

There are two parts to this assessment. Part A looks at the substance of your organization's public policy objectives. Part B looks at your organization's current capacity to do the work.

Use this assessment to create a public policy readiness profile. This profile will help you to see how prepared you are to do this work effectively and examine your capacity to do the work. Refer to it as you complete planning and assess your first months of policy work. Mark your progress along the way. Remember that your response marks a starting point. Consider this a tool to inspire a sense of direction.

Part A: Public Policy Objectives

1. What are your issues?

In the context of our mission, goals, and existing work, we have identified issues and objectives that can be furthered by engaging in debates about public policy and specific legislation.

YES

NO

IN PROGRESS

Our public policy issues are:

2. What are you already doing to address these issues?

We have organizational involvement and expertise in the public policy areas we most want to influence.

YES

NO

DEVELOPING

Expertise and experience are demonstrated in
Programs:

Services:

Research:

Education, awareness, community outreach:

Advocacy:

Lobbying:

3. Where are your issues decided and debated?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congress | <input type="checkbox"/> Court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Legislature | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Administrative Agency | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City or County Agency | |

Arenas for influence where we have an interest in shaping policy decisions are:

4. What policy changes do you want?

We know the actions or changes that are needed in legislation to address the problems and opportunities that we have identified in our priority issue areas.

YES NO SOME

Desired changes in laws, ordinances, or budget and tax policy are:

5. Will you be reactive or proactive?

We will be proposing policy changes and need to prepare a campaign to introduce and lobby for a new idea.

YES NO

We will be responding to an existing legislative proposal or another group's efforts by supporting it.

YES NO

We will be lobbying to stop a measure that we think will have negative impact on our community or the people we serve.

YES NO

6. Will you be lobbying onetime only, or are you in it for the long haul?

ONETIME ONLY ONGOING COMPONENT

Check the approaches compatible with your organization's strengths and objectives:

- Background research and information gathering to "make the case"
- Public education and awareness
- Responding to issue alerts by organizations taking the lead on issues
- Direct lobbying of elected officials
- Mobilizing grassroots support
- Working with other organizations in a coalition or an informal alliance
- Media advocacy
- Other: _____

Part B: Organizational Capacity for Public Policy Work

1. Who is the organizational champion of public policy work, and how deep is the organization's commitment?

The persons serving as key conveners of the discussions about policy work and the stewards of organizational readiness for policy work are

Name: _____ Title: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

We have begun the organizational discussion about why and how to do policy work.

YES NO IN THE SEEDING PHASE

The board of directors has made a commitment to policy work.

YES NO IN DISCUSSION

Our organization's staff share a commitment to policy work.

YES NO A FEW SKEPTICS

Members, clients, stakeholders, and other supporters are ready to go.

YES NO NEED TO TALK TO THEM

2. Do you have a public policy plan?

Our organization is engaging in a planning process to decide how to incorporate public policy work into our organizational strategy and work plan.

YES NO PLAN TO

3. Who's doing what and when?

We have designated a person to coordinate our policy planning and work.

YES NO RECRUITING

The role of the board is clear.

YES NO WORKING ON IT

Staff roles are clear.

YES NO WORKING ON IT

We have a "rapid response" team ready to make decisions and set the course for action when we are in the midst of fast-moving policy action.

YES NO WORKING ON IT

We have decided to form an ongoing public policy advisory committee and its role has been defined.

YES NO

4. Where is the voice of the community?

We have systems in place to educate, inform, and mobilize our members and our constituencies in support of our issues.

YES NO WORKING ON IT

Work Sheets Reprinted with Permission by: The
Lobbying and Advocacy Handbook for
Nonprofit Organisations, Second Edition:
Shaping Public Policy at the State and Local
Level by Marcia Avner and Jon Pratt (2013).