

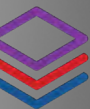
PLATFORM

Civic Strategies

Engaging Policymakers 101

Jessica Hembree

WHAT WILL IT TAKE?



IMPACTING PUBLIC POLICY

WHAT CAN NONPROFITS¹ DO?





PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS ⁵

Private Foundations CAN fund organizations and projects that include lobbying, provided they don't earmark funds specifically for lobbying.

Private Foundations cannot directly lobby except in very limited circumstances.



PUBLIC CHARITIES

Public charities can lobby as long as it's not a major part of the organization's activities.

The IRS provides two options for how public charities track and report their lobbying.



INSUBSTANTIAL PART ⁶

This is the default, but there are few instances when it is the preferred method of tracking lobbying. The law says that lobbying must be an "insubstantial" part of a nonprofit's activity, but does not define the term.



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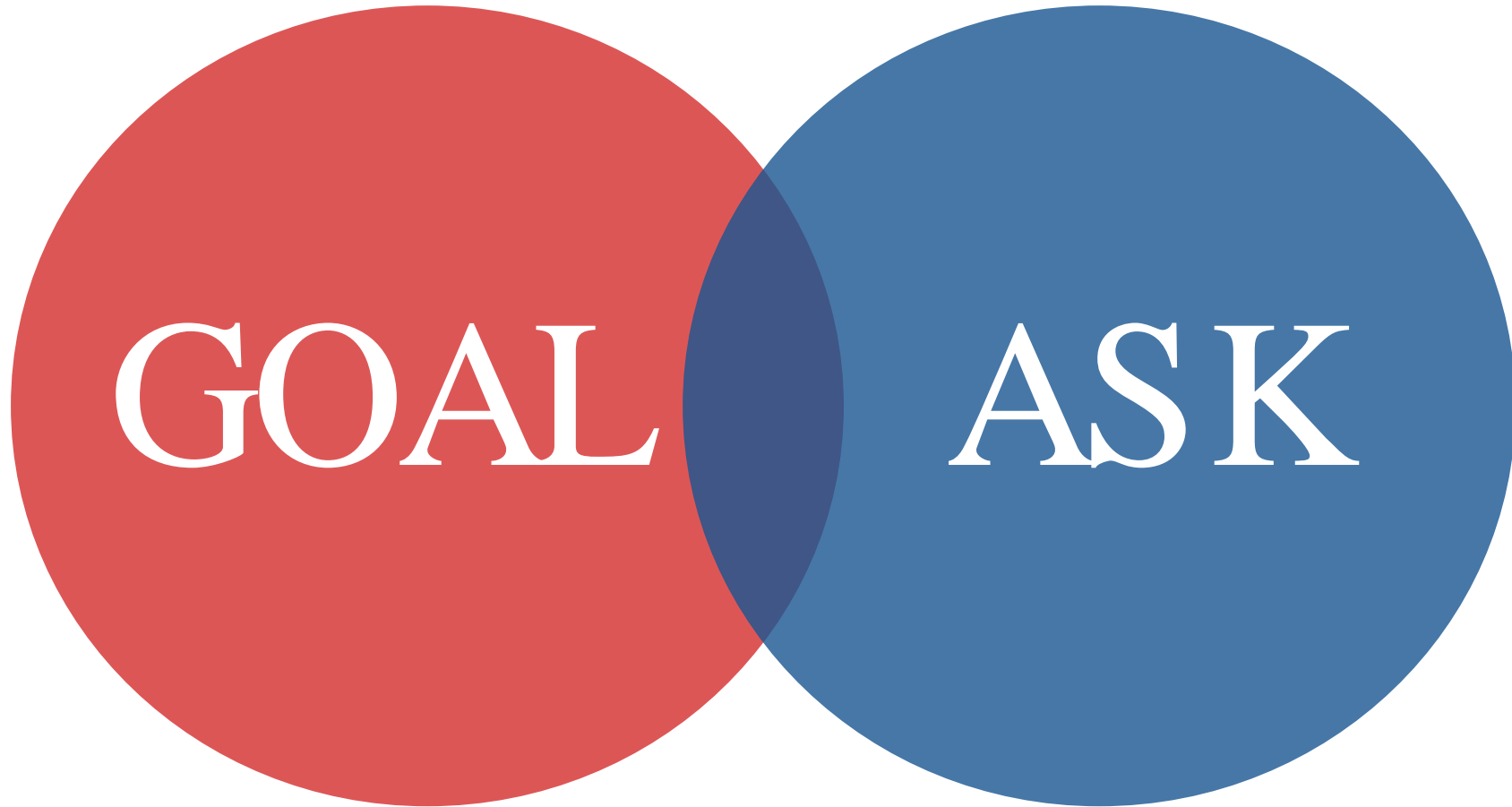
What do you want?

Why does it matter?

Tell me about it.



▶ What do you want?



What do you want?



MEH

We need more options for seniors to age in place.

BETTER

We want the City of Plainsville to adopt a Complete Streets policy.

BEST

We want the City of Plainsville to adopt a Complete Streets policy.
Will you please sponsor?



A photograph of two elderly women with glasses and backpacks, smiling and looking at a smartphone together in a wooded area. The image is overlaid with a purple tint.

▶ Why does it matter?

DATA + PEOPLE

Why does it matter?



MEH

Nearly 90% of people over age 65 want to stay in their home for as long as possible.

BETTER

Medical transport is the #1 request made to the Plainsville United Way referral line.

BEST

Medical transport is the #1 request made to the Plainsville United Way referral line. That's why 45 organizations in our community have joined together to...



▶ Tell me about it.

ONE PAGE

What do you want?

Goal

Ask

Why does it matter?

Data

People



Tell Me About It.

SAIGE-funded access to Research
Journal of Aging Research
Volume 2017, article ID 139881, 10 pages
doi:10.1080/2001139881

Review Article

Ensuring Mobility-Supporting Environments for an Aging Population: Critical Actors and Collaborations

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Successful aging takes on an array of attributes, including optimal health and community participation. Research indicates that (1) persons with disabilities, including age-related disabilities, report frequent barriers to community participation, including unsuitable building design (43%), transportation (32%), and sidewalks/curbs (31%), and (2) many seniors report an inability to cross roads safely near their homes. This paper attempts to define mobility-related elements that contribute to optimal health and quality of life, within the context of successful aging. It then examines the impacts of community design on individual mobility, delving into which traditional and nontraditional actors—including architects, urban planners, transportation engineers, occupational therapists, and housing authorities—play critical roles in ensuring that community environments serve as facilitators (rather than barriers) to mobility. As America ages, mobility challenges for seniors will only increase unless both traditional aging specialists and many nontraditional actors make a concerted effort to address the challenges.

1. Introduction

The elderly population in the United States has grown from 3 million in 1900 to 39 million in 2008, with a projected growth to almost 90 million by 2050 [1]. Older age has been associated with increased prevalence of chronic diseases [2] and sensory impairments [3]; changes in cognitive processing time [4]; alterations in balance and stamina [5]; increases in falls, fall-related injuries, and death [5, 6]. Mobility can mitigate some of the negative health consequences of aging and promote social interactions critical to aging successfully; therefore, it is essential to create environments that encourage safe mobility.

Unfortunately, current research indicates that many older Americans live in communities that hinder rather than facilitate safe mobility. Analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) 2002 National Health Interview Survey indicates that the largest proportion of persons with disabilities, including those with mobility impairments, live in communities that hinder rather than facilitate safe mobility. Their most frequent barriers to community participation included unsuitable building design (43%), transportation (32%), and sidewalks/curbs (31%) [7]. Similarly, a recent AARP study found that between 40% and 50% of seniors reported inadequate sidewalks in their neighborhoods and an inability to cross main roads safely near home [8].

Beginning in 2011, 10,000 people will turn 65 every day, and this rate of achieving senior status will continue for 20 years [9]. Moreover, physical activity rates and community engagement level off or decline with increasing age—potentially bringing on declines in health [1]. These patterns could have a significant impact on healthcare and long-term care in the future, since the use of formal and informal health-related services is strongly correlated to increasing age [10]. If we as a society are to respond successfully to these implications, as well as others, we must ensure that the aging population remains healthy, vital, and engaged in their communities as long as possible.

CDC's healthy aging research network (HAN) defines healthy aging as "the development and maintenance of optimal physical, mental, and social wellbeing and function in older adults. It is most likely to be achieved when physical, mental, and social environments are safe, and support

MEH



What is Complete Streets implementation?

Changing the way things have always been done. Specifically, departments of transportation must modify the way they operate, including changing their project development process, design guidelines, and performance measures

Many jurisdictions are seeking technical assistance that will expose them to increased funding opportunities for Complete Streets and Vision Zero projects.

- 1 Auto-oriented culture**
Overcoming misconceptions around Complete Streets and safety countermeasures through proper staff education and training
- 2 Limited staff time and resources**
Strategically prioritizing staff and financial resources for project management, data collection, and design
- 3 Integration of Complete Streets design elements**
Revising best practices and operating procedures to increase access, improve safety, and provide facilities for all people who use the road
- 4 Public engagement**
Working with the public to balance trade-offs between traffic safety needs, regional and local priorities, and preserving neighborhood character
- 5 Performance measures**
Measuring whether projects meet objectives through data collection and detailed, periodic evaluation
- 6 Resistance to traffic calming**
Communicating how bike lanes, road diets, and traffic calming measures can benefit all users of the road, including drivers

Smart Growth America
BETTER

National Complete Streets Coalition

June 3, 2022

Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council
200 E. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Councillors,

Along with the 40 undersigned partners, we are writing to urge your final adoption of Proposal Number 175, 2022, which was introduced before the Council on May 2, and approved unanimously with a do-pass recommendation through the Rules and Public Policy Committee on May 17. This proposal updates the City of Indianapolis' current Complete Streets ordinance (adopted in August 2012) and is intended to enhance **EQUITY, TRANSPARENCY, and ACCOUNTABILITY** in ensuring successful implementation of a safe, reliable, efficient, integrated and connected multimodal transportation system that prioritizes underserved neighborhoods.

The current Complete Streets ordinance commits transportation planners and engineers to plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain the entire roadway with all users in mind. Complete Streets allow motorists, bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities to move safely along and across the roadway.

We expect the updated Complete Streets ordinance language and subsequent implementation to ensure an equitable and inclusive community engagement process during planning and implementation of projects, publicly available design standards, and a strengthened commitment to performance measures that evaluate the policy's impact and reach.

There are many design elements that make up a Complete Street, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, safe crossing opportunities, median islands, and accessible pedestrian signals. Not every street needs every design element, and one Complete Street may look quite different than the next. Having an updated ordinance in place will ensure that roadway improvements in neighborhoods across Indianapolis balance safety and convenience for everyone, regardless of age, ability, income, or chosen mode of transportation.

Complete Streets improve the livability of a community and can positively impact public safety, public health, and the environment. Complete Streets can also bring new economic opportunities and improved property values to neighborhoods. With your support, Indianapolis' updated Complete Streets ordinance will ensure more transparent and equitable execution of Complete Streets throughout the city-county.

Please feel free to contact any of the undersigned organizations if you have questions or would like additional information. Thank you for your support of Proposal Number 175, 2022.

Sincerely,

Ambre Marr
State Legislative Director
AARP Indiana

Danielle L. Patterson
Region Team Lead Advocacy
American Public Health Association

Kim Irwin
Executive Director
BEST Design

BEST




WHAT WILL IT TAKE?




Resources

IMPACTING PUBLIC POLICY WHAT CAN NONPROFITS' DO?


Always Permissible	ADVOCACY² Not defined in law. In practice, efforts to create policy and systems change.	This is fertile territory for all nonprofit organizations. Think broadly about what's possible: organizing communities, educating legislators, nonpartisan voter education, research, litigation, regulatory efforts, training grantees to lobby.
Never Permissible	PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY³ Intervening in political campaigns on behalf of candidates or political parties.	Partisan political activity is illegal for nonprofits and could get your organization in big trouble. This is some pretty common sense stuff, i.e. don't contribute to a candidate's campaign with nonprofit dollars or pay for partisan voter registration efforts.
It Depends	LOBBYING⁴ Communicating a specific viewpoint about a legislative proposal to a lawmaker OR asking someone else to.	The degree to which you can lobby depends on your tax status.




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ADVANCING POLICY CHANGE: FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY

You know the saying that the longest journeys start with just one step? Well, changing policy is a long journey. Here are five easy first steps.

1. JOIN AN ALLIANCE OF ADVOCATES.

There is strength in numbers and a vibrant web of advocacy organizations already exists across the country. Rather than having to craft your strategies, materials and goals from scratch, plug into an existing alliance of advocates to help inform your work.

- [Partnership for America's Children](#): a national network of child advocacy organizations
- [State Voter Partnerships](#): an alliance of research and policy nonprofits in 40 states
- [Faith in Action](#): a faith-based community organizing network
- Give the Google a good workout and you will likely find a national or state network to plug into related to your topic of interest

2. SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH YOUR FEDERAL LAWMAKERS' DISTRICT STAFF.

Your [Senators and Representatives](#) have offices both in Washington D.C. and "in-district." You can visit your federal delegation's district-level staff without having to travel all the way to D.C. Oftentimes, these can be more meaningful interactions since the district staff aren't as swept up in the day-to-day proceedings in DC. You should go into these meetings with a basic understanding of the federal issues that matter for your nonprofit. Consider directly inviting the Member of Congress to come see your nonprofit's work "in action" the next time they are in town.

3. LEARN WHO REPRESENTS YOU IN STATE, COUNTY, AND CITY GOVERNMENT. INVITE THEM TO COME TOUR.

Federal policymakers get a lot of attention, but the policies being passed at your city, county, and state levels also have profound impacts on people's lives. In my experience, the lower the level of government, the less partisan and more accessible lawmakers are. It tends to be easier to make changes at the city, county and sometimes state level.

Open States has a handy [lookup tool](#) for you to find out who represents you in the state legislature. Google to find your county commission and city council. Most elected leaders at the city and county level represent certain geographies. Now that you have a list of four to six state and local lawmakers, email them an invitation to come tour your organization and see it in action. Don't make more out of this than it needs to be. It doesn't need to be a big "dog and pony" show, just an opportunity for them to come meet you and your staff, pose for a few photos, and see what you do. Expect a 30-minute visit at most.

4. UNDERSTAND THE POLICIES IMPACTING YOUR WORK.

You don't need to become a policy expert in order to advocate, but you should have a basic understanding of the policies impacting your organization's work.

- At the national level, the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), [Brookings Institute](#) and [Urban Institute](#) are great resources.
- For state level policies, I find the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) to be a great resource. When people are newly elected to government, NSCL provides them with initial training and tutorials to get up to speed on a broad array of issues.
- There are fewer resources at the local level, but one of my favorites is the [National League of Cities](#). For health issues, [Change Lab Solutions](#) is a treasure trove.

5. MAKE SURE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTS TO YOUR ELECTED LEADERS.

Our political lives are increasingly playing out over social media, especially Twitter. Use your organization's social media presence to connect with elected leaders. Twitter has already compiled a list of [handles for members of Congress](#). Invite them to follow your organization. As you see news stories or resources you want to share with lawmakers, you can use social media to @ them.

816.377.3330
WWW.PLATFORMCIVIC.COM

ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS 101

Organization Name:

Mission:

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Goal:

Ask:


WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Data:

People:

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

Use the back of this paper to sketch your one-pager. Does it answer what you want and why it matters?



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THANK YOU!

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