

ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING?



Advocacy is the act of supporting a cause or proposal

- Sharing your story
- Raising awareness
- Educating others - like your community or lawmakers about why head start matters.



Lobbying is attempting to influence a legislator about specific legislation or funding requests.

- Asking for a yes/no vote
- Talking about specific laws or funding



These are educational, personal, and awareness-raising actions that do not ask for a specific vote or funding amount:

- A parent shares how Head Start helped their child.
- A teacher posts on social media about their classroom.
- A director gives a tour and talks about the program.
- A staff member encourages families to tell their stories.



These are actions that support or oppose specific legislation or funding decisions:

- Asking a lawmaker to vote for a Head Start bill.
- Opposing a bill that cuts early childhood funding.
- Testifying for a specific funding amount.
- Calling Congress to support a reauthorization bill.



Can I use Head Start funds to lobby?.



No. You can't use Head Start money to ask for votes, funding, or contracts at the state or federal level.



Can I use private donations to lobby?



Yes. You can use fundraising dollars to pay for lobbying.



Can I use Head Start funds to advocate?



Yes. Advocacy is allowed. You can educate, inform, and tell the Head Start story.



What can I do on the clock?



Educate legislators; Share program impact; Speak to the big picture; Connect with hearts and minds; Just don't ask for a vote or money



What about off the clock?



Yes, you can lobby—on your own time. Just make sure - You're not on the clock; You don't use work email; You don't charge your time to federal funds



Can other nonprofits use our space for nonpartisan voter registration?



Yes. That's allowed by law.



Can I testify at a public hearing with Head Start funds?



Yes. If you're invited to speak, it's allowed—just make sure to get the invite from the committee.

Center Directors

- Share information with staff and parents
- Initiate site visits
- Reach out to government officials and teachers
- Lobby or fund raise for lobbying, if possible

Teachers, Home Visitors, etc.

- Share information with legislators
- Include officials in programmed communication lists
- Tell their stories

Parents/Policy Council

- Call, write and post on social media to inform officials about their lives
- Set up a volunteer advocacy committee (But do not solicit lobbying at Policy Council meetings)