

## Connecting Advocacy to your Mission

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### 1) You are already doing advocacy

Are you helping a client get the benefits they are entitled to? Are you helping a student succeed in school? Are you ensuring a community has access to art? All of this work is a form of advocacy, even if that is not the term we use.

### 2) Changing the system requires advocacy

“Direct service doesn’t change the system. Changing the system changes the system.”  
*Emmet Carson, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Policy Action Institute, October 2013*

Direct service to the community is critical, but they alone cannot bring about systems change. Deliberate time and focus is needed.

### 3) Advocacy makes your day-to-day work easier

The frustrations we face when trying to serve our clients – from scarce funding to bureaucratic red tape – make our day-to-day work in nonprofits difficult and inefficient. Advocating to improve these issues not only helps our clients, but makes it easier for us to serve them effectively.

### 4) Funders and donors want to support organizations that do direct service and advocacy

Donors and foundations recognize the importance of systems change. A recent survey of foundation CEOs showed that three out of four saw current government policy as the biggest barrier to meeting their mission. Both groups want to support organization that not only address the important basic needs but also are working to address the root causes of the problem.

### 5) Supporters have another way to engage with your organization

With each younger generation, supporters are looking to engage with causes they support by doing more than donating – they are interested in volunteering and advocating. These activities not only empower your base and provide another entry point for supporters, but often translate to financial support over time.

### 6) Relationships with decision makers are important

Just as you want to have a strong relationship with existing and potential donors, you want to build a strong relationship with decision makers in your community. Apart from any specific law or change, you want decision makers to know your organization, know what you contribute to the community, and look to you for guidance on issues where you have expertise.