

Lobbying vs. Issue Education

Navigating Advocacy as a Nonprofit Worker in the Afterschool Space

To increase funding for and access to afterschool programs, it's important to advocate for why afterschool matters with your elected representatives. If you're thinking that you can't engage in advocacy because your **work for a nonprofit** and/or **work in a 21st CCLC-funded program**, you are mistaken....because YES YOU CAN!

As someone who is immersed in the afterschool space, you are well equipped to share why afterschool matters with your representatives; it's called issue education. Here's the difference between issue education and lobbying:

	Issue Education	Lobbying
Definition	Communication with a legislator or elected official to educate or inform them on issues important to you as a constituent.	Communication with a legislator or elected official to express a view/opinion about specific legislation.
Rules	You can participate without restriction.	You cannot use federal funds (e.g. 21st CCLC*) or work time for lobbying. You can use other unrestricted funds for lobbying, but you must record your time spent lobbying.
Examples	<p>"Afterschool is important to me because I believe all youth deserve the opportunity to spark their passion."</p> <p>"I work in an afterschool program and see how it helps youth succeed in school. I know that afterschool matters."</p>	<p>"I oppose the president's proposed budget which cuts federal afterschool funding."</p> <p>"Please support the bill that increases funding for 21st CCLC."</p>

*21st CCLC: 21st Century Community Learning Centers



More Examples of Issue Education

Remember to personalize your own messages and to only use these examples as a guide.

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As a working parent, I can focus on my job knowing that my kids are safe and engaged in their afterschool program.

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I love the feeling when I'm showing a young person a new way to approach math or reading and you see something light up - you know they're inspired to learn because of the work you do.

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I don't want my or anyone else's kids sitting in front of a TV when there's so many wonderful things they could be doing. Afterschool programs in my community provide activities like dance, sports, theater, music, tutoring. I don't know what we'd do without them.