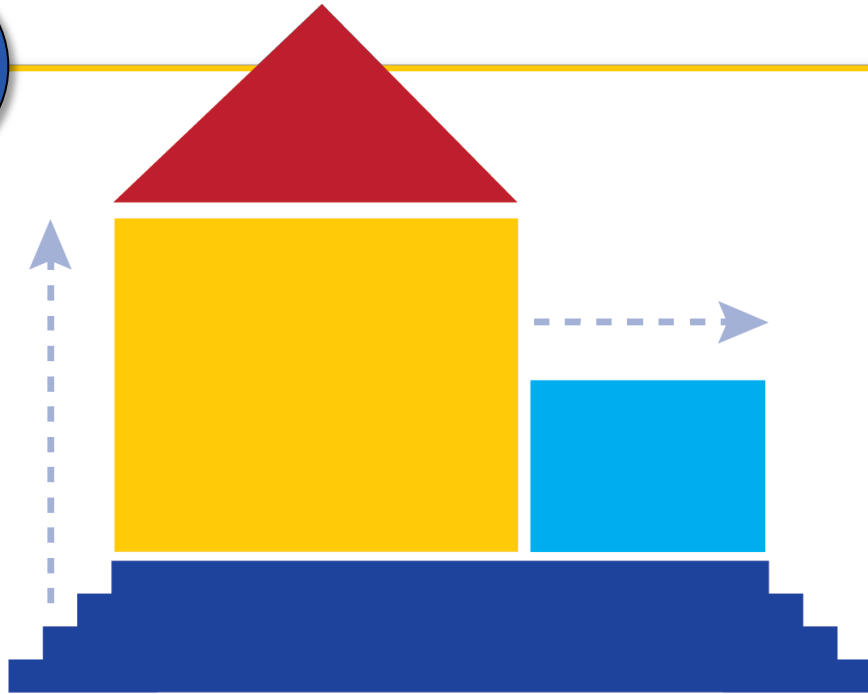


1



BUILD A  
***MOVEMENT!***

USING PUBLIC POLICY TO ACHIEVE YOUR MISSION

## 1. Introduction & Groundwork



WASHINGTON NONPROFITS

[washingtonnonprofits.org](http://washingtonnonprofits.org) | (855) 299-2922 | [info@washingtonnonprofits.org](mailto:info@washingtonnonprofits.org)

Part 1 of a series. Download the rest from the Washington Nonprofit Institute:

**[wanonprofitinstitute.org/advocacy](http://wanonprofitinstitute.org/advocacy)**

### IMPORTANT NOTE

This information is provided for educational purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice. If you are unsure about anything covered in this toolkit, we suggest that you contact the appropriate agency or an attorney. In Washington State, Wayfind is a great place to start: [wayfindlegal.org](http://wayfindlegal.org).

### Thank you!

The following individuals have served as advisors and shared tools to develop this toolkit.

Gabriela Quintana	Amber Johnson, Spokane Neighborhood
Jon Gould, Children's Alliance, Seattle	Action Partners, Spokane
Christina Wong, Northwest Harvest, Seattle	Sarah Brooks, Methow Conservancy, Winthrop
Rene Murry, Youth Development Executives	Nancy Bacon,
of King County, Seattle	David Streeter & Laura Pierce, Washington
Hikma Sherka, Youth Development Executives	Nonprofits
of King County, Seattle	David Lawson, Elaine Rose, & Jodi Nishioka,
	Wayfind

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Seattle Foundation	Youth Development Executives of King County
Campion Foundation	Raikes Foundation

### MORE FINE PRINT

*Build a Movement!* was written for 501(c)(3) nonprofits in Washington State. Much of the information here is also useful for other types of nonprofits, who can also participate in advocacy but may have differing rules or limits. If you are using this resource outside of Washington, make sure you consult the laws that govern advocacy and lobbying where you are. You might start with your state's nonprofit association and the state agency that oversees nonprofit organizations in your state, often the offices of the Attorney General or Secretary of State.

Local jurisdictions have their own rules. In the City of Seattle, for example, you need to register as a lobbyist to try and influence legislation by the City Council. Check with your city or county to make sure you comply with relevant rules. The best ways to check are searching Google with the county or municipality name and the words "lobbying disclosure" (ex. Pierce County lobbying disclosure) or call the local council and ask if they have a lobbying disclosure requirement.

#### Washington State Public Disclosure Commission

711 Capitol Way South #206  
PO Box 40908  
Olympia, WA 98504-0908  
(877) 601-2828  
(360) 753-1111

Email: [pdcc@pdc.wa.gov](mailto:pdcc@pdc.wa.gov)

Website: <https://www.pdc.wa.gov>

#### Internal Revenue Service

(800) 829-4933

<https://www.irs.gov/help/contact-my-local-office-in-washington>



## Table of Contents

Let's raise this roof together! .....	1
<i>Build A Movement!</i> : Three Public Policy Pathways .....	2
What do you want to do? .....	3
The <i>Build A Movement!</i> Framework .....	5
How to use <i>Build a Movement!</i> .....	6
Next Steps .....	6
Groundwork: What is policy advocacy? .....	7
A. What is advocacy? .....	7
B. Why bother? .....	8
C. How are policies decided?.....	10
Who decides? .....	11
Staff working on policy .....	11
Who influences? .....	12
When & how laws are passed .....	12
Legislative process.....	12
Advocacy cycle.....	14
Election cycle.....	14
Groundwork Summary.....	16
Next Steps .....	16
Tools .....	16
Resources.....	16



## Let's raise this roof together!

Your nonprofit is building something important. You and your colleagues on the board and staff are creating a structure that allows you to fully achieve your mission and make your community more vibrant and strong. Your organization's "house" should include a structure for public policy advocacy. You are ready to speak out because you know your community, know your issue, and know the difference you are making every day.

You are ready for this construction project because you have a lot of tools in your toolbox: community-building, fundraising, good board practice and more. One more tool will round out the rest: public policy. **Public policy is a system of actions, regulations, laws, and funding priorities taken by a government.** Policy supports public purposes, which are often aligned with nonprofit causes. By understanding how to use public policy, you can leverage a whole new set of opportunities to better achieve your mission.

You are the right person to step into a policy role and advocate within the halls of government and your community. You and your colleagues are the heroes of the journey! You know the stories, have the passion and connections, and you bring information and credibility that policymakers can trust. They can't possibly make good decisions without your lived experience and examples of impact.

But first, how do you feel about influencing policy? You might feel *insecure* about how exactly to do this. No worries. This toolkit is designed to give you action steps with clear "blueprints" so that you stay where you feel most comfortable. You might feel *distrustful*. Perhaps it was government's inaction that led to the creation of your organization in the first place. These feelings are understandable. This toolkit is designed to give you ideas on how to influence government decisions for the future. You have the power to change the system that causes you to work so hard. You might feel *ready* to start but just need to know what to do. Fantastic! What are we waiting for...

*Build A Movement!* invites you and your colleagues to take action on policy issues that matter to your mission. In its purest form, government is intended to represent the will of the people. This toolkit will support you as you build a movement of people and policy that propels your work to the destination you envision for your organization. "Raising the roof" refers to the tradition of barn-raising—working together to achieve things we can't do alone.

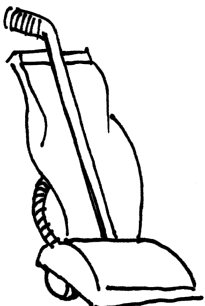


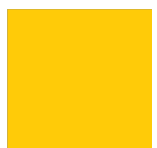

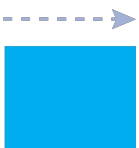
Let's go! Let's build a movement!





## Build A Movement!: Three Public Policy Pathways

You have a choice in how you use policy to achieve your mission. Think of it in terms of living in a house. How you manage the house is up to you.

MANAGE A HOUSE		
<p>You can do <b>basic upkeep</b> to keep the house safe and sound.</p> 	<p>You can respond <b>hurriedly</b> when the roof starts to leak or when your neighbor is moving and offers you their new refrigerator.</p> 	<p>You can be <b>pro-active</b> in upgrading the house—maybe add an addition—which requires special permitting.</p> 
USE POLICY TO ACHIEVE YOUR MISSION		
<p>When it comes to public policy, there are three main pathways to understand and explore. Choose the one that feels comfortable and appropriate to your organization.</p>		
<p><b>Be a credible voice</b></p>  <p><b>EVERYDAY ADVOCACY</b></p>	<p><b>Play defense</b></p>  <p><b>URGENT ADVOCACY</b></p>	<p><b>Go upstream</b></p>  <p><b>STEP-IT-UP ADVOCACY</b></p>
<p>Basic good practice and upkeep of your organization so you are nimble, resilient, and ready to serve. Because you aren't taking the extra step of lobbying, no special registration is needed. Everyday "upkeep" advocacy activities include things like keeping abreast of your field, speaking out on issues that affect your mission, networking and being visible in your community.</p>	<p>Advocacy that happens in response to something unplanned, like the city council is about to cut your funding or there's a proposal in the state legislature for a new policy that would benefit or hurt you.</p>	<p>Everyday advocacy <i>plus</i> you take advantage of the benefits that <u>lobbying</u> provides nonprofit organizations. You make policy more central to your strategy because your mission is significantly impacted by the decisions of policymakers.</p>

## What do you want to do?

Ultimately you want to be able to *do something* related to policy and advocacy. *Build a Movement!* is designed around you being able to take action. Here is a list of possible actions you might take. Complete directions and supporting resources are provided in the **Activities Guide**.

### GROUNDWORK



Build knowledge about your sector, work, or organization



Build knowledge and skill related to policy and advocacy

### EVERYDAY ADVOCACY



Map your purpose



Stay informed on policy issues



Join or build a coalition



Take a public stand



Create a policy plan



Tell a story



Mobilize people

### URGENT ADVOCACY



Letter sign on



Testify in Olympia



Send an action alert to your community



Write an Opinion piece for your local newspaper

### STEP-IT-UP ADVOCACY



Develop a power map



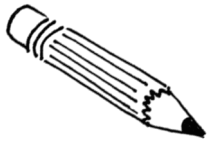
Meet with legislators in Olympia



Practice scenarios



Register as a lobbyist with the Washington Public Disclosure Commission



## REFLECTION

**What do you  
want to do?**

**What action do  
you want to  
take?**

**Why?**

# BUILD A *MOVEMENT!*

Tools to Use Public Policy  
to Achieve Your Nonprofit's Mission



WASHINGTON NONPROFITS

Download the materials at  
[wanonprofitinstitute.org](http://wanonprofitinstitute.org).

## EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES



Stay informed  
on policy  
issues



Take a  
public stand



Create a  
policy plan



Join or build  
a coalition



Purpose  
mapping

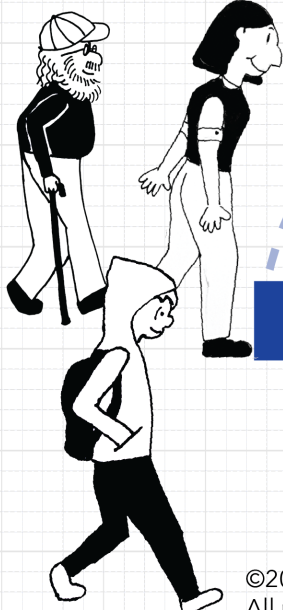


Mobilize  
people



Tell a story

What do  
you want  
to build?



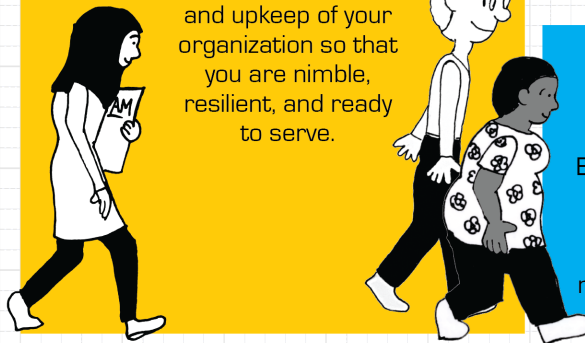
## URGENT ADVOCACY

Advocacy that addresses  
the need to respond when  
something unplanned happens.



## EVERYDAY ADVOCACY

Basic good practice  
and upkeep of your  
organization so that  
you are nimble,  
resilient, and ready to  
serve.



## STEP-IT-UP ADVOCACY

Everyday advocacy, plus  
you take advantage of  
the benefits that  
lobbying provides  
nonprofit organizations.

## GROUNDWORK FOR ADVOCACY



Understand your work

## ACTIVITIES TO GET READY



Understand advocacy

Prepare  
for  
cycles.

## ACTIVITIES TO STEP IT UP



Develop a  
power map



Practice  
scenarios



Meet with  
legislators



Register as  
a lobbyist in  
Olympia

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## How to use *Build a Movement!*

*Build a Movement!* has 8 parts:

	Name	What	Where
YOU ARE HERE	<b>Overview</b>	Information about <i>Build a Movement!</i>	Combined guide
	<b>Groundwork</b>	Common language and core principles of nonprofit advocacy	
	<b>Everyday Advocacy</b>	Basic good practices and upkeep	Guide
	<b>Urgent Advocacy</b>	Unexpected advocacy to respond to a challenge or opportunity	Online resource
	<b>Step-It-Up Advocacy</b>	Lobbying and more	Guide
	<b>Activities</b>	A guide on key advocacy activities	Guide
	<b>Tools</b>	Templates and samples ready to use	Online library
	<b>Resources</b>	Links to other organizations	Online list with links

Everything is available on the Washington Nonprofit Institute website:

**[wanonprofitinstitute.org/advocacy](http://wanonprofitinstitute.org/advocacy)**



### Next Steps

There is no one place to start. You can choose your own pathway forward. Here are some ideas:

1. Is there a specific **guide** that seems like a good place to start? Start there and see where it leads you.
2. Is there an advocacy-related **activity** that you want your organization to be able to do? Start there and work back into what information you might need.
3. Are you curious to learn more before deciding where to start? Read **Groundwork**.
4. Are you ready to dive into lobbying and need an organizer to figure out federal, state and local rules and reporting requirements? Read **Step-It-Up Advocacy**.



## Groundwork: What is policy advocacy?

Before you start building a movement, you need to build a foundation. To use policy to better achieve your mission, this means building a foundation of knowledge about what advocacy is and why it matters.

*The word advocate comes from the Latin *advocare*, meaning call (to one's aid). Advocacy invites others to join your cause.*

*Through advocacy, you build a movement.*

There are three areas to explore as we build a foundation for the rest of this toolkit:

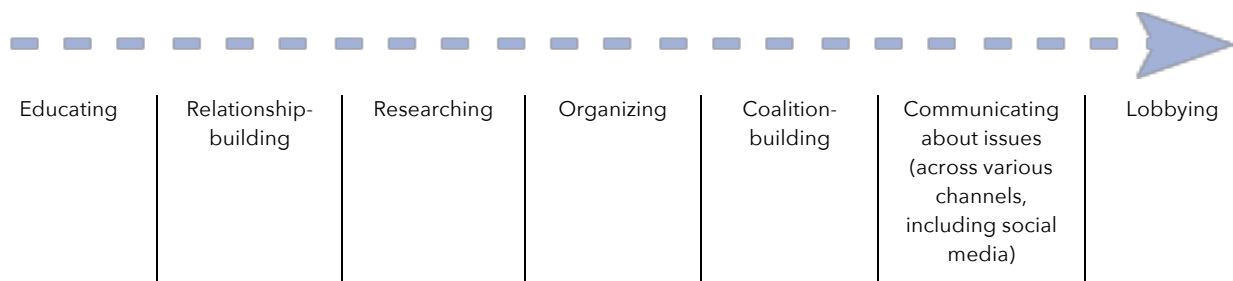
- A. What is advocacy?
- B. Why bother?
- C. How are policies decided?

### A. What is advocacy?

Using policy to better achieve your mission is often called “advocacy.” You advocate for your mission all of the time, so what do we mean by the word “advocacy” when it comes to public policy? What exactly are we talking about when we talk about using policy to achieve our mission?

**We are talking about a spectrum of activities that range from things every nonprofit should do to pro-active organizing that only a few nonprofits may choose to do.**

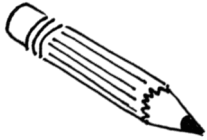
Advocacy activities include:



*You are probably great at many of these activities already. Effective fundraising—telling your story to persuade people to give to support your work—is a form of advocacy, so the skills you have there will translate well to public policy advocacy.*

503(c)(3) nonprofits are allowed to do all of these activities. *Only lobbying may require registering with the government and following rules about tracking and reporting activity.* **The Step-It-Up Guide** goes into lobbying rules, and **The Activities Guide** covers detail on specific activities related to each of these actions.

There is one type of political work that is off-limits for 501(c)(3) nonprofits—A nonprofit cannot support or endorse a candidate for elected office. There are other types of nonprofits that can get more involved in electoral politics, including 501(c)(4) nonprofits and Political Action Committees (PACs). You can learn more about these in our resources, but this toolkit does not cover the rules for these organizations.



## REFLECTION

**When you think about the words “advocacy,” what comes to mind?**

**How about “policy” and “lobbying”?**

**What emotions surface for you? Why?**

### B. Why bother?

Nonprofit people are busy. Why would you consider doing these activities? What goals might you have as you go about trying to influence a course of action being taken by a government official or agency?

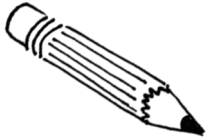
Nonprofits seek to influence policy because they want to change the system in which they work. They want to expand opportunities and reduce barriers to their success. They understand that communities thrive when the three spheres of problem-solving – private, public, and nonprofit sectors—work in partnership.

You might have three goals related to your organization: Money, policy, and implementation. The following chart gives an explanation and example of each one.



Money	Policy	Implementation
A budget process could influence funding for your nonprofit. Your organization or your cause might stand to gain funding or lose funding if you don't advocate for your organization.	A policy could influence your ability to achieve your mission. You might seek to change a policy, introduce a new policy, or keep an advantageous policy in place.	How a government agency is implementing a budgetary or policy decision may influence your ability to achieve your mission. You might seek to influence rule-making or enforcement of a policy.
Example: In 2005, a coalition of museums and heritage nonprofits successfully advocated for funds to be included in the Capital Budget designated for heritage projects.	Example: Many foster children became homeless after aging out of the system at age 18. The Mockingbird Society led a multi-year campaign for extended foster care through age 21.	Example: In 2008, legislation was passed to increase the gross income limit to apply for SNAP benefits (food stamps). But nothing would really change unless people who were newly eligible knew they could apply. Nonprofit advocates served on a work group with state agency staff to implement an outreach campaign to reach targeted groups likely to benefit.

There is a fourth goal to consider: **Sector Promotion**. You can advocate for things that impact ALL nonprofits, such as tax policies, transparency in spending, civil rights, nonprofit nonpartisanship, and much more. Joining as a member and participating in the advocacy work of Washington Nonprofits is a great, easy way to contribute to the health and vitality of nonprofits. Our voice is stronger if your voice is a part of it.



## REFLECTION

**Which of these 4 goals most relate to you or your nonprofit? Why?**

**1. Money**

**2. Policy**

**3. Implementation**

**4. Sector promotion**

### C. How are policies decided?

To influence policy requires understanding how government works. Here are some basics, and we have more information available in the BAM! toolbox.

There are three main questions to consider:

1. Who *decides* policies?
2. Who *influences* policies?
3. *When and how* are policies decided?

Let's explore these one-by-one.



## Who decides?

**Branches of government:** Policy change can happen through all three branches of government: **executive**, **legislative**, and **judicial**. It can also happen through **ballot measures**. Usually, nonprofits begin with legislative advocacy and work with relevant government agencies (executive branch).

**Levels of government:** There are three levels of government that could impact the issue you care about: federal, state or local. Sometimes it is very clear at which level of government a decision is made. At other times not. For example, public education is primarily a state issue with important policy-making also happening at the federal level. Medicaid rules are broadly decided by the U.S. Congress with many rules set by the state. Some taxes are federal, while others are state or local. If you are uncertain, contact your local elected officials first and ask them to help you identify who decides.

*Check out our "Who Decides? Guide" for additional detail.*

### Staff working on policy

There are different kinds of staff in the legislature/congress.

**Caucus Staff:** Caucus staff members work on issues on behalf of the entire party caucus. Their role is to ensure that the entire party caucus is together in their understanding of policy and their party's agenda.

**Committee Staff:** Committee staff are staff who coordinate committee hearings and background materials to inform the committee. They are nonpartisan staff, meaning they work with all of the committee members regardless of their party.

**Policy Staff:** Policy staff are specialists in particular policy issues. They can be both partisan and nonpartisan staff. They are the "wonks" -- the people with technical understanding of policy. Their role is to inform their legislators about policy options.

**Other staff:** Different offices have other staff members as well. Offices generally have session staff whose job is to coordinate the official's schedule, meet with constituents, and other tasks for the official. Some offices may even have communications staff, legislative correspondents (who do respond to constituent concerns), and other aides. Generally, an official's seniority and rank determines their staff size. Powerful, long-time lawmakers are likely to have large staffs; new lawmakers are likely to have smaller staffs.



## Who influences?

The three elements in the advocacy triangle reinforce each other. **Community**, the **media**, and **elected officials** are the three legs of the advocacy stool. They offer opportunities for you to influence decision-making and build a movement. They also influence each other. For example, community members can influence elected officials. If you use this strategy, it is called *grassroots advocacy*. The media can influence elected officials...or community members, who in turn influence elected officials.

You have the ability to leverage each of the corners of the advocacy triangle to build a movement around your mission.



**Community:** People make up a community. They have the power to build a movement around something they feel strongly about.

**Elected officials:** Elected officials make decisions about policies that shape the resources and environment in which nonprofits operate.

**Media:** The media has the power to influence both community members and elected officials.

## When & how laws are passed

There are two systems that influence how policy happens in the legislature, and a third system—your own advocacy cycle—that influences how you engage with policy. Let's look at these systems one by one.


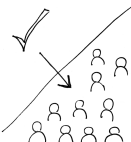
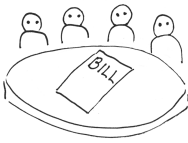
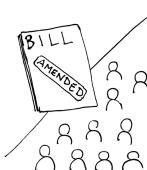
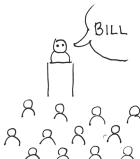

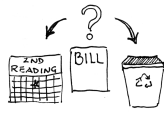


**a. Legislative process:** *Schoolhouse Rock* taught many of us the path of a bill to becoming a law. The story of "Bill" at the federal level is the same for a bill at the state level. Along the way, there are openings for nonprofits to influence the process. You'll find the entire process on the next page.

Congress is in session off and on all year. If you work on federal issues, pay attention to when our senators and representatives are in Washington, DC, and when they are back in our state and available to meet with you at the local office. You can also develop relationships with staff in both offices.

In Washington state, we have a part-time legislature that meets each winter in the state capitol in Olympia. In even years, the Washington State Legislature meets for 60 days beginning in mid-January. In odd years, the legislative session is 105 days long to allow extra time to develop the biennial (two-year) state budget.

# Legislative Process

At what level of government are you seeking a change? ☐ Federal ☐ State

How a bill becomes law	
How YOU can influence this...	
 <p><b>A bill may be introduced</b> in the Senate and/or House of Representatives by a member.</p>	 <p>After passing one house, <b>the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house.</b></p>
<p>Work with a legislator to draft a bill Identify sponsors and champions for a proposal you wish to introduce</p>	<p>Same steps as above</p>
 <p><b>It is referred to a committee for a hearing.</b> The committee studies the bill and may hold public hearings on it. It can then pass, reject, or take no action on the bill.</p>	 <p><b>If amendments are made</b> in the other house, the first house must approve the changes</p>
<p>Submit written comments Testify Meet with committee members or committee staff</p>	<p>Share your position on amendments with all members of the House or Senate, depending on where the bill is. If the bills go to a Conference Committee, share your position with the members of the Conference Committee</p>
 <p><b>The committee report on the passed bill is read in open session</b> of the House or Senate, and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee.</p>	 <p><b>When the bill is accepted</b> in both houses, it is signed by the respective leaders and sent to the governor (state) or president (federal).</p>
<p>Share your position with members of the House or Senate Identify key members who can urge their colleagues to support or oppose your legislation</p>	<p>Advocate to the governor/executive</p>
 <p><b>The Rules Committee</b> can either place the bill on the second reading calendar for debate before the entire body, or take no action.</p>	 <p><b>The governor or president signs the bill into law or may veto all or part of it.</b> If the executive fails to act on the bill, it may become law without a signature.</p>
<p>Share your position with members of the Rules Committee</p>	<p>Attend bill signing/celebrate passage of the law you supported.</p>
 <p><b>At the second reading,</b> the bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the third reading calendar for final passage</p>	
<p>Share your position with members of the House or Senate Identify key members who can urge their colleagues to support or oppose your legislation</p>	

Source of process steps:

<http://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Bill2Law.aspx>





At the local level, municipal and county council schedules vary. Be sure to check their websites for the latest information on meetings and hearings.

Rulemaking is done by government agencies, which publish a schedule laying out when advocates can submit comments or testify at hearings. To stay up-to-date about rulemaking, subscribe to the email lists for the relevant government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels.

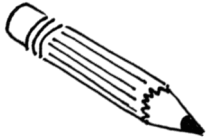


**b. Advocacy cycle:** Your process to set policy goals and advocate will follow a cycle, and you can time your cycle to sync up with the legislative calendar. For example, you will want to develop your positions in advance of the start of the legislative session. Below is a typical advocacy cycle. We provide specific activities related to each of these steps in the advocacy cycle.

**c. Election cycle:** The advocacy cycle is also influenced by the election cycle. Your organization may want to influence a ballot measure (initiative). In this case, you'll need to pay close attention to when elections are happening.

The election cycle is also relevant if your organization wishes to promote civic engagement. Nonprofits can encourage voting and voter registration as long as your efforts are non-partisan (you don't tell people how to vote or only seek to register voters aligned with one party). Nonprofits can also host candidate forums and educate officials and candidates about issues in a nonpartisan fashion. More resources for this work are available from Nonprofit Vote at [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org).

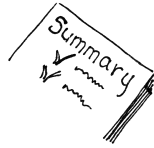
Information related to voting in Washington State is available through the Secretary of State's office at <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/>.



## REFLECTION

**What are some policies that affect your ability to achieve your mission?  
Do you know how those policies were created?  
Who has the power to change them?**

**Looking at the advocacy triangle, which arena do you feel  
your organization can be most influential in?  
Where would you like to build your influence?**



## Groundwork Summary

- You can better influence policy if you have grounding knowledge about how government works and where and when best to influence the process.
- “Advocacy” is an umbrella term for a lot of actions that nonprofits are allowed to take.
- A nonprofit can choose from three types of goals in its policy work: influence money, policy, or implementation of a decision. A fourth area—nonprofit policy—is important to consider because it influences the environment in which you are working.
- Understanding the legislative process will help you target your activities to have the most impact.

### Next Steps

- Map the landscape in which your nonprofit is operating.
- Invite your board and staff to take the Civics Quiz.
- Add key dates to your organizational calendar.
- Invest time with your board and staff to deeply understand your organization’s purpose. See Activity 3 to help you.

### Tools

- Civics quiz
- Calendar (that tracks legislative session, your activities related to advocacy, etc.)



### Resources

- Avner, Marcia, and Josh Wise. *The Lobbying and Advocacy Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations: Shaping Public Policy at the State and Local Level*. Fieldstone Alliance, 2013.
- Bolder Advocacy: <https://bolderadvocacy.org>
- Nonprofit Vote: [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)
- Office of the Secretary of State: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/>
- Schoolhouse Rock, I’m Just A Bill: <https://www.teachertube.com/video/im-just-a-bill-schoolhouse-rock-299951>

