GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADVOCACY: Simply put, advocacy is when nonprofits promote a policy or idea and encourage others to adopt it. Advocacy is the act of promoting a cause, idea or policy to influence people's opinions or actions on matters of public policy or concern. Many types of activities fall under the category of "advocacy" and are legally permissible for 501(c)(3) public charities to engage in, such as issue identification, research and analysis; public issue education; lobbying efforts for or against legislation; nonpartisan voter registration, education and mobilization; litigation; education of government agencies at all levels; participation in referenda and ballot initiatives; grassroots mobilization; and testimonies before government bodies. There are no legal limits on how much non-lobbying advocacy a nonprofit organization can undertake. [1]

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: In broad terms, "civic engagement" or "civic participation" encompasses any and all activities that engage ordinary people in civic life, such as organizing, advocacy and voter registration, education and mobilization. It often involves building the skills, knowledge and experience that enable people to participate effectively in the democratic process.[2]

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: "Community organizing" is a process of building relationships, leadership and power, typically among disenfranchised communities, and bringing that power and collective voice to bear on the issues that affect those communities by engaging with relevant decision-makers. The issues raised, solutions identified and strategies developed to achieve those solutions all are defined and acted on by the leaders themselves, usually with help from professional organizers. "Community organizing" can be one part of an overall advocacy or public policy campaign strategy, but it is distinguished by the fact that affected constituencies are the agents of change, rather than paid advocates or lobbyists who represent the interests of such constituencies.

IMPACT: "Impact" refers to long-term or aggregate change, a desired end result. An "outcome" is the short-term change or result that a program or initiative produces. Several outcomes can contribute to an impact. An "output" is the tangible product that results from a program's activities. For example:

Output: *Twenty organizations endorsed the minimum wage proposal; the minimum wage proposal was introduced in the Senate; a key legislator received 500 calls and letters from constituents favoring this proposal.*
Outcome: *Minimum wage legislation was passed in the legislature.*
Impact: *Low-wage workers' incomes were raised as a result of the minimum wage increase.*

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[1] Unless otherwise notes, these definitions are from NCRP's Grantmaking for Community Impact project: http://www.ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/communities/gcip/gcip-definitions
[2] See Defining Civic Engagement handout for examples of other definitions.

LOBBYING: "Lobbying" generally is defined as an attempt to influence – directly or indirectly – the passage or defeat of government legislation. Lobbying can be one part of an advocacy strategy, but advocacy does not necessarily have to involve lobbying. This is a critical distinction. Nonprofits can lobby legally. Federal laws determine how much lobbying a nonprofit organization can undertake, but there are no limits on how much non-lobbying advocacy (described above) a nonprofit can engage in.

According to the Alliance for Justice, "Public and private foundations can fund 501(c)(3) public charities engaged in advocacy. They do not need to restrict grantees from using their funds for lobbying. Including such a prohibition places unnecessary restrictions on grantees that make it harder for them to accomplish their charitable purposes. Private foundations may not earmark (designate or direct) grants for lobbying purposes. They may make general support grants to charities, even those who lobby. Also, they can give specific project grants to fund projects that include lobbying, as long as the foundation's grant for the project does not exceed the amount the grantee budgeted for the non-lobbying portion of the project. Public foundations have greater flexibility, and can earmark grants for lobbying. Such earmarked grants generally count as a lobbying expenditure." For a detailed guide, go to: http://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Investing_in_Change.pdf. Foundation leaders should consult an attorney for specific legal guidance.

MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES: The phrase "marginalized communities" refers broadly to groups that have been underrepresented or denied a voice in decisions that affect their lives or have experienced discrimination. Groups include, but are not limited to, lower-income people; racial and ethnic minorities; women; immigrants; refugees; low-wage workers; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals; people with disabilities; rural; HIV positive; prisoners and formerly incarcerated individuals and single-parent families.

SERVICE LEARNING: Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that combines service work in the community with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience and teach good citizenship skills.[3]

Legal Disclaimer: The materials presented in this workshop provide helpful background information and guidance, but should not be construed as providing specific legal advice. You should consult with your foundation's legal counsel about specific activities or questions.

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[3] University of Maine-Augusta definition. http://www.uma.edu/umaoce.html