



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO FUNDING POLICY ADVOCACY

Funders seeking to spur change often choose between supporting campaigns focused on specific policy wins and investing in building advocates' capacity to push for progress. [No More Half Measures](#), a report by the Center for Evaluation Innovation, makes the point that funders shouldn't choose. Instead, they should see focused and sustained campaigns to change policy and investments in increasing the capabilities of advocates as inextricably linked.

The report makes the case that by funding policy campaigns and advocacy capacity-building together, funders can achieve policy wins and create the advocacy infrastructure to defend these wins in tougher political climates. The publication draws on examples from the fights for children's healthcare, immigration reform and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' State Priorities Partnership.

Atlas Learning Project

Now more than ever, funders need to learn from each other and put effective approaches and strategies into action.

[No More Half Measures](#) is part of the Atlas Learning Project, a suite of resources from The Atlantic Philanthropies and other experts in the field aimed to help funders think strategically about how to defend, sustain and advance progressive policy change. With smart thinking, bold action and sustained focus, funders and advocates will be better positioned to succeed in advocacy and policy change.

WHAT FUNDERS NEED TO KNOW

- When funders focus solely on policy campaigns, policy achievements can be left vulnerable and more likely to be dismantled in less-friendly climates. This approach to funding also requires funders to build temporary advocacy infrastructure – such as lobbyists, public opinion research and databases – each time a campaign begins.
- If funders focus on building advocacy capacity without clear policy goals, advocates have no clear opportunities to put new skills and resources into practice, which is necessary for meaningful capacity building. Furthermore, advocates are unable to build real policy influence when capacity building is not tied to specific political issues.
- There are five ways funders can blend capacity building and policy campaign approaches to better position advocates to make meaningful, lasting change:
 - Avoid short-term mindsets when funding policy campaigns. Understand and be explicit about where and how funding is situated in the longer timeframe of policy change. This may mean lengthening grant commitments or issuing short-term grants under a longer-term umbrella commitment to a specific field to provide continuity.
 - Engage deeply in the field to understand the players, funding landscape, political context and what advocates need to succeed. Gaining clarity about the context in which advocates are working enables funders to provide the right mix of capacity building and campaign support.
 - Provide flexible funding and adaptive grants that can evolve with advocates' capacity needs and the demands of the policymaking process. This can entail blending general operating support with additional, targeted support for specific purposes.
 - When evaluating grants, consider both policy and capacity outcomes as measurements of success. It can be especially important to frame these as dual goals for foundation boards looking at funding outcomes.
 - Work with advocates to identify capacity needs and make capacity-building decisions. Engaging advocates in the decision-making process can enable funders to make better-informed choices about grantee selection, engage more diverse organizations and create new capacity that will last.

“It’s a simmer and boil strategy. You need to have capacity simmering so you can act when issues are ready to boil over.”

NO MORE HALF MEASURES