

SCIENCE POLICY

& Advocacy Roles

In the US Congress

Taylor Scott

ADVOCACY APPROACHES

Inside - “working with”

- Working in the context of existing values and priorities
- Consulting
- Relationship building

Outside – pushing change

- Protests
- Petitions
- Media for public opinion

Communications: Applicable for both

- Framing the issue
- Conveying values



ADVOCACY

DEFINITIONS

Advocacy

- Supporting or defending a cause or an issue
- e.g., recommending support of evidence-based prevention programs

Education

- Unbiased information to general public or public officials
- e.g., research on evidence-based prevention programs
- e.g., information about legislation, but make no recommendation for action

Lobbying

- A specific type of advocacy activity
- Seeks to influence the enactment or defeat of pending legislation
- e.g., asking a legislator to vote a certain way
- While ALL lobbying is advocacy, NOT ALL advocacy is Lobbying.

AVOIDING THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Lobbying Regulations – the use of certain resources

- 501(c)3 non-profits
- Government employees
- Federally funded research

Citizen Rights

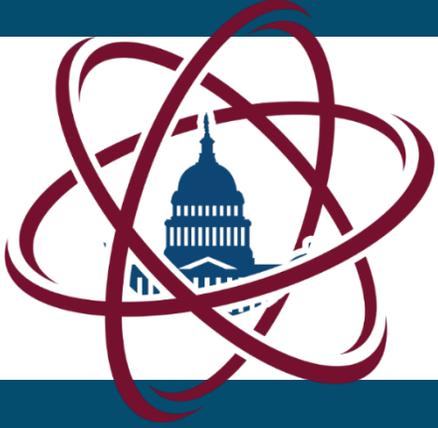
- Freedom of speech
- Advocate with your elected officials
 - When you're not on paid time
 - Using personal, voluntary resources (e.g., computer; travel)



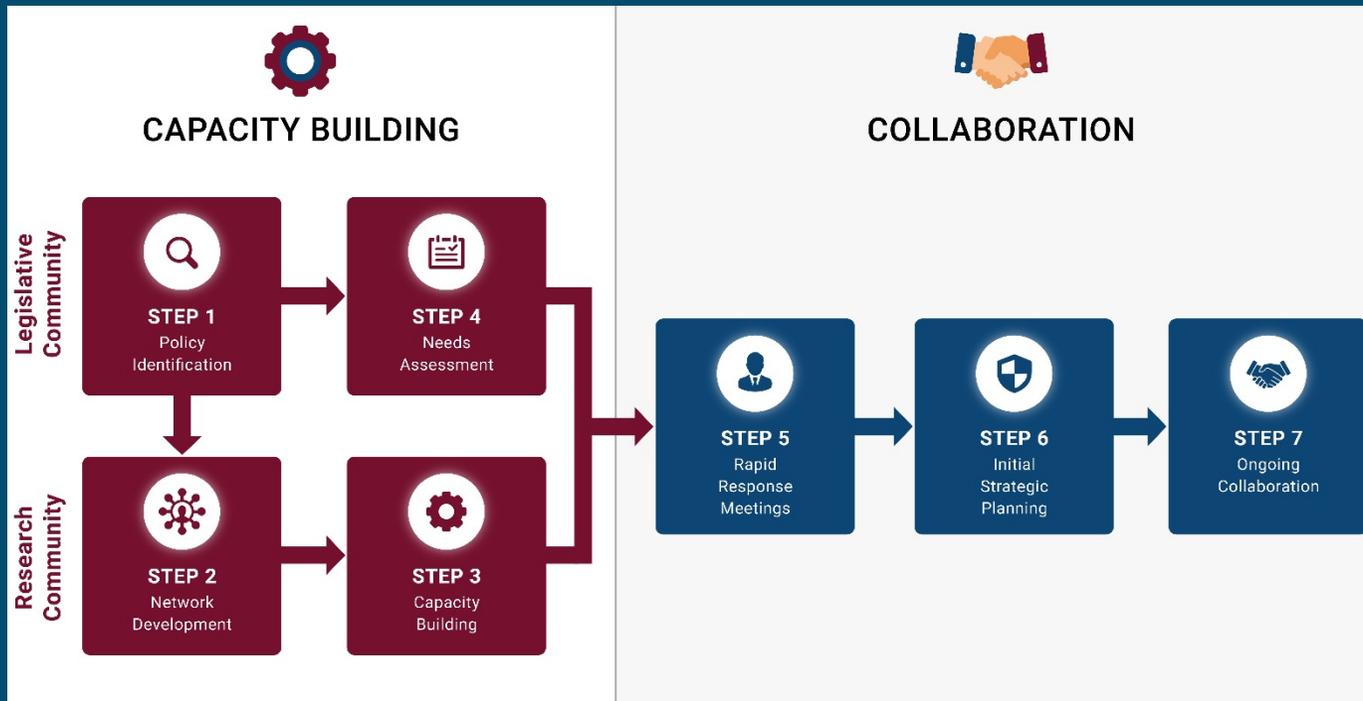
HONEST BROKER

Recommendations

1. Focus on the issues and evidence
2. Provide a menu of policy *options*
(that have bipartisan appeal)
3. Describe legislation objectively
(not your opinion)
4. Describe how evidence does or does not align with
specific legislation



Research-to-Policy — Collaboration —



- Replicable implementation model
- A feasible and efficient pathway for timely policy engagement
 - Identify opportunities
 - Minimize logistical burden
 - In-depth T/A for responses
- Effectiveness studied with RCT
 - More legislation with evidence language
 - Greater value of using research to understand how to think about problems (i.e., conceptual)
 - Researchers report benefits

<https://www.research2policy.org/researcher-sign-up>

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OFFICE

- Represents the University interests; e.g.,
 - Research funding
 - Higher education
 - Regulation
 - Funding
- Occasionally consult with policy-engaged researchers; e.g.,
 - Policymaker requests
 - Representing the university
- Typically do not have the capacity to broker by:
 - Identifying broad policy opportunities
 - Connecting the right researcher at the right time

COMMITTEES VS CAUCUSES

Committee	Caucus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official legislative process<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Members are assigned○ Jurisdiction• Marks up legislation• Conducts hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Informal organization<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Voluntary affiliation○ Legislators have similar policy concerns○ Discuss issues, perform legislative research, and make policy plans

*Most bills die in committee

See RPC Policy Process Brief

COMMITTEES JURISDICTIONS

Protective
Services

Education

Poverty

Jurisdiction	House Committee	Senate Committee	Example Program
Food Subsidies	Agriculture	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
Healthcare Programs	Ways & Means; Energy & Commerce	Finance	Medicaid/Medicare; CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)
Family Financial Assistance	Ways & Means	Finance	TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
Housing Assistance	Ways & Means	Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	Section 8 / Federal Housing Assistance
Social Services	Ways & Means	Finance	Social Services Block Grant (Title XX)
Childcare & Education	Education and the Workforce	Health, Education, Labor and Pensions	Head Start; Child Care and Development Fund; Title I (e.g. low-income schools)
Vocational Education	Education and the Workforce	Health, Education, Labor and Pensions	Job Corps; Pell Grants
Child Abuse Prevention	Education and the Workforce	Health, Education, Labor and Pensions	CAPTA; Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Block Grants
Juvenile Justice	Judiciary; Education and the Workforce	Judiciary	JABG (Juvenile Accountability Block Grant)
Foster Care	Ways & Means	Finance	Social Security, Title IV-E (foster care)
Human Trafficking	Judiciary; Foreign Affairs; Energy and Commerce	Foreign Relations	TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act)

*Ways & Means is one of the oldest and prestigious Committees

*Appropriations Committees are crucial to discretionary funding

See RPC Policy Process Brief

PERSONAL OFFICES

Staffers

- This is who you will meet
- Don't underestimate their influence
- Gatekeepers and bill writers
- Portfolios: Each staff is assigned to handle an issue area
- Customer service role for constituents and stakeholders (i.e., they're typically nice)
- Average age <35
- Rotating door

Constituent meetings

- "All policy is local"
- Legislators are elected to serve their districts / states
- Very interested in local:
 - Problems / stories
 - Initiatives, orgs, successes
 - Your research
 - Your concerns and opinions

INTERACTING WITH OFFICES

Brief emails

- 2-3 sentences
- Bullet points
- Ask for a meeting
- Be persistent

Relationship Development

- Active listening
- Policy neutral (fact over opinion)
- Reinforce values/beliefs (don't challenge)
- Transparency
 - Funding source / special interests
 - Limitations in expertise
- Offer to help

Meeting Tips

- Don't stress – this is not as high stakes as one might think
- Bring:
 - Business cards & notepad
 - Comfortable shoes
- Focus on
 - Key point (singular)
 - Follow-up steps
- Be Flexible
- Express gratitude
- Follow-up Email

CONTACT INFO

Taylor Scott

Taylor.scott@research2policy.org

Twitter: [@jtaybscott](https://twitter.com/jtaybscott)

[@r2policy](https://twitter.com/r2policy)