



Bringing People to Power: Mobilizing Volunteers for Advocacy

Why service providers ought to engage
clients in advocacy

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What is advocacy?

- Advocacy Defined: The Act of Speaking Out on Someone's Behalf
 - Think of it like being someone's advocate
- Some examples of non-profit advocacy
 - Doing outreach on benefit eligibility
 - Organizing in the grassroots
 - Asking for policy change

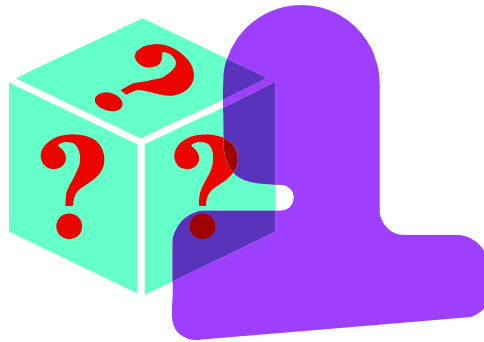


Why should non-profits do advocacy?

- You help your clients.
 - Create good policies that help them put food on the table
- You help your organization.
 - Reduce potential demand for services.
 - Media spotlight
 - More donors, volunteers

Volunteer Advocates?

- Question:
Why would I want to engage volunteers in advocacy?



- Answer:
Because it's legal, it'll make your agency better at advocacy, and it's the right thing to do.

Exercising the right to free speech is legal?

- Advocacy is legal. 501c3 status mostly means you're not allowed to engage in electoral politics- i.e., campaigning for a candidate for electoral office.





Volunteer Assets

- Lots of Americans are skeptical that poverty and hunger are social problems in the richest nation in the world.
- Perceptions of bias in conventional ways of representing social problems.
 - It's that liberal media!
 - It's those Commie professors!
 - It's their job to say that!





Credibility: Advocacy-Style

- Volunteers (and non-profits) are often perceived as unbiased.
 - They have experience, which provides what some see as genuine knowledge.
 - They generally aren't ideological.
 - They don't get paid to advocate.

Volunteers get attention

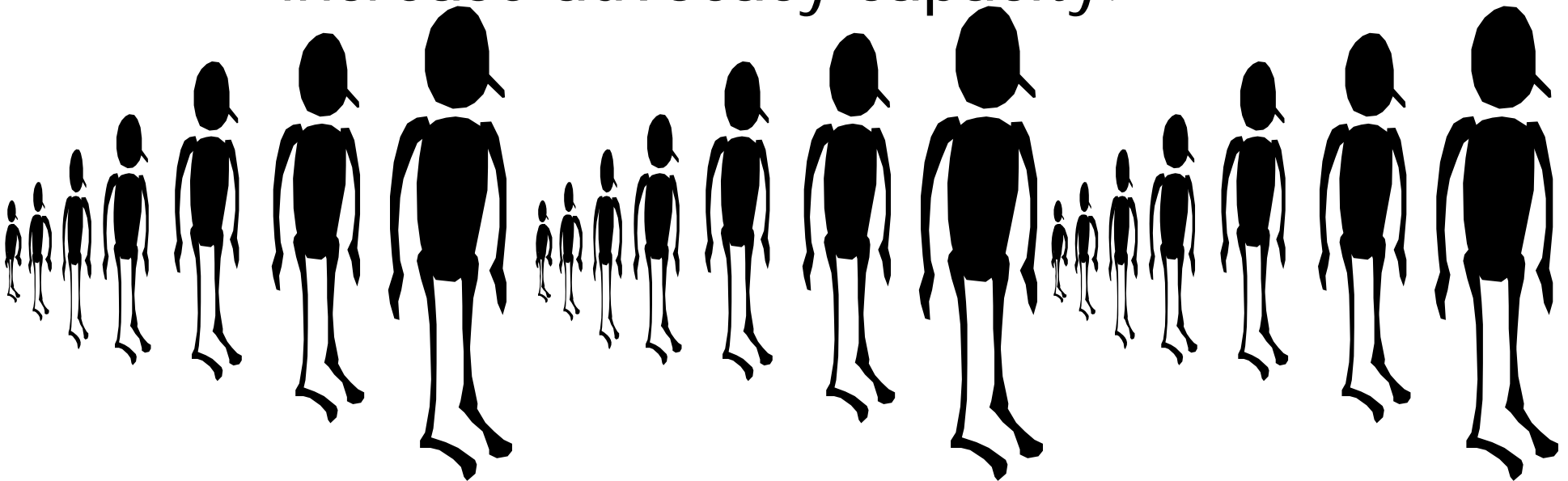
- The media loves stories about poverty
- Volunteers can take bigger risks
- Real people rarely talk to public officials
- They reach people in an emotional way





Power in numbers

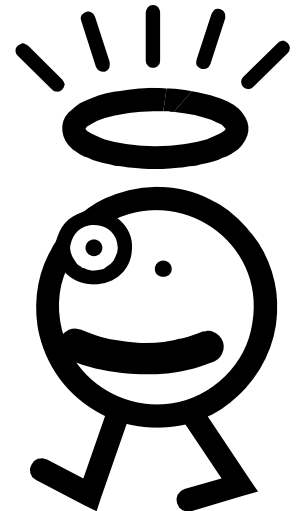
- Volunteers are voters with social networks, so politicians listen.
- Volunteers are a cost-efficient way to increase advocacy capacity.





It's the right thing to do.

- It empowers vulnerable people and communities.
- It's a meaningful experience.
- It makes the world a better place.





So how do I do it?

- Hey, you should check out my HFCR!
 - It shows you how to establish a committee of volunteer advocates at a service provider.
 - Advocacy requires persistence, and committees let you maintain an ongoing relationship with volunteers, which you'll need if you're going to be a persistent advocate.

