

WHEN AND HOW TO MOBILIZE CONSTITUENTS/VOTERS

While there are many ways to influence lawmakers, one of the most effective can be mobilizing their constituents, those who will ultimately hold them accountable at the ballot box. However, additional factors must be considered when activating constituents in the context of an appropriations advocacy campaign.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN ENGAGING WITH CONSTITUENTS

- Messaging is an important consideration when working to organize and mobilize constituents on appropriations because it is a wonky topic that generally requires more explanation than a piece of legislation.
- Will public or private pressure from constituents move a lawmaker toward support?
- What should be the tone of messages from constituents?
 - ▶ Appreciative of past support while asking for additional funding?
 - ▶ Focus on personal storytelling and the impact of the funding?

PREPARING CONSTITUENTS TO ENGAGE WITH LAWMAKERS

- **Grassroots:** Grassroots advocacy focuses on engaging those most affected by an issue to reach out to their lawmaker to call for change. Constituents don't need to be experts on the intricacies of the budget process — but they do need a baseline understanding and familiarity with key moments. As an advocate, that's where you come in. When you mobilize constituents to engage in appropriations advocacy, it is essential to conduct training on how the budget process works to build their power and knowledge. By cultivating a well-informed and engaged grassroots network, you amplify your campaign's impact and foster a stronger collective voice for your cause.
- **Grasstops:** Grasstops advocacy engages those who have strong connections to lawmakers, such as thought leaders and key donors. This approach can be a valuable complement to grassroots advocacy. One way you might approach grasstops advocacy is to look at a lawmaker's donor file and identify any overlap with your or your partners' donor files (e.g., a donor supporting a candidate and a fellow NCIT member). If so, you can engage and prepare that donor (or volunteer) for a meeting with key lawmakers on behalf of your campaign.



OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENGAGEMENT

Private

- Facilitate constituents requesting meetings with lawmakers or their staff to make a funding request.
- Direct emails and calls to lawmakers' offices urging them to support the funding request your organization/coalition is making.
- Invite lawmakers to do site visits to learn firsthand about the importance of your issue and the impact funding would have (e.g., a child care center, a Head Start classroom, etc.).

Public

- Provide support and talking points to constituents willing to ask a lawmaker a question about your issue at a town hall or roundtable with the lawmaker and make the ask that they support your funding request
- Set up an event at the state legislature to raise the profile of your issue (e.g., a farmers market in support of SNAP incentives).