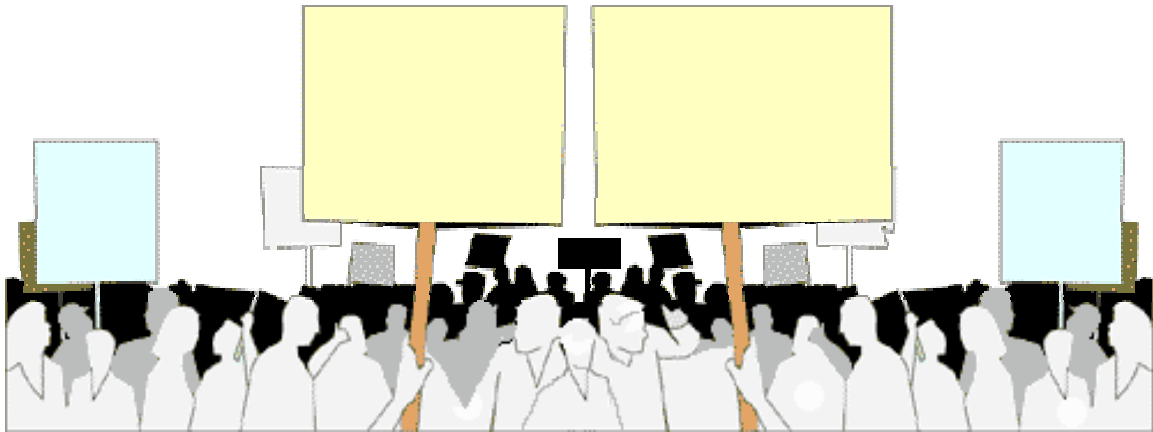


# Organizing Resource Manual for Community Based Groups



*Courtesy of the*

**Socially Responsible Network**  
of the East Bay

You can contact us or make a tax- deductible donation to the SRN at:

**Socially Responsible Network**

1221 Oak St, Suite 536  
Oakland, CA 94612

**510-268-5376**

<http://www.sociallyresponsiblenetwork.org/>

*The Socially Responsible Network*

**Organizing Resource Manual  
for Community Based Groups**

Contents

Introduction: Community Based Organizations	3
What Can Nonprofits Do During the Election Year?	4
What Charitable Nonprofits Cannot Do:	5
Using Elections to Advance Your Non-profit's Message	5
Nonprofit Lobbying Information	7
What is Lobbying?	8
Summary of Federal Rules	9
Red, yellow and green activities	13
Sources and Resources	15

## Resource Manual for Community Based Organizations

Too many nonprofits believe that lobbying activities will jeopardize their organization's tax-exempt status. On the contrary: If you're *not* lobbying, you're not exercising your full rights under the tax laws. The IRS actually encourages nonprofits to engage in lobbying and other advocacy activities, as long as they adhere to some broad spending limitations.

The guidelines are easy to follow. Based on their overall expenditures, most charities can spend as much as 20 percent of their budget on direct lobbying activities intended to influence legislation. You can use these generous limits by filing a simple, one-page form with the IRS to make the "501(h) election." Because the limits are based on the *money* you spend, there are no limits on volunteer efforts and other cost-free activities. Likewise, there are no limits on other kinds of public policy work, such as litigation, research, public education, and attempting to influence decisions by administrative agencies. Lobbying by nonprofits isn't just legal—it's important, powerful, and fundamental to democracy.

An election year is a good time to showcase issues, to be seen and heard, and to heighten an organization's profile and influence at a time that policymakers, politicians, the media, and the public are all paying attention to issues, not just candidates. An election year is an 11-month opportunity to do the following types of important work for your issue that are not possible during a year when no elections are held:

- Leverage the political process for maximum impact and exposure
- Engage and encourage candidates to address your agenda and your issues
- Get the candidates on the record
- Persuade them to change, or, if a challenger, to adopt your position
- Educate people about the candidates' records
- Receive media coverage that will help you educate the public, increase your profile and influence, and reassure donors that you haven't disappeared.

### Why Aren't Nonprofits Seizing Election-Year Opportunities?

If elections provide so many opportunities and such a useful backdrop, why have nonprofits been so hesitant to take advantage of the spotlight? According to Tufts University political science professor Jeffrey Berry, it's because most 501(c)(3) organizations don't understand tax law or where the line is between permissible and illegal activity.

We found that the typical executive director of a 501 (c)(3) has little understanding of what the law actually says. Almost half of those surveyed are so ignorant of the law that they don't even believe their organization has the right to take a public stand on federal legislation (perfectly permissible), while 45 percent believe they are not allowed to sponsor a debate featuring candidates running for public office (they can't support a candidate, but a candidate forum is just fine).

The fact that most nonprofits shy away from doing all the law allows has real costs and consequences, according to Barry. He believes nonprofits "play a special role in American society, and that role is growing. They are often closer to the problems - and the solutions—than the policy makers in city halls, state capitols, and Washington." There's no one to bring this particular perspective into play if you sit out the election year.

### **501(c)(3)s Must Do More in 2004**

Elections are the only regularly scheduled and structured events that allow our society to review and assess local and national policy and direction. Clearly, nonprofits have a unique and necessary voice in the public debate and can and must be heard during elections.

The nature and means of civic and political communications are changing in ways that benefit organizations operating at the grassroots level that have real and longtime connections to the community. Candidates and advocacy groups are relying less on paid media to educate and persuade and more on one-to-one, person-to-person contact to spread the word. Part of the reason for the shift comes from reforms in campaign finance laws limiting broadcast advertising by some advocacy groups during elections. Beyond that, broadly cast communications are increasingly seen as background noise that clutters the airwaves. More important, they are also becoming less trusted.

Americans are actively seeking other information sources. According to a Pew Research Center poll released in January, 2004, one-third of Americans now get their political information from the Internet. The survey also found that Americans are turning away from establishment media and to new and unconventional outlets for information, such as Jon Stewart's "Daily Show" broadcast on cable TV's Comedy Channel.

Grassroots organizations that already have a respected profile in the community, that are known as players working locally and close to home on backyard issues, and that have a "people network" in place have a real advantage as trusted navigators, communicators, and truth-tellers.

Now more than ever, it is time for nonprofits to seize the opportunities provided by elections to educate and communicate their issues beyond their own constituencies.

## **What Nonprofits Can Do During the Election Year**

Tax-deductible nonprofits can engage in a spate of election-year activities - so long as they do not endorse or contribute funds to a candidate and do not favor one party, candidate or groups of candidates over another. The following are all permissible activities, if they are conducted on a nonpartisan basis, as defined in IRS guidance:

- Registering voters
- Sponsoring candidate forums and debates

- Educating candidates on issues
- Issuing legislative scorecards and report cards
- Educating and training the public and media — issuing voter guides informing voters of candidates' records and positions, conducting polling and survey work and releasing results to the public
- Obtaining candidate position statements on questionnaires
- Sponsoring and campaigning on ballot initiatives

### **What Charitable Nonprofits *Cannot* Do**

- Endorse or oppose a candidate or political party
- Contribute money to a candidate or political party
- Display any bias for or against a candidate or political party
- Question an individual about their candidate or political party preference during voter registration

### **Practical Suggestions for Using Elections to Advance Your Nonprofit's Message**

**1. Understand the benchmarks of the election cycle.** Timing is everything. Knowing when the media are paying attention, when most of the public tunes in (after Labor Day), when policy makers are most susceptible to pressure and eager for public praise will all help you maximize media attention and stay legal. (For a broader discussion of these opportunities, see "The Election Cycle Benchmarks" in Section IV of this book.)

**2. Stay Legal.** Make a member of your staff the "compliance officer," charged with knowing the state and federal laws that apply to your organization. Get good information about the laws and current FEC rulings, which were changing even as we went to press with this book. Recognize, both for legal reasons and to enhance the effectiveness of your organization's communications, that an election year is not the time to introduce new issues or advocacy campaigns. Heighten the profile of the issues you have been working on that already have public and media recognition. Your track record with these issues will bring you more credibility and standing with the media as you seek additional coverage. Sticking with the issues you traditionally work on is also less likely to draw legal scrutiny: Feeding a fire that's already burning is less likely to draw attention than starting a new blaze.

**3. Map out the year.** Understand how politicians use the legislative session for positioning, jockeying for media coverage. Mark immovable dates on your calendars: the

petition-gathering period, deadlines for filing and qualifying for candidacy, primary and general election dates, dates of the major party conventions, Labor Day. Look for and plan to exploit traditional events such as candidates' announcement tours, debates, and forums, advertising flights (when new ads hit the airwaves) and retail campaigning (candidate rallies, door knocking, visits to day care and senior centers, etc.) Be sensitive to the year's traditional events and cycles, including religious holidays; secular holidays such as Earth Day, Mother's Day, and Memorial Day; big sporting events such as the World Series and Super Bowl; and pay special attention to the school calendar - people are not likely to show up at a rally if school's out and they're away on vacation.

Figure out how to use the calendar to your advantage either by piggybacking onto a planned event or exploiting a lull in the established schedule when you could create an event that captures the attention of candidates, media, and the public. If you use these cycles, ride 'em and don't try to buck them, getting more media coverage will be easier.

**4. Monitor the media.** You should already know who in the media covers your issues in the legislature, but during election seasons many newsrooms restructure to accommodate the heavier news cycle. Find out which reporters are covering the elections and build relationships with them that enable you to feed stories that take advantage of the candidates and their election activities to spotlight your issues.

**5. Make sure your position is understood.** Prepare materials and brief the media and the public on your issue and stance. Be clear - and vocal— about your priorities and proposed solutions.

**6. Generate coverage** by adding to your tool box. In 2004, the inside baseball of the presidential elections will get plenty of ink and airtime. Very little media time will go to covering where state and local candidates stand on specific issues. But you can use a number of tools to increase coverage and get the record out.

- *Legislative Scorecards.* Releasing and scoring an officeholder's voting record gives the media and public a clear understanding of the candidate's history on your issue. It is safest to score the entire delegation or regional delegation, not just incumbents who are running for reelection.
- *Report cards.* Comparing and contrasting track records and quoting candidate statements allows challengers to be included based on what's been said and done, but must not include an endorsement, be partisan, or exclude any candidate running for the office.
- *Questionnaires.* If you can get candidates to respond, questionnaires require them to go beyond the general to the specific. When done, you have results you can release to the media.

Engage candidates. Invite candidates and the media to tour the local polluting power plant or overcrowded health care clinic. You may take them individually, but you must invite them all, and invite the media each time.

Engage the public. Build a community around your issue - use house parties, video screenings, door-to-door canvassing, and literature drops to recruit volunteers and do public education. The press will get educated, too - if you invite the media to come along.

**7. Get in the picture.** Show up where the candidates show up. Get their public appearance schedule on the Internet and determine whether reporters are likely to cover the event. Deploy a squad of members to appear up front at each location—with nonpartisan signs. Make sure your folks are easily identifiable and are either dressed in matching (again, nonpartisan) T-shirts or are accompanied by props that attract the camera's eye. For example, an inflatable smokestack could herald the need for action on clean air.

**8. Flush 'em out.** Ask questions at town meetings, plant questions with reporters. If candidates refuse to meet or discuss issues, publicize the fact. Don't be afraid to use materials like flyers, paid advertising, or billboards to broadcast candidates' stands or reveal their unwillingness to take a stand on your issue.

**9. Promote editorials.** Engage editorial boards by submitting letters outlining the candidates' positions and your expertise. Offer to meet with the editorial staff for a briefing. Make sure to keep sending Letters to the Editor - they make an impression on the public and the editorial staff.

**10. Plan events.** for convention and other political party gatherings. Party meetings at county and state levels are opportunities to generate coverage. The meetings are largely staged, with lots of downtime and little real news value, but the audience is important and full of influential people. For a nonprofit, there are limits on what you can do, so get good information on the law. And know that the law doesn't limit you from the following activities:

- Setting up an information booth
- Handing out a clever lapel pin or other memorable material
- Staging a media event
- Flooding hotels where delegates are staying with materials
- Advertising in convention programs

## **Nonprofit Lobbying Information**

Whether it's working with public officials on welfare reform implementation or supporting greater charitable deductions, lobbying and advocacy can play an important role for nonprofits in achieving their missions. The federal guidelines that regulate nonprofit advocacy and lobbying incorporate significant flexibility for nonprofit organizations to participate in the public policy process.

The Donors Forum is a local resource for information on nonprofit advocacy. Our library holds a collection of nonprofit advocacy materials including, *Worry-Free Lobbying*, a free publication by the Alliance for Justice that is available on a walk-in basis only; it may not be requested for mailing. *Worry-Free Lobbying* is a handbook for funders and grantees that explains how to use the 501(h) election to maximize your effectiveness as an advocate and lobbyist. The Alliance for Justice is a Washington, DC-based public charity that works to strengthen the advocacy rights and abilities of public interest organizations.

In addition, Charitable Lobbying in the Public Interest is a national project dedicated to educating nonprofits about the possibilities and limits under the law for nonprofit lobbying. Their informative website includes the full text of the revised Nonprofit Lobbying Guide and also goes over permissible activities of 501(c)(3) organizations in conducting lobbying, education campaigns, and voter education.

### **Nonprofit Lobbying: It's the Right Thing to Do**

It is perfectly legal for your nonprofit organization to lobby. In fact, it's not only legal, but it's encouraged by Congress and the Administration. **If you don't lobby, you are in danger of missing an opportunity to help those you serve.**

It's also easy. Anyone who can make a phone call or write a letter can lobby. If you believe in a cause, then you should lobby. Sometimes lobbying is the best service a nonprofit organization can provide. For example, recently lobbying by charitable organizations has been principally responsible for reducing the number of alcohol related highway deaths, curtailing the use of tobacco products by teenagers, the setting aside of 1.7 million acres of federal land in Utah as a national monument, and for gaining greater mental health insurance protection for people suffering from mental illness. Lobbying today is a must. Any organization that does not lobby, or an organization that does not lobby well, is almost certain to get left out.

## **What is Lobbying?**

Before going further, it might help to explain the term lobbying. Lobbying is nothing more or less than trying to persuade the members of a legislature -- whether city council, county commission, state legislature, or United States House of Representatives or Senate -- to enact legislation favorable to your cause or, on occasion, defeat or repeal legislation unfavorable to your cause. It's that simple. The legislation may set up a new program, change an existing one, guarantee certain rights, appropriate funds, etc.

### *Nonprofit Groups CAN Lobby*

Many nonprofits have tended to soft pedal or refrain from lobbying altogether. This behavior no doubt has its roots in a provision that has been in the Internal Revenue Code since 1934 to the effect that "no substantial part" of a charity's activities may be that of attempting to influence legislation. The term "substantial" has never been clearly defined so many charities, fearing that their lobbying might stray beyond the ambiguous

substantial limits, have tended to shy away from the activity altogether. However, the law changed in 1976.

### *Sanctioned by Congress and the IRS*

In 1976 Congress removed all doubts as to the legality of lobbying by nonprofit tax-exempt organizations by writing into the income tax laws authorization for each such organization to elect to spend a certain percentage of its income on lobbying. Not only did Congress recognize the validity of lobbying by such groups but it came right out and used the very words "lobby" and "lobbying." Equally important, the Internal Revenue Service issued very clear, reasonable regulations related to the 1976 lobby law in August of 1990. Together, the law and regulations provide wide latitude for nonprofits to lobby.

## **Summary of federal rules on lobbying for 501(c)(3) organizations**

---

### **Basic Information About the 1976 Law Governing Lobbying by Charities**

The federal government, including Congress and the Internal Revenue Service, supports lobbying by charities. Congress sent that unambiguous message when it enacted the liberal provisions under the 1976 lobby law. The same message came from the Internal Revenue Service in regulations issued in 1990, which support both the spirit and intent of the 1976 legislation.

The 1976 law is clear regarding what constitutes lobbying by charities. Following are key points about that legislation. They apply only to charities that have "elected" to come under the 1976 law. Those that have not elected remain subject to the ambiguous "insubstantial" test, which leaves uncertain which activities of charities related to legislation constitute lobbying and how much lobbying is permitted:

1. The most important feature of the law is that it provides ample leeway for charities to lobby, and it protects those that elect the advantages of the 1976 rules, from the uncertainties they would be subject to if they remained under the insubstantial test.
2. Generally, organizations that elect the 1976 lobby law may spend 20% of the first \$500,000 of their annual expenditures on lobbying (\$100,000), 15% of the next \$500,000, and so on, up to \$1 million dollars a year! Equally important, there are eight critically important legislation-related activities which charities may conduct that are not considered lobbying by the IRS.
3. Understanding what constitutes lobbying under the 1976 law is not difficult. In general, you are lobbying when you state your position on specific legislation to legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation, or urge your members to do so (direct lobbying). In addition, you are lobbying when you state your position on legislation to the general public and ask the general public to contact legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation (grassroots lobbying).
4. The Internal Revenue Service encourages groups to elect to come under the 1976 law.

The IRS has found groups that have elected are more often in compliance with the law than those that have not. Also, it is easy to elect. Just have your governing body vote to come under the provisions of the 1976 law and file the one page IRS Form 5768 with the IRS. For a copy of Form 5768, contact Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest at [charity.lobbying@indepsec.org](mailto:charity.lobbying@indepsec.org) or at 202/387-5048, or download it from the Web site at [www.indepsec.org/clpi](http://www.indepsec.org/clpi).

### **What Are the Main Elements of the 1976 Law?**

**Exclusions from Lobbying** Critical to the 1976 law are the provisions declaring that many expenditures that have some relationship to public policy and legislative issues are not treated as lobbying and so are permitted without limit. For example:

1. Contacts with executive branch employees or legislators in support of or opposition to proposed regulations are not considered lobbying. So, if your charity is trying to get a regulation changed it may contact both members of the Executive Branch as well as legislators to urge support for your position on the regulation and the action is not considered lobbying.
2. Lobbying by volunteers is considered a lobbying expenditure only to the extent that the charity incurs expenses associated with the volunteers' lobbying. For example, volunteers working for a charity could organize a huge rally of volunteers at the state capitol to lobby on an issue and the only expenses related to the rally paid by the charity would count as a lobbying expenditure.
3. A charity's communications to its members on legislation -- even if it takes a position on the legislation -- is not lobbying so long as the charity doesn't directly encourage its members or others to lobby. For example, a group could send out a public affairs bulletin to its members, take a position on legislation in the bulletin, and it would not count as lobbying if the charity didn't ask its members to take action on the measure.
4. A charity's response to written requests from a legislative body (not just a single legislator) for technical advice on pending legislation is not considered lobbying. So, if requested in writing a group could provide testimony on legislation, take a position in the testimony on that legislation, and it would not be considered lobbying.
5. So-called self-defense activity -- that is, lobbying legislators (but not the general public) on matters that may affect the organization's own existence, powers, tax exempt status, and similar matters would not be lobbying. For example, lobbying in opposition to proposals in Congress to curtail charity lobbying, or lobbying in support of a charitable tax deduction for nonitemizers, would not be a lobbying expenditure. It would become lobbying only if you asked for support from the general public. (Lobbying for programs in the organization's field, (e.g., health, welfare, environment, education, etc.) however, is not self-defense lobbying. For example, an organization that is fighting to cure cancer could not consider working for increased appropriations for cancer research to be self-defense lobbying.)
6. Making available the results of "nonpartisan analysis, study or research" on a legislative issue that presents a sufficiently full and fair exposition of the pertinent facts

to enable the audience to form an independent opinion, would not be considered lobbying. The regulations make clear that such research and analysis need not be "neutral" or "objective" to fall within this "nonpartisan" exclusion. The exclusion is available to research and analysis that take direct positions on the merits of legislation, as long as the organization presents facts fully and fairly, makes the material generally available, and does not include a direct call to the reader to contact legislators. This exception is particularly important because many nonprofits that engage in public policy do conduct significant amounts of nonpartisan analysis, study and research on legislation.

7. A charity's discussion of broad social, economic and similar policy issues whose resolution would require legislation -- even if specific legislation on the matter is pending -- is not considered lobbying so long as the discussion does not address the merits of specific legislation. For example, a session at a charity's annual meeting regarding the importance of enacting child welfare legislation, would not be lobbying so long as the organization is not addressing merits of specific child welfare legislation pending in the legislature. Representatives of the organizations would even talk directly to legislators on the broad issue of child welfare, so long as there is no reference to specific legislation on that issue.
8. It's not grassroots lobbying if a charity urges the public, through the media or other means, to vote for or against a ballot initiative or referendum. (It's direct lobbying, not grassroots, because the public in this situation becomes the legislature. Lobbying the public through the media is therefore considered a direct lobbying expenditure, not a grassroots expenditure. This is an advantage because charities are permitted to spend more on direct lobbying than on grassroots lobbying.)

From the foregoing, it is very clear that there are many activities related to legislation that do not count toward lobbying expenditure limits.

---

Many organizations are unclear about how they can participate in the political process. Nonprofit tax-exempt organizations come in a variety of styles, as indicated by their IRS designations: 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) and 527. No matter what the style, each carries a certain power in its ability to educate and motivate voters. . Election 2004 calls for full-throttle implementation of all of these powers.

Most of the larger organizations, such as the Sierra Club or the National Abortion Rights Action League, have set up both a 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(4) organization. 501(c)(3)s are meant to educate and edify and are even allowed to do a limited amount of lobbying. For example, they can tell their members to call upon Congress to act on certain pieces of legislation. Off-limits to any 501(c)(3), however, is any level of partisan politicking—no proclamations such as "Bush sucks. Vote for any Democrat who can sit up by themselves." However, 501(c)(3) organizations *can* criticize Bush Administration policies and rate his performance—very carefully.

Even with partisan electioneering benched on the sidelines, a large playing field still exists for 501(c)(3)s to exercise power in the political process by means of conducting voter registration activities, distributing voter education guides, disseminating information about candidates and issues, working on get-out-the-vote drives, hosting candidate debates, and other educational outreach regarding the election itself, democracy, the importance of voting, and so forth. Obviously 501(c)(3) groups should not do anything that may jeopardize their tax-exempt status (see below), but they should boldly implement the tools that are at their disposal.

More powerful bang for the buck is the 501(c)(4) organization. 501(c)(4)s can conduct unlimited lobbying and can engage in some partisan electoral activity so long as it's not the organization's primary purpose. Although donations to these organizations are not tax-deductible, the organizations themselves are still exempt from most federal taxes.

501(c)(4)s can provide candidate-related information *to their members*, endorse specific candidates, urge the election or defeat of a particular candidate, and encourage contributions to a candidate. The definition of membership is key: members include people who either pay annual dues to the organization or have a significant attachment to the organization, such as the right to participate in the organization's governance. However, a 501(c)(4) *can* (and *should*) announce its endorsements to the press—an effective way of letting a wider public know of its support. Although the organization can't coordinate its endorsement with a campaign, the campaign may independently publicize the organization's support. Influential 501(c)(4)s that have name recognition with the public should use this tactic to amplify their power to motivate voters.

There is a specific type of 501(c)(4) organization known as an MCFL-type corporation, which has an ideological mission, is not formed for profit; is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code; may not accept money from either corporations or unions, just individuals. If these criteria are met, MCFL -type corporations may make independent expenditures for express advocacy communications to the public legally, with FEC reporting. MCFL-type corporations may not make contributions to any candidate campaign, and may not coordinate with any candidate campaign.

### **Election activities 501(c)(3) organizations can engage in without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status.**

Nonprofit organizations can engage their communities in 2004. With their large membership bases and extensive networks, nonprofits can educate large numbers of existing and potential voters without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status. The golden rule is simple: All election activities are permissible so long as they do not appear in any way, shape, or form to promote or critique any one candidate.

Much of what can be done within this rule is common sense. But there are many gray areas that may or may not bring scrutiny to the organization depending on when they do it, how, what they say, to whom, and so forth. Call on resources like the Alliance for Justice to clarify the details of your organization's planned activities.

Federal tax law and state and federal election laws cover these issues. Nonprofits should adhere first to federal tax law, because it often dictates a higher standard than state and federal election law. 501(c)(4) and 527 organizations should pay careful attention to the rules of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, which are in flux even in the midst of the 2004 election cycle.

The following specifies what activities are permissible for 501(c)(3) organizations. Follow the colors to determine how your favorite 501(c)(3) organization can help make Election 2004 a victory for democracy.

### **Red: Don't Do It**

- Endorse candidates.
- Contribute funds to candidates.
- Use organization resources or staff time for candidate election activities (ballot measures are OK, subject to lobbying limits).
- Provide mailing lists to candidates for free or below market rate.
- Solicit candidate pledges: Nonprofit organizations cannot ask a candidate to pledge to do or not to do something in their campaign or in their eventual election. This provides implicit endorsement and is illegal.

### **Yellow: Proceed with Caution**

- Distribute, post on Web site, and send out on listservs voter education guides and legislative voting records that address a wide range of issues. Scorecards are not permissible if they indicate that a candidate's position is either "good" or "bad."
- Educate the public on issues as long as the information does not implicitly suggest that people should vote for a particular candidate.
- Educate the public on candidates as long as information is presented on all candidates and on a wide range of issues and without trying to cast candidates in a favorable or unfavorable light. Web sites of 501(c)(3)s may link to the Web sites of all candidates in a race for educational purposes following the above guidelines.
- Seek to influence party platforms, as long as you do it for all major parties equally.

## Green: Do it!

*Note:* All green activities are really chartreuse because there are times when their permissibility is suspect. Check the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act for the new rules on timing it outlines.

- Register people to vote as long as there is no targeting of districts based on partisan demographics. Nor can you target swing or battleground districts ( ie you cannot target a "Democratic" area but you can target underrepresented communities, such as African Americans, Latinos, etc).
- Run a get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drive. The same targeting rules apply, see above.
- Host a candidate forum. Make sure all candidates are invited, rules are fair, and the audience is not stacked.
- Candidate questioning. Organizations can encourage their members to ask all the candidates in a race the same (not loaded) question about a particular issue of concern to them. Groups can also continue to criticize public officials who they feel are detrimental to their issues -- even when that official is a candidate -- if this is an activity the organization also does in the same manner and scope in a non-election year.
- Public education via earned media coverage of your issue. Use public education tools such as nonpartisan reports, opinion editorials, and letters to the editor to get the word out about your issue.
- Direct public education about your issue by way of scorecards, Internet communications, door knocking, and so forth. All of these must be nonpartisan.
- Ballot initiatives are also a tool to make proactive public policy on your issue

## SOURCES/ RESOURCES

- 1) *Election Year Opportunities*, Kim Haddow and *Power, Tax-Free Exert* from LOUD & CLEAR in an Election Year Created by the Spin Project
- 2) Donors Forum of Chicago [http://www.donorsforum.org/policy/np\\_lobby.html](http://www.donorsforum.org/policy/np_lobby.html)
- 3) Alliance for Justice Toll free: 866-675-6229 (866-NPLobby)  
Phone: 202-822-6070 Fax: 202-822-6068  
E-mail: [advocacy@afj.org](mailto:advocacy@afj.org) or check out their website [www.allianceforjustice.org](http://www.allianceforjustice.org)  
Along with more information and resources on these issues, you can sign up for the Nonprofit Action Network from Alliance for Justice and get news about IRS and Federal Election Commission rulings, as well as other developments that affect the advocacy activities of nonprofits.
- 4) Independent Sector has a website where they provide access to information about lobbying and advocacy. See <http://www.independentsector.org/clpi>
- 5) FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION:  
FPPC's Toll-Free Number: 1-866-ASK-FPPC (1-866-275-3772)  
Has most of the political IRS forms on this website: <http://www.fppc.ca.gov/>
- 6) Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest at [charity.lobbying@indepsec.org](mailto:charity.lobbying@indepsec.org) or at 202/387-5048, or download it from the Web site at [www.indepsec.org/clpi](http://www.indepsec.org/clpi) .
- 7) RS website has comprehensive info for charities and non-profits visit there website for more information: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html>
- 8) Check out our Socially Responsible Network website for more valuable contacts and useful organizing tools: <http://www.sociallyresponsiblenetwork.org/>