



Legislative Advocacy

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New Mexico's Legislature



- Meets for a 60-day session on odd-numbered years to do **all** business.
- Meets for a 30-day session on even-numbered years for budget issues only, plus whatever the Governor wants.
- Meets between regular sessions for interim committee hearings to hear reports on past actions and to prepare for the next session.



Representation



- Senators represent about 50,000 people (or about 27,500 who vote).
- Representatives represent about 30,000 people (or about 16,500 who vote).



Bills, Memorials and Resolutions

- **Bill** = a change in law or an appropriation.
- **Capital Outlay** request = also a **Bill**.
- **Memorial** = passed to study an issue and obtain more information or to honor someone.
- **Resolution** = a proposal to amend the constitution by agreeing to take the proposed amendment to the voters.



Why Advocate?



- **Your credibility, knowledge, caring.**
- Constituents/Voters matter to elected officials.
- Elected officials need and want your expertise.
- *You* have a vote and a voice, children *don't*.
- Policymakers *do* listen.
- The squeaky wheel gets the oil.
- When you advocate for change, *you* change.



How?

- Personal or group visits
- Personal letters
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Letters to the editor and op-ed pieces
- Editorial board meetings
- Press conferences, press releases
- Radio talk shows
- Testimony at committee hearings



Who?



- Your own elected officials (and candidates!)
- Committee members
- Committee chairs
- Legislative leadership
- Legislative staff and analysts
- Department officials and analysts
- General public (through the media)



When?



- During a campaign to influence the agenda.
- After the campaign to influence priorities.
- Before a legislative session... because they have time to listen.
- During a legislative session.
- After a legislative session... to thank them or express your disappointment with their votes.



Do's



- Be *united* and well *organized*.
- Make an appointment.
- Be quick with gratitude, but slow to criticize.
- Be courteous and respectful.
- Use *both* data and personal stories.
- Keep it simple, be concise and to the point.
- **Ask** for what you want.
- Report back.



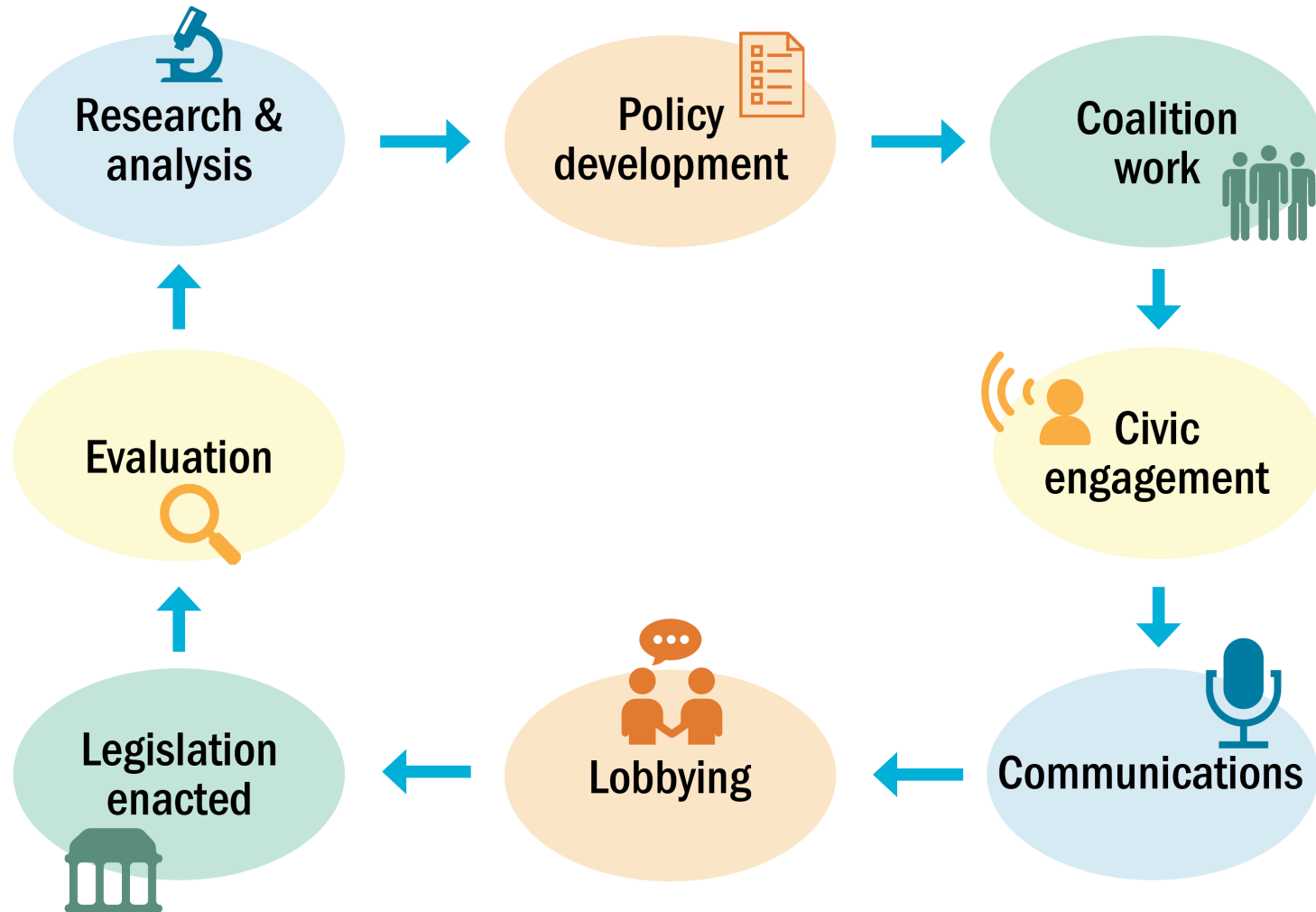
Don'ts



- Be late.
- Be argumentative, arrogant, condescending or threatening.
- Exaggerate.
- Overwhelm them with too much data.
- Take more time than you were offered.
- *Never* burn bridges. Leave the door open for further discussion, on this or other issues.



Legislative Advocacy Flowchart



Mind Your Message



- Develop your **message**.
- *You* **frame** the message, define the debate.
- Stay on message.
- Repeat your **sound bite**.
- **Tell** the story the way you want it.
- **Hook** the issue to a current news story.
- Know what *not* to say.



For Info on Bills and Legislators



www.nmlegis.gov

- To find a legislator, click on **Legislators**
- To find a bill, click on **Legislation**
- To find the schedule of committee hearings and the agenda for the Senate and House, click on **What's Happening**
- To watch committees or floor sessions, click on **Webcast**

