

What is Advocacy?



Advocacy (n.) — The act of supporting or arguing for a cause, idea, or policy. (Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition)

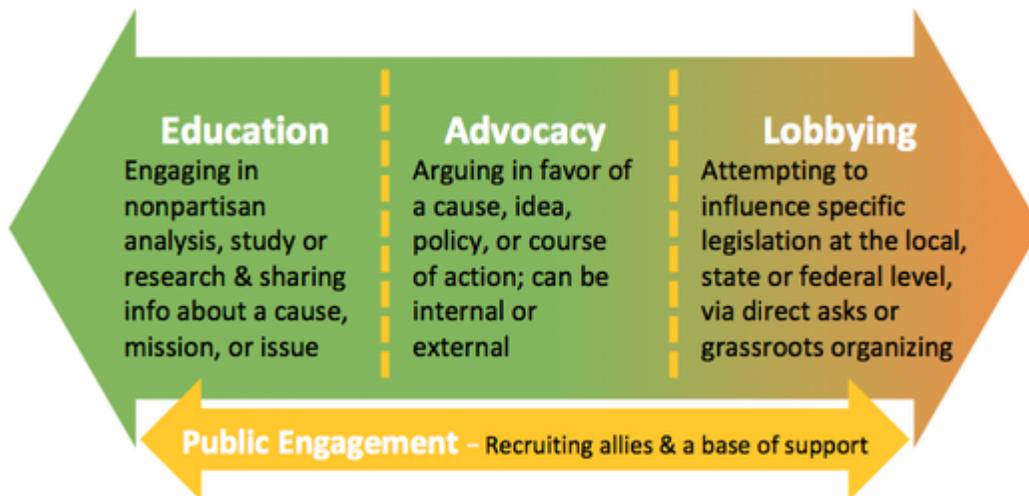
Advocacy is all about actively supporting a cause, idea, or policy. For those new to advocacy, it can feel overwhelming due to the vast amount of information and the scope of work involved. However, starting with the basics can make the process more manageable.

Advocacy generally falls into two main types: grassroots and grasstops. While advocacy is a broad term and can encompass various specific approaches, the following definitions are widely applicable:

- **Grassroots Advocacy:** This involves building and mobilizing a base of supporters. Identify and recruit individuals and organizations within the mountain bike community that align with your goals. Once this base is established, engage them to contact key decision-makers on the issue. Outreach tools may include petitions, phone calls, sign-on letters, social media, and digital ads.
- **Grasstops Advocacy:** This approach focuses on engaging specific decision-makers by leveraging personal connections, such as donors, friends, and community members. The goal is to use these connections to facilitate direct interactions with decision-makers. While both types of advocacy use similar tactics, grasstops advocacy often aims for in-person meetings.



Advocacy is a continuum that is founded in education and awareness. It's a holistic approach which requires the empowerment of others, activating one's voice and holding those in power accountable for change. A nonprofit organization can participate in the Advocacy Continuum at any point in its life cycle. As an organization participates in the continuum, they must ensure that they follow any laws that may restrict their advocacy efforts.



What is the difference between advocacy and lobbying?

It's easy to mix up "advocacy" and "lobbying." Lobbying specifically refers to efforts to persuade legislators—whether at the federal, state, county, or city level—to act on a particular piece of legislation. Advocacy, however, encompasses a wider range of activities that may or may not involve lobbying. Nonprofit organizations can engage in lobbying as part of their advocacy efforts without risking their tax-deductible status, but there are limits to the amount of lobbying they can do. It's important to be aware of and adhere to these limits.