



Creating the Conditions for Change

**Advancing the College Access Agenda
through Effective Advocacy**



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
Community and Education Partnerships

Table of Contents



**Creating the
Conditions
for Change**

<i>Introduction</i>	3
Section One	
<i>Be the Change: Understanding Advocacy and What it Means to College Access</i>	
Advocacy and You.....	7
Why Advocacy Matters to College Access	8
Tenants of Effective Advocacy	9
Section Two	
<i>Getting Organized: Building a Blueprint for College Access Advocacy</i>	
Step One: Assess the Local Context	13
Step Two: Define Your Advocacy Goals and Objectives.....	15
Step Three: Define Your Advocacy Targets.....	17
Step Four: Define the Scope of Your Advocacy Strategy	18
Step Five: Brainstorm and Plan Your Advocacy Activities	19
Step Six: Formalize a Communication Plan.....	21
Step Seven: Evaluate Your Advocacy Impact.....	22
Looking Ahead	23
Section Three	
<i>Overview of the Federal Policy Process</i>	
Advocacy and Your Role as a GEAR UP Professional	27
Congressional Overview.....	29
Understanding the House Legislative Process	29
How a Bill Becomes Law — House Flowchart.....	33
Understanding the Senate Legislative Process.....	34
How a Bill Becomes Law — Senate Flowchart.....	39
Understanding the Congressional Appropriation Process	40
Overview of the Authorization vs. Appropriation Process.....	46
Understanding the Appropriation Timeline and the Congressional Budget Act	49
Section Four	
<i>Effective Congressional Communication and Advocacy</i>	
Congressional Advocacy and Education Activity Checklist.....	53
Congressional Staff Roles	55
Tips for Communicating with Congress.....	56

(continued)

Table of Contents *(continued)*

Visiting with Your Member of Congress58
Congressional Visit Meeting Flow60
Communicating the Impact of GEAR UP to Reporters and Members of Congress61
Congressional Visit General Do’s and Don’ts.....62
GEAR UP Legislative Contact Feedback Form.....63

Section Five
Planning Exercises

Exercise One: SWOT Analysis of the Advocacy Situation67
Exercise Two, Part I: Identifying Influential Policy Makers and Stakeholders70
Exercise Two, Part II72
Exercise Three: Setting Advocacy Goals73
Exercise Four: Advocacy Implementation Plan.....76

About NCCEP79

Introduction



As someone who has long worked on mitigating the educational disparities between affluent students and those who are less fortunate, I am immensely proud of the invaluable college access programs that have increased the academic proficiency, high school graduation rate, and college admission rates of historically underserved students.

However, I am sure that you will agree that our work is far from complete. While we are honing in on the strategies, programs and policies that significantly improve student achievement, the reality is that for every student or family we reach, numerous others remain unaddressed. To ensure that every student has the opportunity to realize their potential, the principles and strategies that drive our college access work must be expanded and institutionalized on a grand scale.

The theme of this publication is *Creating the Conditions for Change*, which suggests that in order to meet our collective goal of increasing the number of students who enroll and succeed in higher education, we must alter and improve how individuals, communities and institutions interact and make decisions when it comes to public education.

Certainly, this is no simple task. Strengthening our schools requires a high degree of collaboration among family and community members, educational leaders and policymakers. To this end, we present the following advocacy toolkit, which is designed to provide a basic framework for better understanding the fundamentals of advocacy and exercises to build an effective advocacy strategy. We hope that upon the completion of this toolkit, you will be equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to begin advocating on behalf of your students and families, your schools, and your college access program.

Our intention is to provide you with a broad framework that is applicable in multiple contexts so that you may address varied audiences, level of governance (local, state, regional, or national), and public policy issues. The toolkit also underscores a fundamentally democratic notion that as educators and concerned citizens, we have an expert voice that can shape the future of education policy and practice. However, before we can be understood, we must be heard.

On behalf of everyone at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), please accept our deepest gratitude for your commitment to the students and families you serve. If we can be of any assistance as you embark on your advocacy journey, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hector Garza'.

Hector Garza

President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

Creating the Conditions for Change:

***Advancing the College Access Agenda
through Effective Advocacy***

Section One

**Be the Change: Understanding Advocacy
and What It Means to College Access**



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You must be the change you want to see in the world.

— Mahatma Gandhi *Indian political and spiritual leader (1869–1948)*

Advocacy and You

At the heart of advocacy lies the fundamental observation that we live and interact in a world of competing beliefs, ideas and policies. In some cases the distinctions between competing beliefs are clearly defined (such as the contrast between political party platforms) and in some cases, the distinctions are far more vague. By channeling our beliefs on behalf of a particular issue into outward action, we can have a profound impact on individuals, institutions and whole communities.

In simple terms, advocacy is the act of supporting or recommending a course of action on behalf of a person, idea, proposal, or policy. In American society, where our democratic governance at every level is predicated on a competitive marketplace of ideas and recommendations, the ability to persuade others that your viewpoint is a superior alternative to competing viewpoints is the fundamental engine for change. From the relatively simple decision to place a traffic stop sign in a particular intersection, to the more complex management of trillions of taxpayer dollars, every policy decision begins with an individual or coalition effectively advocating on behalf of their viewpoint.

While much of advocacy is focused on policies that will ultimately govern how individuals and institutions make decisions, in the college access realm, advocacy is much more. For the purposes of this toolkit, we will also touch on how advocacy is comprised of distinct activities that intend to promote, inform, persuade, and motivate individuals and communities to act differently.

The educators, partners, and family leaders that work on behalf of college access programs are the ideal advocates for advancing the college access agenda—an affiliation of values, beliefs, and proposals designed to ensure that every student has an opportunity to succeed as they prepare for and matriculate in higher education. For example, few laypersons have the same resources to *promote* the value of education, the expertise to *inform* individuals about complex educational processes, the reputation to *persuade* school leaders to adopt one educational practice over another, or the know-how to *motivate* elected or appointed officials to adopt new education policies. Simply put, for the college access agenda to be realized, it must be led to a great extent by the practitioners and partners that commit themselves to the reform work on a daily basis.

Given the importance of increasing the participation of low-income students in higher education, it is critical that as members of the college access community we do our part to advance the college access agenda by leading community awareness and public policy advocacy at the local, state and national level. Thus, this tool kit is designed to assist you in carrying out whatever advocacy action you may be willing and able to take on to expand access to post-secondary education for low-income students and families.

Why Advocacy Matters to College Access

By their very nature, most college access programs are highly dependent on numerous variables that require nurturing: institutional leadership to support program goals; committed stakeholders such as teachers and counselors to buy into the implementation model; strong community and family support; and in most cases, some level of external funding to support staff, infrastructure or programming.

In this regard, advocacy is essential in that the effectiveness and sustainability of the college access program relies on the extent to which various stakeholders commit themselves to supporting the program.

In addition, advocacy is often required to challenge the status quo. For example, asking students, families, and educators to raise their academic expectations or modify their behavior in more pro-academic ways would simply be ineffective without some degree of persuasion to convince stakeholders they have an interest in adopting your recommendations.

Lastly, the very nature of the education challenges that the college access agenda addresses will require a vast amount of social and political will to support long-term solutions. The remedies for the leaky educational pipeline that leads to poor academic preparation, student dropouts and low college enrollment rates are not likely to be created overnight. The systemic solutions that community-education partnerships present may take years to gain traction, implement effectively, cultivate a sufficient body of evaluation evidence, and ultimately become institutionalized.

Taken together, effective advocacy is one of the single most important factors for creating the conditions in which innovations like college access programs can thrive. While we may be dependent on many external variables for programmatic support and success, it is our responsibility to do everything within our power to ensure that we create the conditions that lead to lasting change in our schools and communities.

However, embarking on advocacy correctly entails not only understanding the importance of advocacy as a valuable public tool, but also understanding how advocacy can most effectively be organized to bring about a desired end. Whether you are leading a “grassroots” mobilization effort or organizing a “grassstops” advocacy strategy, there are several tenants of effective advocacy you should be acquainted with before taking on such a critical and powerful public policy tool.

Fortunately, the same skills that contribute to effective educational leadership lend themselves well to effective advocacy: the commitment to facilitate academic excellence in students, families and communities; the capacity to lead robust strategic planning; the ability to develop strong interpersonal relationships; forging consensus and a common agenda among diverse stakeholders and coalitions; a desire to empower family and community leaders; designing effective management structures; being political savvy; and creating feedback mechanisms to assess implementation effectiveness.

Tenants of Effective Advocacy

While many factors distinguish successful advocacy campaigns from unsuccessful advocacy campaigns, what is within our control is the extent to which a campaign is designed and organized effectively. Although many advocacy activities are spurred by dramatic or sudden policy shifts, the types of advocacy required to sustain and expand college access programs are more proactive than reactionary in nature. The keys to effective college access advocacy are quite elementary in nature: sufficient evidence that the college access program brings about desired results; strong support from the community and influential leaders; and the persistence to keep the college access agenda at the forefront of public policy developments.

Prior to building your advocacy strategy, there are several factors that should be taken into consideration by your leadership and advocacy team:

- **Advocacy is a long-term and proactive commitment.** At the onset of your advocacy planning, come to terms with the realization that effective advocacy is not an occasional or supplemental activity, but rather an ongoing operational behavior. Effective advocacy begins with the integration of advocacy activities into your day-to-day operations—nearly everything you will do as a program will offer an opportunity to promote, inform and persuade individuals that your program and approach has special value to the community. Most importantly, know that advocacy is generally an ongoing process. Once community engagement or policy goals are met, you are likely to identify new barriers to student success that will require dismantling.
- **Advocacy is about relationships.** Public policy is not created in a social vacuum; rather, policy proposals are presented in a competitive environment where individuals wield their organizational and interpersonal influence to favorably position their recommendations. Even armed with the strongest evaluation data, much of the effectiveness of your advocacy strategy will be influenced by the quality of your relationships, so use this to your advantage. At the core of your advocacy strategy, consider it critical to create and retain stakeholder interest in your program. Consider anyone that has a known or unrealized interest in, or is affected by your project as a stakeholder—education professionals and administrators, students, families, community members, and elected or appointed officials—and prioritize your stakeholder “buy-in” efforts based on what it takes to get results.
- **Advocacy should be rooted in respect and bring about win-win situations to the greatest extent possible.** Too often advocacy efforts unravel as a result of adversarial strategies or insensitivity to the unique needs, mandates or demands on policymakers, influential stakeholders, and groups with competing viewpoints. Try to diagnose where common ground and mutually beneficial outcomes can be found. Sometimes some of the most successful advocacy coalitions are often comprised of strange bedfellows that form an unexpected alliance on a single issue. Remember, that even under the most adversarial conditions you should treat “friend” and “foe” with respect.

- **Advocacy should be focused locally and then expanded as your sphere of influence grows.** While organizations like NCCEP will occasionally ask for your assistance in educating Members of Congress about the impact that college access programs have in your community, programs should initially focus on local level stakeholders and policymakers. By fully engaging local stakeholders—K–12 and higher education leaders, school boards, local business and community leaders—you will build a strong foundation to advocate locally and significantly raise the visibility of your program. Once on board, empower your local leaders to become effective and influential advocates at the regional, state, or national level. As one US Congressional staffer asked NCCEP: “if a local superintendent or university president isn’t convinced that the program is a priority, why would a Senator think otherwise?”
- **Advocacy should be comprised of a blend of “grassroots” and “grasstops” strategies.** In effective advocacy campaigns, change rarely occurs from an exclusively top-down or bottoms-up approach. Strategic campaigns recognize that individuals that may not exercise much personal influence over policymakers can be quite powerful when mobilized as part of a larger group of similar individuals, or “grassroots” movement. Conversely, there may be highly influential individuals who may persuade policy makers on your behalf. We consider these individuals “grasstop” advocates; although they may be few in number, they exert considerable influence over policy makers. Common grasstop advocates may include business leaders, political donors, “thought leaders,” or community figures. By blending strategies, you can take advantage of the best aspects of both approaches.
- **Advocacy does not need to include direct lobbying.** Considering that most college access programs are supported in part through foundation, state, or federal funds, there are likely to be restrictions on “lobbying,” or the act of directly attempting to influence the outcome of pending legislation or elections. Consult the appropriate general counsel at your university, school system, or organization to become familiar with any pertinent restrictions. For the most part, you are free to engage with policymakers on factual presentations, education research, the performance of your project, and to respond to direct information requests. We strongly suggest focusing your efforts on educating policymakers and leaving the “lobbying” to individuals and organizations that are free of similar restrictions.

Creating the Conditions for Change:

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Section Two

**Getting Organized: Building a Blueprint
for College Access Advocacy**



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Getting Organized

Similar to the process that leads to a successful college access program, effective advocacy will be based on a foundation of sound strategic planning. This section will address some of the basic steps in creating an advocacy strategy that addresses the assets, resources, and challenges of your unique community context.

Figure 1: Building a Blueprint for College Access Advocacy



Step One: Assess the Local Context

As a starting point for developing your advocacy plan, take some time to reflect and assess the social and political context that your college access program operates in; your advocacy strengths and weaknesses; existing or emerging threats to the college access agenda; opportunities for action; and the practices or policies that stimulate or inhibit student success in your community. To assist you during your reflection and assessment, consider the following:

- **Learn the social, cultural and political landscape in your community.** Defining your local context is essential to developing an advocacy strategy that will effectively navigate the unique challenges and opportunities in your community. Identify the socio-cultural factors that encourage or discourage access to higher education for your students and families. Map the political issues that shape how education policy or funding is made. Be aware of institutional histories that may indicate the extent to which institutions will encourage or resist change.
- **Know the existing local, state and federal policy issues that help and hurt your students.** Research or prepare reports on how education policies impact student achievement, P-16 alignment, and college affordability. Provide an analysis where the unit of analysis is your own students, schools or community to localize the issue for stakeholders and policymakers.
- **Conduct an analysis of what other districts or states are doing to remedy policy gaps.** Often the presence or absence of a policy can have negative consequences for your students and families. Identify how other districts or states are forging policy-centered solutions to similar challenges. Analyze the effect of the benefits or repercussions if that policy reform were to be employed in your community and if it is a viable solution to some of your local challenges.
- **Assess existing advocacy assets within your program, institution or organization, and among partners.** While every college access professional may not have the full cadre of skills required to wage an optimal advocacy campaign, there are likely valuable and accessible assets to help you fill any advocacy gaps that may exist. Many postsecondary institutions and school systems have government relations professionals on staff that can provide helpful advice and contacts to open doors to local, state and national policymakers. Most organizations have a public relations specialist who can assist in creating effective communication strategies and vehicles. Within your partnership there are likely highly influential organizational or community leaders that can advocate on your behalf. Lastly, there are likely local scholars or institutional researchers that could be mobilized to conduct education research and policy analysis. By tapping into these assets you can bolster your overall efficiency and impact by bringing the best resources to your strategy.
- **Form an Advocacy / Policy Advisory Committee to help your program leadership navigate changing conditions.** The life of a college access professional is a hectic one and would likely benefit from the strategic advice of internal and external experts to help you guide your strategic advocacy and policy direction. An advisory committee can be a sounding board for new ideas, help you interpret the significance of evaluation findings in your local context, and provide insight on how changes in your community may affect future practices or policies. Equally as important, the advisory committee can themselves become active advocates on behalf of your program. Consider a blend of community leaders, education leaders and business leaders to benefit from a wide array of perspectives.

- **Conduct an analysis of your program’s advocacy strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.** Engage in a candid assessment of what you and your colleagues feel you do well and where you need to improve in the advocacy arena. In addition, brainstorm with your advisory committee about what opportunities and threats exist that will help or hamper your advocacy strategy.
- **Consider building capacity in strategic areas where your advocacy infrastructure needs to improve.** Based on your internal analysis, brainstorm opportunities to provide training to staff, partners, and stakeholders to become more effective advocates for your program. Whether it’s learning how to write better press releases or how to conduct more effective presentations, the majority of skills associated with effective advocacy can be learned and mastered within a reasonable time frame.

Step Two: Define Your Advocacy Goals and Objectives

As with any effective strategic plan, the activities undertaken through your advocacy efforts should be driven by the objectives that impact or advance the college access agenda. While the goals and objectives for advocacy tend to be process-oriented and more qualitative, gaining consensus among your leadership and advisory committee in and of itself is a process that will present immense value to your future advocacy work. Clearly stated goals that are mutually agreed upon by your program leadership will enable you to adopt a long-term vision of collaboration, define and prioritize action, identify appropriate resources for your activities, and evaluate your progress.

In defining your goals and supporting objectives, ask yourself:

- *What do we want to promote, change, or accomplish?*
- *What are you asking for—encouragement, support, or the adoption of a recommendation?*

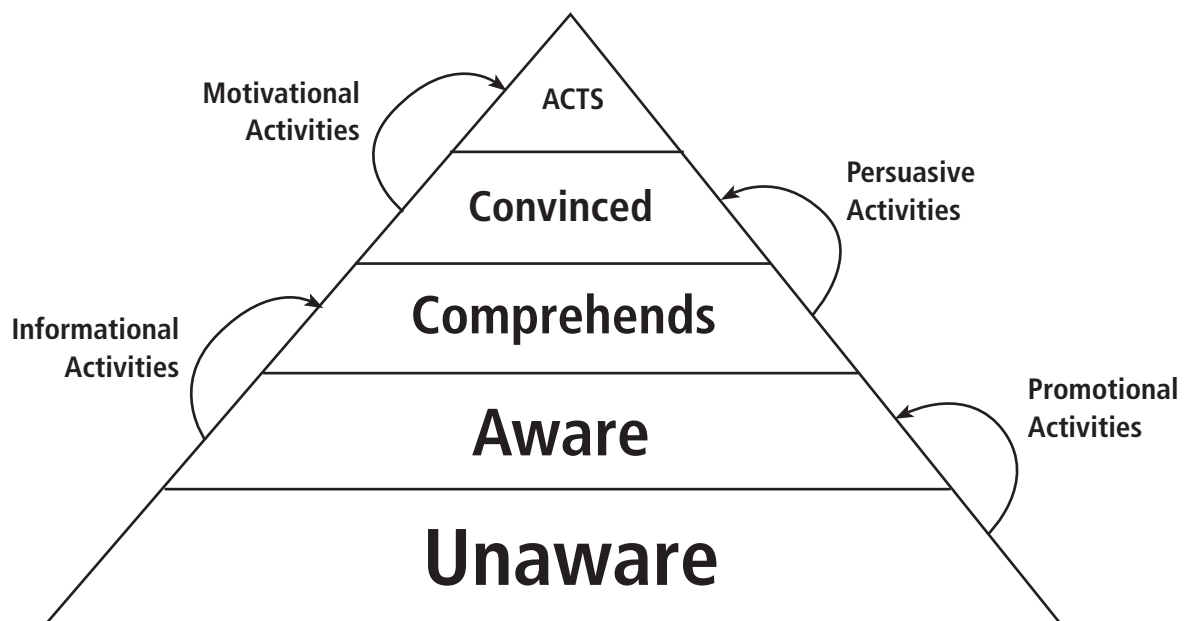
Thinking about these key questions will enable you to identify specific gaps in attitudes, knowledge, skills, or behavior that your advocacy campaign can address. In most cases, college access advocacy campaigns seek to (1) make advocacy targets (those you want to positively influence) more aware of critical issues, (2) convince advocacy targets of a particular issue position, and (3) empower advocacy targets to act on that issue by reforming a specific policy or practice. In the case of your college access program, your advocacy efforts can seek to overcome gaps in knowledge about the importance of a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, or it can be designed to mobilize policymakers to institute policies that increase the availability of rigorous courses in schools.

As in advertising, it is essential that individuals are aware of your program, have positive attitudes about your program, and have opportunities to act intentionally on behalf of your program. However, because most advocacy campaigns are organized around affecting individual behaviors, certain preconditions need to be met to get individuals to behave or act in new and specific ways.

In business, to encourage individuals to buy their product (that is, to adopt a specific behavior), marketing and advertising executives seek to create awareness around a specific brand, develop positive attitudes about that brand, identify compelling reasons for favoring that brand's product, and ultimately, present a rationale for purchasing that product. Marketing professionals thus plan their activities around a hierarchy of steps to affect behavior.

Consider Figure 2¹ and its relationship to the behaviors you would like to change or promote in your community. Depending on where your advocacy targets fall within this hierarchy, do you want to change awareness, comprehension, or behavior?

Figure 2: Hierarchy of Advocacy Activities



In this model, advocacy activities facilitate the movement of individuals from one stage to the next through activities designed to promote, inform, persuade, and motivate. Our short-, intermediate-, and long-term goals should be designed ultimately to empower advocacy targets to take action(s) in support of your project implementation, sustainability, and expanding the college access agenda.

Common advocacy goals may be to:

- raise awareness of the project, available college access resources, and the value of education;

¹ Adapted from: Bangs, D. H., Jr. *The Market Planning Guide: Creating a Plan to Successfully Market your Business, Product, or Service*. 2002. Chicago, IL: Dearborn Trade Publishing.

- increase the comprehension of issues that facilitate college access (course selection, financial aid, college application process);
- create a constituency of stakeholders sufficiently motivated to participate in project activities, become active leaders in engaging others, and advocate on behalf of your program; and
- secure the political will to support, advance and initiate reforms that benefit program students, families and schools.

Finally, remember that advocacy is a long-term enterprise. Focus on measurable, long-term goals (3 years) that can be disaggregated into intermediate (one year) and short-term (90 day) objectives.

Step Three: Define Your Advocacy Targets

The third step of our process focuses on defining your advocacy targets and prioritizing them into smaller groups that have varying degrees of interest in and importance to your project. Based on your goals and objectives, you will likely develop slightly or dramatically different strategies for engaging them. These individuals or groups who you seek to influence, or “advocacy targets” will be the recipients of your differentiated messages, strategies, and activities. Common advocacy targets could include education leaders, elected and appointed officials, community leaders, or thought and opinion leaders, such as the media. The more highly tailored your outreach is with each target, the more likely they are to resonate with their unique needs and perspectives.

To gain a better understanding of your targets, their particular characteristics, and what will encourage and discourage them from supporting your advocacy agenda, consider the following questions:

- **Who are the targets you want to reach and why?** Identify which individuals or groups in your community you’d like to play a passive, supporting, or primary role in your advancing the college access goals of your project. Think about your best stakeholders: Where do they come from? How do they participate? How did they learn about your program? What do they think of your program? What do they want in the future? Consider whether you want new stakeholders to benefit from your project or whether they could add value to your project implementation or advocacy work.
- **What makes your target unique?** Consider the social/cultural, linguistic, economic, lifestyle, and value- and opinion-based characteristics of your audience. How do they differ from those of other targets? What characteristics present challenges to and/or opportunities for capturing their interest? Never assume that individuals are community or group members for uniform reasons (when in doubt, ask).

- **What interests, motivates, and concerns your target the most?** We tend to believe that everyone has a vested interest in ensuring that students receive a high-quality education. But is this really true? Why does your target care about your issue (for better or worse)? What motivates your target to take a given a position on an issue? Consider whether your target might be receiving and supporting messages that may be detrimental to your advocacy success. Be prepared to answer the following questions:
 - o Is their role such that they can make or break your advocacy efforts? If so, to what extent?
 - o Do they have a vested interest in your project and accomplishments?
 - o How does your college access project affect their bottom line, responsibilities, or leadership mandates?
 - o What is the nature of their investment or interest? Is it mission-driven, economic, political, or ideological in nature?
 - o Do “clues” in their professional history suggest that they may be particularly persuaded by evidence of program effectiveness, or by an accumulation of political support?
 - o Do they have a strong opinion of your project? Is that opinion positive, negative, or neutral?
 - o Is their opinion capable of changing over time, for better or for worse?
 - o What is their preferred method and degree of involvement? Do they just want to read reports, or do they prefer a visible role?
 - o Who influences their decisions? Could they become advocates on your behalf?

- **With limited time and capacity to undertake advocacy work, you will likely need to prioritize your targets based on where resources will be most effective.** While it would be ideal to cast a wide net to secure support from many advocacy targets, prioritizing targets allows you to identify where to focus resources most effectively so that over time, you (1) empower primary targets to act on your behalf, (2) motivate secondary targets to act on your behalf, (3) inform tertiary audiences of your activities and college access agenda, and (4) create awareness among peripheral audiences. As your advocacy track record expands, you can more effectively engage new targets to become champions for your program.

Step Four: Define the Scope of Your Advocacy Strategy

Since college access professionals are extremely busy, it may not be possible to implement all of the potential advocacy activities that you and your colleagues bring to the planning process. The fourth step in building an advocacy blueprint is concerned with identifying what can and cannot be done within your reasonable power, budget, and timeline. As always, the key is to

be realistic in your planning and goal setting and to devise high-priority activities that bring about desired results. As you define the scope of your advocacy strategy, consider the following:

- **Seek early victories that improve the program, your reputation and your confidence.** A key starting point for many college access advocacy strategies is to target the “low-hanging fruit” early in your advocacy activities. Rather than seeking to reform legislation at the state level, identify practices or policies that are within your realm of influence (perhaps institutional or district level policies), or are more accessible to your early efforts. By earning early victories you will energize your advocacy base, gain credibility as an agent for change, and set into motion additional activities that positively affect your program students and families.
- **In advocacy, less is often more.** Rather than taking on a wide array of advocacy topics, focus on the core issues that affect the achievement of the students and families you serve. If student achievement is the bottom line for your project, then your advocacy efforts should be initially highly focused on that issue (rather than, affordable housing issues for example) until your community-education partnership has the capacity and credibility to branch off into related advocacy issues. During the planning process, find common ground among your stakeholders on the core policy and practice issues that you will be addressing in the early stages of your advocacy work.
- **Develop an advocacy calendar to identify and capitalize on critical windows of opportunity.** With an already busy schedule, you won’t want to be surprised when opportunities to promote or advance the college access agenda emerge. Spend some time early in the year to identify key staff meetings, board meetings, education hearings, legislative sessions, community meetings, visits to Washington DC, and local chamber of commerce meetings to determine when and where to implement advocacy activities.
- **Assume oversight responsibility for the planning process, but delegate implementation activities whenever possible.** Since you may not be able to oversee every detail of implementation of your advocacy strategy, ensure that the goals, strategies, and tactics are appropriate to your program’s needs. Ensure that every individual associated with your advocacy work understands the importance and concept of the advocacy strategy, the messages being shared, and their role and responsibilities in implementing specific activities.

Step Five: Brainstorm and Plan Your Advocacy Activities

Now that you have identified the issues your advocacy strategy will address, the goals and objectives associated with your strategy, and which stakeholders or policymakers you will be targeting, it is time to begin brainstorming what types of activities to implement. As discussed earlier, effective advocacy is best achieved when activities are aligned and integrated into the day-to-day program operations or events. To this end, consider the numerous opportunities

you have throughout the year to highlight the accomplishments of your program by inviting the participation of stakeholders and policymakers at programmatic events.

Some common and more novel advocacy activities implemented by college access programs include:

- Meeting regularly with institutional, district, state and federal policymakers and stakeholders to update them on the progress of the program, lessons learned from implementation, and implications for the broader adoption of program principles and innovative strategies.
- Presenting program outcomes and implementation models in a formal setting such as a hearing at a local chamber of commerce meeting, school board meeting, state legislature hearing, or US Congress hearing.
- Publishing educational research and policy analysis “white papers” or briefs intended to raise awareness of critical education challenges and solutions pertaining to college access for low-income students.
- Hosting policy forums for program partners, institutional leaders, and the community to share research and data on local college access needs, potential solutions, and program outcomes.
- Hosting or participating in Education Town Hall Meetings that bring together parents, families, educators and policymakers to engage in a dialogue on community involvement in education, college access, and education policy trends.
- Having students and family members document their personal histories, educational experiences, and their interaction with the college access program as part of a formal program assignment; once complete, organize and share these personal histories to articulate the college access story to the community.
- Inviting key advocacy targets to have roles in program graduation and grade promotion ceremonies to provide encouragement, perspective, and support to participating program students and families.
- Arranging for a Program State Capitol day, wherein program students and families visit the statehouse to meet with legislators, learn about the political process, and participate in legislative ceremonies.
- Forging new alliances between the college access program and community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to address non-educational issues that impact shared students and families (such as child care, health, housing and immigration organizations) in ways that might undermine their likelihood to succeed along the pathway to higher education.
- Raising the visibility and awareness of the program by submitting op-eds and articles in local papers, seeking televised media opportunities to highlight and share program events, and being an active participant in broader state-wide college access campaigns.

- Sponsoring outreach activities that bring the message that higher education is important and accessible by participating in rallies in historically underserved neighborhoods, coordinating door-to-door visits to meet and engage parents and families, and hosting academically or culturally focused fairs to engage the broader community.
- Providing student and parent/family leadership institutes to educate individuals about the educational system, encourage greater self-advocacy, and to empower them to serve as agents of change in education reform.
- Coordinating with NCCEP and other organizations on a national level to educate the US Congress about the issues confronting students and families participating in college access programs, the progress of program implementation, and the educational and social outcomes of the program.

Step Six: Formalize a Communication Plan

When engaging in advocacy activities, it is extremely helpful to have a communication plan in place to provide infrastructure for communicating with current and potential stakeholders, partners and policymakers. Common methods for communicating to current and potential stakeholders, policymakers and others include: brochures, posters, annual reports, newsletters, progress and issue reports, program websites, and video.

The communication plan should be comprised of effective messages and practical communication vehicles that can disseminate your messages, program progress, and emerging issues and challenges. When developing your communication plan, you may benefit from the following suggestions:

- **Your most important messages should be unambiguous and consistent, therefore get organized and develop core materials that all of your advocacy staff can use.** One- to two-page “fact sheets” illustrating program design and impact, newsletters, and talking points should be centrally developed so that everyone is on the same page.
- **Create purposeful messages that matter.** How you depict the core messages about your program, a position you’re advocating for, or the impact of the program will greatly influence your ability to persuade your advocacy target. By understanding the unique characteristics of your target, what motives that individual(s), and any potential rival or counter-messages, your message will resonate with them more effectively. For the greatest impact, test your message with a focus group or diverse stakeholders to learn how they interpreted the messages. Lastly, the messages should directly correspond to an expressed advocacy goal (to promote, inform, persuade or motivate the target).
- **Be an effective salesperson: keep it simple and provide solid evidence that reinforces your message.** Since college access programs can be rather comprehensive and be rooted in a complex theory of change, you shouldn’t feel compelled to explain every detail of your program. Focus on what matters most (student achievement) and

the particular interests of the advocacy target and support your position with the best data that you have available. Create value for your advocacy target and always have “an ask” of the person, such as participation in project activity, ongoing public support, or sharing policy information and insights.

- **Build communication redundancies.** It won't be enough to provide one vehicle for communicating your key messages, nor will it be enough for one person to be delivering your messages. Express your core messages through as many channels as possible and do everything imaginable to ensure that key advocacy targets hear core messages regularly and from different advocates.

Step Seven: Evaluate Your Advocacy Impact

The final step in developing your advocacy strategy is to begin addressing how you will evaluate your strategy and assess its impact on desired goals. A good evaluation allows you to reflect on what went well and what advocacy activities need improvement. The challenge here is that advocacy goals are often qualitative in nature and there are varying views among experts on how to appropriately evaluate incremental progress towards meeting individual objectives. In addition, the often cited goal of introducing or reforming new education policies is a long-term process, often taking years to achieve. In this light, what is the best way to plan for an advocacy evaluation?

While evaluators seek to improve methodologies, we highly recommend that advocacy leaders adopt a flexible approach that begins at the planning phase by clearly articulating a goal and related objectives that indicate how the leadership team will define its success—some leaders may define success through the attainment of a specific policy, while others will value processes, such as raising the awareness of a issue, or increasing the program's capacity to implement effective advocacy strategies. Benchmarks such as the number of new members of an advocacy coalition, shifts in decision-making processes, or an increase in advocacy targets that express support for the college access agenda can serve as practical proxies of progress in a formative evaluation designed to provide feedback on how well an advocacy strategy is progressing.

With these challenges in mind, we suggest working with your project evaluator early in the planning process. An excellent resource for developing and monitoring outcomes related to advocacy work is the recent publication, *A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*, which was prepared by the Organizational Research Services on behalf of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. You can download the report, including a matrix of advocacy outcomes at <http://www.organizationalresearch.com>.

Looking Ahead

As reiterated throughout this toolkit, advocacy is a long-term commitment required to ensure that the great work of college access can take root and thrive in local communities, expand to new areas, and change the way our nation thinks about education reform. For those new to advocacy, we urge you to begin the seven step advocacy planning process and wish you great success. For those advocates well entrenched in their communities, we thank you for your on-going commitment to ensuring that college access programs receive the support they deserve.

As you begin or continue your advocacy work, please visit NCCEP's website at www.edpartnerships.org for news and updates on federal issues that impact college access programs, tools for communicating with Members of Congress, and a National Legislative Toolkit for supporting the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) initiative.

Creating the Conditions for Change:

***Advancing the College Access Agenda
through Effective Advocacy***

Section Three

Overview of the Federal Policy Process



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
Community and Education Partnerships

Advocacy and Your Role as a GEAR UP Professional

As a GEAR UP grantee, you are encouraged to develop a working relationship with your members of Congress and Congressional staff. You are also encouraged to inform them about the impact that your GEAR UP program is having in their district and/or state. However, it is important that you ensure that when communicating with your members of Congress and/or their staff that you do not engage in any lobbying activity using federal funds.

GEAR UP grantees are prohibited from using federal funds to engage in lobbying. GEAR UP grantees may not use federal funds to attempt to influence the introduction, enactment or modification of any legislation with their elected officials or their staff. This prohibition extends to any discussions about increased funding (appropriations) for relevant programs.

To ensure compliance with all applicable restrictions on federal education grantees, NCCEP has consulted with the U.S. Department of Education to confirm that GEAR UP grantees are permitted to meet with their members of Congress or Congressional staff for informational briefings in Washington, D.C. or at their local offices, provided that grantees adhere to the rule described above. It is important that if you decide to meet with your representative or his/her staff, you do so on your own time and that you do not use federal funds to engage in that activity. This means that you must not use any federal funds for transportation to and from your meetings with your elected officials or their staff. You may take public or other transportation on your own as long as you pay for it with funds other than federal grant monies.

The following Do and Don't lists were developed by NCCEP to assist you in communicating effectively with your Members of Congress and Congressional staff without infringing upon any applicable federal lobbying restrictions.

Do (You Should...)

- Talk about the number of families and students served by your program and the impact your efforts are having on student performance, college aspirations, parental involvement, etc.
- Give both statistical evidence of your program's impact and personal stories of students for whom GEAR UP has made a difference i.e., "We've doubled the number of eighth graders enrolled in algebra, and Alison Benton is one of those students. She hopes to be the first in her family to go to college."
- Discuss state, local, and private involvement in your program. Where appropriate, describe the role that your community and business partners are playing to help you achieve your program objectives.
- Factually answer any questions asked to the best of your ability.
- Build a relationship with your members of Congress and their staffers. Invite your member of Congress and staff to visit your program site and use you as a resource.
- Be sure to thank the Member and staffers (including the receptionist who greets you) as you conclude your visit.

Don't (You Should Not...)

- Request increases (specific amounts or otherwise) in GEAR UP funding. (As noted above, federal law and regulations prohibit using federal funds to attempt to influence specific legislation, including legislation that has not yet been introduced and federal Appropriation, or spending, bills.)
- Do their jobs for them. Members of Congress and staff often ask, “What should we cut to fund your program?” They were elected to make those decisions.
- Moreover, you must not discuss program funding levels.

Congressional Overview

Understanding the House Legislative Process

“All Legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.”

(Article I, Section 1, of the United States Constitution)

The chief function of Congress is the making of laws. The legislative process comprises a number of steps. To help you better understand this process, a very brief overview of the legislative process within the House of Representatives is presented below. There are many aspects and variations of the process which are not addressed here. A much more in-depth discussion and presentation of the overall process is available in How Our Laws Are Made found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>.

Forms of Congressional Action

The work of Congress is initiated by the introduction of a proposal in one of four principal forms: the bill, the joint resolution, the concurrent resolution, and the simple resolution.

1. Bills

A bill is the form used for most legislation, whether permanent or temporary, general or special, public or private. A bill originating in the House of Representatives is designated by the letters “H.R.”, signifying “House of Representatives”, followed by a number that it retains throughout all its parliamentary stages. Bills are presented to the President for action when approved in identical form by both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

2. Joint Resolutions

Joint resolutions may originate either in the House of Representatives or in the Senate. There is little practical difference between a bill and a joint resolution. Both are subject to the same procedure, except for a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution. On approval of such a resolution by two-thirds of both the House and Senate, it is sent directly to the Administrator of General Services for submission to the individual states for ratification. It is not presented to the President for approval. A joint resolution originating in the House of Representatives is designated “H.J.Res.” followed by its individual number. Joint resolutions become law in the same manner as bills.

3. Concurrent Resolutions

Matters affecting the operations of both the House of Representatives and Senate are usually initiated by means of concurrent resolutions. A concurrent resolution originating in the House of Representatives is designated “H.Con.Res.” followed by its individual number. On approval by both the House of Representatives and Senate, they are signed

by the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate. They are not presented to the President for action.

4. Simple Resolutions

A matter concerning the operation of either the House of Representatives or Senate alone is initiated by a simple resolution. A resolution affecting the House of Representatives is designated “H.Res.” followed by its number. They are not presented to the President for action.

The Role of Committees in the House Legislative Process

Any Member in the House of Representatives may introduce a bill at any time while the House is in session by simply placing it in the “hopper” provided for the purpose at the side of the Clerk’s desk in the House Chamber. The sponsor’s signature must appear on the bill. A public bill may have an unlimited number of cosponsoring Members. The bill is assigned its legislative number by the Clerk and referred to the appropriate committee by the Speaker, with the assistance of the Parliamentarian. The bill is then printed in its introduced form.

An important phase of the legislative process is the action taken by committees. It is during committee action that the most intense consideration is given to the proposed measures; this is also the time when the people are given their opportunity to be heard. Each piece of legislation is referred to the committee that has jurisdiction over the area affected by the measure.

Committee Hearings and Markup Sessions

Usually the first step in this process is a public hearing, where the committee members hear witnesses representing various viewpoints on the measure. This process can take place at either the subcommittee level or the full committee level, or at both. Hearings and markup sessions are important status steps in the legislative action process.

- Each committee makes public the date, place and subject of any hearing it conducts. The Committee Meetings scheduled for a particular day are publicly available along with other House Schedules. Public announcements are also published in the Daily Digest portion of the Congressional Record.
- A transcript of the testimony taken at a hearing is made available for inspection in the committee office, and frequently the complete transcript is printed and distributed by the committee.
- After hearings are completed, the bill is considered in a session that is popularly known as the “mark-up” session. Members of the committee study the viewpoints presented in detail. Amendments may be offered to the bill, and the committee votes to accept or reject these changes.

Committee Action

At the conclusion of deliberation, a vote of committee or subcommittee Members is taken to determine what action to take on the measure. It can be reported, with or without amendment, or tabled, which means no further action on it will occur. If the committee has approved extensive amendments, they may decide to report a new bill incorporating all the amendments. This is known as a “clean bill,” which will have a new number.

If the committee votes to report a bill, the Committee Report is written. This report describes the purpose and scope of the measure and the reasons for recommended approval. House Report numbers are prefixed with “H.Rpt.” and then a number indicating the Congress (currently 110). From the Committee Level bills are referred for Floor action.

House Floor Consideration

- Consideration of a measure by the full House can be a simple or very complex operation. In general a measure is ready for consideration by the full House after it has been reported by a committee. Under certain circumstances, it may be brought to the Floor directly.
- The consideration of a measure may be governed by a “rule.” A rule is itself a simple resolution, which must be passed by the House, that sets out the particulars of debate for a specific bill — how much time will allowed for debate, whether amendments can be offered, and other matters.
- Debate time for a measure is normally divided between proponents and opponents. Each side yields time to those Members who wish to speak on the bill. When amendments are offered, these are also debated and voted upon.
- After all debate is concluded and amendments decided upon, the House is ready to vote on final passage. In some cases, a vote to “recommit” the bill to committee is requested. This is usually an effort by opponents to change some portion or table the measure. If the attempt to recommit fails, a vote on final passage is ordered.

Resolving Differences Through Conference Committees

- After a measure passes in the House, it goes to the Senate for consideration. A bill must pass both bodies in the same form before it can be presented to the President for signature into law.
- If the Senate changes the language of the measure, it must return to the House for concurrence or additional changes. This back-and-forth negotiation may occur on the House floor, with the House accepting or rejecting Senate amendments or complete Senate text. Often a conference committee will be appointed with both House and Senate members. This group will resolve the differences in committee and report the identical measure back to both bodies for a vote. Conference committees also issue reports outlining the final version of the bill.

Final Step — Enrollment

- Votes on final passage, as well as all other votes in the House, may be taken by the electronic voting system which registers each individual Member's response. These votes are referred to as Yea/Nay votes or recorded votes, and are available in House Votes by Bill number, roll call vote number or words describing the reason for the vote.
- Votes in the House may also be by voice vote, and no record of individual responses is available.
- After a measure has been passed in identical form by both the House and Senate, it is considered "enrolled."

Presidential Action

- Pursuant to Article 1, section 7 of the Constitution, "Every Bill, which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; . . . " If the President approves and signs the measure within 10 days, it becomes law. The 10-day period begins on midnight of the day the President receives the measure, and Sundays are not counted. Thus, if the President were to receive an enrolled measure on Thursday, February 14th, the first day of the 10-day period would be Friday, February 15th; the last day would be Tuesday, February 26th.
- If the President objects to a measure, he may veto it by returning it to its chamber of origin together with a statement of his objections, again within the same 10-day period. Unless both chambers subsequently vote by a 2/3 majority to override the veto, the measure does not become law. If the President does not act on a measure — approving or vetoing it — within 10 days, the fate of the measure depends on whether Congress is in session. If Congress is in session, the bill becomes law without the President's approval. If Congress is not in session, the measure does not become law. Presidential inaction when Congress is not in session is known as a pocket veto. Congress has interpreted the use of the pocket veto to be limited to the final, so-called sine die adjournment of the originating chamber. The President's pocket veto authority is not definitively decided.

How a Bill Becomes Law – House Flowchart

Bill or Joint Resolution is Drafted

A bill or joint resolution is drafted by a Member of Congress or the Executive Branch.

Bill or Joint Resolution is Introduced

The bill or joint resolution is then assigned a Committee which then assigns it to a Subcommittee.

Bill or Joint Resolution Goes to Subcommittee

The members of the Subcommittee study the bill or joint resolution, hold hearings on it, and debate the provisions. They mark it up and if it passes it gets sent to the Committee.

Bill or Joint Resolution Goes to Committee

The Full Committee considers the bill or joint resolution. If the Full Committee approves it, they sent it to the Rules Committee.

Bill or Joint Resolution Goes to Rules Committee

The Rules Committee issues a rule to govern debate on the floor and sends the bill or joint resolution to the Full House.

Bill or Joint Resolution Goes to Full House

The Full House debates the bill or joint resolution and may amend it. If it is different than the Senate version then it gets sent to the Conference Committee.

Full House Votes on Bill

The Full House votes on bill or joint resolution and if it passes it goes to the President.

Bill Goes to Conference Committee

Senators and Representatives meet to reconcile the differences between the bills. If an agreement is reached, a compromised bill is sent to the Full House.

Full House Votes on Bill

The Full House votes on bill or joint resolution and if it passes it goes to the President.

President Gets Bill or Joint Resolution

The President can accept the bill or joint resolution by signing it, veto it, or do nothing with it.

- If the President decides to sign off on it, it becomes law.
- If the President decides to veto it, the Congress can override the veto with a 2/3 majority vote in the House and Senate.
- If the President decides to do nothing with it and the Congress is in session, then it becomes law. If the Congress is not in session, then the measure does not become law.

Understanding the Senate Legislative Process

“All Legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.”

(Article I, Section 1, of the United States Constitution)

As we learned in the previous section, a fundamental part of the policy making process occurs within the House of Representatives. However, given the fact that a measure cannot become law without consideration and approval by both Houses of Congress, it is important to learn about aspects of Congressional action as it pertains to the other chamber of our bi-cameral legislative system. Therefore, the following section provides a brief synopsis of the legislative process within the United States Senate.

The Role of Committees in the Senate Legislative Process

Like in the House, legislation is referred to a committee after introduction, according to its subject matter. Most commonly, a committee will further refer the legislation to one of its subcommittees. The subcommittee may request reports from government agencies or departments, hold hearings, mark up the bill (adopt revisions), and report the legislation to the full committee. The full committee may take similar action, with or without prior subcommittee consideration, and report the legislation to its full chamber.

Committee Hearings and Markups

- Regardless of the type of hearing, or whether a hearing is held in Washington or elsewhere, hearings share common aspects of planning and preparation. Senate standing committees and subcommittees are authorized to meet and to hold hearings when the Senate is in session, and when it has recessed or adjourned. To minimize conflicts with floor activities, a committee may not meet, without unanimous consent, on any day after the Senate has been in session for two hours, or after 2:00 p.m. when the Senate is in session.
- Senate Rule XXVI requires each committee (except Appropriation and Budget) to give at least one week’s notice of the date, place, and subject of a hearing; however, a committee may hold a hearing with less than one week’s notice if it determines that there is “good cause.” These notices appear in the Daily Digest section of the Congressional Record. While the Senate rule requires a one week public notice, a separate standing order of the Senate requires each Senate committee to notify the Daily Digest Office as soon as a hearing is scheduled [S.Res. 4, 95th Congress].
- Hearings are generally open to the public, but can be closed by a committee roll-call vote in open session if the subject matter falls within specific categories enumerated in Senate rules. Although a committee chair determines the agenda and selects witnesses,

the minority typically works informally with the majority to invite witnesses representing its views. Senate rules allow the minority-party members of a committee (except Appropriation) to call witnesses of their choice on at least one day of a hearing.

- Witnesses before Senate committees generally must provide the committee with a copy of their written testimony at least one day before their oral testimony, with specifics set out in individual committee rules. It is common practice to request witnesses to limit their oral remarks to a brief summary of the written testimony. A question-and-answer period generally follows a witness's testimony. Each committee determines the order in which Senators question witnesses. Although Senate rules do not restrict the length of time each Senator may question a witness, several committees have adopted such rules. Some committees also authorize committee staff to question witnesses.
- A markup is a meeting of the committee or subcommittee to debate and consider amendments to a measure under consideration. The markup determines whether the measure pending before a committee will be recommended to the full Senate, and whether it should be amended in any substantive way. Procedures in markup for the most part reflect procedures used on the Senate floor, possibly modified by an individual committee's rules.
- The process begins when the chair of the committee or the subcommittee schedules and sets the agenda for the markup. In leading a markup, the chair has broad discretion choosing the legislative vehicle and presenting it for consideration and amendment. The measure that is marked up may be one that was introduced in the Senate, or received from the House and referred to the committee. Alternatively, the chair may choose to consider the text of a draft measure that has not been introduced, such as a subcommittee-reported version or a chairman's mark. In still other cases, the markup vehicle may be placed before the committee as an "amendment in the nature of a substitute" for the measure or text initially referred to it.

Reporting Legislation to the Senate Floor

- When a committee concludes its markup, any committee member may move to order the measure reported to the Senate. A committee has several options for the form in which the measure is ordered or reported. It may be reported with no changes, with amendments to various sections adopted in markup, or with one amendment in the nature of a substitute. In addition, a Senate committee is authorized to report an original bill that embodies a text decided upon in markup. Senate rules require the physical presence of a majority of the committee in order to report a measure. Absent Senators may vote by proxy on reporting a measure unless a committee has adopted a rule to the contrary, but such proxy votes may not effect the outcome of a vote to report a measure, and proxies may not be counted to determine a quorum.

- Following a committee's vote to order a measure reported, it is the duty of the committee's chairman to report the measure promptly to the Senate. When a committee reports a measure, it generally prepares an accompanying written report that describes the purposes and provisions of the measure. If a report is submitted, Senate rules and statutes require the inclusion of such components as records of roll-call votes cast in committee, cost estimates, a statement of regulatory impact, and the specific changes the legislation would make to existing law.
- Committee members are also entitled to at least three days to prepare supplementary, minority, or additional views for inclusion in the report.

The Amending Process

- Floor consideration of a measure usually begins with opening statements by the floor managers, and often by other Senators. The managers usually are the chair and ranking minority member of the reporting committee or pertinent subcommittee. The first amendments usually to be considered are those recommended by the reporting committee. If the committee has proposed many amendments, the manager often obtains unanimous consent that these amendments be adopted, but that all provisions of the measure as amended remain open to further amendment.
- After committee amendments are disposed of, amendments may be offered to any part of the measure in any order. If the committee recommends a substitute for the full text of the measure, the substitute normally remains open to amendment throughout its consideration. The Senate may dispose of each amendment either by voting on it directly or by voting to table it.
- The motion to table cannot be debated; and, if the Senate agrees to it, the effect is the same as a vote to defeat the amendment. If the Senate defeats the motion, however, debate on the amendment may resume. While an amendment is pending, Senators may propose amendments to it (called second-degree amendments) and to the part of the measure the amendment would change. The Senate votes on each of these amendments before it votes on the first-degree amendment (the amendment to the measure). Many additional complications exist. When a complete substitute for a measure is pending, for example, Senators can propose six or more first- and second-degree amendments to the substitute and the measure before any votes must occur.
- If an amendment is considered under a time limitation, Senators may make no motions or points of order, or propose other amendments, until all the time for debating the amendment has been used or yielded back. Sometimes, however, the Senate unanimously consents to lay aside pending amendments temporarily in order to consider another amendment to the measure.
- The amending process continues until the Senate orders the bill engrossed and read a third time, which precludes further amendment. Then the Senate votes on final passage.

Voting

- Article I, sec. 5, paragraph 3 of the Constitution provides that one-fifth of those present (11 Senators, if no more than a quorum is present) can order the yeas and nays — also known as a roll call vote or a recorded vote. If a Senator asks for the yeas and nays on a pending question, and the Senate orders them, it does not mean that a vote will occur immediately. Instead ordering the yeas and nays means that whenever the vote does occur, it will be by roll call and will be recorded in the Journal. Otherwise, votes can be taken by voice vote, unanimous consent, or division.

Resolving Differences Through Conference Committees

- A bill cannot become a law of the land until it has been approved in identical form by both houses of Congress. Once the Senate amends and agrees to a bill that the House already has passed — or the House amends and passes a Senate bill — the two houses may begin to resolve their legislative differences by way of a conference committee or through an exchange of amendments between the houses.
- If the Senate does not accept the House’s position, one of the chambers may propose creation of a conference committee to negotiate and resolve the matters in disagreement between the two chambers. Typically, the Senate gets to conference with the House by adopting this standard motion: “Mr. President, I move that the Senate insist on its amendment(s) (or “disagree to the House amendment(s)” to the Senate-passed measure), request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes thereon, and that the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees.” This triple motion rolled into one — to insist (or disagree), request, and appoint — is commonly agreed to by unanimous consent. The presiding officer formally appoints the Senate conferees. (The Speaker names the House conferees.) Conferees are traditionally drawn from the committee of jurisdiction, but conferees representing other Senate interests may also be appointed.
- There are no formal rules that outline how conference meetings are to be organized. Routinely, the principals from each chamber or their respective staffs conduct pre-conference meetings so as to expedite the bargaining process when the conference formally convenes. Informal practice also determines who will be the overall conference chair (each chamber has its own leader in conference). Rotation of the chairmanship between the chambers is usually the practice when matched pairs of panels (the tax or Appropriation panels, for example) convene in conference regularly. For standing committees that seldom meet in conference, the choice of who will chair the conference is generally resolved by the conference leaders from each chamber. The decision on when and where to meet and for how long are a few prerogatives of the chair, who consults on these matters with his or her counterpart from the other body.
- Once the two chambers go to conference, the respective House and Senate conferees bargain and negotiate to resolve the matters in bicameral disagreement. Resolution is

embodied in a conference report, signed by a majority of Senate conferees and House conferees. The conference report must be agreed to by both chambers before it is cleared for presidential consideration. In the Senate, conference reports are usually brought up by unanimous consent at a time agreed to by the party leaders and floor managers. Because conference reports are privileged, if any Senator objects to the unanimous consent request, a non-debatable motion can be made to take up the conference report.

- Approval of the conference report itself is subject to extended debate, but conference reports are not open to amendment. Almost all of the most important measures are sent to conference, but these are only a minority of the bills that the two houses pass each year.

Final Step — Enrollment

- After the Senate and House resolve all their disagreements concerning a bill or joint resolution, all the original papers are transmitted to the enrolling clerk of the originating chamber, who has the measure printed on parchment, certified by the chief officer of the originating chamber, and signed by the Speaker of the House and by either the Vice President (who is the President of the Senate) or the authorized presiding officer of the Senate. The enrolled bill then goes to the President for his approval or veto.

Presidential Action

- Pursuant to Article 1, section 7 of the Constitution, “Every Bill, which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; . . . “ If the President approves and signs the measure within 10 days, it becomes law. The 10-day period begins on midnight of the day the President receives the measure, and Sundays are not counted. Thus, if the President were to receive an enrolled measure on Thursday, February 14th, the first day of the 10-day period would be Friday, February 15th; the last day would be Tuesday, February 26th.
- If the President objects to a measure, he may veto it by returning it to its chamber of origin together with a statement of his objections, again within the same 10-day period. Unless both chambers subsequently vote by a 2/3 majority to override the veto, the measure does not become law. If the President does not act on a measure—approving or vetoing it—within 10 days, the fate of the measure depends on whether Congress is in session. If Congress is in session, the bill becomes law without the President’s approval. If Congress is not in session, the measure does not become law. Presidential inaction when Congress is not in session is known as a pocket veto. Congress has interpreted the use of the pocket veto to be limited to the final, so-called sine die adjournment of the originating chamber. The President’s pocket veto authority is not definitively decided.

How a Bill Becomes Law — Senate Flowchart

Bill

A bill is drafted by a Senator or the Executive Branch.

Bill is Introduced

The bill is introduced and then assigned a Committee which then assigns it to a Subcommittee.

Bill Goes to Subcommittee

The members of the Subcommittee study the bill, hold hearings on it, and debate the provisions. They mark it up and if it passes it gets sent to the Committee.

Bill Goes to Committee

The Full Committee considers the bill. If the Full Committee approves it, they sent it to the Rules Committee.

Bill Goes to Rules Committee

The Rules Committee issues a rule to govern debate on the floor and sends the bill to the Full Senate.

Bill Goes to Full Senate

The Full Senate debates the bill and may amend it. If it is different than the House version then it gets sent to the Conference Committee.

Bill Goes to Conference Committee

Senators and Representatives meet to reconcile the differences between the bills. If an agreement is reached, a compromised bill is sent to the Full Senate.

Full Senate Votes on Bill

The Full Senate votes on bill and if it passes it goes to the President.

President Gets Bill

The President can accept the bill or joint resolution by signing it, veto it, or do nothing with it.

- If the President decides to sign off on it, it becomes law.
- If the President decides to veto it, the Congress can override the veto with a 2/3 majority vote in the House and Senate.
- If the President decides to do nothing with it and the Congress is in session, then it becomes law. If the Congress is not in session, then the measure does not become law.

Understanding the Congressional Appropriation Process

“No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriation made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.”

(Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution)

Introduction

Annual Appropriations are not required by the Constitution but it has been the custom since the First Congress to make Appropriation for a single fiscal year. An Appropriation law is one that provides federal agencies legal authority to incur obligations and the Treasury Department authority to make payments for designated purposes. (There are other types of laws that provide this same type authority for entitlements such as Social Security). Appropriation are usually used or obligated in the fiscal year for which they are provided, unless a law specifies that they be available for a longer period of time. An appropriation makes funds available for obligation but does not usually require that outlays occur in any particular year. Budget authority is obligated when agencies commit to a spending requirement, but outlays occur as checks are written to pay for the requirement. The rate at which checks or payments are made for a particular program often occur a period of more than one fiscal year. An agency may not spend more than the amount appropriated to it and may only use these funds for the purposes and subject to the conditions provided by Congress. Detailed information on how funds are to be spent, along with other Congressional guidance, is provided in the reports and statements of managers accompanying the various Appropriation measures. Agencies ordinarily abide by report language in spending appropriated funds, although the directives in the report are not legally binding. Generally, Appropriation reports do not comment on every appropriation.

By precedent, Appropriations originate in the House, with the Senate following suit. Congress generally passes three types of appropriation measures. General appropriation bills provide budget authority to multiple agencies for the next fiscal year. Supplemental appropriation bills provide additional budget authority during the current fiscal year. Continuing appropriation bills provide temporary (or full-year) funding for those agencies whose regular appropriation has not yet been enacted by the start of that fiscal year. The fiscal year begins on October 1 of each calendar year.

The Appropriation Committee

In 1865, all of the general appropriation bills were placed within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriation. Since that time this committee has grown in its level of importance in the congressional budget process. Once the aggregate spending levels have been determined by the budget resolution, the Appropriation Committee is given an allocation (known as a section

302(a) allocation) for spending because that is the section of the Budget Act that includes this allocation authority. This allocation serves as an internal Congressional control mechanism, enforceable through points of order and other procedural mechanisms in both the House and Senate. The Appropriation Committees in the House and Senate may not exceed these aggregate totals in the bills they develop in the annual Appropriation process.

When the Appropriation Committees receive the aggregate allocation, they divide this into suballocations (known as the section 302(b) suballocations) corresponding to each of the thirteen Appropriation Subcommittees. Once the subcommittees receive their suballocation totals, each subcommittee begins work on its annual spending bill for the relevant areas of government operations. The subcommittees work off the Administration's budget request, as well as previous year's spending bills, incorporating any new priorities Congress may have. The President requests annual Appropriation in his budget submission in February which agencies supplement with justification materials sent to the two Appropriation Committees. These justifications contain more detail than the budget request and are used in support of agencies' testimony during annual subcommittee hearings on the President's budget.

In the House, appropriation measures originate in the Appropriation Committee when one of its subcommittees marks up or reports a committee print, rather than its being introduced by a member beforehand. Once a subcommittee completes its work on a chairman's mark, it is reported to the full committee where it is considered, possibly amended and ultimately approved and reported by the full Appropriation Committee consistent with House rules. At this point, the ordered reported bill is normally reported by the appropriate subcommittee chairman. All committee actions are constrained by the overall discretionary spending limits and the allocations in the budget resolution. The target date under the Budget Act for completion of the House Appropriation Committee's action on these general bills is June 10 of each year.

The Committee on Appropriation — Subcommittees

U.S. House of Representatives

- Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on Defense
- Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
- Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
- Subcommittee on Homeland Security
- Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
- **Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (*jurisdiction over GEAR UP funding*)**
- Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
- Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Administration, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
- Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Related Agencies

U.S. Senate

- Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on Defense
- Subcommittee on Energy and Water
- Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
- Subcommittee on Homeland Security
- Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
- **Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (*jurisdiction over GEAR UP funding*)**
- Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
- Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
- Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
- Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Each Appropriation subcommittee has jurisdiction over one regular Appropriation bill. Each House Appropriation subcommittee is paired with a Senate Appropriation subcommittee, both having jurisdiction over the same agencies and programs. For example, the House and Senate Labor/HHS/Ed Appropriation subcommittees have jurisdiction over federal spending for these agencies.

After the hearings have been completed and the House and Senate Appropriation Committees have received their committee spending ceilings from the budget resolution, the House and Senate Appropriation subcommittees begin to mark up the regular bills under their jurisdiction and report them to their respective full committees. Each Appropriation committee considers each of their subcommittee's recommendations separately. The committees may adopt amendments to a subcommittee bill and then report the bill as amended to their respective floors for action. Recently, the Senate Appropriation Committee has generally reported either original Senate regular Appropriation bills or substitute amendments replacing the texts of the House-passed bills.

House and Senate Floor Action

After the House or Senate Appropriation Committee reports an Appropriation bill to the House or Senate, the bill is brought to the floor. At this point, Representatives or Senators are generally provided an opportunity to propose floor amendments to the bill.

HOUSE

Prior to floor consideration of a regular Appropriation bill, the House generally considers a special rule reported by the House Rules Committee setting parameters for floor consideration of the bill. If the House adopts the special rule, it usually considers the Appropriation bill immediately.

The House considers the bill in the Committee of the Whole of which all Representatives are members. A special rule on an Appropriation bill usually provides for one hour of general debate on the bill. The debate includes opening statements by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Appropriation subcommittee with jurisdiction over the regular bill, as well as other interested Representatives.

After the Committee of the Whole debates the bill, it considers amendments. Amendments must meet the following requirements:

- House standing rules and precedents, for example, amendments must be germane to the bill;
- authorization-Appropriation process, which enforces the relationship between authorization and
- Appropriation measures congressional budget process; and
- special rule providing for consideration of the particular bill.

If an amendment violates any of these requirements, any Representative may raise a point of order to that effect. If the presiding officer rules the amendment out of order, it cannot be considered on the House floor. The special rule may waive any of these requirements, thereby allowing the House to consider the amendment.

During consideration of individual regular Appropriation bills, the House sometimes sets additional parameters, either by adopting a special rule or by unanimous consent. The House agrees to the parameters only if no Representative objects. For example, the House sometimes agrees to limit debate on individual amendments by unanimous consent.

After the Committee of the Whole completes consideration of the measure, it reports the bill with any adopted amendments to the full House. The House then votes on the adopted amendments and passage. After House passage, the bill is sent to the Senate.

SENATE

The full Senate considers the bill as reported by its Appropriation Committee. The Senate does not utilize the device of a special rule to set parameters for consideration of bills. Before taking up the bill, however, or during its consideration, the Senate sometimes sets parameters by unanimous consent.

When the bill is brought up on the floor, the chairman and ranking minority member of the Appropriation subcommittee make opening statements on the contents of the bill as reported.

Committee and floor amendments to the reported bills must meet requirements under the Senate standing rules and precedents, the authorization-Appropriation process, and the congressional budget process. The specifics of the Senate and House requirements differ. As in the House, the Senate may sometimes waive some of these rules.

When the Senate Appropriation Committee reports a Senate bill and after the full Senate has completed action on it, the Senate waits for the House to send its bill to the Senate and amends the House-passed bill with generally a substitute amendment that contains the text of the Senate bill as amended on the Senate floor.

House and Senate Conference Action

Generally, members of the House and Senate Appropriation subcommittees having jurisdiction over a particular regular Appropriation bill, the chairmen of the full committees, and the ranking minority members of the full committees meet to negotiate over differences between the House- and Senate-passed bills.

Under House and Senate rules, the negotiators (or conferees or managers) are generally required to remain within the scope of the differences between the positions of the two chambers. Their agreement must be within the range established by the House- and Senate-passed versions. For example, if the House-passed bill appropriates \$3 million for a program and a separate Senate amendment provides \$5 million, the conferees must reach an agreement that is within the \$3-5 million range. However, these rules are not always followed.

When the Senate passes a single substitute amendment to a House bill, the conferees must reach agreement on all points of difference between the House and Senate versions before reporting the conference report in agreement to both houses. When this occurs, the conferees propose a new conference substitute for the bill as a whole. The conferees attach a joint explanatory statement (or managers' statement) explaining the new substitute.

Usually, the House considers conference reports on Appropriation measures first because it traditionally considers the measures first. The first house to consider a conference report has the option of voting to recommit the report to the conference for further consideration, rejecting the conference report, or adopting it. After the first house adopts the conference report, the conference is automatically disbanded; therefore, the second house has two options — adopt or reject the conference report. Conference reports cannot be amended in either the House or Senate.

If the conference report is rejected, or is recommitted by the first house, the conferees negotiate further over the matters in dispute between the two houses. The measure cannot be sent to the President until both houses have agreed to the entire text of the bill.

Presidential Action

After Congress sends the bill to the President, he has 10 days to sign or veto the measure. If he takes no action, the bill automatically becomes law at the end of the 10-day period. Conversely, if he takes no action when Congress has adjourned, he may pocket veto the bill.

If the President vetoes the bill, he sends it back to Congress. Congress may override the veto by a two thirds vote in both houses. If Congress successfully overrides the veto, the bill becomes law. If Congress is unsuccessful, the bill dies.

Timetable for Consideration of Regular Appropriation Bills

MEASURES

Traditionally, the House of Representatives has initiated consideration of regular Appropriation measures. The House Appropriation Committee has jurisdiction over Appropriation measures and ordinarily began the legislative process by reporting regular Appropriation bills separately to the full House.

Recently, both the House Appropriation Committee and the Senate Appropriation Committee, which has jurisdiction over Appropriation measures in the Senate, has been reporting the regular Appropriation bills in May or June. The House committee completes all or almost all of the bills by the annual August recess. The Senate measures are generally reported before the August recess or in September.

Generally, the full House begins consideration of the regular Appropriation bills in May or June as well, passing most by the recess. The Senate begins passing the bills in June or July and completes most of the bills by the end of September.

During the fall, the Appropriation Committees are usually heavily involved in conferences to resolve differences between the two chambers. Relatively little or no time is left before the fiscal year begins to resolve what may be wide disparities between the House and Senate, to say nothing of those between Congress and President. Congress is usually faced with the need to enact one or more temporary continuing resolutions pending the final disposition of the regular Appropriation bills.

Overview of the Authorization vs. Appropriation Process

A primary avenue for exercising Congress's power of the purse is the authorization and appropriation of federal spending to carry out government activities. While the power over Appropriation is granted to Congress by the U.S. Constitution, the authorization appropriation process is derived from House and Senate rules. The formal process consists of two sequential steps: (1) enactment of an authorization measure that may create or continue an agency or program as well as authorize the subsequent enactment of Appropriation; and (2) enactment of Appropriation to provide funds for the authorized agency or program.

The authorizing and appropriating duties in this two-step process are carried out by a division of labor within the committee system. Legislative committees, such as the House Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, are responsible for authorizing legislation related to the agencies and programs under their jurisdiction; most standing committees have authorizing responsibilities. The Appropriation Committees of the House and Senate have jurisdiction over Appropriation measures. As discussed below, House and Senate rules generally prohibit the encroachment of these committee responsibilities by the authorizers and appropriators.

Agencies and programs funded through the annual Appropriation process, referred to as discretionary spending, generally follow this two-step process. Not all federal agencies and programs, however, are funded through this authorization–Appropriation process. Funding for some agencies and programs is provided by the authorizing legislation, bypassing this two-step process. Such spending, referred to as direct spending, currently constitutes about two-thirds of all federal spending. Some direct spending, mostly entitlement programs, is funded by permanent Appropriation in the authorizing law. Other direct spending (referred to as appropriated entitlements), such as Medicaid, is funded in Appropriation acts, but the amount appropriated is controlled by the authorizing legislation.

Authorizing Legislation

An authorizing measure can establish, continue, or modify an agency or program for a fixed or indefinite period of time. It also may set forth the duties and functions of an agency or program, its organizational structure, and the responsibilities of agency or program officials.

Authorizing legislation also authorizes the enactment of Appropriation for an agency or program. The amount authorized to be appropriated may be specified for each fiscal year or may be indefinite (providing “such sums as may be necessary”). The authorization of Appropriation is intended to provide guidance regarding the appropriate amount of funds to carry out the authorized activities of an agency.

For your review, an example of how legislative language for GEAR UP appears in an authorizing bill is provided below:

<SEC. 406H. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-28] 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965>

Authorization of Appropriation for GEAR UP. There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this chapter \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 1999 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.>

Appropriation Measures

An Appropriation measure provides budget authority to an agency for specified purposes. Budget authority allows federal agencies to incur obligations and authorizes payments to be made out of the Treasury. Discretionary agencies and programs, and appropriated entitlement programs, are funded each year in Appropriation acts.

As discussed previously, the subcommittees of the Appropriation Committees of the House and Senate are each responsible for one of the regular Appropriation acts. The regular Appropriation acts provide budget authority for the next fiscal year, beginning October 1. Congress usually adopts one or more supplemental Appropriation acts to provide additional funding for unexpected needs while the fiscal year is in progress. If the regular appropriation acts are not completed by October 1, then Congress must adopt a continuing Appropriation act, commonly referred to as a continuing resolution, providing stop-gap funding. In some years, instead of adopting the regular appropriation measures individually, Congress may include several in an omnibus Appropriation measure, or a continuing Appropriation bill providing funding for the full fiscal year.

For your review, an example of how legislative language for GEAR UP appears in an appropriation bill is provided below:

<109-337: Making Appropriation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2006, and for Other Purposes [HR 3010] >

The conference agreement includes \$306,488,000 for the GEAR UP program, the same level proposed by both the House and the Senate. The conferees intend that funds be awarded on an annual basis and that the Department consult with Congressional committees of jurisdiction prior to new grant competition announcements. The conference agreement provides a sixth and final year award to grantees first funded in 2001, while continuing all other funded projects. The conferees also intend that these funds are available to eligible 2000 grantees that opt to apply for new grant awards servicing a cohort no later than seventh grade, and are allowed to continue assisting students who have not yet completed the program through high school graduation.

The conference agreement includes sufficient funds for a GEAR UP competition in fiscal year 2006 for new partnership awards. The twin goals of GEAR UP are to ensure that low-income students are academically prepared for college and that they receive scholarships to enable them to actually attend college. Accordingly, the conferees encourage the Department to give consideration in the 2006 GEAR UP competition to partnerships that, in addition to providing early intervention services, guarantee college scholarships to GEAR UP students.

Enforcing the Authorization — Appropriation Process

The separation between the two steps of the authorization-appropriation process is enforced through points of order provided by rules of the House and Senate. First, the rules prohibit appropriation for unauthorized agencies and programs; an appropriation in excess of an authorized amount is considered an unauthorized appropriation. Second, the rules prohibit the inclusion of legislative language in appropriation measures. Third, the House, but not the Senate, prohibits appropriation in authorizing legislation.

While the rules encourage the integrity of the process, a point of order must be raised to enforce the rules. Also, the rules may be waived by suspension of the rules, by unanimous consent, or, in the House, by a special rule. If unauthorized appropriations are enacted into law through circumvention of House and Senate rules, in most cases the agency may spend the entire amount.

Understanding the Appropriation Timeline and the Congressional Budget Act

The Congressional Budget Act establishes a timetable for the consideration of appropriation legislation. This timetable pertains to the Appropriation process:

First Monday in February	President Submits Budget to Congress
March 15 – May 15	House and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittees hold hearings on funding jurisdictions, including GEAR UP
April 15	Adoption of the budget resolution
May 15	Annual appropriation bills may be considered in the House.
June 1 – August 1	House and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittees begin to mark up their Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation bill
June 10	House Appropriation Committee reports last annual appropriation bill.
June 30	House completes action on annual appropriation bills.
August 6 – September 7	Congressional recess period for Members and Senators
September 7 – October 1	<u>Ideally</u> , appropriators should complete conference consideration on the Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation and forward the bill to the President
October 1	Fiscal year begins. [all Appropriation actions to be completed]

These deadlines reflect the pace at which the Appropriation process typically occurs. Because the conventional pattern for consideration of Appropriation is for the House to originate the measures, the deadlines focus on the House in order to promote timely consideration, and allow sufficient time for Senate and conference consideration.

Creating the Conditions for Change:

***Advancing the College Access Agenda
through Effective Advocacy***

Section Four

Effective Congressional Communication and Advocacy



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
Community and Education Partnerships

Congressional Advocacy and Education Activity Checklist

Appropriation Calendar	Appropriation Cycle	GEAR UP Grantee Advocacy & Education Action Items	Person Responsible for Completing Activity
<p>First Monday in February</p>	<p>President Submits Budget to Congress, which contains recommended funding levels for GEAR UP under the Department of Education's budget</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> GEAR UP advocates should get their letter writing campaigns in place by sending letters to their partners reminding them to "GEAR UP" for the upcoming Appropriation process. Include facts and figures on the positive impact that GEAR UP is having in your communities, as well as sample letters for their use.</p>	
<p>March 15 – May 15</p> <p>March 16</p> <p>April 15</p> <p>May 1</p> <p>May 16</p>	<p>House and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation Subcommittees accept letters for program funding recommendations and hold hearings on funding jurisdictions, including GEAR UP</p> <p>House Letters Due</p> <p>Adoption of the budget resolution</p> <p>Senate Letters Due</p> <p>Annual appropriation bills may be considered in the House</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> GEAR UP advocates and their partners should send letters, visit and make calls to Members of Congress, especially members on the House and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation subcommittees, sharing with them information on the impact GEAR UP is having in their communities. Letters should also encourage Members to add their names to GEAR UP letters of support being circulated in both chambers of Congress. Advocates are also encouraged to send their own letters of support to House and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation subcommittees.</p>	
<p>June 1 – August 1</p>	<p>House and Senate Labor-HHS-Ed Subcommittees begin to mark up their Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation bill</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> GEAR UP advocates should watch closely to see what level of funding is assigned to GEAR UP. Additionally, they should contact their Members thanking them for their support, if obtained, and inviting them to various events during the August congressional recess.</p>	

Congressional Advocacy and Education Activity Checklist (continued)

Appropriation Calendar	Appropriation Cycle	GEAR UP Grantee Advocacy & Education Action Items	Person Responsible for Completing Activity
<p>August 6 – September 7</p>	<p>Congressional recess period for Members and Senators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> While members are back in their Districts or States, GEAR UP advocates should hold events and activities and invite their Members to these events. <input type="checkbox"/> Additionally, GEAR UP advocates should again take steps to educate Members (via telephone calls, e-mails, faxes, and/or letters) on the positive impact that the GEAR UP program is having in your communities, thank them for their previous support of GEAR UP, and remind them that their support will be needed again during the conference period on the Labor-HHS-ED Appropriation bill. 	
<p>September 7 – October 1</p>	<p><u>Ideally</u>, appropriators should complete conference consideration on the Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriation and forward the bill to the President</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> GEAR UP advocates should again pay close attention to the funding level assigned to GEAR UP during the conference and again contact Members of Congress to express how important maintaining the program means to the millions of students serviced by the program. Up-to-date information regarding proposed GEAR UP funding levels will be made available via our website: www.edpartnerships.org. 	

Congressional Staff Roles

Each member of Congress has staff to assist him/her during a term in office. To be most effective in communicating with Congress, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of key staff. Commonly Used Titles:

Chief of Staff or Administrative Assistant

The Chief of Staff, or the Administrative Assistant as referred to in some offices, reports directly to the member of Congress. He/she usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The Chief of Staff/Administrative Assistant is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant, or Educational Assistant

The Legislative Director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some congressional offices there are several Legislative Assistants and responsibilities are assigned to staff with particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different Legislative Aide depending on the issue at hand. For instance, a member educational assistant or EA is responsible for overseeing policy matters related to educational issues.

Press Secretary or Communications Director

The Press Secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines of communication between the member, his/her constituency, and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands, and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views or position on specific issues.

Appointment Secretary, Personal Secretary, or Scheduler

The Appointment Secretary is usually responsible for allocating a member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituent requests. The Appointment Secretary may also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

Caseworker

The Caseworker is the staff member usually assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The Caseworker's responsibilities may also include helping resolve problems constituents present in relation to federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. There are often several Caseworkers in a congressional office.

Other Staff Titles

Other titles used in a congressional office may include: Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, Office Manager, and Receptionist.

Tips for Communicating with Congress

Below are some suggestions to consider when communicating with your congressional office. To find out the contact information for your senator and/or representative, you are encouraged to use our searchable online congressional directory (www.edpartnerships.org) or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask for your senators' and/or representative's office.

Tips on Calling Member(s) of Congress

Remember that telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member and not the Member of Congress. However, ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment. You are encouraged to use the Congressional Staff Roles list that we have included in this toolkit as you identify the appropriate person to speak with.

1. Identifying yourself and the program, school, or organization which you represent.
2. Tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/ Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S.____/H.R.____)."
3. State reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Share key information and examples from your program to support your position.
4. Keep your call focused and address only one issue during each call.
5. Be courteous, to the point, and never use threatening, condescending, or an intimidating tone.
6. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill.
7. Conclude your call with a Thank You and leave your contact information.
8. Follow-up the call with a brief Thank You letter and include any information requested by the aide you spoke with and/or promised by you.

Tips on Writing Congress

The letter is the most popular choice of communication with a congressional office. If you decide to write a letter, this list of helpful suggestions will improve the effectiveness of the letter:

1. Use your program's, school's, or organization's letterhead.
2. State your purpose for writing the letter in the first paragraph. If your letter pertains to a specific
 1. piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R. _____, Senate bill: S._____.
 2. Include key information, using examples to support your position.
 3. Keep your message focused and address only one issue in each letter.
 4. If possible, keep the letter to one page.
 5. Be courteous, to the point, and never use threatening, condescending, or an intimidating tone.
 6. Type the letter or print clearly.
 7. Conclude your letter with a Thank You.

Addressing Correspondence to a Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
__(Rm.#)__(name of) Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Addressing Correspondence to a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
__(Rm.#)__(name of) House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as:

Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman:
or
Dear Mr. Speaker:

Tips on E-Mailing Congress

Generally, the same guidelines apply to sending an e-mail to your Member of Congress as with writing a letter to them. You may find and e-mail your senators and representative directly from our web site (<http://www.edpartnerships.org>) .

1. State your purpose for writing the e-mail in the first paragraph. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R. ____, Senate bill: S.____.
2. Include key information, using examples to support your position.
3. Keep your message focused and address only one issue in each e-mail.
4. Be courteous, to the point, and never use threatening, condescending, or an intimidating tone.
5. Conclude your letter with a Thank You.

Visiting with Your Member of Congress

Meeting with a member of Congress or congressional staff is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific legislative issue. Below are some suggestions to consider when planning a visit to Capitol Hill or your local congressional office.

Plan Your Visit Carefully

Be clear about what it is you want to achieve; determine in advance which member or committee staff you need to meet with to achieve your purpose.

Make an Appointment

When attempting to meet with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler. Explain your purpose and who you represent. It is easier for congressional staff to arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the member.

Be Prompt, Polite and Patient

When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a Congressman or Congresswoman to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to the member's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with a member's staff.

Be Prepared

Prepare for the meeting by checking all facts and figures before you go to the meeting, make sure you have your facts straight. Also, make sure to take two copies of all materials supporting your position to the meeting. Members are required to take positions on many different issues and in some instances, a member may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. It is therefore helpful to share with the member information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.

Be Political

Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. If possible, describe for the member how you or your group can be of assistance to him/her. Where it is appropriate, remember to ask for a commitment.

Be Responsive

Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the member and/or their staff expresses interest or asks questions. Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, and send along any additional information and materials requested. Make sure to leave your contact information as well as offer to be a resource for the Member and/or their staff should they require additional information.

Be Proactive

Follow-up your meeting with a Thank You letter and use this opportunity to develop and/or strengthen your working relationship with your Members of Congress and their staff. Make sure to send them your newsletters and program updates. Also, be sure to invite them and their staff to take part in major events around your program. Invite them to see first-hand the positive impact that the GEAR UP program is having in your community.

Keep NCCEP Informed

Be sure to complete and submit a **Congressional Office Feedback Form** (page 63) to NCCEP after your meeting. This information helps us as we plan our meetings with Members of Congress and their staff. You can download the form from the NCCEP website at www.edpartnerships.org.

Congressional Visit Meeting Flow

You can expect to get 15 to 20 minutes for your visit. If you are meeting with the Senator or Representative, not his or her staff, the meeting will likely be shorter. As long as they are reasonably polite about it, do not feel slighted. They are very busy and getting a meeting at all is often a challenge. If you are meeting with a staff person, it is crucial that you leave materials that can be passed along to the Senator or Representative. This outline is meant as a guideline as you begin to build on relationships with your congressional leaders. You know your group and project best. Be aware, however, that time runs out quickly, and if you are not conscious you may miss the opportunity to share important information.

- 1. (2-3 minutes) Designate a facilitator to briefly introduce everyone**
 - a. Names and roles in program is sufficient
 - b. This part can be lengthy – politely move things along
 - c. If you have more than eight (8) people in a meeting, introduce several in groups (“these folks are parents, we have three teachers from the middle school, etc.)
- 2. (1-2 minutes) Describe why you applied for a GEAR UP grant**
 - a. Were you concerned about student achievement?
 - b. College attendance rates?
- 3. (2-3 minutes) Brief description of your program**
 - a. What services/activities are provided, number of students/families served as well as your program(s) demographics
- 4. (3-5 minutes) Present your accomplishments**
 - a. This is a good place to use facts and demonstrate the impact of GEAR UP i.e. your program receives \$450,000 annually but as a result of the matching requirement, the program pulls in the community and business to bring the program’s value to more than \$1 million per year
- 5. (3-5 minutes) Personal stories**
 - a. This is the fun part! You get to share your stories (one to three depending on length) about students and families that embody the purpose of GEAR UP.
 - b. Please use success stories and not sob stories as the goal is to put a human face on all the education policy and jargon heard on the Hill
 - c. Any supporting materials, particularly from students and parents are useful — photos are great!
- 6. (1-2 minutes) Plans for the future**
 - a. What are your goals for student achievement?
 - b. What is your timeline for accomplishing those goals?
- 7. (1 minute) Invite the member of Congress to visit your program**
 - a. Ask them when they might be in the district and able to come by
- 8. Complete a Legislative Contact Feedback Form (page 63) and fax to NCCEP at 202-530-0809 or send the NCCEP Government Relations staff a quick update via e-mail at GovernmentRelations@edpartnerships.org.**

Communicating the Impact of GEAR UP to Reporters and Members of Congress

GEAR UP Talking Points and Other Key Messages

Talking Points

1. **GEAR UP works:** The earliest available data indicates that **84.4%** of the first cohort of GEAR UP students successfully graduated from high school, a rate that far exceeds both the rate for low-income students, and all students, regardless of income.
2. **GEAR UP is cost-effective:** From 1999 – 2006, the average federal appropriation per student served by GEAR UP is only **\$243**.
3. **GEAR UP leverages federal investments:** In 2006 alone, the federal appropriation in GEAR UP leveraged an additional \$387,455,258 for education services for low-income students.
4. **GEAR UP uses a holistic approach:** GEAR UP is based on research-proven practices; initiates whole school reform; creates sustainable education/community/business partnerships; provides supplemental resources and services; and engages parents, teachers, and students.

Other Key Messages

GEAR UP makes America more competitive by preparing students to contribute to the future economic growth of our country. GEAR UP ensures that students have the math, science, and literacy skills they need to excel in college and the professional acumen to apply those skills in the workplace. GEAR UP prepares students to be leaders and innovators, to be the foundation for our country's continued competitive success.

GEAR UP levels the playing field by implementing programs and providing resources where they are needed most. High schools in our wealthiest communities offer college-level calculus courses while those in poor and middle-class communities struggle to meet basic math and science requirements. GEAR UP is making our education system fairer and causing our schools to achieve better results.

Congressional Visit General Do's and Don'ts

The following list of Do's and Don'ts were developed by NCCEP to assist you in communicating effectively with your Members of Congress and Congressional staff.

Do (You Should...)

- Plan your meeting. Choose a facilitator who will be the primary spokesperson, and assign other speaking roles to share information.
- Be prepared to spend only 15 minutes with your Member or staffer and plan accordingly. This is no time for long introductions. Remember to allow time to respond to questions.
- Talk about the number of families and students served by your program and the impact your efforts are having on student performance, college aspirations, parental involvement, etc.
- Give both statistical evidence of your program's impact and personal stories of students for whom GEAR UP has made a difference i.e., "We've doubled the number of eighth graders enrolled in algebra, and Alison Benton is one of those students. She hopes to be the first in her family to go to college."
- Discuss state, local, and private involvement in your program. Where appropriate, describe the role that your community and business partners are playing to help you achieve your program objectives.
- Factually answer any questions the representative, senator, or staffer may ask to the best of your ability.
- Think of this as an opportunity to build a relationship with your members of Congress and their staffers. Invite your member of Congress and staff to visit your program site and use you as a resource.
- Be sure to thank the Member and staffers (including the receptionist who greets you) as you conclude your visit.

Don't (You Should Not...)

- Request increases (specific amounts or otherwise) in GEAR UP funding. (As noted above, federal law and regulations prohibit using federal funds to attempt to influence specific legislation, including legislation that has not yet been introduced and federal Appropriation, or spending, bills.)
- Attempt to answer questions of which you are unsure. Offer to get back to them later with the correct information and/or suggest NCCEP as a resource.
- Feel slighted if you meet with staff rather than the member of Congress. This is normal and should not be taken as a sign of disrespect. Staff members are often as engaged in and knowledgeable about particular programs as their bosses.
- Be intimidated by the legislative process or jargon. As practitioners who work with students every day, your expertise is of value to your members of Congress and staff. They have much to learn from you!
- Do their jobs for them. Members of Congress and staff often ask, "What should we cut to fund your program?" They were elected to make those decisions.
- Moreover, you must not discuss program funding levels.
- Overstay your welcome. Members of Congress and staff keep hectic schedules so be considerate of their time.
- Forget to let NCCEP know if it should follow up by providing factual information or data requested during your meetings.

GEAR UP Legislative Contact Feedback Form

After you speak with (phone or in person meeting) legislative staff and/or members, please fill out one Feedback Form per visit and return it to NCCEP by fax at 202-530-0809. This form can be used for speaking with state and federal legislative members and/or their staff. This will allow us to monitor each legislator's level of support for GEAR UP in order to focus our future advocacy efforts. Please inform the legislator and their staff person that NCCEP is the organization that represents the GEAR UP community and can serve as a useful resource for them. Encourage them to call NCCEP at 202-530-1135 should they have any questions regarding GEAR UP.

Your Name: _____

Your Phone #: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Name of GEAR UP Partnership: _____

Legislative Office Visited: _____

Person Visited (Member or Staff) & Title: _____

Person Visited (Member or Staff) & Title: _____

Person Visited (Member or Staff) & Title: _____

Date of Visit: _____

1. Was the person aware of GEAR UP before your visit? Yes No

2. Was the person aware of your GEAR UP partnership before your visit? Yes No

3. Did the person state or seem to be supportive of GEAR UP? Yes No

4. Generally, describe how the meeting/call went. _____

5. What questions did the person ask? _____

6. What follow-up actions were agreed to? _____

7. What would you do differently next time? _____

8. Other comments: _____

Please complete one Feedback Form per contact and fax to NCCEP at 202-530-0809.

Creating the Conditions for Change:

***Advancing the College Access Agenda
through Effective Advocacy***

Section Five

Planning Exercises



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
Community and Education Partnerships

Exercise One: SWOT Analysis of the Advocacy Situation

To help define the local advocacy context, capitalize on your strengths and mitigate potential weaknesses, Exercise One will ask you to identify internal and external factors that will influence your advocacy work. As you begin your work, ask yourself:

- *What factors will assist our advocacy?*
- *What factors will hinder our advocacy?*

To complete the exercise, brainstorm the factors that will affect your advocacy and categorize them as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, or Threats. Consider the following categories and key questions:

A. Strengths

Strengths are current conditions internal to our work that we can take advantage of to help us achieve our advocacy goals.

Key Question:

What strengths does our program/partnership have operating in our favor as we move forward to achieve our advocacy goals?

Examples:

- Rigorous and consistent program implementation
- Broad consensus from key influential stakeholders

B. Weaknesses

Weaknesses are obvious, or sometimes not so obvious, current conditions internal to our program/partnership that will hinder our advocacy goals unless we develop a way to address, correct or avoid them.

Key Question:

What are the weaknesses internal to our program/partnership that are currently blocking us from reaching achieving our advocacy goals?

Examples:

- Partnership members and program leadership do not communicate
- Inability to document program impact and accomplishments

C. Opportunities

Opportunities are the factors that are current, but external to our program/partnership that create an ideal climate to accomplish our advocacy goals.

Key Question:

What are the current external factors that make this an especially opportune time to move forward with our advocacy goals?

Examples:

- Increasing emphasis at all levels of decision making for preparing all students for the rigors of higher education
- State legislature is using our program as a model program for education reform

D. Threats

Threats are the factors that are current, but external to our program/partnership that could get in our way of accomplishing our advocacy goals if we don't have a plan for responding to them.

Key Question:

What are the current external threats that could get in the way of our advocacy goals?

Examples:

- We may be competing with other groups in the community for the same sources of funding
- Lack of political will among key legislators to support college access programs

SWOT Analysis of the Advocacy Situation	
A. Strengths (Internal)	B. Opportunities (External)
C. Weaknesses (Internal)	D. Threats (External)

Exercise Two, Part I: Identifying Influential Policy Makers and Stakeholders

In the following table, please identify those individuals who will exert a degree of influence over your advocacy goals and the extent to which they might support or resist your program / request. You may want to focus on those stakeholders who have a local and specific interest in your program rather than on tangential educational or political leaders.

Who are the key stakeholders, and to what extent will they support or resist the advocacy goals of your program?

Local Stakeholders: Level of Support for College Access Agenda						
Name of Key Policy Maker/ Stakeholder	Strongly Opposes	Opposes	No Commitment	Let It Happen	Help It Happen	Make It Happen

(continued)

Local Stakeholders: Level of Support for College Access Agenda							
Name of Key Policy Maker/ Stakeholder	Strongly Opposes	Opposes	No Commitment	Let It Happen	Help It Happen	Make It Happen	

(continued)

**Exercise Three:
Setting Advocacy Goals**

Advocacy Activity #1:		
A. What do we want to promote, change, or accomplish?	B. Activity Type	C. Why the Advocacy Targets Will Care
	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional <input type="checkbox"/> Informational <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive <input type="checkbox"/> Motivational	
D. Activity Goals / Objectives		E. Anticipated Outcomes & Benchmarks
90 Day		
One Year		
Three Year		

(continued)

**Exercise Three:
Setting Advocacy Goals** *(continued)*

Advocacy Activity #2:		
A. What do we want to promote, change, or accomplish?	B. Activity Type	C. Why the Advocacy Targets Will Care
	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional <input type="checkbox"/> Informational <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive <input type="checkbox"/> Motivational	
D. Activity Goals / Objectives		E. Anticipated Outcomes & Benchmarks
90 Day		
One Year		
Three Year		

(continued)

**Exercise Three:
Setting Advocacy Goals** *(continued)*

Advocacy Activity #3:		
A. What do we want to promote, change, or accomplish?	B. Activity Type	C. Why the Advocacy Targets Will Care
	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional <input type="checkbox"/> Informational <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive <input type="checkbox"/> Motivational	
D. Activity Goals / Objectives		E. Anticipated Outcomes & Benchmarks
90 Day		
One Year		
Three Year		

(continued)

Exercise Four: Advocacy Implementation Plan

Activity #:	Expected Completion Date:			Implementation Calendar	
	Activity Manager:	Implementation Tasks / Milestones	Task Owner	Task Start Date	Task End Date
Activity Description					
Capacity Building Goals					
Anticipated Outcomes					

Exercise Four: Advocacy Implementation Plan *(continued)*

Activity #:	Expected Completion Date:			Implementation Calendar	
	Activity Manager:	Implementation Tasks / Milestones	Task Owner	Task Start Date	Task End Date
Activity Description					
Capacity Building Goals					
Anticipated Outcomes					

Exercise Four: Advocacy Implementation Plan *(continued)*

Activity #:	Expected Completion Date:			Implementation Calendar	
	Activity Manager:	Implementation Tasks / Milestones	Task Owner	Task Start Date	Task End Date
Activity Description					
Capacity Building Goals					
Anticipated Outcomes					

About NCCEP

A good-quality higher education is one of the single most important factors in determining an individual's success in life. Yet millions of young people from economically impoverished communities find the door to higher education all but shut to them. The **National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)** is an organization dedicated to the fundamental American principle that every child deserves an equal chance to obtain a high-quality college education.

The mission of NCCEP is to expand access and opportunity in higher education for low-income families and to ensure that anyone who wants to be the first in his or her family to attend college can fulfill that dream. This is facilitated by developing and strengthening partnerships throughout the education continuum, from early childhood through postsecondary education. To accomplish this goal, NCCEP brings together colleges and universities with local K–12 schools, parent groups, government agencies, foundations, corporations, and community-based organizations in collaborative efforts to improve education at all levels.

By building these broad-based partnerships, linking schools and communities, developing new initiatives, supporting proven programs, and using research findings to create successful frameworks for action, NCCEP aims to invigorate this principle of equal education opportunity for all and, in the process, enrich the life of our nation.

For additional information regarding NCCEP, please contact:

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