



**chicago alliance**  
making homelessness history

# WHAT IS ADVOCACY, WHAT ARE THE RULES, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

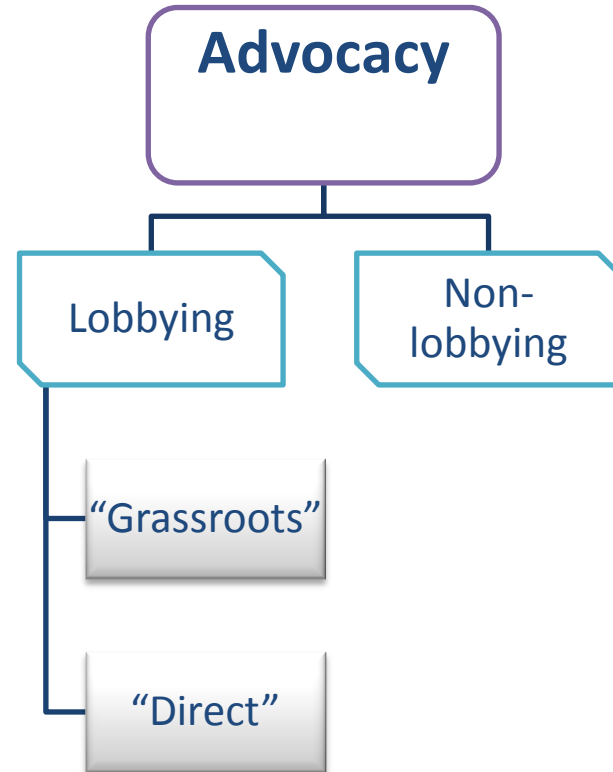
PRESENTED BY:  
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APRIL 30, 2013

**all Chicago**  
making homelessness history

- Advocacy is **active** support of an idea or a cause.
- Advocacy encompasses the **actions** we take to effect change, usually aimed toward influencing policy, practice, or attitudes.
- Can take many forms, but will always involve **action!**
  - *Educating* policymakers and the general public
  - *Participating* in lobby days or other group efforts
  - *Contacting* legislators and other policymakers
  - *Encouraging* others to get involved

- *Remember:* All lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying!
- Lobbying by 501(c)(3) organizations is limited by IRS rules and regulations
- No federal limit on how much *non-lobbying* advocacy your organization can do



- **“Direct”**: Contacting any legislative member, staff, or government employee to influence him/her to propose, support, or oppose *specific* legislation;
  - ✓ Communication with legislator
  - ✓ Expresses a particular view on specific legislation
- **“Grassroots”**: Trying to persuade the public to share your views on a particular legislative proposal.
  - ✓ Communication with the public
  - ✓ Expresses a particular view on specific legislation
  - ✓ Includes a “Call to Action”

- Educating the public or legislators on an issue, without supporting or opposing legislation.
  - ✓ Non-partisan analysis or research
  - ✓ Discussions of broad social or economic problems that do not refer to specific legislation or involve a call to action
  - ✓ Responding to written requests from legislators for testimony or assistance (limited)
  - ✓ Communication with members (exceptions)

You schedule a site visit with your Alderman to educate her about your programs and show the impact your agency is having on the community.

**NOT LOBBYING!**

You send a letter to your U.S. Senator asking him to support H.B. 5577 when it comes to a vote next week.

**DIRECT  
LOBBYING!**

You send out an action alert to the public urging them to call their representatives and voice support for a proposed increase in funding for housing programs.

**GRASSROOTS  
LOBBYING!**

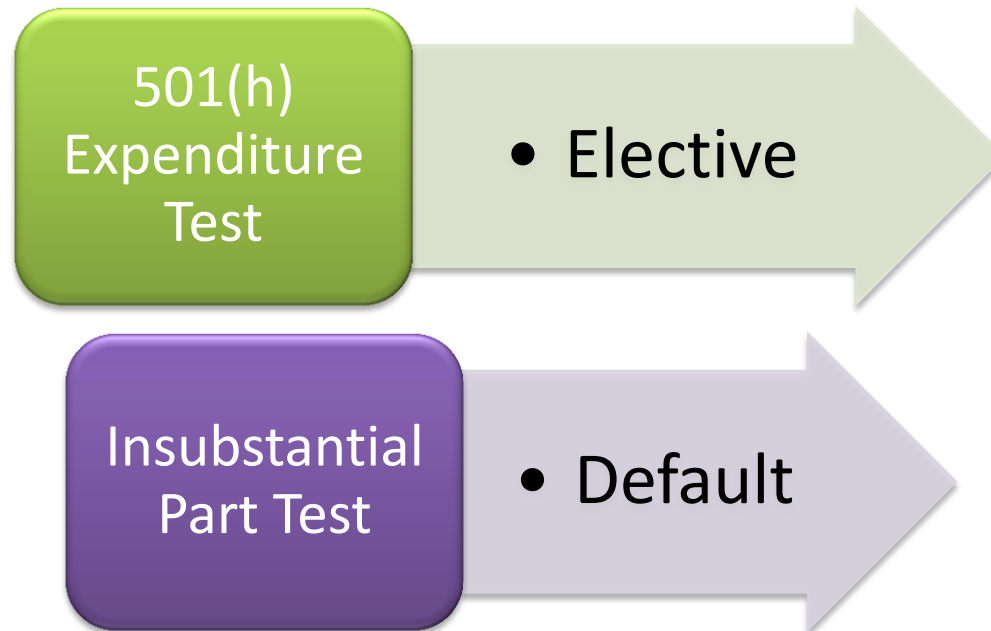


You post a tweet about the importance of passing housing reform in your state.

**NOT LOBBYING!**

# How Much Lobbying Can I Do?

- Overseen by Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Two tests to determine how much lobbying you can do:



- Sets very clear limits on how much funding can be spent on lobbying
  - Based on size and budget of organization
  - Cannot exceed \$1 million total
- Distinguishes between grassroots and direct lobbying
  - Percentage allowed for lobbying, further divided between each type
- Measures only *expenditures*.
  - Cost-free activities do not count against limits

- No clear limits set on how much funding can be spent on lobbying.
  - No *substantial part* of organization's activities can consist of lobbying
  - Some use general rule of up to 5%, but this is not an IRS set standard
- No distinctions between different types of lobbying
- Measures *time and expenditures*
  - Cost-free activities are included

- **DO:**
  - ✓ Advocate!
  - ✓ Know how your organization measures lobbying activity.
  - ✓ Understand the restrictions on using certain funds for lobbying (grants, state or local dollars)
  
- **DO NOT:**
  - x Support or participate in political campaigns as an organization.
  - x Use federal funds for lobbying.

- Stay in contact with your local, state, and federal representatives.
- Advocacy can be helpful at any point before, after, or during the legislative process!
- Different situations will call for different strategies.
- Important to incorporate advocacy into your everyday work.

## Why is Advocacy Important?

- **YOU** are the experts and should be the ones to shape public policy and dialogue around the issues.
- **Funding** is limited and you need to make sure the issues you care about are a priority when budget decisions are being made.
- **If you don't speak up, no one will hear you.** Having everyone participate in advocacy will ensure our voices are heard.

- For renewal Supportive Housing Program (SHP) and Shelter plus Care projects in the Chicago CoC
- More emphasis on agencies actively participating in advocacy and civic engagement
- Was not scored in the 2013 Evaluation Instrument, but will be in the future



- **Does the agency currently have a policy on Advocacy and Civic Engagement?**
  - *If yes, please attach a copy of the policy.*
  - *If no, would the agency be interested in reviewing a template of such a policy?*
  
- **Has any representative (i.e. consumer, staff, board, volunteer) of the agency participated in any advocacy/civic engagement activities in the last year?**
  - *If yes, please complete the Advocacy Table and attach it with the application.*

The table that accompanies the advocacy questions on the Evaluation Instrument outlines common advocacy efforts and asks each agency to record their participation.

✓ For Yes	Has a representative of your organization participated in/with:	Name(s) of Representative(s)	Event/Meeting Topic(s) or Issue(s) *	Month/ Year *
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive Housing Providers Association	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	CAEH Advocacy Team	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with the local Alderman	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with local house or senate representative	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Springfield Lobby Days	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter writing/phone campaign to legislative offices	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consumer group	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Visit 2012 Campaign	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Voter Registration and "Get out and Vote" Efforts	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Residency Advocacy Training	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocacy Training (example conducted by CAEH or National Alliance to End Homelessness)	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	_____	_____	_____

\* If the event/meeting happened several times throughout the year, please respond with information about the most recent event/meeting

- **Advocacy Team**
  - Advocates committed to responding when a call to action is made
- **Advocacy Committee of the Chicago Alliance**
  - Membership made up of consumers and service providers, covering all constituency groups
- **Join Mailing Lists**
  - CAEH, NAEH, SHPA, CCH, Housing Action IL

- Alliance for Justice and Bolder Advocacy Initiative  
[www.bolderadvocacy.org/navigate-the-rules](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org/navigate-the-rules)
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)  
[www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits)
- National Alliance to End Homelessness  
[www.naeh.org](http://www.naeh.org)
- The Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness  
[www.thechicagoalliance.org](http://www.thechicagoalliance.org)