



Idaho Nonprofit Center Policy Agenda 2023-2024

Statement of Purpose/Goals

- Raise the profile of the nonprofit sector by creating a voice for INC members on public policy issues.
- Educate nonprofit organizations and legislators on public policy issues that affect the nonprofit sector as a whole, their rights and responsibilities as advocates, and the skills needed to effectively engage in advocacy.
- Build a representative body of nonprofit organizations where diverse viewpoints are represented and engaged in public policy debates on issues that affect the sector as a whole.
- Enable INC members to weigh in on significant state and national policy issues through advocacy and lobbying as needed (within limits set for charitable nonprofits by the IRS).
- Increase the ability of nonprofits to carry out their mission by collectively advocating for policies that are good for the majority of organizations. Also to make it less burdensome for nonprofits to raise funds and deliver services while also maintaining high levels of transparency and public trust.

Policy Advocacy Issue Areas

- **Nonprofit & Government Relations**

Improve, strengthen, and support the interface between Idaho nonprofits and government agencies and processes at both the state and federal levels.

- **Building Public Trust, Transparency, and Accountability**

Enhance the ability of Idaho nonprofits to function at the highest levels of integrity, efficiency, and transparency and be accountable to the public they serve. Such as, maintaining the proper balance between maintaining transparency while still informing members—and the public—about potential excessive or disruptive government regulatory burdens or overreach.

- **Charitable Giving Incentives and the Tax Code**

Preserve and enhance the ability of nonprofits to raise needed funds in Idaho by increasing tax code incentives—at both the state and federal level—to encourage Idahoans to donate to charitable organizations and their causes care about.

Promote, advance, and protect policies that preserve the tax exemption status of nonprofit organizations—including maintaining critical property tax exemptions for nonprofits.

- **Budget Appropriations: Maintaining & Enhancing Federal and State Resources for Nonprofits**

Preserve and enhance the ability of nonprofits to access federal and state resources including pass through dollars, federal grants, state grants, contracts/fee for services, and sponsorship agreements.

Included in this is advocacy for fair and timely reimbursement rates for services nonprofits provide as part of federal or state grants and contracts. The INC also advocates for transparency around available government grant contracts that nonprofits can apply or compete for and policies that make it easier for small and medium sized nonprofits to access federal or state grant programs.

- **Workforce Development, Employee Recruitment and Retention**

Expand and strengthen incentives for people to enter the nonprofit workforce as professional staff or volunteers.

Reduce—and advocate for reduction of—burdensome regulations/policies that hinder nonprofit effectiveness or efficiency as it relates to their workforce and operations.

Recognize—and support—policies and collaborations that make childcare and affordable housing more abundant across Idaho. This is especially important in rural and “resort” communities where finding qualified nonprofit workforce is extremely difficult due to high costs of living and lack of access to childcare.

- **Nonprofit Advocacy and Lobbying Rights**

Preserve the advocacy and lobbying rights of all nonprofit/exempt organizations as defined by IRS regulations and strengthen the ability of Idaho nonprofits to engage and educate elected officials.

- **Lead and Promote Civic Engagement and Strengthen Equity and Inclusion of Idahoans in Social and Fiscal Policy**

Support diversity in public policies that include the voices of those who have been historically underrepresented in program implementation (e.g. ALICE population of which is a majority of the population that human services nonprofits serve).

Promote nonpartisan policies that lead to increased, positive civic engagement and the bolstering of democracy including “Get Out the Vote” efforts, voter registration, and/or civic education and voter education efforts.

Prevent policies or legislation that targets subsector groups of nonprofits because of who they serve. Support the ability of nonprofits to create inclusive policies for their staff and/or clients that best serves their own mission.

INC Policy Criteria: three stances on pieces of legislation

- **Monitor:** INC takes no official stance on a piece of legislation but believes it impacts enough nonprofits to build awareness of the legislation.
- **Advocate for:** INC takes an official stance in support of a piece of legislation.
- **Advocate against:** INC takes an official stance against a piece of legislation.

The INC will 'educate/track' on policy and legislation that:

- Impacts nonprofits in the above policy issue areas in a significant way.
- Have statewide application or effect; local or limited application but are determined to have statewide policy significance.
- Have general relevance to the creation, management, operation, administration or well being of nonprofits in Idaho.
- Have broad, communitywide importance, and are likely to have a significant impact on people and causes nonprofits serve such that it is appropriate for the voice of the nonprofit sector to be represented in the policy debate.

The INC will advocate for or against on policy and legislation that/with:

- Evidence is provided via members that the policy/legislation in question would be significantly damaging/helpful to a majority—or subsector—of the INC nonprofit membership.
- Significantly puts at risk the ability of nonprofits as a sector—or in a substantial subsector—(e.g. housing) to carry out their missions/services effectively.
- Significantly affects nonprofits' ability to attract and retain workers or volunteers.
- Significantly affects nonprofits' ability to attract or raise financial resources.
- Does not significantly impact the INCs ability to be seen as a nonpartisan organization or compromise its reputation as a credible voice of the sector.

Process:

- **INC staff:** under guidance of the CEO have broad authority to monitor and educate on policy and legislation that corresponds to the above policy areas.
- **The INC policy committee:** are responsible for determining if a stance to advocate for or against a piece of policy/legislation via:
 - Full board approves general INC Policy Agenda
 - Staff brings a recommended position forward to the committee (electronically or in person)

- Advocacy Committee votes (super majority – 2/3) to advocate for or against
- Note: For efficiency sake, not every bill that the INC takes a formal position on needs a committee vote as the committee may offer blanket authority to advocate for or against certain types of bills that may come up repeatedly in a legislative session or in each chamber of the legislature, etc.