

AIDD Guidance on Informing Policymakers

Under the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act) Councils have a responsibility to inform, educate or advise policymakers, however, there are **restrictions on the use of grant funds** to influence the enactment of legislation and related activities. This is noted in Section 503 of Public Law 106-554, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001 –

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-106publ554/pdf/PLAW-106publ554.pdf> which says:

SEC. 503.

(a) No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall be used, other than for normal and recognized executive legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, for the preparation, distribution, or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or video presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress or any State legislature, except in presentation to the Congress or any State legislature itself.

(b) No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall be used to pay the salary or expenses of any grant or contract recipient, or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the Congress or any State legislature.

The Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) believes that grantees (Councils: members, staff, and their project grantees/contractors) will be able to meet their responsibility to inform, educate or advise policymakers under the DD Act and avoid violating the applicable limitations on lobbying by emphasizing a **nonpartisan analysis, study and research**.

Turn page over for action items.

Present Facts in a Full and Fair Way

Grantees are free to advocate a position or viewpoint as long as there is a full and fair sharing of the facts that help the policymaker to come to their own decision. This means that the grantee would **only present an opinion that is supported by facts**. Councils should not provide distorted facts (*partial facts or only those that support your opinion*), inflammatory and disparaging terms (*saying negative things about other options or opinions that do not align with yours*), or conclusions based more on strong emotional feelings than on facts.

Share Information from All Sides of an Issue

Grantees advising legislators and others about legislation should do this in a balanced way, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the legislation and comparing it to other proposals that may also be under consideration.

The Council should be informed of different possible ways to address an issue and share the good and bad of different solutions compared to the one we support and/or give the policymaker contact information for someone who has that information.

Share Desired Outcome but Be Willing to Consider Different Solutions for Meeting Needs

A nonpartisan approach does not mean that a grantee must be neutral about outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities. But grantees must present an **unbiased attitude when considering alternatives** for meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

We should not be only willing to support our own solution, but be willing to think about other possibilities to solving a problem.

Be a Source of Information

Grantees should emphasize their role as a **source of information and advice** in helping legislators and other policymakers to identify and evaluate the available alternatives for meeting the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Share that the Council is available to help policymakers identify and evaluate different solutions for meeting the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.