

Nonprofits as Advocates

MCN Annual Conference, October 24th, 2019

MARIE ELLIS, PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

ILEANA MEJIA, PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCATE



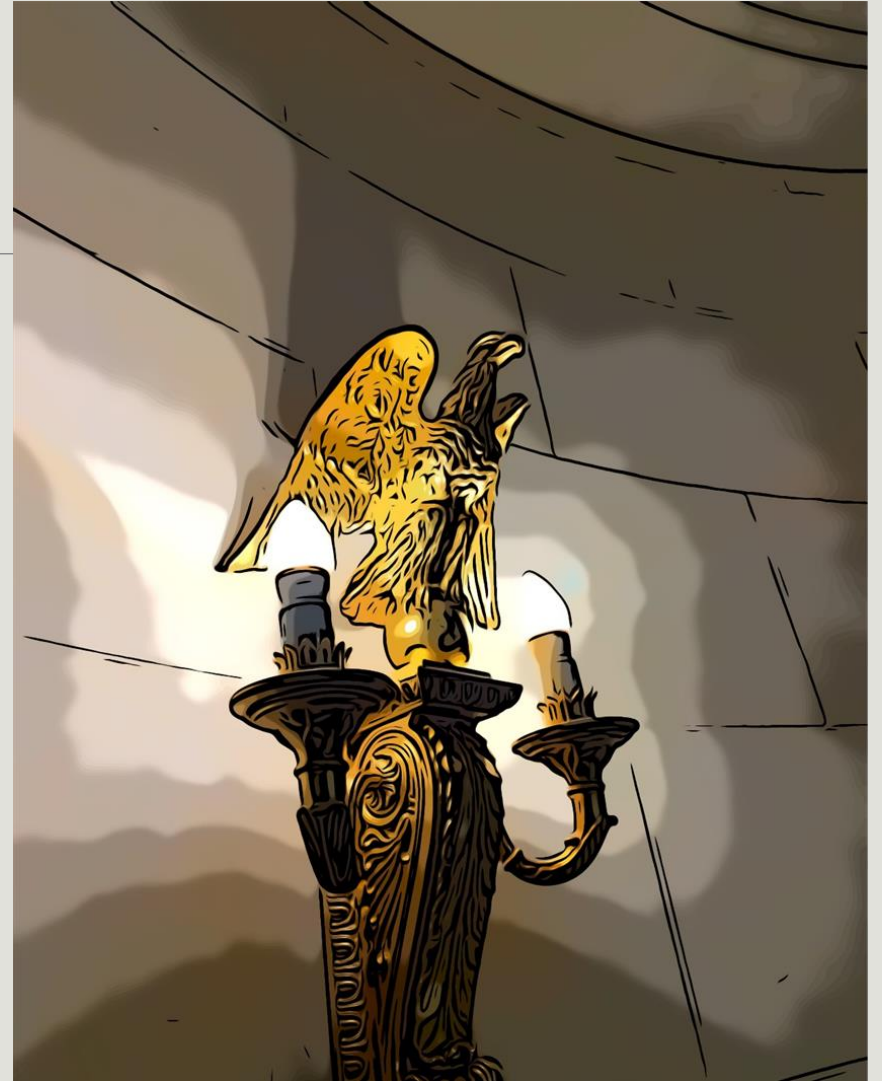
Agenda

1. Introduction
2. MCN overview
3. Advocacy
4. How to advocate
 - Lobbying
 - Relationships with elected officials
5. Trivia
6. Debrief / Q & A



Introductions

- Name
- Pronouns
- Organization
- 1 word you think of when you think of advocacy



Learning Objectives

- Know the various ways to advocate for your nonprofit
- Promote civic engagement among constituents
- Understand what lobbying is and isn't
- Increase comfort in building relationships with elected officials

MCN and Public Policy

We believe that advocacy is a powerful catalyst for change.

MCN supports nonprofits and Minnesota's nonprofit sector to be their own voice in the public policy process.

- We provide training to help nonprofits grow their advocacy muscle.
- Serve as a resource to policymakers on the nonprofit sector.
- Advocate on issues that impact all nonprofits.



Advocacy:
A broad range of strategies to advance a cause.

Differences

501(C)(3)

- Tax-exempt
- Charitable contributions are deductible
- Lobbying work is limited
- No political campaign activity



501(C)(4)

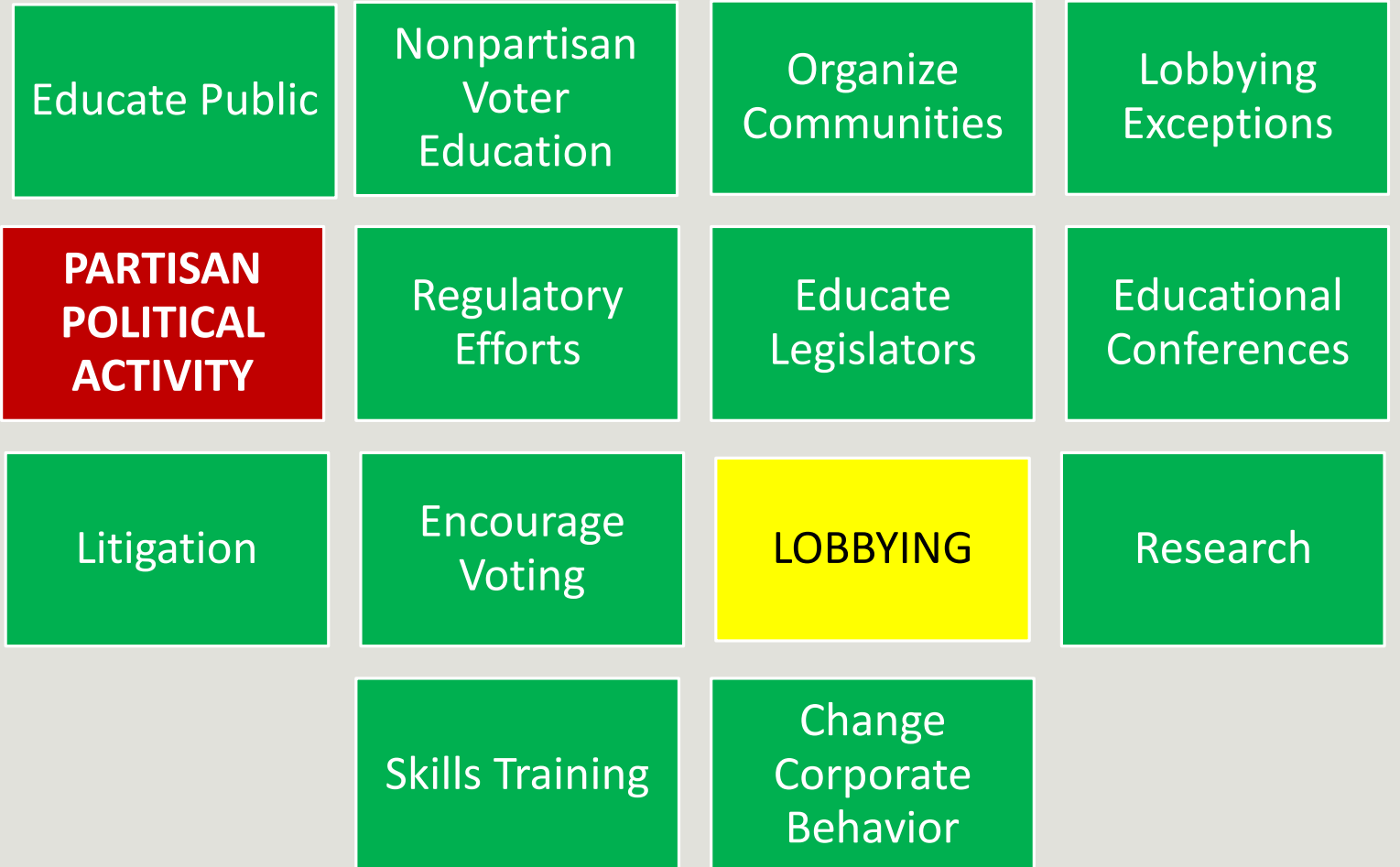
- Not tax-exempt
- Charitable contributions are not deductible
- Unlimited lobbying work
- Political campaign activity is allowed, as long as it is not the organization's primary activity



Why advocate?

- Elected officials need our expertise
- Pass important legislation that impacts nonprofits and their constituents
- Build power and liberation
- Heart of our democracy

How do I advocate in my nonprofit?



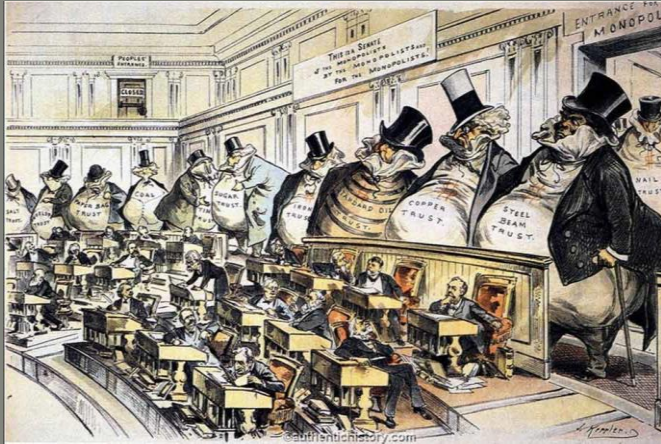
Approaches to Advocacy

Core Questions

- 1) What is the problem or opportunity?
- 2) What do you want to have happen?
- 3) Who decides?
- 4) How do you influence them?



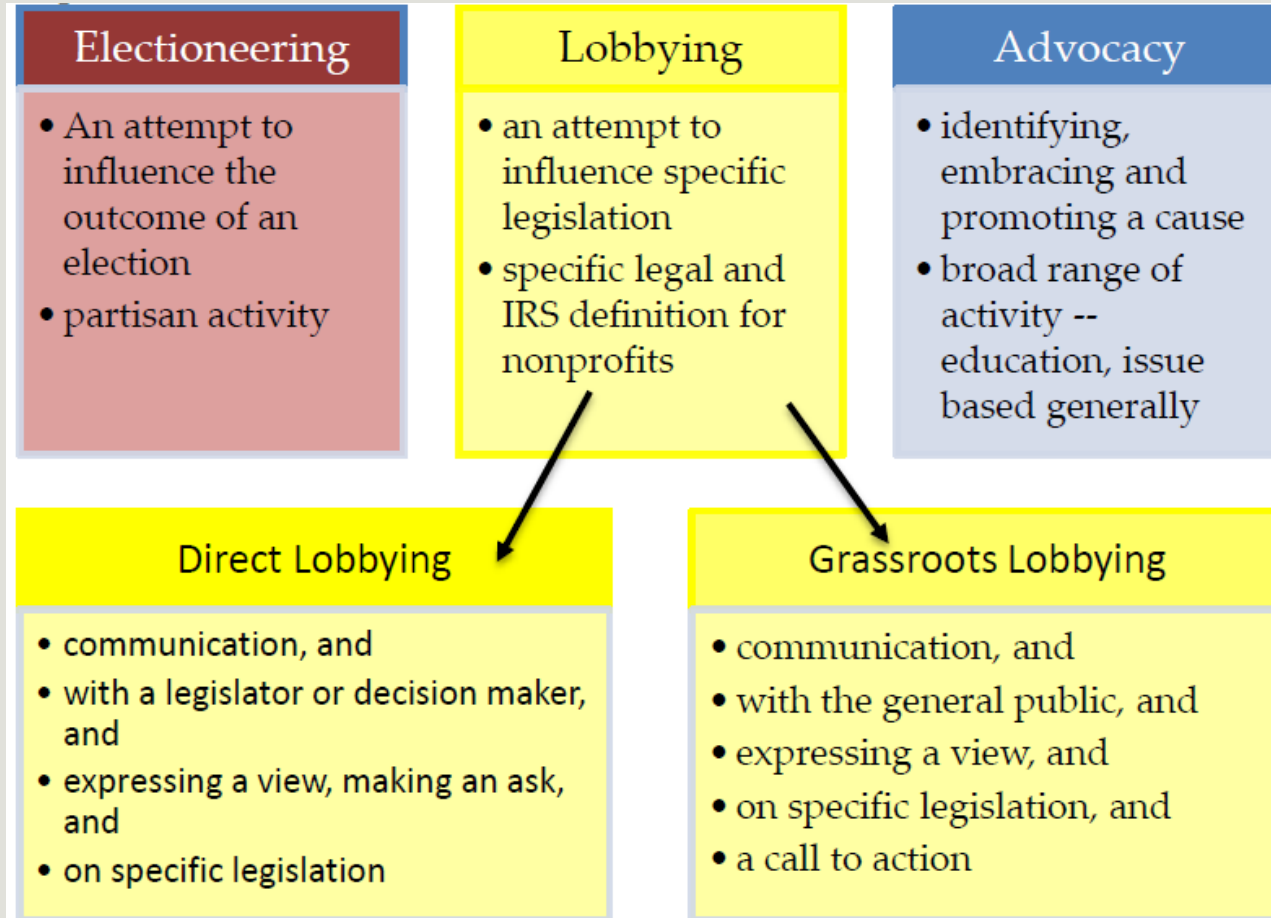
Why do nonprofits avoid lobbying?



- Concern that it is not legal or appropriate
- Misunderstanding of the law and what lobbying is
- Lack of process to develop positions on issues



What is lobbying?



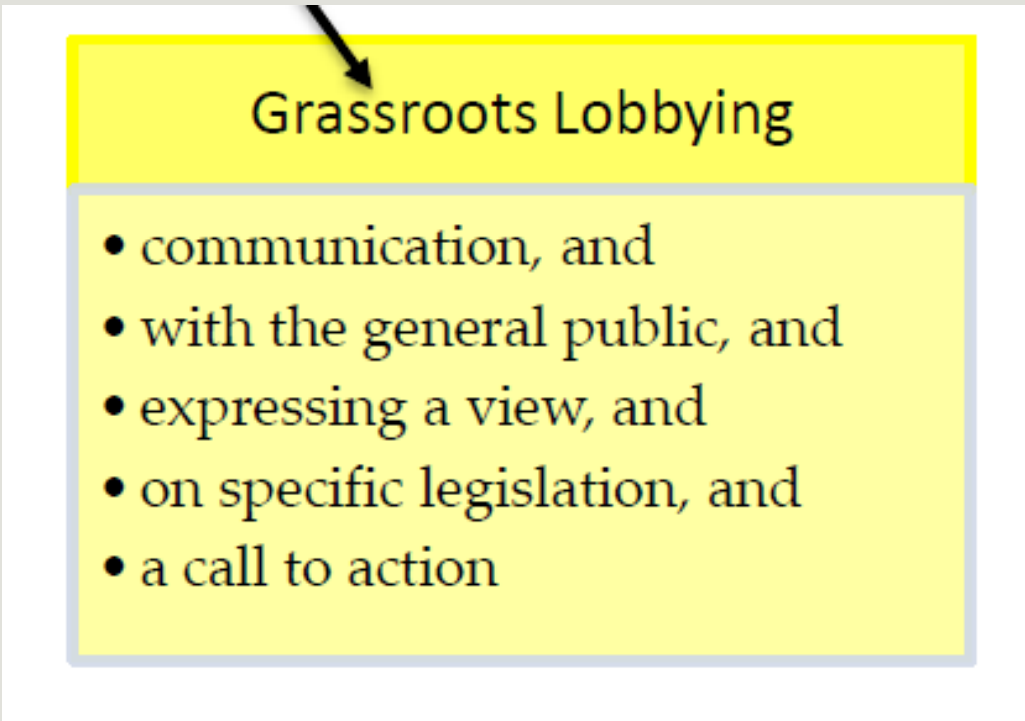
Direct Lobbying

Direct Lobbying



- communication, and
- with a legislator or decision maker, and
- expressing a view, making an ask, and
- on specific legislation

Grassroots Lobbying



Grassroots Lobbying

- communication, and
- with the general public, and
- expressing a view, and
- on specific legislation, and
- a call to action

Building Relationships with Elected Officials

Why?

- You are the expert!
- You can tell the story of your organization and the concerns of your constituency!
- Bring attention to issues in your community
- Bills, bills, bills

Legislature Timeline

- Session goes from January/February to late May. Odd years are budget, even years focus on bonding.
- Session starts on February 11, 2020.
- Bills are introduced and committees hold hearings.
- Small bills are rolled into large omnibus bills, then conference committees hash out differences.
- Best times to build relationships with legislators: the beginning of session and anytime outside of session! (Right now!)

Senator Carla J. Nelson (26, R)



★ Capitol Office

95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg, Room 3235
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4848
E-mail: [Use Mail Form](#)

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Legislative Assistant: Jillian Reynolds 651-296-5956

Visit [Senator Nelson](#) legislative history

[District Map](#)

[District 26 Demographic Details](#)



Committee Assignments:

Chair [E-12 Finance and Policy](#)

[Capital Investment](#)

[Finance](#)

[Health and Human Services Finance and Policy](#)

Bills Authored:

Chief Author Bills

[2019-2020 Biennium Regular Session Status Report](#) (With Details)

[2019-2020 Biennium Regular Session Status List](#)

[2019 one Special Session Status Report](#) (With Details)

[2019 one Special Session Status List](#)

Chief and Co-Author Bills

[2019-2020 Biennium Regular Session Status Report](#) (With Details)

[2019-2020 Biennium Regular Session Status List](#)

[2019 one Special Session Status Report](#) (With Details)

[2019 one Special Session Status List](#)

Legislative Service:

Elected: to the House 2002

Elected: to the Senate 2010, re-elected 2012, 2016

Term: 3rd

Biographical Details:

Home: Rochester
931 SW 22nd Avenue 55902
(507) 288-2159

Business: Rochester
Olmsted Financial Group
3428 Lakeridge Place NW 55901

Family: Married, Spouse Terry, 3 children.

Occupation: Business owner - insurance, financial services

Education: ME, University of Minnesota
BE, Drake University

Special Legislative Concerns :

Education, jobs, economic growth, health care

★ Prefers interim mail at this address.

Compiled by the Legislative Reference Library.

Who represents me?

Roleplay with an Elected Official

- Get into pairs
- 1 person will be the elected official, 1 person will be the nonprofit leader (you will switch!)
- Task:
 - Nonprofit leader: introduce yourself to the elected official, tell them your story, what would you like them to know? What is your nonprofits mission? What is the main service you provide?
 - Elected official: introduce yourself, listen to the nonprofit leader, are you able to provide support in anyway?

#mnleg

Mary Lahammer  @mlahammer

BREAKING: You saw it here first ;) [@mnlegturkey](#) with House Speaker on [#tptAlmanac](#) [@tpt](#)



Tweet your reply



 **Tweet**

 **Matt Little**  @LittleSenator

Whether you're a Minnesotan has nothing to do with race, religion, or birthplace. It's about whether you love your neighbor, obsess about the weather, and hold the door open for the next person even if they are an uncomfortable distance away.

9:03 PM · 8/1/19 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

56 Retweets 592 Likes

 **Mike Freiberg**  @RepFreiberg

Representative Lucero's jackets as My Little Pony: a thread [#mnleg](#)

1:41 PM · 4/26/19 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

70 Retweets 343 Likes

1 2 34

 **Mike Freiberg**  @RepFrei... · 4/26/19

1 2 31

 **Mike Freiberg**  @RepFrei... · 4/26/19

Civic Engagement and Nonprofits



Elections

501c3 nonprofit organizations **must remain nonpartisan.**

501c3 nonprofit organizations **can do...**

- Voter registration
- Voter education
- Get out the vote activities
- Support or oppose ballot measure questions

501c3 nonprofit organizations **cannot...**

- Support or oppose specific candidates for office
- Support or oppose political parties

Civic Engagement and Nonprofits



Census 2020

- Constitutional mandate to count U.S. population every 10 years
- Nonpartisan
- Promotes civic engagement and participation in democracy
- MCN supporting nonprofits through grants, resources, and marketing any nonprofit census events.

Grant Types

\$700- to support the cost on a one-time community census event

\$2000- to support the cost of ongoing “get out the count” efforts

\$5000- same as above, for culturally specific organizations

Tactics (check all that apply):

- Community Census event – Put together a fun and engaging event to inform community members about the census.
- Get Out the Count Tabling – Table at a community event or organization-sponsored event to provide access to information on the census.
- Doorknocking – Gather volunteers and door knock to promote and provide resources on the census.
- Pledge Campaign – Gather volunteers and door knock or table to pledge individuals to fill out the census.
- Info session at an organizational event – Speaker or panel discussion.
- Other:

About your Organization

In 2-3 paragraphs, provide a summary of your organization’s mission, history, programs, and activities. In your summary please address: who do you serve? Who are your volunteers? Who hears your messages? How many members or contacts are in your database?

In 2-3 paragraphs, describe your target audience for the 2020 census? In your description also address: Who do you intend to mobilize or educate? What methods will you use to reach your base about the census?

Are you planning to collaborate with another organization in 2019-2020 to do census outreach and activities? Yes, or no? If yes, please provide a brief description of who, and how your organization wants to collaborate.

3

Census 2020 Grants!!

MCN will be offering grants (up to \$5,000) to Minnesota nonprofits to promote participation in the 2020 Census!

Q. 

A. 

Trivia time!!

Upcoming Public Policy Events

Coffee with Commissioners Series

MDHR Commissioner Rebecca Lucero

Thursday, Nov 7th, 2019

8:30am-10am

Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Cowles Auditorium

DEED Commissioner Steve Grove

Wednesday, December 4th, 2019

8:30am-10am

Wilder Foundation, Auditorium B

Save the Date

Session Lineup

Friday, February 14th, 2020

Location & Time TBD



Questions?



Contact us!

Michelle Chang, policy and equity coordinator

Marie Ellis, public policy director

Ileana Mejia, public policy advocate

Sign up for the Nonprofit Advocate!