

Considerations for Action Coalition Lobbying

As Action Coalition leaders survey the policy landscape in their states, potential battles can appear daunting, and budgets never seem large enough. We want to help stretch your dollars to get the biggest bang from your non-lobbying bucks. This document provides five key points to consider on lobbying as you strategically plan your activities. Additionally, the Center to Champion Nursing in America's (CCNA) legal adviser is available to consult with Action Coalitions to provide suggestions about maximizing advocacy and to review plans to help use non-lobbying funds effectively.

1. Understand What Lobbying Is and What It Isn't

This seems so simple that it should be obvious. So why state it here? Because far too many nonprofit leaders think they know the line between education and lobbying, without understanding the nuances. This often causes leaders to stop well short of what's allowable with grant funds. By taking time to learn about the nuances, you can push your grant dollars as far as possible, saving scarce lobbying dollars for when they will pack the most powerful punch.

2. Think Strategically About Education

Educational activities can have long-term policy payoffs. Grant funds may be used to educate legislators about important nursing issues, as long as the communication does not reflect a view on specific legislation or on "specific legislative proposals." For example, an Action Coalition may host a breakfast for lawmakers to educate them on scope of practice issues, if the Action Coalition is careful in how it structures the conversation. An Action Coalition also might arrange for a lawmaker to shadow a nurse for a day when the legislature is out of session. By boosting lawmakers' understanding of our issues, we can lead them to become personally invested in improving care, and they will give nurses a more sympathetic ear in the future when we advocate for policy changes.

3. Seek Regulatory Victories

Regulatory efforts are not lobbying. The communications with decision-makers do not involve specific legislation, so they will not be classified as lobbying, even if you communicate with a legislator to ask him or her to weigh in on a regulatory decision. The Affordable Care Act expansion of Medicaid means the regulations regarding licensure, reimbursement rates and related issues will become increasingly important in the coming years. Action Coalitions have an opportunity to make an enormous impact by advocating to improve regulations, and every penny may be paid for using Robert Wood Johnson (RWJF) or CCNA grant funds.

4. Divide Tasks and Share the Burden

Have your Action Coalition's allies handle the legislative opportunities, while the Action Coalition tackles the regulatory challenges. The regulatory changes may be complementary to the legislative

opportunities, or they may be unrelated. As you strategize with your allies, recognize the assets each organization brings to the table. There are more than enough policy battles to go around.

5. Recognize When It's Time to Lobby

Action Coalitions may lobby, and there may be times when pending legislation makes it important for your Action Coalition to lobby. But you may not use RWJF or CCNA grant funds to pay for the lobbying. Keep in mind that certain restrictions are in place to protect RWJF, CCNA and the Action Coalition:

- Provide advance notice to your liaison at CCNA before your Action Coalition lobbies.
- Make sure all costs related to lobbying – including staff time for researching and writing materials, publishing materials and meeting with legislators – are paid for using funds from sources other than RWJF and CCNA.
- Include the following disclaimer on all materials:
“The _____ Action Coalition participates in the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*, which is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA). These materials, however, were produced independently of RWJF and CCNA and do not use their funds or other resources.”
- Do not use the RWJF or CCNA names, logos, funds or other resources in your lobbying activities. When necessary, the materials may use the above disclaimer to describe your Action Coalition as being part of the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*. However, the materials may not use the *Campaign for Action's* logo.

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