

Ideas for Getting Involved in Nonprofit Advocacy

The list of advocacy activities that nonprofits may engage in is long! Here are some specific examples of appropriate advocacy activities:



Educating your audience on specific issues

For example, you're a food justice nonprofit. You can educate your community on information about SNAP, hunger in your community, local food banks, and how public resources support food justice.



Keeping your audience up to date on current events

Tell your organization about news about food justice and how recent events might relate to food justice. For example, share information about how drought in one part of the world may impact food prices in your community.



Analyzing specific pieces of legislation and their impact

Communicate details about pieces of legislation and what it will mean for the community. For example, if your local school district is planning on expanding Free School Lunch for all students, educate your stakeholders on how that advances your mission.



Sharing how your organization uses funding (especially any government funding) and what it has accomplished

Inform and educate your stakeholders - including local officials! - about how your organization provides important community impact through the support of this funding.



Testifying before congress or a state legislature

As an expert in your mission area, you have invaluable knowledge to share. Offer to share research, testify about community impact, or describe programmatic work. Providing expert testimony is not considered lobbying.



Inviting lawmakers to tour your offices or facilities, or attend events

If your organization is hosting a public event or open house, include your local elected officials and their offices on the invite. For example, your food justice nonprofit is hosting a Farmer's Market, featuring subsidized local product. Invite local officials to attend so they gain awareness of your work and see the community impact.



Helping people in a nonpartisan way to register and vote



Productive Nonprofit Advocacy Conversations With a Lawyer

When it comes to nonprofit advocacy—and especially lobbying—it can be helpful to have your questions answered by an in-house counsel or a friendly attorney. But how you conduct that conversation matters.



Start With What You Can Do

Start by discussing what is possible. This starts things on a positive note and provides legal tactics up front. You will have to discuss prohibitions and limitations, but you don't have to start there.



Talk in Advance

Don't wait until a bill is on the floor to get your questions answered. Be proactive and talk to the lawyers before there's a crisis.



Write Some Policy

Having a policy document that is reviewed by an experienced nonprofit lawyer can make advocacy work smoother and more consistent, especially when personnel changes occur.

When Your Nonprofit Doesn't Have a Lawyer or the Resources to Hire One

Things you can do to ensure you stay on the right side of the law:



Read the IRS Publications

Start with the 501(c)(3) Compliance Guide, which has chapters on political and legislative activity. The IRS also offers a free 10-course video workshop that covers many different issues, including an entire chapter on the ban on political campaign intervention.



Get Help From a Nonprofit Group

There are many organizations that exist to help nonprofits. For example, the National Council of Nonprofits provides tools, research and resources.



Find a Friendly Attorney

Perhaps you have a volunteer who is a lawyer and can answer questions, do research or at least refer you to someone who understands nonprofits. Or maybe you can convince a local nonprofit lawyer to answer basic questions pro bono. Nonprofit associations also have referrals for local attorneys.



Emulate Similar Organizations

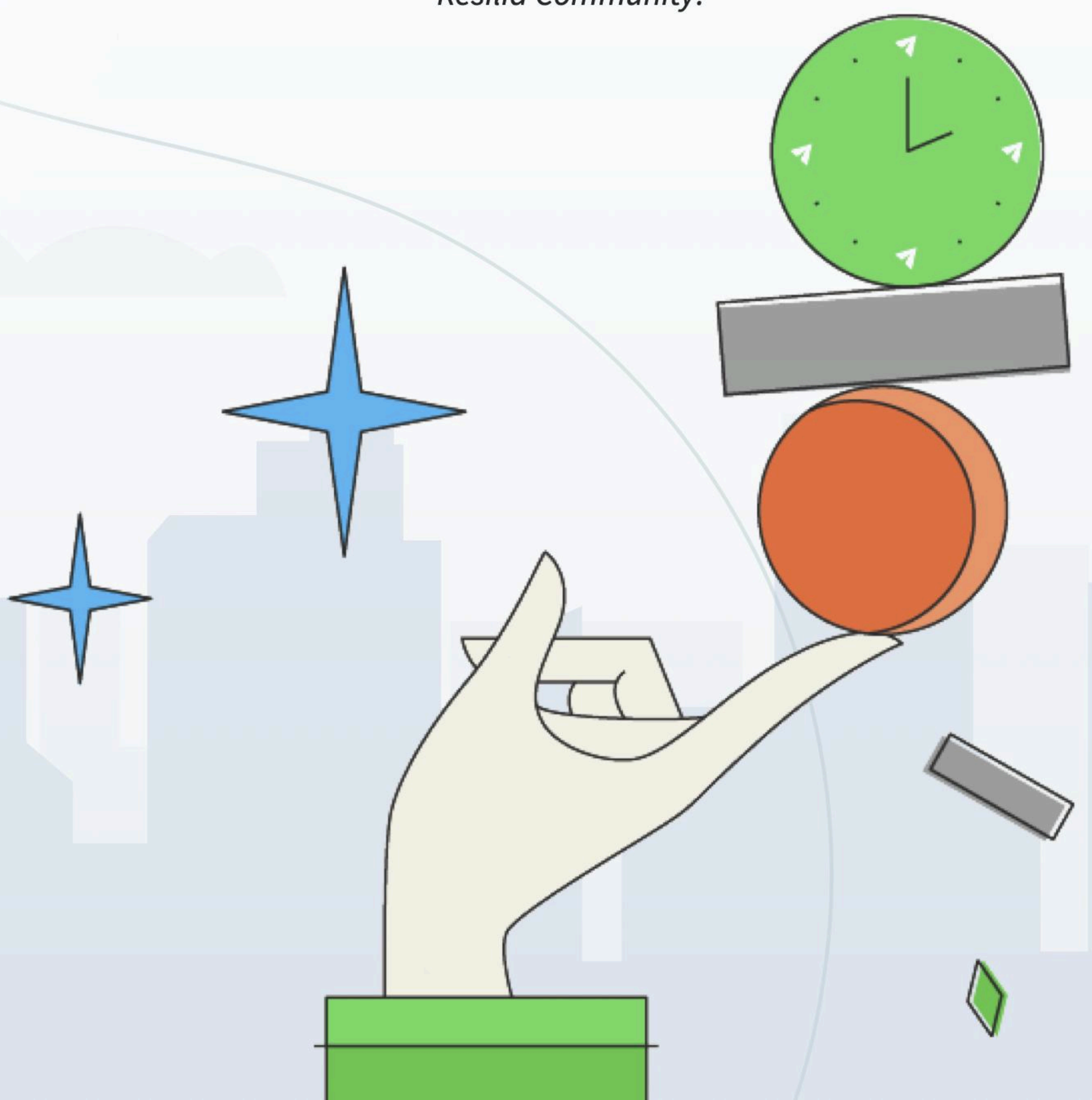
Look at 501(c)(3) nonprofits similar to yours, study their advocacy program and then talk to them. At a minimum, you know they are confident enough to be carrying out their program. And, other organizations in your mission area are motivated to help you!

Make this a call out: Tip: Make a post in Resilia Community!



Take Your Questions to the Source

The IRS Tax Exempt and Government Entities Customer Account Services may be helpful. The office can be reached at 877-829-5500.



Get the Full Resilia Advocacy Toolkit to Maximize Impact Ahead of the Election

Nonprofits can save time, reduce anxiety, and gain confidence in their advocacy efforts with our toolkit's step-by-step guidance and compliance framework.

Resilia's Advocacy Toolkit helps nonprofits bridge the advocacy learning gap through coursework, AI-powered goal tracking to create and manage plans, and moderated community spaces for support.

1 Nonprofits Can Conduct Advocacy—Carefully

Video Module:

- ☐ An Introduction to Nonprofit Advocacy

Support Articles:

- ☐ The Case for an Advocacy Program
- ☐ Activities to Avoid
- ☐ Does your advocacy work need a lawyer?

2 Planning an Advocacy Program

Video Module:

- ☐ Starting a Basic Advocacy Program

Support Articles:

- ☐ Making the Case for Advocacy
- ☐ Choose the Right Tactics & Channels
- ☐ Choosing the Right Tools
- ☐ The Need for an Advocacy Content Calendar

Support Resources:

- ☐ Sample Advocacy Content Calendar
- ☐ Advocacy Goal Tracker

3 Building and Maintaining an Advocacy Audience

Video Module:

- ☐ Developing an Audience Obsession

Support Articles:

- ☐ The Vital Role of 'Super Advocates'
- ☐ The Nexus Between Fundraising and Advocacy

Support Resources:

- ☐ Basic List Hygiene Do's and Don'ts Checklist

4 Advocacy Campaigns, Optimization and Reporting

Video Module:

- ☐ Launching, Running and Optimization

Support Articles:

- ☐ The Engagement Ladder
- ☐ Working With Partners and Coalitions

Support Resources:

- ☐ Campaign Messaging Examples
- ☐ After-Action Report Template

5 Getting involved in Elections and Government

Video Module:

- ☐ How to (Safely) Get Involved in an Election

Support Articles:

- ☐ A Basic Election Program

Support Resources:

- ☐ Campaign Messaging Template

Get the Toolkit

- Learn to amplify your mission while managing compliance risks
- 10+ hours of video modules taught by nonprofit advocacy experts
- 20+ expert-developed resources, including email templates, social media guides, and policy one-pager.

[Purchase](#)

[Learn More About the Toolkit](#)



"Empowering changemakers with the practical knowledge of how to get started is important work, and I'm excited to see this toolkit support nonprofit leaders with resources they need."

– Hannah Kane, Senior Organizer, Unite Here