

Effective Lobbying

Indiana Coalition for the Arts/Foundation

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Lobbying is not a bad word

- First Amendment!
- Your elected representatives want to hear from you
- You have the right and the responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to you
- Lobbying is the process of promoting change effectively

What's the issue?

- What do you want to lobby about?
- Find out what the INCA's position is on a particular piece of legislation
- General rule: do what the Coalition tells you to do!

Make it personal

- What is your personal story?
- How does the issue affect you?
- Communicating your personal story lets Members of the General Assembly know what is important to their constituents

What to say

- Tell your personal story
- Explain the issue
- List the impacts
- Recommend a specific course of action

Know your “ask”

- What specific course of action are you asking for?
- Do you want a Member of the General Assembly to vote for, hold hearings on or co-sponsor a bill?

Be Specific

- Be specific – refer to legislation by bill number and name
- Examples
 - “Please increase Arts funding in HB 1001, The State Budget.”
 - “Please write a letter to the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee in support of HB 1001.”

Do your research

- Before you contact your legislator, do some research
- Where does the Member stand on the issue?
 - Are they already a supporter?
 - Do they need some convincing?
- Gauging interest in a particular issue is an important first step. It will help you shape your call, meeting or letter and tailor it to each office

When to lobby

- There are certain times during the legislative process when lobbying can be particularly effective
 - Before a committee hearing
 - Before a vote
 - While legislation is being drafted

You are the expert

- Members of the General Assembly and their staff don't have time to be experts on all of the issues coming before them
- They rely on constituents, groups and lobbyists to provide them with information

Practice

- Before making any contact, practice what you are going to say
- You want to feel comfortable and natural
- Know the facts

How to make contact

Write a letter

Make a call

Schedule a meeting

Write

- Keep the letter short
- Tell your personal story
- Explain the issue and the desired action and outcome
- Include your full name and address
- Email it as attachment and then mail it

Calling your legislator

- Call the office of your Member
- Ask to speak with their Legislative Assistant who handles the issue you are calling about

During the call

- Have the information in front of you
- Be concise
- State your name and location
- Have a specific request or action, such as “Please vote for additional Arts funding in the State Budget”

Meet

Meeting face-to-face with your representative or a state agency is the best way to lobby

Meeting with your Member of the General Assembly

- Call the office of your Member of the General Assembly
- Don't be discouraged if you don't get a meeting with the Member – staff members are very knowledgeable and will pass along your message
- Often the best place to meet with a legislator is in his or her home district
 - Third House meetings are an excellent opportunity

At the meeting

- Be early
- Be brief – Get to the point. Stay on message.
- Leave something behind – Give out your card. Have a fact sheet ready that explains the issue and your ask. Bring extra copies.
- The Statehouse is an unpredictable place. Be understanding if the office needs to rescheduled.

Be a source of information

- Members and staff don't necessarily know about the issue. *You* are the expert.
- Learn about the issue before the meeting
- Be ready to answer questions
- Be prepared to get back to an office on any requests for information

Build a relationship

- A major part of lobbying is building a relationship with a staffer or an office so that they listen to you and are open to hearing your ideas
- When you call or meet with someone, start to build a relationship with them by being informative and friendly

Follow up: Be persistent!

- Follow up: Send a thank you card or email to any staffers you met or who helped you get a meeting
- Send any information that was requested in the meeting and ask if any additional information is needed

Use a group effort

- Members of the General Assembly are more likely to act if they hear from multiple constituents
- Ask others to write, call or schedule a meeting in support of the issue

Conclusion

- Members of the General Assembly want to hear from their constituents
- Be a source of information
- Build a relationship
- Be persistent
- Don't be discouraged
- Use a group effort

Useful Online Resources

www.in.gov/iga

http://www.in.gov/house_republicans/

http://www.in.gov/house_democrats/

http://www.in.gov/senate_republicans/

http://www.in.gov/senate_democrats/

<http://www.in.gov/apps/sos/legislator/search/>

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