maintain your relationship with the reporter that you worked with, so send a thank-you note to him or her if appropriate. Ask when the story will run, and then get clippings of the story when it's out for your own records (or a tape, if it aired on television or on the radio.) In the future, keep the reporter updated on what you're up to and on upcoming events. Maybe you'll even get a follow-up story on your original story!

TO SUM IT UP

Now that you're reading your story on the paper, watching it on TV, or listening to it on the radio, it's time to congratulate yourself. It's also time to think about what you learned. What did you learn that would make it easier or more effective the next time? Is there a better way of getting your story out? Can you build on the contacts and relationships you developed with the media? Hopefully, now you have a better sense of how this works, what people want to read, and how to focus on what really matters to your community. It's time to get ready for the next story!

COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

http://ctb.ku.edu

RESOURCES

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Bagnall, Nicholas. (1993). *Newspaper Language*. Oxford: Focal Press.

Anderson et al. (1994). *The conversation of journalism: Communication, community, and news*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Rich, Carole. (1997). *Writing and reporting news: A coaching method*. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

List of Media Contacts in Maine

DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Bangor Daily News
PO Box 1329
Bangor, ME 04402
Phone: 207 990-8000
Fax: 207 941-9476
Email: bdnmail@bangordailynews.net
Website: www.bangornews.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Lewiston Sun Journal
PO Box 4400
Lewiston, ME 04243
Phone: 207 784-5411
Fax: 207 777-3436
Email: editor@sunjournal.com
Website: www.sunjournal.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Journal Tribune
PO Box 627
Biddeford, ME 04005
Phone: 207 282-1535
Fax: 207 282-3138
Email: jtribune@gwi.net
Website: www.journaltribune.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Kennebec Journal
274 Western Ave
Augusta, ME 04330
Phone: 207 623-3811
Fax: 207 623-2220
Email: kjedit@centralmaine.com
Website: www.kjonline.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Morning Sentinel
31 Front Street
Waterville, ME 04903-0589
Phone: 207 873-3341
Fax: 207 861-9191
Email: msedit@centralmaine.com
Website: www.centralmaine.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

Portland Press Herald
PO Box 1460
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: 207 791-6650
Fax: 207 791-6920
Email: news@pressherald.com
Web: www.pressherald.com
Press release accepted via email: Yes

The Times Record
PO Box 10
Brunswick, ME 04011
Phone: 207 729-3311
Fax: 207 729-5728
Email: news@timesrecord.com
Web: www.timesrecord.com
Press release accepted via email: yes

Fosters Daily Democrat (York Bureau)
PO Box 451
York, ME 03909
Phone: 207 363-4413 x 5470
Fax: 207 363-5530
Email: mprowland@fosters.com
Web: www.fosters.com
Press release accepted via email: yes

Portsmouth Herald (York Bureau)
PO Box 2000
York, ME 03909-2000
Phone: 207 363-6179
Email: yorkweekly@seacoastonline.com
Press release accepted via email: yes

Associated Press
75 Market St., PO Box 15008
Portland, ME 04112
Phone: 207 772-4157
Fax: 207 774-6625
Email: cone@ap.org (call first)
Web: www.ap.org/nne/

RADIO STATIONS

Maine Public Radio
PO Box 1628
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: 207 874-6570
Fax: 207 761-0318
Email: comments@mpbc.org
Website: www.mpbc.org

WGAN AM 560
420 Western Ave.
South Portland, ME 04106
Phone: 207 761-5600
Fax: 207 761-7765
Email: news@wgan.com
Web: www.wgan.com

TELEVISION NEWS

WLBZ-TV Channel 2
PO Box 415
Bangor, ME 04402
Phone: 207 942-4821
Fax: 207 942-2109 (News)
Email: newscenter@wblz2.com
Website: www.wlbz.com

WCSH-TV Channel 6
1 Congress Square
Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 207 828-6666

Fax: 207 828-6630
Email: newscenter@wcsh6.com

WGME 13
1335 Washington Avenue
Portland, ME 04103
Phone: 207 797-9330
Fax: 207 878-7479
Email: tvmail@wgme.com
Website: www.wgme.com

WMTW-TV Channel 8
PO BOX 9501
Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 207 775-1800
Fax: 207 782-2165, 207 775-6253
Email: wmtw@wmtw.com
Web: www.wmtw.com

WABI-TV Channel 5
35 Hildreth St
Bangor, ME 04401
Phone: 207 947-8321
Fax: 207 941-9378
Email: wabi@wabi.tv
Website: www.wabitv.com

WAGM-TV, Channel 8
PO Box 1149
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: 207 764-4461
Fax: 207 764-5329
Email: wagm@wagmtv.com

WVII Channel 7
371 Target Industrial Circle
Bangor, ME 04401
Phone: 207 945- 6457
Fax: 207 945-6864
Email: tv7news@wvii.com

Media Advocacy How To's

Write letters on current issues.

WHERE TO START

Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are a powerful way to communicate with your legislators and community.

- Check the paper's guidelines for writing letters, which should be stated on the editorial page.
- Include your name, address and daytime telephone number—include title if pertinent.
- Letter should generally be 200 words or less, but check specific newspaper's policy. (Letters are usually subject to condensation by newspaper.)
- Write letters about current issues, and respond promptly to stories and editorials.
- Include all relevant information about the issue—most importantly, why it's important to you personally.
- Papers may print letters to the editor each day or once weekly.
- Letters to the editor may be published right away, can take weeks or may never appear in print.

Op Ed

Op Eds are issue opinion pieces written by local readers, usually appearing opposite the editorial page.

- Identify the correct person to send your op ed to, usually the editorial page editor.
- Include your name, address and daytime telephone number —

include title if pertinent.

- Include all relevant information about the issue, including background information.
- Piece is subject to editing by newspaper.
- Op Eds should generally be 600 -750 words, you should check with specific newspaper's policy.
- Op Eds are usually published in a timely manner, as most are related to a current event issue.

MORE MEDIA ADVOCACY HOW TO'S

This section is intended for those who may need to conduct an editorial board meeting or write a press release or media advisory for their own organization.

Press Release

A press release is used to announce new information, new facts or milestone accomplishments of your program/agenda.

- Use letterhead, double space and leave ample margins.
- Include contact name/position/email/telephone number in upper right hand corner.
- Under contact name, put release date: (For Immediate Release: Date)
- Your headline should be short, catchy and in bold letters. If you use a sub-headline, it should be in upper and lower case and underlined.
- Include all pertinent information. If you're talking about an event, include specifics.
- Include quotes from relevant parties. Make sure quote is approved by speaker.
- Signal the end of the release with three pound signs. (###)
- After sending/faxing/emailing press release, follow up with reporters for coverage.

Media Advisory

A media advisory is an alert to the media to be aware of an upcoming event. It's an urgent invitation to a press conference or special event. It's sent 3 or 4 days prior to the event and must be newsworthy!

- Use letterhead, double space and leave ample margins.
- Keep to one page.
- Include contact name/position/email/telephone number in upper right hand corner.

Editorial board meetings are a powerful tool.

- Under contact name, put release date.
- If information is sent out in advance and event must be kept confidential, include "Embargoed until (date of event)".
- Use a short, catchy headline, in bold letters. If you use a sub-headline, it should be in upper and lower case and underlined.
- Include who, what, when, where, why.
- Include special photo note at the end for specific photo opportunities.
- Signal the end with three pound signs (###).

Editorial Board Meetings

Organizations and groups use editorial board meetings to communicate their message/mission to the local media with the intent of having the paper editorialize in favor of said mission and to establish contacts for future articles.

- Identify the editorial board contact at the paper—usually the editorial page editor.
- Initiate communication & write a letter requesting an editorial board meeting.
- In your request, include the reason you'd like the meeting and the names/titles of your group participants. Try to include a spokesperson from the city or town you're visiting.
- Approximate appropriate group size is 5 people.
- Once the meeting is scheduled, confirm it in writing.
- With group members, plan a strategy for meeting. Who will talk about what?
- Editorial board meetings are usually less than one hour. It is very important to be concise.
- Designate a team leader who will introduce the team and open the meeting.
- Outline the purpose of the meeting, state the areas you'd like to discuss, provide clear details and clearly state what you'd like to see in the media.
- Thank the board for their time, exchange business cards and shake hands.
- Team leader should send thank you notes to each member of editorial board.

Testifying at State and Local Hearings/Town Meetings

State and local hearings/town meetings are an opportunity to speak directly to decision makers about how an issue affects you personally and locally.

- Call the governing body at least a week in advance—it may be necessary to sign up to speak.
- At the hearing/meeting, check in—you may be asked to sign in as a speaker.
- Public forums usually start with a mediator explaining the rules, order of speakers, etc.
- In many cases, the moderator calls speakers from a list. In other cases, you may need to volunteer to speak by walking up to the microphone.
- When you stand up to speak, give yourself a moment to collect your thoughts at the microphone – don't feel rushed – this is your time. When you're ready, introduce yourself and begin.
- Keep it short! Make your point quickly and clearly.
- Keep it personal! Show how the issue affects you, your family and friends. This is easier for people to understand than facts and figures.
- Keep it local! Give specific examples when you can.
- Remind decision makers why you care about this issue and that you are counting on them to help protect your health.

Addressing Community Health and Development Issues

Gaining Public Support

What do we mean by gaining public support, and why is it important?

Contributed by Phil Rabinowitz
Edited by Val Renault

The park had once been the center of neighborhood life. Children had played among its trees, older people had sat and talked on its benches, joggers had run along its paths, and families had spread picnics on its lawns. In the evening, couples had strolled along the well-lit walkways, or sought privacy in the shadows. It had been a carefully-tended island of green in a sea of concrete and asphalt, and neighborhood residents had treated it as an extension of their houses.

Now, however, the park was an eyesore. The grass was rarely mowed, broken limbs and twigs covered the ground under the trees, and there were bare patches where once the lawns had been thick. Children no longer played there, because the park was dangerous even during the day. The only people who used it now were gangs and drug dealers; entering at night was suicidal.

A few people in the neighborhood remembered the way the park had been, and wanted it to become the neighborhood's living room again. In order for that to happen, there would have to be money to clean it up and maintain it, and police and neighborhood patrols to keep it safe. Much of the work could be done by neighborhood residents ...but they'd have to support and make a commitment to the idea.

The people in the core group went door-to-door, put up posters, made phone calls, and held meetings. They hosted and attended potluck after potluck, at which they discussed the park and its future, gaining support one person and one living room full of people at a time. After many

months, they held a public meeting to which they invited the neighborhood's city councilor, the local state representative, the mayor, the Chief of Police, and the director of the City Parks Department, as well as the general public.

Most of the public officials came, and found themselves surrounded by hundreds of neighborhood residents asking what they were going to do about the park. Many people at the meeting offered their time, either to help fix up and maintain the park or to patrol it. By the time the meeting ended, the mayor had promised money to fix up the park, the police chief had promised extra patrols, and a residents' committee had been elected to work with them and see that the promises were kept.

Public support is often the crucial factor in bringing about changes in local conditions. Whether you're concerned with reclaiming a neighborhood park, changing the way health care is delivered, or persuading people to alter behavior for their own or society's benefit (quit smoking, choose a designated driver), the weight of public approval can tip the scales in your favor.

Other sections in this chapter discuss ways to educate the public about your issue. This section is about how to gain and use public support in order to ensure that your issue is addressed. In some ways, this is the central section in this chapter, because it deals with getting your issue not only into the public consciousness, but onto the official public agenda, where policy change takes place.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GAINING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES?

Real public support is more than people understanding the issue, or even than a number of people being willing to show up and be vocal at a rally or public meeting. You'll have real public support when most people's response to your issue is "Of course we ought to do something about that. What are we waiting for?"

To get to that point, you have to do your groundwork, the work outlined in other sections of this chapter:

- You have to make sure that the community knows the issue exists.
- You have to educate community members about the issue, and help them understand its importance.
- Once you've accomplished these goals, you're ready to convince people of the issue's relevance to them and the community, so that they'll understand that addressing it is their responsibility and that of the community as a whole. When people accept that

Public support enhances your credibility!

responsibility, they'll get behind an effort to address the issue. That's what we mean by public support.

WHY SHOULD YOU GAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES?

This may seem like a foolish question, but it's remarkable how often gaining public support is ignored. Many initiatives or organizations seem to feel that their cause is so obviously just and logical that people will support it automatically. They don't see the need to cultivate that support, and as a result, they often don't get it. Then, when they fail to reach their goals, they can't understand why.

Public support is important for a number of reasons:

- *Public support lends credibility to your campaign for community change*. It's not just your organization or initiative that believes your issue needs to be addressed, it's the community as a whole.
- *The more support you gain, the more you'll continue to garner*. As Everett Rogers points out, in Diffusion of Innovations, once a certain critical mass of adoption of a new idea is reached, that idea becomes the norm. Once your public support reaches that critical mass, your issue will be, as one perceptive human service provider used to say, "like the fire department." No one will question that it ought to be a community priority, or that community resources ought to be devoted to addressing it.
- *You need support for any action you take*. The more public support you have, the more your action seems not only reasonable, but appropriate.
- *If you're striving for a political goal—i.e., a change in law or policy—you need the strength of numbers*. Public support means that you can apply more pressure to politicians and officials, and that your pressure is perceived as coming from the mainstream, not from the political fringe.
- *Public support means that the community has taken ownership of the issue*, making it more likely not only that it will be dealt with, but that it will continue to be dealt with over the long term. Once the issue is in the community consciousness, it won't disappear.

WHOSE SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?

When we refer to "public support," just whose support are we talking about? The ideal, of course, is that of everyone in the community, but there are some particular individuals and groups to aim at.

The better you know your community and your issue, the more effectively you can target the people and organizations whose support is important to your effort. In the book *Agenda-Setting* (1996), Everett Rogers and James

Dearing point out that on the national level in the U.S., there are two factors that virtually guarantee an issue a place on the agenda: mention by the President (especially in a policy address) and coverage by *The New York Times*. On the local level, that translates to a mention by the mayor or city council, or an article in the local newspaper.

Conversely, lack of attention by a key person or the media can work against the public's perception of an issue as important, which is often influenced by what the media determines to be important. As Dearing and Rogers illustrate, "In the case of AIDS in the 1980s, President Reagan helped delay the rise of the epidemic on the media agenda simply by ignoring it" (Agenda-Setting, p. 33).

So in your work to gain public support, pay special attention to the following:

- Community leaders and other influential individuals. Clergy, business leaders, people known for service to the community, local sports heroes or media personalities, and citizens with high levels of community credibility all fall into this category. Once you get them on board, many others will follow.
- Media representatives. The power of the media to further your cause is obvious. If you can enlist some key journalists or media executives, your job will be much easier.
- People most affected by the issue. Their support also lends credibility to your effort, and gives you a store of firsthand accounts of the issue's effects to use in educating the public.
- Policymakers. Whether or not you're trying to influence legislation or regulations, it's important to have those who make policy on your side. They can help you keep the issue in the public eye, and their support will gain you that of their supporters as well.
- Activists. Those who involve themselves in community issues often have a constituency, and know how to make their voices heard.
- Opinion leaders. In Diffusion of Innovations, Everett Rogers describes these as people who are among the first to try new things or adopt new ideas, and who influence the opinions of others. The more of these forerunners you can attract, the better.

WHEN SHOULD YOU TRY TO GAIN SUPPORT?

Gaining public support for your issue is an ongoing process, but there are in fact times and circumstances when a push to gain support can be particularly productive.

1. **When there's a crisis involving the issue**. A historic landmark is about to be torn down; the funding for a desperately-needed community health clinic has just been discontinued; the loggers are

In 1962, **The Other America: Poverty in the United States**, by Michael Harrington, galvanized public support for what became Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. Harrington brought to the fore an issue that most people had ignored or been unaware of, and changed the political climate to create general acceptance for an anti-poverty campaign.

Political battles about issues are often over the framing of them. Michael Dukakis lost the 1988 U.S. Presidential election at least in part because he allowed his opponent to define the major issue of the campaign as one of Liberal vs. Conservative, and to define Liberal as "wanting bigger taxes, soft on crime, and with no respect for the middle class and its values." If Dukakis had instead embraced the Liberal label and framed the election's issues in a different way, he might have had a better chance to win.

already starting to clear-cut a patch of virgin forest. Situations like these (unfortunately) present opportunities for gathering public support.

2. **When the issue has reached a point where it can't be ignored.** When homeless people are freezing to death in doorways because there are no shelter beds available, or when the number of AIDS cases skyrockets, people are more willing to endorse efforts to address the issues involved.

3. **When the number of people affected by the issue reaches critical mass.** At the point where nearly everyone knows, or knows about, someone affected, the public is generally more than ready to champion attempts to deal with the issue.

4. **When new information calls attention to the issue.** A university study showing a local increase in a particular condition or disease, or the publication of an Environmental Protection Agency report uncovering the dumping of pollutants into local waterways can solidify support for what you're doing.

5. **When a publication, or a media story not initiated by you, highlights the issue.** A new book or an investigative report can raise public consciousness about your issue, and gain you a larger following.

6. **When a crucial event makes your issue more visible**. An event that is not directly related to the issue may nonetheless provide an opportunity for building public support.

7. **When the political time is right.** An approaching election, pressure on politicians or officials to address the issue, or a referendum all might make it a good time to build public support.

HOW DO YOU GAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES?

Now you're at the stage where it's important to get the public to take personal and community responsibility for the issue. Achieving that will lead both to officials changing laws and policy, and to individuals changing their behavior to address the issue.

1. Frame the issue properly. Framing the issue means defining it and its context. You want to cast the issue in a light that will make the largest number of people willing to support it.

   - Frame the issue as mainstream, not extreme or radical, and define it clearly.
   - Don't make insupportable claims, or claims that most people would find extreme or counter-intuitive. In an anti-child

Two Types of Change

Most changes in the community require a change in official or unofficial policy; others require individual change; and some require both.

Changes in policy are needed where they won't happen otherwise. A few corporations and developers pay attention to environmental considerations, for instance, because they are genuinely concerned about them, and because they see environmental responsibility as part of their responsibility to the community. Most, however, would prefer to be left alone to do as they please, and often don't believe in the seriousness of the environmental consequences of their practices. If they're based elsewhere, they may have little commitment to the communities where they operate. In such cases, laws or regulations are needed to safeguard the public and community resources.

Individual behavior change can lead to community change when the issue is one that's under the control of individuals, at least once they have the right information. Quitting smoking, adopting preventive health practices, and making a commitment to buying organic produce are three examples of actions individuals can take that may result in larger changes in the community.

Usually, however, it takes both policy change and individual change to create change in the community. Recycling won't work unless individuals commit to separating their trash and performing whatever other tasks are associated with it. But it also needs community policies that make it possible—and, even better, easy—to recycle. A parent who abuses her child has to come to terms with her anger and learn how to relate to the child in more appropriate ways; but there also has to be a legal mechanism to keep the child from being abused until that happens, if it happens.

abuse campaign, for instance, it's probably not helpful to assert that any hitting of a child constitutes abuse. Most people have the experience of having been occasionally spanked or swatted by loving parents, and don't see that as abusive (and have in fact suffered no ill effects from it). Whether or not they use corporal punishment on their own children, they may consider the "any hitting is abuse" stance too extreme to accept.

- Where possible, emphasize common ground and universal or near-universal values. "We all want our children to be healthy." "Everyone needs safe drinking water."

2. Enlist respected community members as representatives and spokespersons. The list of potential spokespersons is long, and similar to that of those whose support your need, given earlier, with a few additions:

With the formation of the European Union came international workplace and product standards. Some American manufacturers realized that they might not be able to compete in the international marketplace unless they addressed the basic skills of their workers. Adult literacy advocates seized the opportunity to gain backing for workplace education.

As a result, many manufacturers formed collaborations with adult literacy organizations or others to provide workplace classes in English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) and reading, writing, and math to workers. The classes benefited workers individually, but also benefited employers by creating a workforce that could better understand and maintain safety and product standards, and could be more adaptable and productive.

While you should never make unsupported claims, there are exceptions to the other half of this rule. When you have overwhelming proof that you're right, and your interpretation is necessary to addressing the issue effectively, you may have to confront community prejudices. Many individuals (and communities) find it "common sense" that sex education in the schools gives teens permission to be sexually active. In reality, study after study shows that sex education almost always reduces the level of teen sexual activity, as well as increasing safe sex practices and reducing teen pregnancy. Studies have also shown that "just say no" campaigns against teen sex and drugs are almost totally ineffective.

Sometimes it's necessary to use hard numbers and respected research to try to shake people out of what they "know," and convince them of the facts.

- Clergy and other faith community leaders.
- Business leaders.
- Activists.
- Local entertainment and sports figures.
- Respected community members. These can include people who have no official position, but who are known for their wisdom, dedication to community service, or other good attributes.
- Elected or appointed officials who are generally believed to put the public good before their own advancement.
- Opinion leaders.
- Those affected by the issue, either directly (victims of youth violence) or indirectly (emergency room physicians who treat victims of youth violence.)
- Recognized authorities on the issue—researchers, academics, professionals, etc.

3. Make common cause with other groups. Try to draw in other groups that share your concerns about the issue, or that can be convinced that they should. Some possibilities:

   - Coalitions.
   - Communities of faith and clergy associations.
   - Neighborhood organizations and other grassroots groups.
   - Agencies or initiatives with purposes or goals similar to yours. A campaign to prevent youth violence, for instance, might find common ground with Big Brother/Big Sister, the schools, youth leadership organizations, and other groups concerned with child welfare.
   - Professional organizations concerned with the issue.

4. Become the authority. Always do your homework, and be able to counter arguments against your effort. You should know as much as possible about your issue, and should be able to demonstrate why addressing it is necessary, and why it needs to be addressed in particular ways (if that's part of your campaign).

5. Take advantage of opportunities. When those events that we discussed above in "When should you try to gain support?" come up, use them. Point out how they demonstrate the need to address the issue. Employ your knowledge and status as an expert to show people what could be done to change the situation. Never let a chance to gain support pass you by.

6. Use the media. By establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with local newspapers, radio, and TV (including the citizen-access cable station), you can get your message out to the public, and build

a base of public support

7. Use the Internet. A community website, an on-line forum or chat group or listserv, a large e-mail list - all of these can be effective tools for building community support and keeping people informed. They also provide a fast and easy way to organize supporters for action.

8. Gain support one individual and organization at a time, as well as aiming at large numbers through the media and other similar methods. Often, public support gets built through many personal contacts over time.

   Once you have an individual on board, perhaps you can persuade her to host a house party of her friends and acquaintances to discuss the issue, or to participate in a community presentation. Perhaps she'll just discuss the issue with her friends, who'll discuss it with their friends. You can reach a lot of people that way.

   People trust most those whom they know best. You can gain an enormous amount of support, especially in a close neighborhood or small town, just by word of mouth. Don't pass up the opportunity.

9. Ask people to do something, rather than just telling them about the issue. People are more likely to support you if they can feel effective in doing so. Giving them an opportunity to influence the results of addressing the issue gives them ownership of the process. Some things the public might do:

   - Write, call, or e-mail politicians to advocate.
   - Report instances of abuse, drug dealing, child malnutrition, etc.
   - Join a neighborhood watch or other active group.
   - Change their behavior, if only temporarily: stop smoking for a day, get their blood pressure checked, talk to a homeless person.
   - Go to a meeting or rally.
   - Volunteer, either with a direct service organization, or for an initiative or coalition.
   - Hold a house party or home-based meeting to discuss the issue.

10. Create activities or events that highlight the issue, and also involve the public. Some examples include organizing the clean-up of a vacant lot with volunteer labor, and a "Take Back the Night" evening rally against street violence. Each of these events also implies a follow-up: the first could result in turning the now-neat lot into a neighborhood playground; the second could evolve into a neighborhood watch program or a campaign to reclaim the nighttime streets for the law-abiding.

While the support of an activist who is perceived by the community as dangerous or on the fringe can hurt your cause, the support of people from all parts of the political spectrum can help it. When liberals, conservatives, and those in between all agree that an issue is important, most people would go along.

In revolutionary Russia, the control of the government after the fall of the Czar went to a democratic party, while the Communists were a minority player. Lenin, however, called his smaller party the Bolsheviks - the Majority in Russian - and referred to the actual majority as the Mensheviks - the Minority. It was a brilliant piece of public relations... and it had a huge effect.

11. As your support grows, demonstrate it at every opportunity. Most people want to be in the majority. If they're convinced that supporting you is backing a winner, they'll do it.

12. Recognize and give awards to community members who do things to affect the issue and demonstrate their support for your work, regardless of whether they're part of your campaign. Some folks to reward:

    - Politicians who support your cause, and try to change policy accordingly.
    - Community volunteers who work on your issue.
    - Organizations - or their directors or staff members - that do an outstanding job on your issue.

    When you give an award or hold a recognition ceremony, be sure to have the media present.

13. Celebrate accomplishments publicly.

14. Cede control of the effort to the community, if that's feasible. A community may be more willing to support something that's seen as an indigenous, grassroots effort. You and your organization should remain involved, but not necessarily as the leader of the effort. Whether community control makes sense in your community depends upon the situation, and what needs to be done.

15. Follow up and maintain support. Once you've gained public support, you have to keep it. Don't take the support of any individual or group for granted, but continue to maintain contact, and to court their backing. Continue also to expand your base of support, adding new people and groups at every opportunity. The ideal here is that every single person and organization in the community will support your effort. You'll probably never reach that goal, but if you try, the chances are you'll develop solid and powerful community support that will make sure your issue is addressed.

TO SUM UP

Real public support for addressing issues is more than simply public knowledge of those issues. Rather, it implies that most people see them as needing to be dealt with as quickly as possible for the good of the community.

Public support is crucial, because it lends credibility to your efforts, helps you gain further support, provides strength for action or political pressure, and creates community ownership of and responsibility for measures to deal with the issue. In order to build that public support, you need support first from key individuals and groups in the community - trusted figures from various walks of life to whom people listen, or whose credibility

is high because of their involvement in the issue.

Building public support is an ongoing process - indeed, it should never stop - but can be especially effective when the issue is highlighted by a crisis, or by particular events or situations. New information or publications that draw attention to the issue can also be used to advantage, as can political opportunity. Any time the issue is before the public is a good time to try to enlist community support for addressing it.

Actually obtaining community support requires attention to several concerns:

- Define the issue. This includes framing it properly, recruiting the right people as representatives and spokespersons, making common cause with other organizations, and becoming recognized as the authority on the subject.
- Communicate with community members. Use every possible opportunity—both those that present themselves by circumstance, and those that you create—and every possible avenue—the media, the Internet, person-to-person communication—to build public support.
- Ask people to do something that will help them feel they're having an effect on the issue and encourage them to take ownership of finding and executing a resolution to it.
- Advertise your support and your accomplishments. Stage activities and events, give awards, celebrate your successes, issue bulletins on the extent of your support. Let the community know that you're a public movement, with a broad community foundation.
- Give over control of the effort to the community, if that's possible, thereby further establishing your grassroots credentials.
- Follow up and maintain your support indefinitely.

It's almost impossible to address community health and development issues effectively without broad-based community support. If you can use the strategies suggested here to gain that support, you're well on your way to meeting the health and development needs of your community.

If you can't counter arguments against it, then it may be time to rethink your position. Is some of your thinking inaccurate? It's better to do what's most helpful for the community than to make yourself look good by not admitting that you're wrong.

THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

http://ctb.ku.edu

PRINT RESOURCES

Dearing, James W. and Everett M. Rogers. (1996). *Agenda-Setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Rogers, Everett M. (1995). *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: Free Press.

INTERNET RESOURCES

http://www.ahecpartners.org

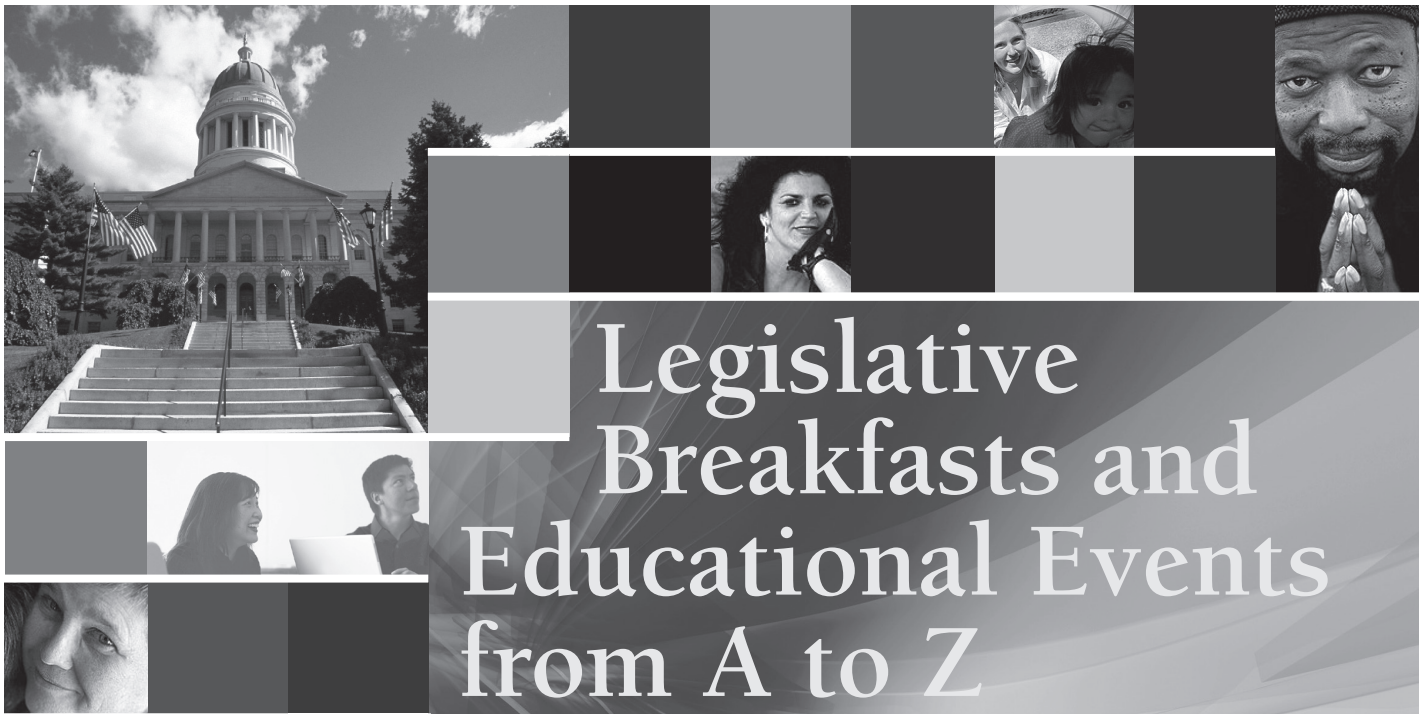
Information and links on building healthy communities from AHEC/Community

Partners of Amherst, MA.

http://thecollaboratory.us/collaboratorycs/
The Collaboratory for Community Support, an Ann Arbor, MI, research and consulting firm that helps communities generate cross-sector, comprehensive approaches to dealing with community issues.

http://www.loka.org/pubs/chronicle.htm
An article about community-based research and public support from LOKA, a non-profit in Amherst, MA.

http://www.nfie.org/publications/engaging.htm
"Engaging Public Support for Teachers' Professional Development," an article from the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (the National Education Association is America's largest teachers' union). A description of some local efforts.



Legislative Breakfasts and Educational Events from A to Z

These events allow you and/or your organization to link with policymakers and key stakeholders

BREAKFASTS ARE A COMMON WAY TO HOST LEGISLATORS. THEY'RE USUALLY CHEAPER THAN OFFERING OTHER MEALS, EASIER TO OFFER AT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO BUSY PEOPLE WHO TEND TO HAVE EARLY MORNINGS FREE, AND THEY ALLOW LEGISLATORS TO COME IN AND LEAVE AS IS CONVENIENT.

Your goal here is not a heavy sell—you want them to leave with a smile, having enjoyed themselves and found new partners in serving their constituents. It is best not to highlight current crises, but to emphasize strengths. They should leave with just enough written information to be useful; your contact information is the most important part of that written information.

You can also hold functions in the afternoon and provide a light snack, or invite legislators to a coalition meeting.

Generally legislative breakfasts start at 7:30 am and end by 9:00 or 10:00 am. It is best to hold them at your organization—this makes the best impression, especially for local legislators. Legislative breakfasts held at the statehouse can still be effective, but tend to run together in legislators' minds. Just coffee and muffins or fruit are fine; getting too fancy can take away from your message. Food that is easy to eat standing and talking is best—avoid anything that needs spreading or could drip on a suit or tie. If children will be attending, consider their needs—have kid-friendly food, and an area where they can play, draw, etc., still within sight of their parents or caregivers but without interrupting legislators' conversations. If you are lucky enough to have access to the services of lobbyists, make sure they are able to come—that allows the linkage between your good work and, months later, your advocacy at the statehouse.

MAPSA

Invite executive branch policymakers, community leaders and local municipal elected officials.

GETTING STARTED

1. Choose your site and reserve a few available dates at least a few weeks away, devise a guest list
2. Call the legislative aides of a couple of legislators you really want to be sure can attend—put it on their calendars, make it clear that you are scheduling the event around them, ask them about any competing events their legislators have been invited to
3. Pick a date
4. Print and mail invitations (see below) to both home and statehouse addresses
5. Call a week after mailing to be sure they got it - call home and LOB phone numbers
6. Be persistent—keep calling every couple of days until you get an answer one way or another, even an "I'll try to make it" is fine
7. If your organization is registered for lobbying—check about reporting limits, how much is spent on each attendee, and if necessary how to report the breakfast

WHO TO INVITE

Be expansive in your guest list. Invite your local legislators, from committees that oversee your program area, leadership and anyone who has paid special attention to your program or someone in your organization has a personal relationship with. I just invite all legislators—it's safer. Make it clear that it is OK to send an aide. Invite executive branch policymakers—those that oversee your contracts, regulate your organization, etc. Invite your funders, community leaders and local municipal elected officials. Be sure to include your lobbyist if you have one. If you are part of a coalition, invite your partners.

Invite clients, volunteers, your Board of Directors and staff from across program areas. Have lots of people to greet legislators.

INVITATIONS

Postcards are fine as are letters on your letterhead. Make it simple:

Join us for a legislative breakfast

Organization name

Date, time

Address

Phone #, email address for questions and RSVP

Be prepared to meet your guests.

Include directions and parking info with the invitation—don't direct them to a website. You can include a response card or page with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, but it isn't necessary. You can include an organizational brochure, but don't include more info about you than that.

A week before—divide up the jobs

- Who will bring the food?
- Who will arrange the room before, clean it up if necessary and clean up afterward?
- Who will get the paperwork and supplies necessary?
- Who will greet legislators? You want several people for this. You can role-play ahead of time for people who are nervous about talking with legislators. But the idea here is pleasant small talk; you want them to feel comfortable, wanting to come back next year. If you know something about the legislator, met them before, have a mutual friend, etc. that can start conversation. Keep the conversation light; it's too early for a heavy discussion.
- Who will take pictures?
- Who will collect names of everyone who attends? This is critical and should be that person's only job. Have a sign in sheet at the door, but not everyone will sign it. It's not helpful when a legislator attends, no one gets their name and afterward you try to guess who they were to send a thank you note.
- Who will speak/give formal remarks? Help clients with their remarks if necessary.
- If you are giving a tour, plan it ahead (traffic patterns, client confidentiality, etc.) and decide who will guide it and who else will go?
- Who will be responsible for copying and assembling the packets?
- Who will provide child care and/or translation services, if necessary?
- Who will be in charge of logistics and handle little problems, e.g. the room is too hot, you ran out of coffee?

That day

Be prepared to greet legislators at 7:30 if that's when your invitation says you are starting. Don't assume they will be late. On the other hand, allow for some who come later or choose to stay late. If a legislator wants to stay and talk, give him your time.

Set up the room for talking; definitely not lecture style pointing at a podium. Have a few chairs in small groups or against the walls. Remove or push any big tables to the wall. Put the coffee at the other end of the room from the entrance, so they have to walk by several people to get their caf-

Take pictures and be sure to introduce yourself to all invited guests. Listen carefully to what they are telling you and clarify anything that you don't understand.

feine. If children will be present, set up their area and food ahead.

Have nametags for every client and staff person. Have them available for legislators at the front door, but don't insist.

Have plenty of information packets available. The most important piece of the packet is your contact information; it should be in several places, e.g. business card(s) and print addresses on each piece of paper, as the packet may not stay together once it gets to the office. Include everything - name, title, organization, address, phone numbers, FAX, email and website, if available. They don't need every staff person's card, but be sure that the numbers they have will get them a quick response. Do not overwhelm them with information; you wouldn't believe how much they get. I like to include everything in a folder—expecting them to pick up a copy of each of ten or twenty papers and brochures is not realistic and creates bottlenecks at the table. Folders can easily be put on bookcases or in file folders at the office. Have more packets than you think they will need; they may take extras for staff, constituents or colleagues who couldn't make it.

Take pictures of legislators with clients and staff if you can, especially for digital formats. Try to get everyone. Also take some crowd shots. These can be sent along with thank you notes and used in your newsletters/communications/website.

Introduce yourself to each legislator. Don't assume they will remember you; they meet thousands of people. A nice way to start off is, "It's so good to see you again Senator." If legislators start to huddle in a corner and talk shop, accept it for a while. If it goes on, gently join the group and interrupt. Be polite, but engage one or several in a separate conversation bringing them back to your services. For example, walk up with a client or staff person and say, "Senator Jones, I want to make sure you meet Ms. Smith." Never argue with a legislator.

They may send a legislative aide in their place. This is not a bad thing; in fact it can be an excellent opportunity. Treat them just as you would a legislator. Unlike legislators, aides are full time at the Capitol and often are intimately involved in policy decisions. Get their names as well and send thank you's to both them and their legislator afterward.

Listen carefully to what they are telling you, clarify anything you don't understand. Ask how you can be effective and helpful to them. Comments might include "This is going to be a difficult budget year." Your response, "How can we help you ensure that vital services like this remain available for the people who need them?" Share any concerns that you hear with your advocacy partners—lobbyist, coalition members, etc.

Do not use jargon or acronyms—not every legislator is an expert on your program area (nor should they be). Don't make them ask. If they ask a question, get them the answer either from someone in the room or promise to get the answer to them as soon as possible. Then follow up—include the answer in your thank you letter.

AGENDA

Again, this is mainly informal. Many legislators will not stay for the remarks, and they should come away with the messages without having to stay. Keep remarks brief—15 minutes maximum. Have the director thank them for coming, a client talk about how important the services are and maybe a direct service staff person or volunteer describe their job. Thank them again at the end not only for coming but also for their support. Emphasize that you want to create a relationship, that they should call you any time they need information. In describing relevant legislative issues, start positive, and do not limit yourself to your organization's funding—talk about the needs of your clients, other organizations that you and your clients rely on. Remind them to get an information packet before they leave.

You can follow up with a tour of the facility near the end of the timeframe. Think through traffic and client confidentiality issues. A leisurely walk is the pace you are going for. Have your designated guide practice before and be sure that staff on the tour route know you are coming.

Check list—what to have in the room

- Food
- Cups, plates, napkins
- Milk, sugar, stirrers
- Knives if necessary (not advised)
- Paper towels for spills (always happens)
- Packets
- Name tags
- Sign in sheet at the door
- Pens and paper
- Child-friendly food and supplies/toys—if needed

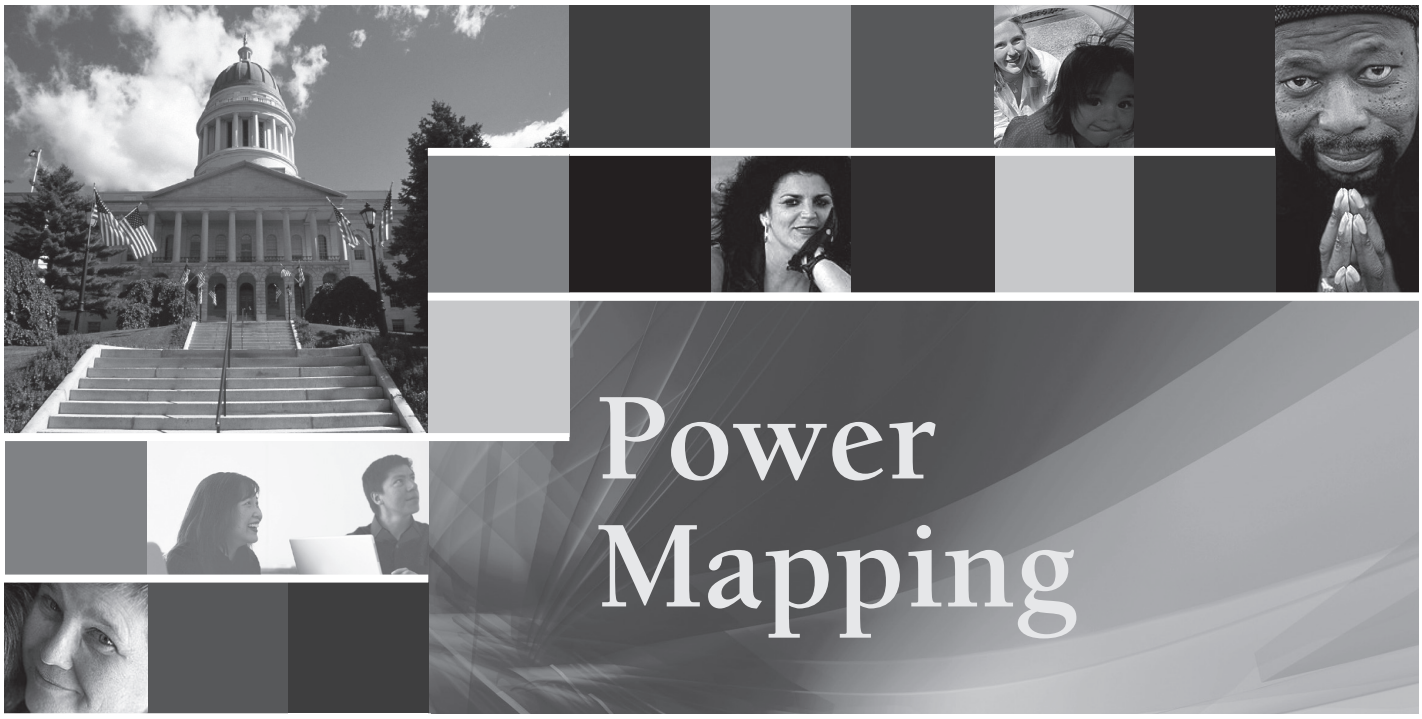
Follow up. Send thank you letters to everyone who attended with photos. Include a fact sheet or newsletter or brochure that wasn't in the packet. Reiterate your offer to help. Include your contact information on the letter and include a business card—you can write on the back, "Call me anytime." Include any specific information about their visit, e.g. "I've included a picture of you and Ms. Smith, our client" or "I looked into your question and found that . . . ".

Send a letter to legislators and others who did not attend. Include a packet, with all the above contact information.

Evaluate. Take a few moments to consider what went right and what didn't. Low attendance because of snow is out of your control, but maybe you need to do a better job of following up on invitations or send them earlier. Ask your staff, clients and volunteers who attended for their feedback. Often you do everything right and it just takes time for people to get to know you. Make it better next year.

MODIFIED FROM THE HEALTH ADVOCACY TOOL BOX

http://www.cthealthpolicy.org/toolbox/tools/leg_breakfast.htm



Power Mapping

Power Mapping can be a powerful tool to develop strategy.

GOALS

- To help participants consider the social and political context within which they are developing strategy.
- To creatively consider allies, opponents, targets and constituents prior to embarking on a campaign.
- To serve as a reminder and framework for subsequently revising strategy.

TIME

- 1 hour to 2 hours

HOW IT'S DONE

In pairs/threes/small groups

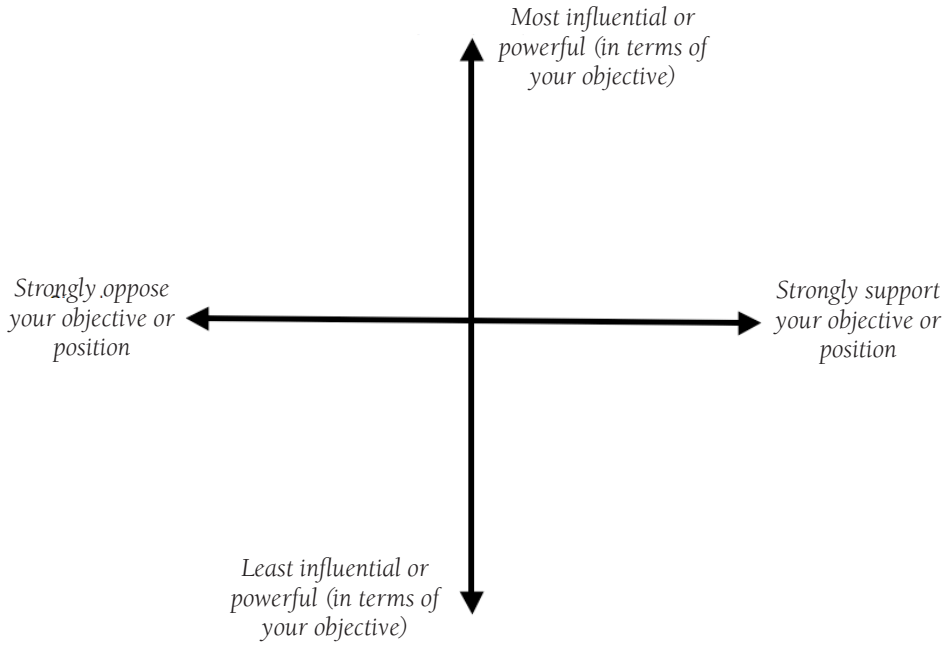
1. Think of a campaign you are involved with (or might become involved with). What is it you are trying to achieve with this campaign?
2. If working in a mixed group, briefly describe your campaigns to each other.
3. Select one campaign for this exercise to work on together.
4. Consider: "**What is the main outcome your campaign hopes to achieve?**" Define this outcome in terms of a realistic and achievable objective (e.g., recycling bins in every classroom or a doubling in council's budget for native tree planting or the introduction of a climate refugee visa).
5. With this outcome in mind, write on separate post-it notes the

Map your stakeholders and groups who could oppose or influence your cause.

names of organizations and people with whom you might need to engage in order to achieve this outcome. Start with yourself and the main decision makers/s. You might like to include:

- your own group
- other community groups—consumer, residents, environment, etc.
- local government—which counselors or officers?
- state government—which departments or ministers?
- churches
- federal government—which departments or ministers?
- local, regional and national media
- property / real estate developers
- local businesses
- experts, academics, professionals (e.g., teachers, police)
- particular sectors of the community
- traditional owners and local indigenous people
- youth, the unemployed, men / women, the aged
- industry

6. Each group needs a blank power map on butchers paper. This is a simple matrix with a horizontal axis and vertical axis. The vertical axis indicates the level of influence or power each person or organization has to give your group what you are asking for. The top of this axis is where you would place people or organizations that have most power or influence. The horizontal axis indicates whether people support your group's specific objectives or if they are opposed to these objectives. At the left end of this spectrum are people who are most opposed to your desired changes or objectives. At the right end are people who support your objectives most strongly (see below).



7. Place the post-it note with the name of your organization on the power map. You'll be strongly in support of your objective, so you sit on the right hand side of the map, but you'll need to consider how much influence or power you have over your objective.

8. Identify the individual holding the most influence of power in terms of delivering your desired outcome (your target). Place this note on the power map, measuring how much influence they have over and how supportive of your campaign they are.

9. Place each note in turn on the power map. As you place the notes, say something about how they are related to your organization, to the main powerholder / target, and to other players. How much influence do they hold? Do they cooperate with each other, or are they in conflict? Do you presently have a relationship with these people? Are they likely to agree with your position?

    - Position the notes according to the relationships that exist between them.
    - Consider the relative power of the stakeholders in your campaign. Who is closest to the key decision makers? Move them around.
    - Spend at least five minute until the map feels right.
    - Your partner(s) in this exercise can help clarify power relationships by questioning you as you go along.

10. When your map is complete, identify the two or three locations within the map where you feel your campaign might effect the greatest influence. Are there people or organizations who hold power and who you might successfully influence or build strategic relationships with?

11. Report back, discussion.

WHERE THIS TOOL COMES FROM

James Whelan, http://www.thechangeagency.org

Action Planning Template

Your organization or action team can complete this template as you plan your organizing campaigns in the future. You may want to keep blank to make further copies.

Issue or Problem to Be Solved What is the issue or problem to be solved? Be concrete and specific in naming the problem in order to target a solution.	
Goals Name 1–4 clear goals for the campaign. These will be your yardstick for determining success.	1. 2. 3. 4.
Targets Who makes decisions about this issue? What influences or changes their decisions?	
Core Constituencies What people/groups are most affected by this issue? Who among them will be willing to participate in finding a solution?	
Allies In addition to the core constituents, who will be supportive and helpful on the organizing effort? How will you get their support?	
Opposition Who stands on the other side of this issue and will attempt to block/ thwart or work against you? How do you deal with them?	
Key Messages Identify 2–5 key messages for your campaign. Articulate them clearly and in a language that is accessible to the public.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5

Tactics What tactics will you use to accomplish your goals? (Much of this will be driven by power relations, community perceptions and strength of the organized base.)	
Activities Design activities to accomplish several things such as increasing involvement of your base, impacting the media, showing strength to decision-makers and gaining the initiative.	
Organizational Structure How will you be organized to accomplish your goal? Who makes what level of decision? How can you communicate efficiently?	
Budget Determine the minimum amount of money you need to conduct a campaign and how you might secure that. Build budgets with varying levels of resources. (Consider personnel, office supplies, materials, etc)	
Staff Will this campaign require paid staff? If so, how many and what will they do?	
Volunteers How many volunteers need to be mobilized and what will you ask them to do?	
Timeline Sketch out a timeline for the organizing project. How many months overall will be needed? What will be accomplished in each shorter segment?	
Community-building Activities Design a few activities to build community and familiarity among the organizers.	
Evaluation How will you evaluate your campaign? How will you know if you were successful? Besides reaching your major goals, what other outcomes are desirable?	