



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
EDUCATION
DIRECTORATE

ADVANCING PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*A PSYCHOLOGIST'S GUIDE
TO FEDERAL ADVOCACY*



A Psychologist's Guide to Federal Advocacy

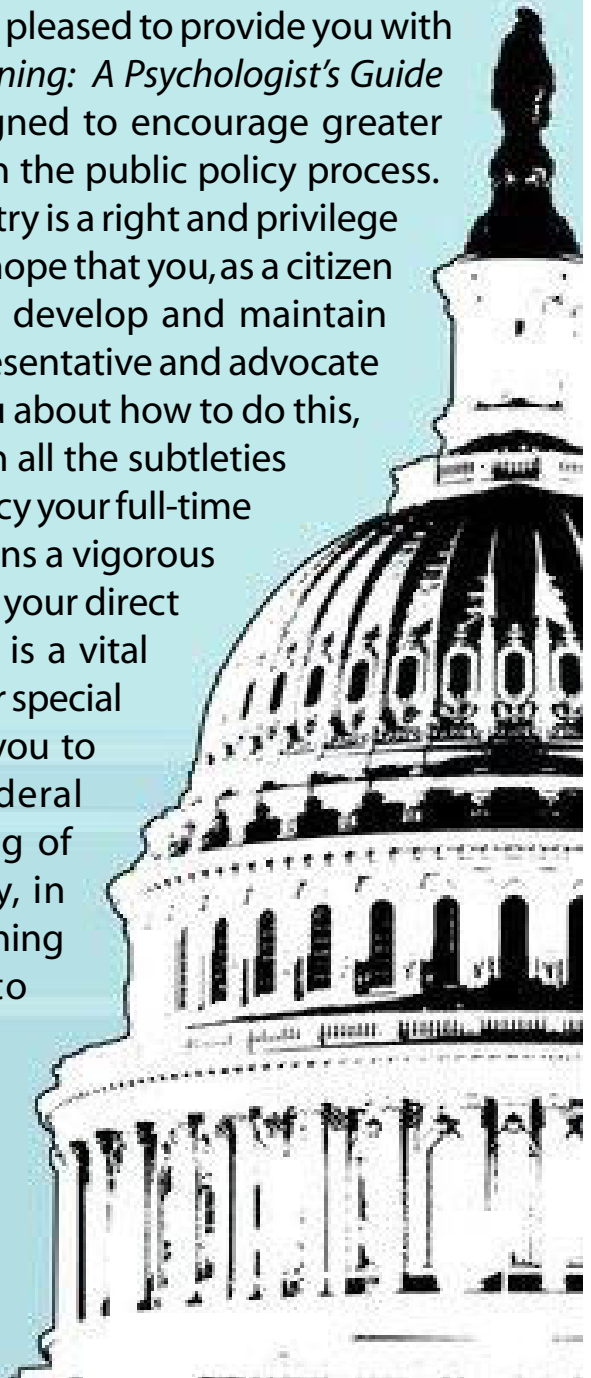
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
I. APA EDUCATION ADVOCACY.	4
Federal Education Advocacy Coordinators (FEDAC).	6
Public Policy Advocacy Network (PPAN).	7
II. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS 101.	8
Understanding the Legislative Process: Authorization and Appropriations.	8
Congressional Committees and Subcommittees That Affect Education and Training Programs.	11
The Regulatory Process (In Federal Agencies).	12
How a Legislator Decides How To Vote.	12
How to Obtain Laws, Bills, and Other Congressional Documents (Locating Information on the Web).	14
III. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS.	18
Identifying and Locating Your Legislators.	18
Understanding the Role of Congressional Staff.	19
Writing a Letter or Sending an E-mail as a Constituent.	20
Making a Telephone Call as a Constituent.	22
Meeting With Your Legislator.	23
Inviting Your Legislator To Visit.	25
Education Advocacy Grassroots Activities.	26
CONCLUSION	29
GLOSSARY.	30
U.S. CAPITOL COMPLEX MAP.	37
PLACES TO EAT AND SHOP ON CAPITOL HILL.	38



INTRODUCTION

The American Psychological Association's (APA) Education Directorate and the Education Public Policy Office are pleased to provide you with *Advancing Psychology Education and Training: A Psychologist's Guide to Federal Advocacy*. This guide is designed to encourage greater political participation by psychologists in the public policy process. Taking part in the political life of our country is a right and privilege exercised by too few Americans. It is our hope that you, as a citizen and psychologist, will use this guide to develop and maintain contact with your U.S. Senators and Representative and advocate for psychology. The guide will inform you about how to do this, in a way that will not require you to learn all the subtleties of public policymaking or to make advocacy your full-time job. Each APA Directorate, in fact, maintains a vigorous and effective advocacy agenda. However, your direct contact with Congress, as a constituent, is a vital component of APA's advocacy efforts. Your special training and expertise uniquely qualify you to contribute to the development of federal policies and programs to the reshaping of political attitudes toward psychology, in particular, psychology education and training and the application of psychology to education (teaching and learning).



APA EDUCATION ADVOCACY



The advocacy goals of the APA's Education Directorate are to increase federal support for psychology education and training and expand the role of psychology in education. Specifically, the Education Public Policy Office, on behalf of and in collaboration with the Education Directorate, lobbies to promote those goals by articulating psychology's unique role in promoting health and preventing disease, improving teaching and learning in America's schools, and addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of our nation's underserved populations (e.g., children, older persons, chronically ill persons, and victims of trauma and abuse), especially in urban and rural communities.

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Advocacy at the federal level is critical because legislation passed by Congress affects every APA member. For example, Congress establishes federal programs and their funding levels. Eligibility for Federal financial aid programs for health professionals, such as the Department of Health and Human Resources' National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program or the U.S. Department of Education's Graduate Aid in Areas of National Need (GAANN), is primarily determined by congressional action. In addition, it is Congress that established and maintains the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program solely for psychology education and training and Congress that considers other APA requests (e.g., the establishment of a federal program to assist institutions of higher education to expand the availability of campus psychological services).

APA's education advocacy has three foci:

1. Target relevant federal legislation for changes that are consistent with the Education Directorate's advocacy goals.
2. Monitor the implementation of federal legislation that has an impact on the Education Directorate's advocacy goals.
3. Increase psychologists' awareness of the need for education advocacy and their involvement in the advocacy process.

To attain the education advocacy goals, it is necessary to achieve certain objectives. The goals remain the same, but the objectives regarding Federal legislation and programs change depending on the statutes up for renewal, the budget situation and the political climate. To increase funding for the education and training of psychologists, the objectives are two fold:

1. To expand the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) Program and to seek participation in other federal aid programs for health professionals and psychological scientists; to increase the role of health service psychologists in primary care and to address the mental and behavioral health needs our Nation's underserved populations.
2. To increase the role and application of psychology to education (teaching and learning) by increasing the role of psychology in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Higher Education Act, as well as other federal legislation that creates national programs to meet the needs of our nation's underserved children and youth.

Education advocacy is accomplished by:

- Providing expertise to policymakers on psychology education and training issues and the role of psychology in education.
- Developing briefing sheets and other advocacy materials describing the contributions of psychology to health and education and education in general; and the need for Federal support for psychology education and training and the application of psychology to education.
- Establishing a grassroots network of psychologists concerned with education and training issues and the impact of psychology on education.
- Participating in coalitions advocating for Federal support for education and training and the application of psychology to education.

APA's education advocates have scored a number of successes. Among them are:

- Creating the first and only federal program dedicated solely to psychology education and training: the Graduate Psychology Education Program.
- Garnering bipartisan support to establish a federal program to expand psychological services on campus.
- Gaining access for graduate psychology students in the Federal Work Study Program.
- Placing psychologists in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Programs and influencing the NHSC to focus on Mental and Behavioral Health.
- Establishing the Federal Education Advocacy Coordinators (FEDAC) grassroots network nation wide.



FEDERAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY COORDINATORS (FEDAC)

The average American may be amazed to know that in any given legislative year as many as 10,000 bills are introduced in the U.S. Congress. Although only a very small percentage (approximately 6%) actually becomes law, these laws govern every aspect of our lives, from communication to recreation, from transportation to education and much more. Amendments to laws governing such issues such as telecommunications, designation of national parks, gasoline taxes and educational loans and scholarships are among the hundreds of decisions that our legislators make on our behalf everyday.

How do the lawmakers make these determinations? How do they know what we want or what is best for their local community? Legislators rely heavily on the expressed views of their constituents and information provided by experts - such as YOU. Through constituent letters or e-mails, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings, legislators learn what's important to the "people back home." However, even greater influence and impact is gained when large numbers of constituents speak with "one voice." This is best accomplished through an organized effort such as the Federal Education Advocacy Coordinators (FEDAC) grassroots network.

Inaugurated in December 2001, the FEDAC is a campus-based nationwide, education advocacy grassroots network established to assist the APA

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Education Directorate and Public Policy-Education staff with efforts to gain federal support (funding) for psychology education and training. When fully completed, the FEDAC network will include individuals representing the full spectrum of psychology education/training (i.e., graduate, postgraduate, undergraduate, and pre-college). The FEDAC network collaborates with other psychology grassroots networks (e.g., PPAN, APAGS, Practice, etc.), whenever possible and appropriate.

In fact, grassroots support (i.e., constituent letters, phone calls, hill visits) from the FEDAC network is vital to the success of Education Advocacy legislative initiatives (i.e., authorizing and appropriations). Consequently, the FEDAC Regional Coordinators recruit psychology representatives on campuses and training sites within their region, especially key states (i.e., states that have Congressional Members serving on House/Senate Committees overseeing legislation of importance to psychology education and training).

Using this targeted approach, the newly formed FEDAC network continues to grow. Approximately one third of APA members are employed in educational settings and nearly one half of the members are engaged in educational activities. In addition, within APA there are approximately 64,000 student members, and 2,300 high school teacher affiliates. These psychologists, students and faculty from hundreds of universities, colleges, professional schools, and secondary schools have the potential to unite and become a powerful voice on Capitol Hill.

PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY NETWORK (PPAN)

Another opportunity for grassroots participation is through the Public Policy Advocacy Network (PPAN). This broader network offers a means for individual psychologists and psychology students to learn about education, public interest and science legislative initiatives. This includes providing them with timely information on legislative and regulatory issues of importance to psychology as well as to federal health. To meet this goal, PPO maintains the PPAN. PPAN sends e-mails to provide individual members with periodic legislative updates and calls-for-action on critical federal policy initiatives of concern to psychologists in the areas of science, education, and the public interest. Individual members can choose to receive information updates and action alerts in any of the issue areas - Education, Science or Public Interest, or can choose to be involved in a combination of, or all issue areas. Information updates and action alerts differ in that information updates are more general announcements detailing the legislative activity surrounding a specific topic (e.g., funding for graduate training of psychology students) while action alerts will request members to take direct action, usually in the form of contacting members of Congress to advocate on an issue or specific piece of legislation. APA's Public Policy Office administers PPAN, in collaboration with the Science, Education, and Public Interest Directorates, as well as the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students.