



GPNP
Greater Pittsburgh
Nonprofit Partnership

GPNP Public Policy Protocol

GPNP has adopted a public policy protocol that assures the following:

- 1) Continuous engagement and empowerment of GPNP members in public policy through the GPNP Public Policy Committee,**
- 2) A standardized, predictable, and responsive process in prioritizing and adopting policy positions, and**
- 3) Quality action and judicious use of GPNP resources**

I. Continuous Engagement and Empowerment of the GPNP Members

Make-up of the Public Policy Committee

The Public Policy Committee is made up of volunteers from GPNP member organizations. The committee is chaired by a member of the GPNP Advisory Team. The Vice Chair also is a GPNP Advisory Team member. The Vice Chair shall serve as Chair-elect. Each position will serve one (1) year in their respective positions. The GPNP Chair nominates the Chair and Co-Chair to the GPNP Advisory Team for approval, each position is renewable up to one year. Each representative of every member organization in good standing shall be eligible for participation on the Public Policy Committee. There is no limit to the number of members that may serve on the Public Policy Committee.

Meetings of the Public Policy Committee

The GPNP Public Policy Committee shall meet at least five (5) times a year, every other month. Meetings will be two hours in duration; and agenda and pre-materials will be sent out via email prior to each meeting. Meetings are scheduled by GPNP Executive Director under direction of the GPNP Public Policy Chair.

Responsibilities of the Public Policy Committee

The role of the Public Policy Committee is to review public policy issues on which the GPNP may take action. This committee is also responsible for recommending and developing communications, advocacy methods, and educational opportunities for GPNP members that involve public policy. The committee is committed and involved in the GPNP's voter and public engagement efforts.

II. Prioritization and Development of Policy Positions

Identification of Policy Issues

Policy issues are brought before GPNP from many sources and all require that the GPNP Public Policy Protocol be utilized:

- A GPNP Public Policy Committee meeting;
- A formal request from a GPNP member;
- A Campaign for What Works or another advocacy group request;
- A Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania request;
- An Advisory Team member request;
- A GPNP Executive Director request
- A request by an elected official or public employee
- A request by a foundation executive
- A request from the private sector
- A request from media.

Policy issues that have been identified and vetted through the Public Policy Committee are given top priority for consideration and as a first step are reviewed by the ***GPNP Policy Response Team*** which is comprised of the GPNP Executive Director, the GPNP Public Policy Committee Chair and Co-Chair, The President of The Forbes Funds, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the GPNP Advisory Team. A position statement is then developed and recommended to the GPNP Advisory Team for formal adoption.

From time to time, the membership of GPNP will be electronically surveyed to solicit input and feedback on policy issues. The Advisory Team shall review all findings and determine an appropriate agenda based upon the findings as well as other information received from the membership. The Advisory Team, in cooperation with the GPNP Executive Director, shall then develop and propose a process for implementing this agenda. This agenda will guide the Public Policy Committee's work each year. The Public Policy Committee may also suggest issues or projects for consideration by the Advisory Team and/or other committees of the GPNP.

Prioritization of Public Policy Issues

Policy Issues will likely fall in one of two tiers for consideration:

- First tier issues include those matters concerning the administration and/or regulation of all charitable organizations and are broadly relevant to the sustainability of the whole nonprofit sector. GPNP assigns the majority of its resources to addressing this policy

tier. (e.g. charitable tax status, state laws requiring purely public charities to conduct audits; federal laws regarding the estate tax, wage and compensation and other human resource related issues, the Pennsylvania state budget and publically funded nonprofits).

- Second tier issues include those matters that impact only some charitable organizations and their clients directly but have relevance to the whole community. GPNP assigns some resources to these issues based on capacity to deliver and contingent upon receiving adequate programmatic support if necessary. (e.g. human services, health, environment, education, arts, community development, basic needs).

Special considerations need to be made when developing a policy position:

- Has the GPNP Advisory Team previously taken a position on the issue?
- Has a subject-specific association or coalition taken action? If so, to what extent? What is the request of GPNP and what capacity needs are necessary, if at all?
- Does the issue affect multiple subsectors of the nonprofit community?
- Is the issue regionally relevant?
- Is success likely to be reached through GPNP's involvement?
- What role would GPNP play: lead, partner, supporter and what resources might be required to successfully fulfill that role and are they available to GPNP?
- What are the divergent or conflicting implications between the subsectors?

Procedures to Adopt Public Policy Issues

Rapid Policy Response:

When immediate response is required, a ***Rapid Response Policy Team*** comprised of the GPNP Executive Director, the Public Policy Committee Chair, the Advisory Team Chair, and the President of the Forbes Funds will respond to items that require action in less than 2 business days. This will generally include media requests. The Rapid Response Policy Team possesses the authority to make a decision on behalf of GPNP. If an immediate response is required, the Rapid Response Team may act, and then promptly inform the GPNP Advisory Team and the Public Policy Committee of its action.

Time-Sensitive Policy Responses:

On time-sensitive matters, the Policy Response Team will recommend a position statement to the GPNP Advisory Team who will then review the recommended position statement and be given a period of 1-3 business days to respond with its decision. A simple majority will determine approval or denial of the position statement. The GPNP Public Policy Committee will be promptly notified of its action.

General Responses:

When an immediate or time sensitive policy position is not required, the Policy Response Team will bring the issue to the Public Policy Committee (or vice versa) and then ultimately to the GPNP Advisory Team for final approval at the next scheduled Advisory Team meeting.

III. Quality Action and Judicious Use of GPNP Resources

After deliberation, the policy position statement is submitted to the GPNP Advisory Team for approval, publication on the website, inclusion in the GPNP Weekly Public Policy Updates, and disseminated to the membership. The position statement will include the potential impact of the issue and steps for action by GPNP. Actions can include but are not limited to:

- Policy Alerts or Call to Action Alerts to the membership via email blasts and published on the website
- Grassroots advocacy including but not limited to:
 - Communications with the media,
 - Community or region-wide education and engagement sessions
 - Public engagement on the issue(s)
 - Informational legislative visits and/or with elected officials on topics unrelated to existing or emerging legislation
 - Coordination of rallies
- Direct advocacy/lobbying
 - Appeals to legislators and other public officials on specific pieces of legislation on behalf of and with the membership

IV. Former Advocacy Issues

Since summer 2006, the GPNP Public Policy Committee has taken action on several issues, including:

- Pennsylvania HB 632 Charitable Audit Threshold Bill which was favorably passed and signed into law by Governor Rendell with desired amendments in October 2006
- Pennsylvania Lobbyist Disclosure Act in February 2007
- Federal Pension Protection Act in October 2006
- Nonprofit Electioneering
- IRS Revised Form 990
- Federal IRA Charitable Rollover Act
- Pennsylvania Free Enterprise and Taxpayer Protection Act
- 2015 name change of the PA Department of Public Welfare to the PA Department of Human Services
- Senate Bill 4 Constitutional Amendment defining Purely Public Charity Pennsylvania State Budget 2015-2016 – Impasse, position on stop gap budgets

- 2016-2017 Fiscal Code provision protecting child welfare fourth quarter payments in event of budget impasse
- 2016 Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program
- 2016 Voter Engagement Program
- 2016 Fair Labor Standards Act Overtime Exemption rules
- 2016 Neighborhood Assistance Program
- Emerging legislation on:
 - Senate Bill 1269: Early Intervention for Children with Mothers with Postpartum Depression
 - Telemedicine
 - Mental health bed registry
- Support of Pennsylvania Pension Reform efforts
- Opposition to the repeal of the Johnson Amendment
- Opposition to parts of the Federal Tax Reform bill of 2017