Making Time for Advocacy

League of American Orchestras

June 7, 2017
Making the Time
For Advocacy

David L. Thompson
Vice President of Public Policy

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Connect with the National Council of Nonprofits

- Through the League of American Orchestras

- On Twitter @NatlCouncilNPs and @buildnNPCapacity

- By signing up for Nonprofit Advocacy Matters and Nonprofit Knowledge Matters at www.councilofnonprofits.org/news/e-newsletters
Making the Time for Advocacy
Why Not?

Why don’t nonprofits engage in advocacy?

- Too much to do
- Confusion about the law
- Influence of the Naysayers
  - Attorneys
  - Accountants
  - Academics
  - Funders
  - Board Members
Advancing Mission

One Simple Question

Who can I talk to today to advance my mission?
Advancing Mission

Who can I talk to today to advance my mission?

- Co-workers?
- Civic Group?
- Funder?
- Reporter, Publisher?
Advancing Mission

Who can I talk to today to advance my mission?

- Co-workers?
- Civic Group?
- Funder?
- Elected official?
- The League?
- Others?
- Reporter, Publisher?
Advancing Mission

David’s Favorite Nonprofit Advocacy Story
Key Public Policy Issues
Key Public Policy Issues

State and Local Issues

- Arts Funding
- Charitable Deduction
- Property tax exemption (PILOTs)
- Sales/Ticket taxes
- Nonprofit Independence
- Endowments
- Others
Taking Action in Public Policy
Taking Action in Public Policy

Early Action Steps

1. Join nonprofit state association
2. Board discussion: what’s in our way?
3. Policy committee of the board
4. Issue filter/guide
5. Policy agenda
6. Usual suspect - community engagement
7. Other
What We Can Do Everyday?

Promoting Good Policy

Pre-empting Bad Policy

- Demonstrate Community Impact
  - Your Nonprofit Organization
  - Your Nonprofit Community
- Work Across Sub-Sectors
- Build and Maintain Relationships
- Treat Advocacy as Core to Mission
- Push Back
- Engage through State Associations of nonprofits and the League of American Orchestras
Questions?

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Picture the Impact

Engaging · Sustaining · Transforming
“Music has given me a different perspective on how I view myself and the world around me. YOLA has shaped me to be a better leader, role model, and made me realize I could be a part of something greater in life.

Raymond Chaves, Age 15, Clarinetist
Youth Orchestra LA (YOLA), a project of the LA Philharmonic
Advocacy

- Telling your story, impact
- Site visit, rehearsal
- Volunteer work
- Charity fundraising assistance
- Help with constituents
- Appear at events
- Crawfish boil
- Speaking at luncheon

Lobbying

- 3 things required
  1. Talking to decision maker
  2. About legislation
  3. Asking for a vote

- Examples
  - Ask to introduce bill
  - Testify for/against
  - Other?

- Exceptions
  - Asked to testify
  - Provide data
  - Self Defense

26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3)
“... no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided in subsection (h)),”
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