

Advocacy Rules for Non-Profit Organizations

What can you do to advocate?

- First talk about permissible activities regarding your institution's organizational structure and rules to ensure political advocacy is allowed.
- Cultivate relationships with local elected officials before asking for support! Provide them with valuable information regarding your museum and its relevance in a community and develop relationships with staffers and candidates.
- Educate local legislators, candidates, and political parties on issues and legislation
- Create a public policy agenda for your museum
- Send surveys, questionnaires to legislators, candidates
- Register voters, run get out the vote activities

What you can't do:

- Do not endorse or oppose candidates. You can serve as a resource for a legislator or collaborate with a legislator on a community event, but when that legislator is a candidate for office, you cannot as an organization support his candidacy, nor can you allow him as a candidate to support your organization
- Do not make a campaign contribution from your organization
- Do not work for election of a candidate in your official capacity or on your organization's time
- Do not coordinate activities with candidates
- Do not have candidates sponsor activities (however, they are allowed to rent your facility for a private event.) Waiving fees you typically charge or making exceptions to standard policy for a particular candidate is equivalent to endorsing and coordinating activities with a candidate. If you sell space or a mailing list, then it must be at fair market value and available for all candidates.