

# Lobbying 101: An Introduction

## Overview:

Often, individuals who are active in the community through service and activism come to care deeply about an issue and want to influence that issue through the political process. Some individuals' entry into civic engagement may even be wanting to influence policy makers and policies directly, sparked by a passion on an issue. Regardless of the path, it's helpful to know some approaches for lobbying, which this workshop introduces.

Complementary workshops to do and/or review for materials include *Advocacy 101* (which covers specific tips for letter writing, meetings, and phone campaigns), *Meeting with a Congressperson*, *Get Out the Vote*, and *Action Planning*

## Category:

political engagement; lobbying; advocacy; activism; strategic planning

## Level:

Introductory to intermediate levels

## Recommended

**Bonner Sequence:** This training is recommended for Bonner students in conjunction with education about strategies of civic engagement, including political engagement. It can be a support to those campuses that have adopted a goal of fostering student knowledge and participation in civic engagement, a baseline for some during junior year.

expectation	explore	experience	example	expertise

VALUES: ALL - civic engagement

## Type:

Structured activity suitable for workshop (e.g. retreat or training) including interactive activities

## Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- To explore the role of lobbying as part of a larger strategic campaign for influencing the political process
- To explore and understand some basic principles for effective lobbying

- To teach strategies for effective lobbying and provide a chance to apply and practice them in a simulated format

### **Materials:**

- Copies of attached handouts
- Markers and flip chart paper
- Newspaper clippings on current issues

### **How to Prepare:**

Review and become comfortable with all of the content and activities in the module. Prepare handouts and materials. In addition, select some newspaper clipping on current issues that may have a lobbying or political connection.

### **How to Do/Brief Outline:**

The 2 to 2.5 hour outline has the following parts:

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Picking a Specific Goal            | suggested time 10-15 minutes |
| 2) Power Mapping                      | suggested time 30-40 minutes |
| 3) Message Delivery/What's Persuasive | suggested time 15-20 minutes |
| 4) Principles of Effective Lobbying   | suggested time 20-25 minutes |
| 5) Small Group Work and Presentation  | suggested time 40-50 minutes |
| 6) Review and Closing                 | suggested time 5-10 minutes  |

### **Part 1) Picking a Specific Goal**

Suggested time: 10-15 minutes

In this warm-up activity, you want to get the group to identify one specific goal or issue for focus of the session. As you do so, explain that picking a specific goal is an important step in lobbying:

- 1) While the issues that people often want to influence are complex (e.g., education, poverty, etc.), in practice having a specific goal is an important part of the strategy.
- 2) Focus helps drive success.

You can generate that issue from the group, starting with a brainstorm of issues (on their campus, in their city, state, or country) or use newspaper clippings to spark the group's thinking.

To pick a specific goal, lead a "mental imagery" session in which participants hone in on one issue (from the brainstorm or clippings). Facilitating the group's thinking, work back-wards in order to identify one potential manageable strategy towards a solution. It's important to identify one issue to be used for the next activities in the workshop.

For example, if from the brainstorm or a clipping people identify “low high school graduation rates, especially for low income students” they might then identify potential influences of low graduation rates. Out of several, they may choose for focus on a specific like “poor teacher training and preparation” which could be addressed through policy and legislation.

## **Part 2) Power Mapping**

Suggested time: 30-40 minutes

A next crucial step in lobbying is identifying appropriate targets whom you will then lobby. Present the following point:

- The definition of lobby (as a verb) is: *to try to influence public officials for or against a specific cause. Lobbying is a form of public policy advocacy and educating government. It is communicating with legislators and the executive branch to encourage them to take action on specific legislation. Lobbying is a part of the democratic process.*
- Note that the definition identifies “public officials” not elected officials. Officials who work for the government through appointed or other means can also be important in your strategy (especially those that have the ears of elected officials). For example, people who work for the local neighborhood, city, state, and federal agencies and/or departments that affect particular policies may be effective in your strategy (especially as peers to the legislator to make the case).
- So, how do you identify key stakeholders to influence that will ultimately lead to policy or legislative change?
- Here, we will use a strategy called power mapping which is: *a conceptual strategy of determining whom you need to influence, exactly who can influence your target, and whom you can actually influence to start the dominoes in motion.*

In this part, you want to lead through a use of the technique power mapping (also see that full module), in order to identify crucial information for the lobbying effort. When doing so, either people in the group will need to know certain things, or you can frame this information as questions that should be answered when planning the lobbying strategy.

**NOTE: if possible, have a computer with an Internet connection available during the session for research.**

As a facilitator, lead the power mapping process and conclude with some answers to the following questions (which you should present, using the flip chart):

- 1) Who votes or influences this issue?
- 2) When do they vote?
- 3) What motivates these individuals or what influences their positions?
- 4) For policy makers, what is their voting history?
- 5) Who influences these policy makers or individuals in influential positions?

Use the steps for power mapping as below (and handout):

### **Step 1: Locate the issue in a context**

Here, use the issue that you identified in the last part. Map around this issue – putting it in the center.

E.g., here, you put the issue “poor teacher training and preparation” in the center.

### **Step 2: Map major institutions**

Identify key decision-making institutions or associations that are related to this issue. Write these names on the flip chart paper in a ring around the issue.

E.g., here, you might go through a process from local to county to state to national, identifying departments and individuals that set or influence policies and practices related to teacher training.

NOTE: HERE IS WHERE IT CAN BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO HAVE A COMPUTER WITH INTERNET ACCESS IN THE SESSION, IN CASE YOU NEED TO RESEARCH STRUCTURES AND PEOPLE IN THEM. OR YOU MAY NEED TO DO THIS IN PREPARATION.

Here are some general entities to consider (with some additions pertaining to education to talk through):

School level:	Principals
	School District Boards; Superintendents
	Key lobbies (often non-profit) such as teacher associations, professional associations,
	College and universities that train teachers
Local level:	City Councils (set property tax levels)
	Voters (through ballot initiatives)
	Mayor
County:	Board of Supervisors
State:	Teacher (or whatever) certification agencies
	Elected officials
	Governor
	Senators
	House Representatives
Federal:	Senators

House Representatives

Key national lobbies (active on Capitol Hill)

President

### **Step 3: Map individuals associated with the institutions**

Now comes the real homework. Put the names of 2-3 individuals who are associated with each of those institutions in the second ring (moving out concentrically) around the issue.

These can be people you (the group) know or don't know; again, you may need to identify as questions to research.

### **Step 4: Map all other associations with these individuals**

Think about people who are connected to these key individuals or who influence them. (For example, supervisors, constituency groups, spouses, non-profit or other organizations, companies, etc.) Essentially, you want to map how these key decision-makers are influenced and by whom. The purpose of this step is to help identify ways to access the individuals or institutions that could address the issue (in other words, the "dominoes").

At this step, also note any relationships that members in the group have with the people/entities listed and any information you have about them.

### **Step 5: Determine relational power lines**

The next step is to step back and conceptually review the networks that the group has mapped out. You can do this by drawing lines connecting people and institutions that have relations to each other. Some people will have many connections while others may not have any.

### **Step 6: Target priority relationships**

Then, analyze some of the relationships and connections and make some decisions about who are the best targets for the lobbying effort.

One way to do this is to circle the few people that have the most relational power lines drawn to them.

Another thing to consider may be a person or institution in the map that doesn't necessarily have many different relational lines running to him/her/it but nonetheless has a few critical ones and seems to hold a lot of influence.

Again, now that you have identified some targets address these questions:

- 1) Does this person vote or influence this issue? How?
- 2) When do they vote?
- 3) What motivates this individual or what influences their position?

- 4) What is this person's voting history?
- 5) Who influences this official/policy maker?

### **Step 7: Make a plan**

The next step is to create some action steps for what to do.

Here, we'll assume this step has already been decided to some extent – to plan specific lobbying strategies.

With lobbying, there are some common approaches (review and give handout):

- 1) Sending mass postcard, email, or letter. (Use full address and target the district where you live).
- 2) Hand-written or personalized letters.
- 3) Telephoning the office of the legislator.
- 4) Getting community and issue opinion leaders to telephone the office of the legislator.
- 5) Conversing over the telephone with a Congressional Aide or public official's key advisor.
- 6) Getting an article published in a state/district newspaper.
- 7) Meeting with a Congressional Aide or public official's key advisor or visiting the official's offices.
- 8) Meeting with the legislator (Congressional Representative at federal or state level) or official in his or her home district.
- 9) Meeting with the legislator (Congressional Representative at federal or state level) or official in the State Capitol or Washington DC.
- 10) Working with a lobby or coalition to apply a variety of approaches.

For the purposes of the workshop, let's pick 1-2 to explore in more depth.

### **Part 3) Discussing Principles of Message Delivery (What's Persuasive)**

Suggested time: 15-20 minutes

The purpose of this activity is to get people to think creatively and strategically about the nature of persuasion and influence.

To start, lead the group in a brainstorm of different factors that influence their own opinions (e.g., friends, family, media, religion, personal values, personal gain, etc.).

Then, present some information on persuasion to give context:

*It's helpful to introduce a bit of theory and research regarding persuasion. One source is the Harvard Business Review article, "Harnessing the Science of Persuasion," written by Robert Cialdini (October, 2001) or his best-selling book.*

- Over the past several decades, though, experimental psychologists have learned which methods reliably lead people to concede, comply, or change. Their research shows that persuasion is governed by several principles that can be taught and applied.
- The first principle is that people are more likely to follow someone who is similar to them than someone who is not. A good lobby strategy then, may be to enlist peers (e.g., colleagues of the legislator, those in his/her party, those with similar backgrounds/perspectives) to help make the case.
- Second, people are more willing to cooperate with those who are not only like them but who like them, as well. So it's worth the time to uncover real similarities and offer genuine praise.
- Third, experiments confirm the intuitive truth that people tend to treat you the way you treat them. It may be helpful for lobbyists to think about what help or support (e.g., information, data, votes, endorsements, volunteerism, etc.) they are prepared to offer.
- Fourth, individuals are more likely to keep promises they make voluntarily and explicitly. This one is a bit tricky with a legislator, but if you can get the promise documented in some way, it's helpful.
- Fifth, studies show that people really do defer to experts or expertise. Involving someone (or groups) that really know the issue well and can articulate supporting data may be helpful. Keep in mind that the "experts" may also be the people who know an issue from first-hand experience (not just research).
- Finally, people want more of a commodity when it's scarce; it follows, then, that exclusive information is more persuasive than widely available data. Do the extra homework.

Present and discuss these ideas (also in handout form) with participants.

Engage in a discussion of how to apply the information, choosing a few of the lobbying strategies. Your goal is to help participants apply the principles of message delivery to actual strategies (such as the mass email or letter).

## **Part 4) Discussion of Principles of Effective Lobbying**

Suggested time: 20-25 minutes

Overall principles:

- Be accurate (and don't lie). If you get a question you can't answer, say so.
- Be brief: For a written communication, try to keep it to a page or less (unless it's an expose or well-researched position paper).
- Be clear: Have a specific goal.
- Know your opposition. Know the main arguments for and against a position or a piece of legislation.

- Show them how they win: Appeal to enlightened self-interest, if you will. Again, this ties in with the persuasion principles of liking them and showing support.
- See it their way: Try to find a way to make your position and argument fit in with the person's own values, viewpoints, history on the issue, etc.
- Consider the messenger: This is backed up by the research suggesting that someone is more likely to listen to someone who is *like* them and who *likes* them. Keep in mind that this doesn't have to mean by physical characteristics only (which may defeat the value and importance of respect for diversity).
- Follow up. Send a thank you. Make a phone call. Recognize and appreciate any effort made.

## Part 5) Small Group Work and Presentation

Suggested time: 40-50 minutes

Ask people to work in small groups, using the issue identified at the beginning or another one. They need to:

- 1) Revisit and/or work through the Power Mapping steps. Identify a few targets.
- 2) Consider the Common Approaches to Lobbying (the ten reviewed). Identify 2-4 that they would like to use and explain specifically (who is the target, how will it work, what do they know/need to find out, and why this strategy).
- 3) For 1-2 of those strategies (depending on time), consider the Principles and actually prepare for the communication. This means prepare to act it out and/or write the communication/script.

Give the groups allotted time to work, circulating to check in.

**Note: If you want, you can also refer to the handouts and materials from Advocacy 101 or Meeting with a Congress Person as a guide.**

Then, perhaps using an external guest to represent a "target," give small groups/participants the opportunity to present their strategy (responses to all three points). Allow for the external guest, the facilitator, and other participants to offer feedback for each group's presentation.

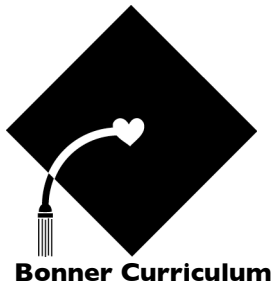
## Part 6) Review and Closing

Suggested time: 5-10 minutes

Briefly draw out lessons learned, teachable moments, and highlights.

End with a restatement of next steps (e.g., will the group meet again; will they have the chance to really carry out their strategy) and an evaluation.





# Power Mapping for the Purposes of Lobbying

## Step 1: Locate the issue in a context

Here, use the issue that you identified in the last part. Map around this issue – putting it in the center.

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## Step 2: Map major institutions

Identify key decision-making institutions or associations that are related to this issue. Write these names on the flip chart paper in a ring around the issue.

Here are some general entities to consider (with some additions pertaining to education):

Topic level (e.g., schools)

Key entities and lobbies (often non-profit).

[Ex: School level:

Principals  
School District Boards; Superintendents]

College and universities that train teachers

Local level:

City Councils  
Voters (through ballot initiatives)  
Mayor

County:

Board of Supervisors

State:

Governing agencies  
Elected officials in any position  
Governor

Senators  
House Representatives

Federal:

Senators  
House Representatives

Key national lobbies (active on Capitol Hill)

President

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### **Step 7: Make a plan**

The next step is to create some action steps for what to do.

## **Common Approaches to Lobbying**

- Sending mass postcard, email, or letter. (Use full address and target the district where you live).
- Hand-written or personalized letters.
- Telephoning the office of the legislator.
- Getting community and issue opinion leaders to telephone the office of the legislator.
- Conversing over the telephone with a Congressional Aide or public official's key advisor.
- Getting an article published in a state/district newspaper.
- Meeting with a Congressional Aide or public official's key advisor or visiting the official's offices.
- Meeting with the legislator (Congressional Representative at federal or state level) or official in his or her home district.
- Meeting with the legislator (Congressional Representative at federal or state level) or official in the State Capitol or Washington DC.
- Working with a lobby or coalition to apply a variety of approaches.

# Some Theory about Persuasion

Over the past several decades, though, experimental psychologists have learned which methods reliably lead people to concede, comply, or change. Their research shows that persuasion is governed by several principles that can be taught and applied.

- The first principle is that people are more likely to follow someone who is similar to them than someone who is not. A good lobby strategy then, may be to enlist peers (e.g., colleagues of the legislator, those in his/her party, those with similar backgrounds/perspectives) to help make the case. (Social proof)
- Second, people are more willing to cooperate with those who are not only like them but who like them, as well. So it's worth the time to uncover real similarities and offer genuine praise. (Liking)
- Third, experiments confirm the intuitive truth that people tend to treat you the way you treat them. It may be helpful for lobbyists to think about what help or support (e.g., information, data, votes, endorsements, volunteerism, etc.) they are prepared to offer. (Reciprocity)
- Fourth, individuals are more likely to keep promises they make voluntarily and explicitly. This one is a bit tricky with a legislator, but if you can get the promise documented in some way, it's helpful. (Consistency)
- Fifth, studies show that people really do defer to experts or expertise. Involving someone (or groups) that really know the issue well and can articulate supporting data may be helpful. Keep in mind that the "experts" may also be the people who know an issue from first-hand experience (not just research). (Authority)
- Finally, people want more of a commodity when it's scarce; it follows, then, that exclusive information is more persuasive than widely available data. Do the extra homework. (Scarcity)

Extrapolating principles and adapted from

Harvard Business Review article,

"Harnessing the Science of Persuasion,"

written by Robert Cialdini (October, 2001).

**Find the full article on persuasion on the web at:**

**[www.sosu.edu/faculty/cvonbergen/](http://www.sosu.edu/faculty/cvonbergen/HARNESSING%20THE%20SCIENCE%20OF%20PERSUASION.doc)**

**[HARNESSING%20THE%20SCIENCE%20OF%20PERSUASION.doc](http://www.sosu.edu/faculty/cvonbergen/HARNESSING%20THE%20SCIENCE%20OF%20PERSUASION.doc)**

# Principles of Effective Lobbying

- Be accurate (and don't lie). If you get a question you can't answer, say so.
- Be brief: For a written communication, try to keep it to a page or less (unless it's an expose or well-researched position paper).
- Be clear: Have a specific goal.
- Know your opposition. Know the main arguments for and against a position or a piece of legislation.
- Show them how they win: Appeal to enlightened self-interest, if you will. Again, this ties in with the persuasion principles of liking them and showing support.
- See it their way: Try to find a way to make your position and argument fit in with the person's own values, viewpoints, history on the issue, etc.
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