

Government 101



September 13th, 2022



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Intro to the Government Relations Team





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Advocate Academy Overview



Overview



- Purpose: train individuals to develop their personal policy and advocacy skills
- Free and open to anyone – including youth
- Lessons are universal, but will be tailored to the mentoring/youth development sector
- Three separate hour-long, interactive virtual learning sessions that must be attended in their entirety
- Attendees will receive and optional supplemental reading and brief assignment that must be turned in to move on to next course

Upcoming Sessions



- Government 101 – October 12 at 1pm ET
- Advocacy 101 – October 11 at 7pm ET and November 9 at 1pm ET
- Policy and Advocacy Communications 101 – October 12 at 1pm ET, November 15 at 7pm ET, and December 7 at 1pm ET

The next session, Advocacy 101 will be held October 11th at 7PM EST. Registration is required and will be sent once the assignment is submitted.

U.S. Government Overview



Government in the U.S.



- Citizens vote for representatives in national, state, and local (county/city level) elections
 - Executive, Legislative, and (sometimes) Judicial
- Federal law supersedes state and local; state law supersedes local
- Each formed government has their own unique set of procedures to conduct business and enact policy

The Legislative Branch



- Primary function: write and vote on new laws
 - Laws are approved by majority or, sometimes, supermajority vote
- “Power of the Purse” – budget and funding the government
- Representatives are elected to represent evenly-apportioned districts
 - “Representatives,” “Assembly People,” “Senators,” or “Council Members”
- Most state legislative branches are bicameral
- Most local forms of government are “Council” structures
- Internal rules define procedures for conducting business
 - Creates committees in charge of specific areas of lawmaking

The Executive Branch



- Primary function: implementation of laws
 - Policies are implemented through “regulations” at “agencies,” which run “programs” created by the legislative branch
- Leader of Executive branch typically has veto power over legislation
- Collects tax revenue and uses/distributes it according to law
- Executive are typically elected to represent the entire constituency
 - “President,” “Governor,” “Executive,” or “Mayor”

The Judicial Branch



- Primary function: interpretation of law and application to individual cases
- Federal, state, and local courts
 - Federal: district, circuit, and Supreme
 - States: state courts which lead up to State Supreme Court; also establish courts that handle specific matters (i.e. juvenile courts, family courts)
 - County/municipal courts

Other Forms of Local Government



- School boards: often make budget and policy decisions for local school districts
- Board of Regents: handle policy and budgeting for systems of higher education
- Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs): state/local entities in charge of workforce programs funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)



QUIZ!

What can the
government do for
you?



Issue analysis



- Problem is identified – usually from constituents/constituent groups
- Government identifies what tools it has to address the problem
 - Does policy or funding already exist to address this issue?
 - If yes: usually an implementation issue (Executive branch)
 - If no: usually a legislative issue (Legislative branch)

Drafting policy



- All governing bodies in the U.S. have a “code” of general permanent laws, usually organized by subject
- A bill amends the code by “striking” language, and/or “substituting/adding” language
- Drafting a bill amends the code to address the problem
- Once a bill is drafted, the public official introduces the bill for consideration and approval

Implementing policy



- Even after a bill becomes law, there are often opportunities to affect how it is implemented through regulations
- Legislative bodies will often leave certain decisions to Executive agencies
 - Grant applications/preferences; reporting
- At the federal level: Administrative Procedures Act requires public notice and feedback
 - federalregister.gov
 - States also have versions of this



QUIZ!

The Legislative Process



The Legislative Process



- Bill is drafted and introduced by elected official
- Bill is then referred to the committee of jurisdiction
- Committee takes action on the bill
 - Hold a hearing; debates the bill; marks up/edits the bill; vote to report it favorably or unfavorably
- Committee reports bill to the full chamber
- Floor action – debate and amendments
- Vote on the bill

The Legislative Process



- Process is repeated in other chamber
- After approval in both chambers, versions of bills are reconciled by “conference committee”
- Approved bill is sent to Executive
- Executive signs or vetoes the Act
- Legislative body can vote to override veto

Analyzing a bill



Types of Bills



- Regular bills (H.B./S.B. or H.R./S.R.)
- Resolutions (H. Res. S. Res.)
- Appropriations bills
- Number is assigned by clerk in order of introduction

Elements of a Bill

- Short title
- Purpose/findings
- Enacting Clause
- Sections amending/repealing/adding laws
- Effective dates



Identifying and Tracking Bills



- Legislative bodies have their own systems for tracking and sharing bills that have been introduced to the public
- Congress uses congress.gov
- Search for the website of the legislative branch of the governing body
- You can typically find legislation on topics of interest by typing in key words or searching by subject

What's next?



Assignment



- Identify a local, state, or national bill that interests you
- Read the bill
- Write a half page to one page memo that includes:
 - Brief summary what the bill would do if enacted
 - Analysis of who the bill would impact and how
 - Include any fiscal implications
- Send to Caden at cfabbi@mentoring.org prior to next session
- This assignment must be completed in order to advance to the next course
 - Only people that complete the assignment will receive the registration link

Additional Resources in Follow Up



- Link to video on how to explore a bill on congress.gov
- Supplemental reading on how to read/understand a bill
- Sample memo

Next Course



Advocacy 101

This session will focus on how advocates can use various tactics to influence policy at the local, state, and national level. It will cover strategies such as writing to or calling elected officials; utilizing social media; researching and requesting meetings with elected officials; and more.

Questions?

