

Arts Providers Alliance of San Francisco

ADVOCACY 101

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is identifying, embracing and promoting a cause, and then using information and education to make a compelling case for that cause. It can shape public perception, as well as public policy. There are no limits to advocacy efforts that can be accomplished through education outreach that includes direct mail, publications, presentations and the Internet. Informing elected officials about the need for a greater investment in the arts is advocacy. Presenting materials to lawmakers that make the case for this need is also advocacy.

ISN'T ADVOCACY ILLEGAL FOR A NONPROFIT?

No. "Lobbying" as a substantial part of 501(c)(3)'s budget is illegal. "Education" of lawmakers is not illegal or prohibited for nonprofits.

WHAT IS "EDUCATION" OF LAWMAKERS?

- Communications that discuss legislation without a call to action.
- Providing pertinent facts about a legislative issue to enable an independent opinion.
- Responding to a request from a legislative committee for technical advice on legislation.
- Taking a position on legislation that might affect the organization's right to exist.

WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

A 501(c)(3) has two options:

1. Elect that no more than 20% of your organization's budget will be devoted to lobbying efforts. Keep a tally of all expenditures related to advocacy efforts.
2. Decide that advocacy will be an "insubstantial" part of your organization's activities.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Most organizations fall into the second of these two options. For a youth-based direct service organization, advocacy efforts (from 1 day per year in Sacramento to writing a letter to the Governor) will almost surely constitute an "insubstantial" part of your organization's activities. Furthermore, the majority of your advocacy-related activities will most likely be "education", rather than lobbying.

2009 Executive Committee

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Diversity & Outreach Co-Chair: Katina Papsen, World Savvy, 415.292.7421, katina@worldsavvy.org

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Treasurer: Keegan Finberg, San Francisco Arts Commission, artsedassistant@sfgov.org

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Marketing and Communications Chair: Julie McDonald, LEAP, 415.512.1899, julie@leap4kids.org

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WHAT IS GOING ON IN ARTS EDUCATION ADVOCACY?

- Local Advocacy Efforts:
 - APASF: The Arts Providers will keep you up to date on local issues facing the SFUSD and Arts Communities in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. Meetings are the third Thursday of every other month, 3:30-5pm.
 - Family Budget Coalition, hosted by Coleman Advocates, FBC is a coalition of CBOs in San Francisco that serves as a watchdog monitoring services to children, youth and their families in the city. The APASF is one of the Coalition's many members. www.colemanadvocates.org
- State Advocacy Efforts:
 - California Arts Advocates has its own lobbyist in Sacramento and monitors all arts-related legislation at the capitol. www.CaliforniaArtsAdvocates.org
 - California Alliance for Arts Education monitors action on arts education-related legislation at the capitol, but has less of an advocacy focus. The Alliance often partners with CAA for its advocacy efforts. www.artsed411.org
- National Advocacy Efforts:
 - Americans for the Arts provides all of its members with crucial national and international-level advocacy alerts. They have a strong arts education component to their advocacy and programming. Check their website for information on presidential candidates' arts education platforms! www.americansforthearts.org

HOW DO I ADVOCATE?

Craft your advocacy pitch.

- Start with your audience. Identify who you're addressing (politician, parent, school board, principal).
- What do you want? In concise terms, explain your cause. (Tip: Keep it simple. Leave more detail for a deeper conversation if they seem interested.)
- Tell your story. Who are you and why do you care? Why should your audience care?
- Ask for their commitment. What do you want them to do? Make it clear and compelling.

NOW WHAT?

Practice. Work one-on-one with a co-worker to practice your pitch. Try it out on colleagues. Refine it, revise it, and keep working on it. Advocacy doesn't come naturally to anyone. You have to work at it.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE THE EXPERT

No one knows your work as well as you do. Find the best way to communicate your expertise through your advocacy pitch, without getting sidetracked from your message.

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