**Module 1**

**Introduction to Federal Lobbying for 501(c)(3) Organizations**

**PowerPoint Script**

**Slide 1: Title Page**

Welcome to Module 1. This module will give you an overview of Federal Lobbying for 501(c)(3) organizations.

**Slide 2: Learning Objectives**

This section lays the groundwork for the rest of the content you will be viewing. The purpose of this section is to make you familiar with the basic terms that we will be using throughout these modules, so you can fully understand the concepts we are conveying. This module will cover the basics of lobbying and describe what types of lobbying you can engage in, the difference between direct and grassroots lobbying, discuss why your organization might want to engage in lobbying, and introduce you to advocacy and distinguish advocacy from lobbying. All of the terms used in this first module will be used again in later modules. It is important to understand each of them in order to make sure you will understand the content that follows module 1.

**Slide 3: What is Lobbying?**

With that being said lets jump right in. If I was to ask you what lobbying is what would you say? Most individuals would say it consists of trying to get legislators to pass bills. Many individuals would associate this activity with large corporations such as big oil, manufacturers, and other businesses. However, lobbying can be done, and is done, by a variety of organizations of different size. Lobbying is defined as the attempt to influence the passage, defeat, introduction or amendment of legislation, including bills introduced by a federal, state, or local legislative body, bond issues, referenda, constitutional amendments, and Senate confirmation votes on Executive branch nominees. There are two types of lobbying. These include grassroots lobbying and direct lobbying. Depending on what your organizations mission is, you might engage in one or both forms of lobbying.

If a large oil company sent individuals to meet with legislators to try to convince them not to pass laws that created new regulations for oil producers in the Gulf of Mexico, their actions would be considered lobbying. Any time an organization asks a member of Congress to vote for or against, or amendment, introduced legislation, they are engaging in lobbying. A 501(c)(3) organization that advocates for animal rights is lobbying if they ask a member of congress to oppose legislation that would have an effect on animal cruelty laws. Emails to members of the community may also be considered lobbying. If any organization emails a “call to action” to members of the community urging them to contact their member of congress in support of action on introduced legislation or spending regulations, the organization is lobbying.

**Slide 4: Direct v. Grassroots Lobbying**

As you probably noted, there are two distinct situations mentioned that constitute lobbying. In one situation, you are contacting members of the community or members of your organization and encouraging a “call to action,” or you are directly contacting a legislator to influence the passage of some form of legislative act.

The first example is Grassroots Lobbying. This form of lobbying refers to any attempt to influence legislation through an attempt to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment thereof. A grassroots lobbying communication is one in which: 1) the communication refers to specific legislation; 2) the communication reflects a view on that legislation; and 3) the communication encourages the recipient to take certain action with respect to the legislation.

Direct lobbying refers to the attempt to influence any legislation through communication with a legislator, an employee of a legislative body or other government official, which: 1) refers to specific legislation; and 2) reflects a view on such legislation.

**Slide 5: Why might my organization want to lobby?**

Think of lobbying as a tool. Lobbying can be an effective form of advocacy that can help nonprofits tackle the social issues they are most concerned with. Most nonprofits exist to make the world a better and fairer place for a particular constituency group or community, or for the planet as a whole. If a nonprofit wants to achieve its goal, such as a cleaner environment, more affordable housing, healthcare for everyone, or equal pay for equal work, lobbying is an indispensable tool and can help shape the legislation that effect’s that issue.

**Slide 6: What is Advocacy?**

Advocacy, as opposed to lobbying, is the act of advocating in respect to a specific topic without encouraging action in regard to legislation, or attempting to influence a legislator to vote a specific way on legislation.

Lets consider a hypothetical. Organization E is an environmental organization that publishes a regular newsletter. This newsletter routinely summarizes and reports on the status of environment-related bills pending in Congress. The newsletter identifies each bill by a bill number and the sponsor’s name. Although the summaries and status reports refer to, and often reflect a view on specific legislation, they do not encourage readers to act with respect to any of the bills. The summaries and status reports are not grassroots lobbying communications. Why? Because they do not include a “call to action.”

Lets review one more hypothetical. Organization Z prepares a paper on a particular state’s environmental problems. The paper does not reflect a view on any specific pending legislation nor on any specific legislative proposal which Z supports or opposes. Z’s paper is not a direct lobbying communication, even if it is sent to a legislator. Why? Because it does not attempt to influence any legislation. It is simply advocating for the environment.

It is important to note that these are very specific examples and you should consult legal counsel before attempting the communicate with a legislator or send out notices in the first hypothetical. Each industry is different, and it is important to consult legal counsel before engaging in such activities.

**Slide 7: The Difference between Lobbying and Advocacy**

The difference between lobbying and advocacy boils down to targeting specific legislation. Lobbying is an attempt to influence legislation through direct or grassroots communication with legislators or their staff. Advocacy can occur without lobbying, but lobbying cannot occur without advocacy. Advocacy is a range of activities that seek to bring about systemic social change. Advocacy is often used to address the root causes as well as the symptoms of social and economic problems. Action may include community organizing, public policy, and lobbying litigation, or nonpartisan voter engagement.

**Slide 8: End**