

Education and Advocacy

Know the Difference

As experts with lived experience and knowledge gained from training, research, and direct practice, we have a responsibility to engage in policy education and systems change. It is important to understand the ways you can engage as a representative of a federally-funded training program and which actions should be reserved to your role as a private citizen.

Trainee: Policy Education

Providing education on the impact of current or proposed policies and laws

Sharing research and publications

Developing and sharing policy analysis

Responding to information requests from policymakers

Private Citizen: Personal Advocacy

Advocating for a specific policy or law to be passed or defeated

Supporting specific political candidates or political parties

Electoral or campaign organizing

Nonviolent civil disobedience

Example Situations

Congress is considering legislation that impacts your program.

- *As a trainee*, from your official e-mail or phone, you can share how the program impacts you, how it impacts the community you serve, what outcomes are important, what the needs are, etc.
- *As a private citizen*, from your personal e-mail or phone, you can ask your Member(s) of Congress to sponsor the legislation or to vote for it. You can also ask other people in your district to make the same ask.

A presidential candidate is visiting your community. You want to make sure disability policy is a priority for them.

- *As a trainee* you can share facts, data, and information about critical issues related to disability.
- *As a private citizen* you can ask them to pledge to support policies that we know or strongly believe will positively impact people with disabilities.

You are part of an amazing research institution with ties to legislation that Congress is considering.

- *As a trainee* you can share a summary of your research and its key findings, and answer questions related to your research.
- *As a private citizen* you can explain why the research supports a position for or against a proposed piece of legislation, and suggest language and changes based on your research.