

Association of Fundraising Professionals

Chapter Advocacy/Lobbying

Why should our Chapter participate in Advocacy?

The charitable sector is under siege. Over the past six years, there have been calls for regulatory reforms with added bureaucracy for charities such as nonprofit compensation restrictions, third-party accreditation and mandatory IRS audits. More recently, the charitable deduction has been put at risk, which could result in the loss of billions of dollars of charitable contributions.

AFP provides in-house advocacy, which is important, but time and time again, the one proven way to best educate Congress and state legislatures is through grassroots activity—local members meeting with their local government officials on issues that impact their organizations and charities. Your local members are voting constituents—the loudest voice heard among any elected group. AFP chapters are best positioned to engage these AFP members.

Can our Chapter legally participate in Advocacy?

YES, chapters can legally lobby. AFP chapters are organized as 501(c)(3) entities under the Internal Revenue Code – as are most typical charities. The **rule** is that lobbying cannot be a substantial part of the chapter's mission and expenditures for lobbying must be limited (e.g., only 20% of the first \$500,000 of your annual expenditures can be spent on lobbying [\$100,000]).

How can our Chapter advocate?

Thank you for asking!

1. Ensure that you have a Chapter Government Relations Chair. Ideally, you will also have a Chapter Government Relations Committee of interested members.
2. Encourage the Chapter Government Relations Chair (and any interested members) to join the AFP U.S. Government Relations Committee, a body of volunteers that meets regularly by phone and twice annually in person to discuss federal, state and local public policy issues.
3. Keep an eye out for advocacy-related issues in *eWire*.
4. Sign up for AFP's *Public Policy Updates* found on the AFP website.
5. Set aside a few minutes to discuss advocacy-related issues during chapter meetings.
6. Include advocacy issues in your chapter newsletter.

What have other Chapters done to bolster their advocacy efforts?

Some chapters hold regular government relations calls and request AFP's General Counsel and in-house lobbyist, Jason Lee, to participate in the calls.

Other chapters have invited Mr. Lee to give presentations on advocacy issues during their monthly meetings.

Regional chapters have coordinated to provide advocacy training events.

Who can we go to for help and/or information?

Contact Jason Lee, AFP's General Counsel, regarding any questions related to advocacy/lobbying at jlee@afpnet.org or 703-519-8484. AFP can help your chapter form positions on public policy issues, and AFP can draft talking points and template letters for you.