



# ADVOCACY TOOLKIT: WHEN ADVOCACY BECOMES LOBBYING

## NWA'S MISSION

The National WIC Association (NWA) provides its members with tools and leadership to expand and sustain effective nutrition services mothers and young children.

## NAVIGATING WIC ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a broad term that encompasses various forms of engagement. Understanding the different types of advocacy will help you determine the type of advocacy that you feel most appropriate and comfortable engaging with.

Some forms of advocacy include, but are not limited to:

- Public education
- Media outreach
- Direct lobbying
- Grassroots lobbying
- Partisan political activity
- Litigation

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education of WIC through in-person forums, press events, and social media can elevate the successes of a WIC clinic and inform both the public and policymakers about the importance of WIC. These activities alone do not amount to lobbying,

**Public education is a form of advocacy. It is not lobbying.**

## LOBBYING

Lobbying is a type of advocacy that intends to influence the outcome of specific legislation. The First Amendment guarantees your constitutional right to lobby in a personal capacity; however, you may want to assess your professional capacity and workplace policies beforehand.

According to federal law, there are two forms of lobbying.

- **Direct lobbying** is an individual's attempt to influence a policymaker on a specific proposal.
- **Grassroots lobbying** is an individual's attempt to mobilize others to influence a policymaker on a specific proposal

**All lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying.**

Under the federal definition, there are three elements that determine whether advocacy activity rises to the level of lobbying:

1. The advocacy must be in communication with a federal legislator or government official or employee in charge of developing the legislation/policy or with the general public that encourages the recipient to take action to contact a legislator or government official or employee;
2. The advocacy must refer to specific legislation or measures in a piece of legislation; and
3. The advocacy must reflect a view on that legislation.

NON-LOBBYING EDUCATION	LOBBYING
Sharing key messages with your member of Congress on the importance of WIC and how it plays out in your local community	Tweeting at your member of Congress that they should vote in opposition to a bill that would limit access to WIC
Writing a letter to the editor highlighting how budget shortfalls have affected the ability to effectively administer WIC	Submitting an op-ed to your local paper encouraging your community to email their legislators in support of fully funding WIC in Appropriations
Sharing the impact of the enhanced Cash Value Benefit (CVB) on WIC families and your local economy	Signing onto a sign-on letter or Action Alert urging Congress to extend the enhanced CVB through Appropriations
Inviting a Member of Congress to visit your clinic and meet WIC families	Distributing flyers in WIC clinics asking participants to call their Member of Congress in favor of a specific bill