



**SEXUAL ASSAULT
ADVOCACY GUIDE**
First Edition

**An Advocate's Guide to
Sexual Assault Policy**

NAESV CONTACT INFORMATION



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AN INTRODUCTION TO NAESV

What is NAESV?

The purpose of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) is to work to end sexual violence and ensure services for victims. The NAESV Board of Directors consists of leaders of state sexual assault coalitions and national law, policy, and tribal experts who promote the organization's mission to advance and strengthen public policy on behalf of state coalitions, individuals, and other entities working to end sexual violence. Most importantly, the NAESV advocates on behalf of the victim/survivors—women, children and men—who have needlessly suffered the serious trauma of sexual violence and envisions a world free from sexual violence.

What does NAESV Do?

NAESV utilizes a comprehensive grassroots communication network to shape national policy related to sexual violence and victims' needs, ensure funding for rape crisis programs and sexual assault coalitions, and provide expertise to governments, businesses and non-profit organizations addressing sexual violence in all of its forms.

Who are NAESV's Allies?

The leadership of the NAESV maintains relationships with allied national level anti-violence organizations including the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Violence, Arte Sana, National Network to End Domestic Violence, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Center for Victims of Crime, Rape Abuse Incest National Network, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U. S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women.

What are NAESV's Policy Priorities?

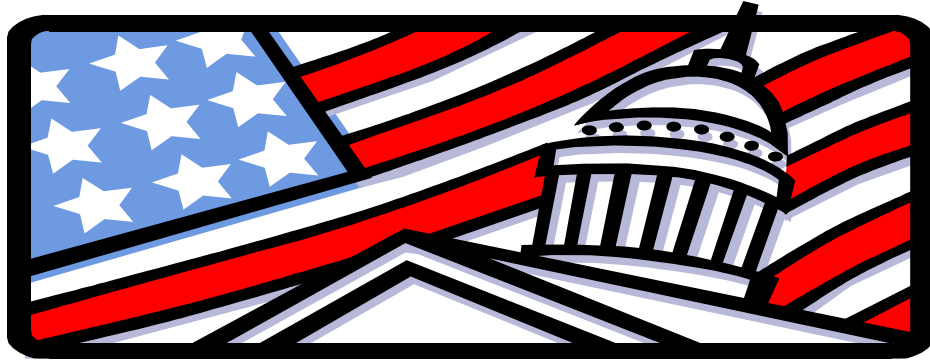
Priorities for Fiscal Year 2009 include full funding for the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, which includes funding (\$50M) for the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) and increased funding for the Rape Prevention and Education Program and Rural Services Program; preservation of the Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) fund; and the rape crisis set-aside and funding of the Preventive Health and Human Services Block Grant.



Federal Government Contact Information

Who is my Representative? Who are my Senators?

To learn who your Representative is, visit www.house.gov and type in your zip code. To learn who your Senators are, visit www.senate.gov and choose your state. If you do not have access to the internet, call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.



To contact your Senator, visit

www.senate.gov

or write

The Honorable (First Name_Last Name)

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510

or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard

(202) 224-3121

To contact your Representative, visit

www.house.gov

or write

The Honorable (First Name_Last Name)

United States House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard

(202) 224-3121

To contact the White House, visit

www.whitehouse.gov

or write to

President (First Name_Last Name)

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Washington, D.C. 20500

or call the White House Switchboard

(202) 456-1414

Understanding The Legislative Process

The Structure of Government

PART OF BEING AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ACTIVIST IS HAVING A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE GOVERNMENT IS SET UP AND HOW THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WORKS.



Executive Branch

The Executive Branch is composed of the President, Vice President, cabinet, and all related agencies, e.g., FBI, Treasury, Department of Justice, Health & Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, etc. It is the responsibility of the Executive Branch to execute the laws passed by the U.S. Congress.



Judicial Branch

The Judicial Branch is comprised of the U.S. Supreme Court (nine justices) and all federal courts. Supreme Court justices are appointed by the President, approved by the U.S. Senate, and serve a life term. Generally, most federal judges are also appointed by the President, approved by the Senate, and serve a life term. The Judicial Branch interprets the constitutionality of the laws passed by Congress.



Legislative Branch

The U.S. Congress makes up the Legislative Branch. Congress consists of the Senate (100 Senators, 2 per state) and the House of Representatives (435 representatives, based on population of the state). Senators serve six-year terms, and the elections are staggered so that one-third of the Senate is up for election every two years. Representatives serve two-year terms and elections for the entire House are held every two years. The Legislative Branch is responsible for writing, passing, and changing federal laws, which affect the entire country.



State and Local Government

State governments are similar to the federal government in that they are bicameral (two houses) forms of government. Nebraska is the only unicameral state government. State legislatures are responsible for passing laws which affect the entire state. Counties, cities, and towns have their own governing bodies which pass ordinances and regulations pertaining only to particular jurisdictions.

Understanding The Legislative Process

How a Bill Becomes a Law

1: Origins of Legislation

Suggestions for legislation can come from anyone, i.e. lawmakers, interest groups, or constituents. However, legislation can only be officially introduced by a Member of Congress. The Member who introduces the bill is known as the chief sponsor of the bill.



It then moves to the House, or vice versa. Once a bill passes through one chamber, it undergoes a similar process in the other chamber.

2: Committee Assignment

Once a bill is introduced, it is assigned a number and referred to a specific committee. A subcommittee may consider the bill before any action is taken by the full committee. Committees “mark up” or make changes to the bill, hold public hearings allowing testimony for or against the bill, and are responsible for deciding whether to “report” or “not report” a bill to the House or Senate floor. Bills not reported die in committee and no further action is taken. Bills reported to the floor are scheduled for floor action.



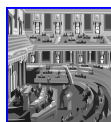
4: Conference Committees

If there is a substantial difference between the bills passed by each chamber, then a conference committee is convened to resolve the differences. The conference committee is composed of Members from each chamber. Once the committee produces a final bill, known as a “conference report,” the bill is then sent back to both chambers to be voted on again. Once the bill leaves the conference committee to be voted on by each chamber, it cannot be amended or changed. If both chambers approve the bill, the bill is sent to the president.



3: Chamber Floor

Once a bill is reported from committee, it moves to the floor of the respective chamber (the House or the Senate). At this time, rules and restriction are placed on the bill limiting the time of debate, including what types and how many amendments may be added to the bill. Members will then debate the bill and take a vote. If the bill passes one chamber, i.e. the Senate,



5: The President

When Congress sends a bill to the President, the bill will either be signed or vetoed. If the bill is signed, it becomes law. If the bill is vetoed, it goes back to Congress for a vote. A two-thirds majority vote is required to override a presidential veto and enact a bill into law.



Understanding The Legislative Process

How a Bill Becomes a Law



The House

Legislation is introduced in the House.



The bill is assigned a number and sent to a committee and possibly a subcommittee.



Subcommittees and committees hold public hearing on the bill, make changes, and vote on the bill.



If the bill passes out of committee, it goes to the Rules Committee to determine limits on debate and amendments.



The bill is debated and voted on.



If the bill passes, it is sent to the Senate or to a conference committee to resolve difference with an already existing Senate bill.



The Senate

Legislation is introduced in the Senate.



The bill is assigned a number and sent to a committee and possibly a subcommittee.



Subcommittees and committees hold public hearings on the bill, make changes, and vote on the bill.



If the bill passes out of committee, the Senate leadership schedules the debate and determines the rules for debate.



The bill is debated and voted on.



If the bill passes, it is sent to the House or to a conference committee to resolve difference with an already existing House bill.



A final bill, approved by both chambers, is sent to the President for signature or veto.

Understanding The Legislative Process

Appropriations: Overview and Key Terms

Appropriations refers to the process by which Congress gives legal authority to federal agencies to spend money. The process begins in early February of every year when the President submits his/her budget request to Congress. The House and Senate Budget committees then meet to set the amount of money (302(b) allocations) available for discretionary programs in each federal agency, producing Budget Resolutions. The next step is for the House and Senate Appropriations committees to receive their 302(b) allocation that dictates the amount of money they can spend on discretionary programs in their bill. There are 13 subcommittees that each write their bill to fund a different federal agency.

During the spring, Appropriations subcommittees spend their time getting input on what programs to fund and

start to write their bills. This is a crucial time to get involved in securing more funding for your sexual assault programs; sign-on letters to appropriators and lobby visits are in full-swing.

Which subcommittees should sexual assault advocates be concerned with?

- House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) subcommittee
- House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (LHHS) subcommittee
- Senate Appropriations Commerce, Justice Science (CJS) subcommittee
- Senate Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (LHHS) subcommittee

Key Terms

Appropriation: Gives legal authority for Federal agencies to spend money from the Treasury for specific purposes. It is not necessarily the full amount permitted under the authorization.

Authorization: Basic legislation that establishes a federal program and that sanctions a particular expenditure for that program.

Budget Resolution: Legislation setting forth the congressional budget that establishes budget totals and divides them into spending categories by federal agency.

Continuing Resolution: A joint resolution enacted by Congress and signed by the President that provides budget authority for federal agencies to continue their operations.

Discretionary spending: Spending controlled in annual appropriations acts, not mandatory (ex., VAWA).

Mandatory spending: Spending controlled by laws other than annual appropriations (ex., Social Security).

Omnibus Appropriations: A bill that combines several spending areas into a single measure.

Supplemental Appropriations: A bill appropriating funds for federal agency spending after the annual appropriations bill has already been passed.

Appropriation bills start to move through the subcommittees, the full Appropriations committees, and then on to the floor over the summer. Commerce, Justice, Science and Labor, Health and Human Services, Education bills are usually the last to move through. The Appropriations bills are voted on by Congress, reconciled in conference committee and sent to the President to sign into law.

Understanding The Legislative Process

Appropriations: Timeline

First Monday in February	President submits budget proposal to Congress	
February / March	Budget committees meet. Members of Congress make requests to Appropriations Committees for their funding priorities.	Alert: Dear Colleague sign-on letters Alert: Send letters to your legislators
March / April	Appropriations subcommittees begin their hearings on the budget and start writing their bills	
April 15	Budget resolution passed (theoretically). The resolution specifies allocations for each Appropriations subcommittee.	
May / June / July	Appropriations subcommittees finish bills and are considered by the full Appropriations committee.	Alert: Make calls to your legislators
August	Congressional recess	Meet with your legislators in district.
September 30	End of fiscal year. Appropriations bills brought to floor at this time (theoretically).	
October / November	Appropriations bills voted on and sent to conference committee.	
November / December	Final Congressional Budget approved.	Thank your legislator if they helped to increase funding for your program.
<p>**Caveat: The Appropriations process is fluid and changes from year to year. This timeline is an example of how the year <i>should</i> proceed.</p>		

Tracking Legislation

THERE ARE SEVERAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO FOLLOW BILLS THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

WEBSITE RESOURCES



Thomas: <http://thomas.loc.org>

- This website is the most comprehensive site for congressional information. It contains the full text of bills, bill summary and status, hearing testimony, recorded notes, committee reports, and other useful information about a particular piece of legislation.

Congressional Record: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/index.html>

- The Congressional Record is the official record of the proceedings and debates of Congress. It is published daily when Congress is in session. It provides daily summaries of action in each chamber, committee hearings, bills introduced, bills signed, and a schedule of committee meetings for the following day.

U.S. Senate: <http://www.senate.gov>

- The “Legislation & Records” link provides information about bills and resolutions being considered in the Senate. The site allows viewers to track bills and see how individual members voted on a particular bill. The site also provides a schedule for upcoming legislative activity.

U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>

- The “Legislative Resources” section provides information about bills and resolutions being considered in the House. The site allows viewers to track bills and see how individual members voted on a particular bill. The site also provides a schedule for upcoming legislative activity.

Washington Post: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

- At this site at the “Today in Congress” section, you will find pertinent information on any action items that will happen in Congress on that particular date.

Congress.org: <http://www.congress.org>

- This resource is valuable when attempting to locate information about a particular Member of Congress

TELEPHONE RESOURCES



Daily Calendar Information: The Cloakroom

- The Democratic and Republican Party provide recorded messages about the floor proceedings in both chambers.
- Senate Democratic (202) 224-8541 and Senate Republican (202) 224-8601
- House Democratic (202) 225-7400 and House Republican (202) 225-7430

Legislation Status

- The Office of Legislative Information on Capitol Hill responds to telephone inquiries regarding current legislation. A staff member can give you information such as the status of certain legislation, bills introduced by a specific Member of Congress, or bills introduced on a given subject. They can be reached at (202) 225-7400.

Action Tools

Meeting with your Legislator

The most effective way to communicate your message to your legislator is to schedule a meeting to talk face-to-face with your Member of Congress' staffer. While these personal visits are the most successful lobbying tool, they also require the greatest amount of planning and time. Here are a few guidelines to help you plan an effective visit.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A MEETING

- √ Ask to speak to the scheduler when you call the office to set up your appointment. **Let the scheduler know you are a constituent.** They will know which staff member you need to meet with based on your issue. Call at least a week in advance and prepare to allocate 15-20 minutes of time for your meeting.



HOW TO PREPARE

- √ **BRING A WRITTEN STATEMENT.** Prepare a written letter that you can leave with the staffer recapping what you mentioned in your visit. Be sure to address why this legislation is important to you, how it will effect your organization's services, and the current unmet needs of your organization (including statistics of victims not being served). Not only will this letter provide the legislator with a written record of your visit, but writing the letter will help you prepare for your appointment.

TIPS FOR DURING THE MEETING

- √ **EXPLAIN HOW PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL DIRECTLY AFFECT YOU.** Bring statistics from your local programs, written testimonials, or personal stories from victims. Highlight both the successes your organization has achieved as well as the areas where additional funding and programs are needed. Explain how a cut in funding will affect your organization's services or how a new proposed program will help meet your current unmet need.
- √ **BE POLITE AND PROFESSIONAL.** Always be on time and dress professionally. Even if you disagree with your legislator's position, always be polite. A staffer may make critical remarks about your position or organization. He/she may ask you tough questions. If you do not know the answer, remain calm and tell them that you will get back to them.

ENDING THE MEETING

- √ **ASK FOR A COMMITMENT.** Your goal is to enlist your legislator's support, so be as specific as possible. Ask the staffer direct questions such as "Will your boss vote for....?" or "Will your boss support....when it comes to the floor?" to elicit direct answers.
- √ **BRING A BUSINESS CARD.** Give the staffer your business card and ask for theirs. The card should contain all your contact information.

FOLLOW-UP

- √ **FOLLOW UP YOUR MEETING WITH A THANK YOU LETTER.** Regardless of how the meeting goes, you should always follow up by thanking the staffer for his/her time and reiterating the points you discussed in the meeting. This can be sent by email or fax.
- √ **OFFER TO PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION.** Always offer to provide staffers and legislators with additional information on your issue. NAESV is more than happy to provide you with fact sheets on a variety of federal sexual assault programs that you can pass along to your Members of Congress. Offer to provide more detailed information about your local programs, if necessary.

Action Tools

Sexual Assault Advocacy Talking Points

- ◆ Consult these talking points when you meet with your Member of Congress. If Congressional staff have additional questions, feel free to have them contact NAESV (p. 2). Most importantly, talk about **your experiences as a sexual assault services provider**, such as challenges you face due to low funding.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund support our sexual assault program(s) that provide **life-saving services to victims in** << *Congressional district/State* >>.

Sexual Assault Victim Services Program (SASP)

- ◆ SASP is the sole federal funding source for direct services for victims of sexual assault.
- ◆ In order to meet the increased demand for services for sexual assault victims, we request that Congress **fully fund the Sexual Assault Services Program** at its authorized amount of **\$50 million**.

Rape Prevention and Education Grant Program (RPE)

- ◆ RPE provides critical grants to support primary prevention efforts, including education, training, and community awareness.
- ◆ Funding the **Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) grant program** at the authorized amount of **\$80 million** is crucial to prevent sexual violence and educate our communities on rape and assault.

Rural Communities Grant Program

- ◆ Victims of violence who live in rural states and communities have unique needs and face a lack of desperately needed resources.
- ◆ It is critical that Congress fund the **Rural Communities program** in VAWA at the amount of **\$55 million** to provide adequate funding to meet these needs.

The Victims of Crime Act Fund (VOCA)

- ◆ The Victims of Crime Act Fund (VOCA), started by President Reagan in 1984, helps victims of ALL types of crime. It is **funded by fines and penalties collected from criminals, NOT taxpayers**.
- ◆ More than 4,400 agencies from every state and territory depend on VOCA to serve over 3.8 million victims yearly.
- ◆ We request that Congress implement a **VOCA cap of \$770 million** with no new or expanded earmarks to restore funding to FY '06 levels and restore victim assistance grants to states.

Action Tools

Writing your Legislator-Sample Action Letter

The Honorable {First_Name Last_Name}

United States Senate -or- United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20510

Washington, DC 20515

{DATE}

Dear Senator/Representative {Last_Name}:

Sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking are devastating and pervasive crimes that directly affect women, men and children in the United States and touch the lives of nearly all individuals. One in six women and one in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape; nearly one in every four women experiences at least one physical assault by a partner during adulthood; and people ages 16-24 are raped and sexually assaulted at rates higher than any other age group. To address this devastating violence, funding for the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) must be a high priority in the Fiscal Year 2009 Congressional Budget. **On behalf of [*who your organization serves/represents, such as "victims of sexual assault in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania"*] we urge you to support full funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program and the Rape Prevention Education Program so that both prevention activities and direct services for victims of sexual assault can be provided.**

[Insert information, statistics, and/or stories describing the need for increased/continued VAWA and VOCA funding in YOUR community. Describe how funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program and other VAWA programs would help your community end sexual violence. If you have waiting lists for services or seen an increased demand for services for children, for example, describe it.]

While rape crisis centers and other organizations have made tremendous progress towards ensuring that sexual assault victims receive the services they need, these agencies' ability to serve the needs of all victims of sexual violence - both female and male, young and old - has historically been hampered by a significant lack of resources. And now, more victims of sexual assault are coming forward for help than ever before. That is why full funding for VAWA programs in the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) budget at \$683 million is critical. Our agency and community depend on the support of particular programs, including the **Sexual Assault Services Program, Grants to Combat Violence Against Women-STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors)** and the **Rural Grants Program** *[add names of other programs you receive funding from]*. Additionally, we urge you to reject the President's block-grant proposal in his budget request and maintain the individual VAWA line-items in the CJS Appropriations bill.

VAWA programs in the Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) budget are also critical and must be fully funded at \$320 million. Of particular priority for our agency is the **Rape Prevention and Education Program** which provides formula grants to States to support rape prevention and education programs conducted by rape crisis centers, state sexual assault coalitions, and other public and private nonprofit entities.

Without full funding for VAWA programs, women, men and children in [your city and/or state] cannot access the services they need to escape from violence. If the balance of the VOCA fund is eliminated, as the President has proposed, and VAWA programs are not funded, counties across the State may lose these services entirely. The continued support of Congress is crucial to helping victims find safety and security and build self-sufficiency. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact [your name and program]. We look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Your Name, Organization

Address/Contact Information

Action Tools

Calling your Legislator



PHONE CALLS

If you find that you do not have time to write a letter, making a phone call is one of the quickest ways to contact your legislator. When an urgent matter arises, nothing brings an issue to the attention of a Member of Congress like tying up the office phone lines.

There are several tips to remember before making a phone call:

- First, if you are a constituent, identify yourself as one.
- Second, ask to speak to the specific staffer working on sexual assault issues.
- Third, be brief and specific. Congressional staffers are busy people and they will appreciate your effort to keep your conversation concise.
- Fourth, be courteous and polite. If you get angry, you may lose your credibility.
- Finally, offer to send information you have on the subject so that the staffer can be better informed on how the issue affects the community.

Sample Telephone Script

“My name is *<name>*. I am a constituent, and I work at *<shelter or program>*. I urge *<Representative or Senator’s name>* to support full funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program in the Violence Against Women Act.

VAWA has protected millions of victims of sexual assault. In our community alone, VAWA has been instrumental in providing funding and training for *<list key programs>*. *<Name of your shelter or program>* serves *<number>* of sexual assault victims each year. It is imperative that Congress provide full funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program to meet our community’s needs.

If you have any questions or if I can provide you with any additional information please feel free to contact me at *<phone number>*. Thank you.”

If you do not know the telephone number for your Senator or Representative, call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Action Tools

Thanking your Legislator



Thank You Letters

Not only is it important to contact your Member of Congress when an issue arises that concerns you, it is also important to thank your legislator for voting a certain way, speaking up on an issue important to you, or attending an event you organized.

Showing a Member of Congress and their staff your appreciation for his or her efforts is a great way to build a relationship and let the legislator know the voting constituency supports his or her decisions.

Follow these tips when writing a thank you letter:

- If you are a constituent, begin your letter by saying so.
- Make clear what exactly you are thanking your legislator for: supporting a bill, making a speech, attending an event.
- Remind the legislator why this issue is important to the constituency and why his or her support is necessary.
- Now that the legislator has done something for you, offer to do something in return, such as providing resources or educating staffers.
- Be sure to include all your contact information in your letter.

The Honorable {*First_Name Last_Name*}

United States Senate -or- United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20515

{*DATE*}

Dear Senator/Representative {*Last_Name*}:

On behalf of all the sexual assault advocates and victims in your district and across the country, <<*your organization*>> deeply thanks you and your colleagues for your overwhelming support and commitment to ending the epidemic of intimate partner violence that affects millions of victims and their children each year. By voting to increase funding for the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), you have brought us one step closer to making this country a safer place for women, children, and families.

For the past five years the programs created under the Violence Against Women Act have had a positive impact on the lives of millions of families. VAWA bolstered the prosecution of sexual assault offenders and provided additional resources for law enforcement. It also increased services for victims by funding sexual assault crisis centers through the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP). Countless lives have been saved thanks to this landmark piece of legislation.

Thank you again, for your outstanding leadership and action in the <<House/Senate>>. We look forward to your continued collaboration as we work toward full funding for the Violence Against Women Act, and we would be happy to provide you with additional resources.

Sincerely,

Your Name, Organization

Address/Contact Information

Media Outreach

Letters to the Editor



An important component of lobbying is getting the media tuned into your issues. Gaining media attention helps get your message out to more people and sends a strong message to your legislators. Below you will find several tips and samples for how to use the media to your advantage.

Letters to the editor provide citizens with the opportunity to comment on articles or editorials appearing in their local papers. Local leaders and politicians read the letters to the editor section to judge community opinion on an issue. Use the following tips and sample letter when drafting your letter.

- Address your letter to the “Letters to the Editor” and “Dear Editor.”
- Write clearly, concisely, and proofread your work. Limit your letter to 200 words or less.
- Comply with the paper’s formatting rules. If you do not follow the paper’s guidelines, your letter may be disqualified.
- Cite statistics to support your argument, but do not let your message become lost in the numbers.
- Include your name and contact information. Most papers verify this information before printing and will not print anonymous letters.
- Read the editorial page daily to ensure your letter is not redundant with other letters.
- If your letter is not published, keep trying. Editors choose stories based on reader interest and if they perceive a strong interest in a topic from the community, they are more likely to run stories on it.

Media Outreach

Press Releases



The purpose of a press release is to present a summarized version of a story for the media. Any time you have news to report, such as a bill being passed through Congress, you can send out a press release to give reporters an idea for a possible story along with background information.

Follow the tips below when writing a press release:

- ⇒ Write a concise summary of the story you want covered. Write in journalistic style; use short sentences and paragraphs.
- ⇒ Try to write objectively and be sure that your facts are completely accurate.
- ⇒ Include direct quotes from legislators and advocates in your press release.
- ⇒ When using abbreviations, make sure to indicate what they stand for. Assume that your audience is not familiar with your issue.

Format:

- ⇒ Type on 8-1/2 x 11 letterhead.
- ⇒ Include a brief heading describing the story, the release date, your contact information, and a blurb on your organization.
- ⇒ Identify the end of the press release with “###” (a symbol used by the press to indicate the end of a document).
- ⇒ Be brief – keep it to one page or less.

Federal Advocacy and Non-profits

Non-profits can and should lobby! By not lobbying, non-profits are not fully exercising their rights under federal tax laws. Below is basic information regarding Federal lobbying rules, primarily for 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

What is lobbying?

Lobbying is a type of advocacy that includes both direct and grassroots lobbying. Direct lobbying is communication with a legislator that expresses a specific position on specific legislation. Grassroots lobbying is communication with the public that expresses a specific position on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action.

Restrictions on 501(c)(3) organizations

501(c)(3) organizations are groups organized for charitable, educational, scientific or religious purposes. Unlike 501(c)(4) organizations and Political Action Committees (PACs), the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) has imposed limitations on the amount of legislative lobbying that 501(c)(3)s may engage in. The IRC allows the 501(c)(3) organization to choose between two tests in order to measure the organization's lobbying activities. The two tests are the **Insubstantial Part Test** and the **501(h) Expenditure Test**. Below is an explanation of the two tests.

- Insubstantial Part Test: The Insubstantial Part Test is the default standard that the IRS uses unless an organization chooses the alternative standard. This test requires that “no substantial part” of a 501(c)(3) organization's activities be “carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.” This test is somewhat problematic, however, because the IRS and the courts have not yet clearly defined what constitutes as a “substantial part.” In addition, the Insubstantial Part Test does not provide adequate guidelines on what exactly constitutes lobbying. Thus, for most 501(c)(3) organizations, the 501(h) Expenditure Test is a better option because it provides greater clarity.
- 501(h) Expenditure Test: The 501(h) Expenditure Test is the alternative standard used by the IRS to measure lobbying activities. This test authorizes a percentage of the organization's budget that may be used on lobbying. Activities that do not generate expenses (such as work completed by volunteers) do not count as lobbying. The 501(h) test is generally preferable because the test provides clearer definitions for what constitutes lobbying and it arguably allows an organization to do more lobbying than the Insubstantial Part Test. (Note that some organizations such as churches are not eligible to use this test.)
- Should your organization decide to take advantage of the 501(h) test, you must fill out a simple, one-time, one-page form with the IRS — Form 5768, which you can access at www.irs.gov. If your organization does not fill out this form, the IRS will automatically apply the Insubstantial Part Test.

Federal Advocacy and Non-profits

Grassroots lobbying	Direct lobbying	Not lobbying
Communication with the public, such as “calls to action” urging the public to contact a legislator on an issue, providing a means for the public to communicate with the legislator, and identifying the legislator’s position.	Communicating directly with a legislator’s office by phone, email or fax urging them to vote a certain way on specific legislation.	Giving a tour of your program to a legislator or their staff.
Paid mass media advertisements referring to specific legislation.	Meeting with your legislator on specific legislation.	Sending information about your program to your legislator’s offices.

Expenditure Limits Under the 501(H) Test

The general rule is that organizations with budgets under \$500,000 may spend as much as 20% of their budget on “direct” and “grassroots” lobbying combined. Yet the organization may only spend a quarter of its overall limit (as much as 5% of its budget) on “grassroots” lobbying. If an organization’s budget later increases, the allowable percentage of its expenditures on lobbying declines (though the grassroots lobbying limit is always a quarter of the overall limit).

Tracking and Reporting Lobbying Activities

Regardless of which standard your organization chooses, every 501(c)(3) organization is required to track its lobbying activities. Those organizations using the 501(h) test must keep a record of its total expenditures on direct and grassroots lobbying. Under the Insubstantial Part Test, an organization must record the cost of its lobbying in addition to providing a summary of its lobbying activities. The lobbying expenditures that an organization must record include salaries for staff time spent lobbying, costs specific to a lobbying activity, and a percentage of overhead costs.

501(C)(4) Organizations: Unrestricted Lobbying

Organizations designated as 501(c)(4) organizations (civic, action or social welfare organizations) have no restrictions on lobbying as long as it is related to the purpose of the organization.

For more information, consult the Alliance for Justice:
www.allianceforjustice.org

STATE SEXUAL ASSAULT COALITIONS

COALITION	OFFICE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Alabama Coalition Against Rape	334.264.0123	www.acar.org
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	907.586.3650	www.andvsa.org
Arizona Sexual Assault Network	480.831.1986	www.arizonasexualassaultnetwork.org
Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault	479.527.0900	www.acasa.ws
California Coalition Against Sexual Assault	916.446.2520	www.calcasa.org
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault	303.861.7033	www.ccasa.org
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services	860.282.9881	www.connsacs.org
Delaware Contact Lifeline, Inc.	302.761.9800	www.contactlifeline.org
District of Columbia Rape Crisis Center	202.232.0789	www.dcrcc.org
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence	850.297.2000	www.fcasv.org
Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault	404.815.5261	www.gnesa.org
Hawaii Coalition Against Sexual Abuse	808.533.1637	N/a
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence	208.384.0419	www.idvsa.org
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault	217.753.4117	www.icasa.org
Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault	317.423.0233	www.incasa.org
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault	515.244.7424	www.iowacasa.org
Kansas Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence	785-232-9784	www.kcsdv.org
Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs	502.226.2704	www.kasap.org
Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault	985.345.5995	www.lafasa.org
Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault	207.626.0034	www.mecasa.org
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Abuse	410.974.4507	www.mcasa.org
Massachusetts—Jane Doe, Inc. - MCASADV	617-248-0922	www.janedoe.org
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	517-347-7000	www.mcadsv.org
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault	651.209.9993	www.mncasa.org
Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault	601.948.0555	www.mscasa.org

STATE SEXUAL ASSAULT COALITIONS *(CONTINUED)*

COALITION	OFFICE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	573-634-4161	www.mocadsv.org
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	406.443.7794	www.mcadsv.com
Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition	402-476-6256	www.ndvsac.org
Nevada Coalition Against Sexual Abuse	702.384.1005	www.ncasv.org
New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	603-224-8893	www.nhcadsv.org
New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Abuse	609.631.4450	www.njcasa.org
New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Inc.	505.883.8020	www.swcp.com/nmcsaas
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault	518.482.4222	www.nyscasa.org
North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault	919.870.8881	www.nccasa.org
North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services	701.255.6240	www.ndcaws.org
Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	405.524.0700	www.ocadvsa.org
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	503.230.1951	www.ocadsv.com
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape	717.728.9740	www.pcar.org
Puerto Rico—Coordinadora Paz para la Mujer, Inc.	787.281.7579	www.pazparalamujer.org
Rhode Island—Day One	401.421.4100	www.dayoneri.org
South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	803.256.2900	www.sccadvasa.org
South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault	605.945.0869	www.southdakotacoalition.org
Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	615.386.9406	www.tcadsv.org
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault	512.474.7190	www.taasa.org
Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault	801.746.0404	www.ucasa.org
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	802.223.1302	www.vtnetwork.org
Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance	804.377.0335	www.vsdvalliance.org
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs	360.754.7583	www.wcsap.org
West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services	304.366.9500	www.fris.org
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault	608.257.1516	www.wcasa.org
Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	307.755.5481	www.wyomingdvsa.org

