

## Grassroots Legislative Advocacy

The Aspen Institute examined the factors that make non-profit organizations effective in national public policy debates. Their study asked policy makers and advocacy organizations to identify the most effective national advocacy organizations and to prioritize the strategies used by these organizations. The strategies listed below are what Aspen Institute's report found were the most effective tools in affecting public policy.

### Keys to effective Advocacy

- Invite lawmakers to meet and observe the people and places for whom you are advocating
- Enlist known community leaders to make contact with legislators
- Keep focused on objectives and do not get bogged down in side debates
- Maintain constant flow with other agencies to avoid missing crucial details or developments

### Opportunities for contact with policy makers

- In-person briefings
- Strategy discussions
- Briefing papers
- Testimony at hearings
- Opportunities for social contact such as receptions and award banquets

### Strategies in Message Development

- Eliminate inflammatory or empty rhetoric and loaded words
- Define the problem or situation in terms that make it manageable and real
- State facts and arguments in brief, bulleted points

### Communication Strategies

- Develop relationships with reporters: take advantage of hometown newspapers with human-interest stories
- Write op-eds and letters to the editors
- Fax news releases to specific reporters
- Make television and radio appearances
- Hold press conferences when newsworthy events occur

### Strategies to use with policy makers

- Serve as a source of credible analytic and timely information
- Deliberatively reach out to both Democrats and Republicans
- Maintain contact at the local level
- Train members on the legislative process
- Publicize the issue and demand candidates positions during election campaign