Act Locally:

Grassroots Advocacy Training

May 15, 2012

Health Care & Housing Are Human Rights
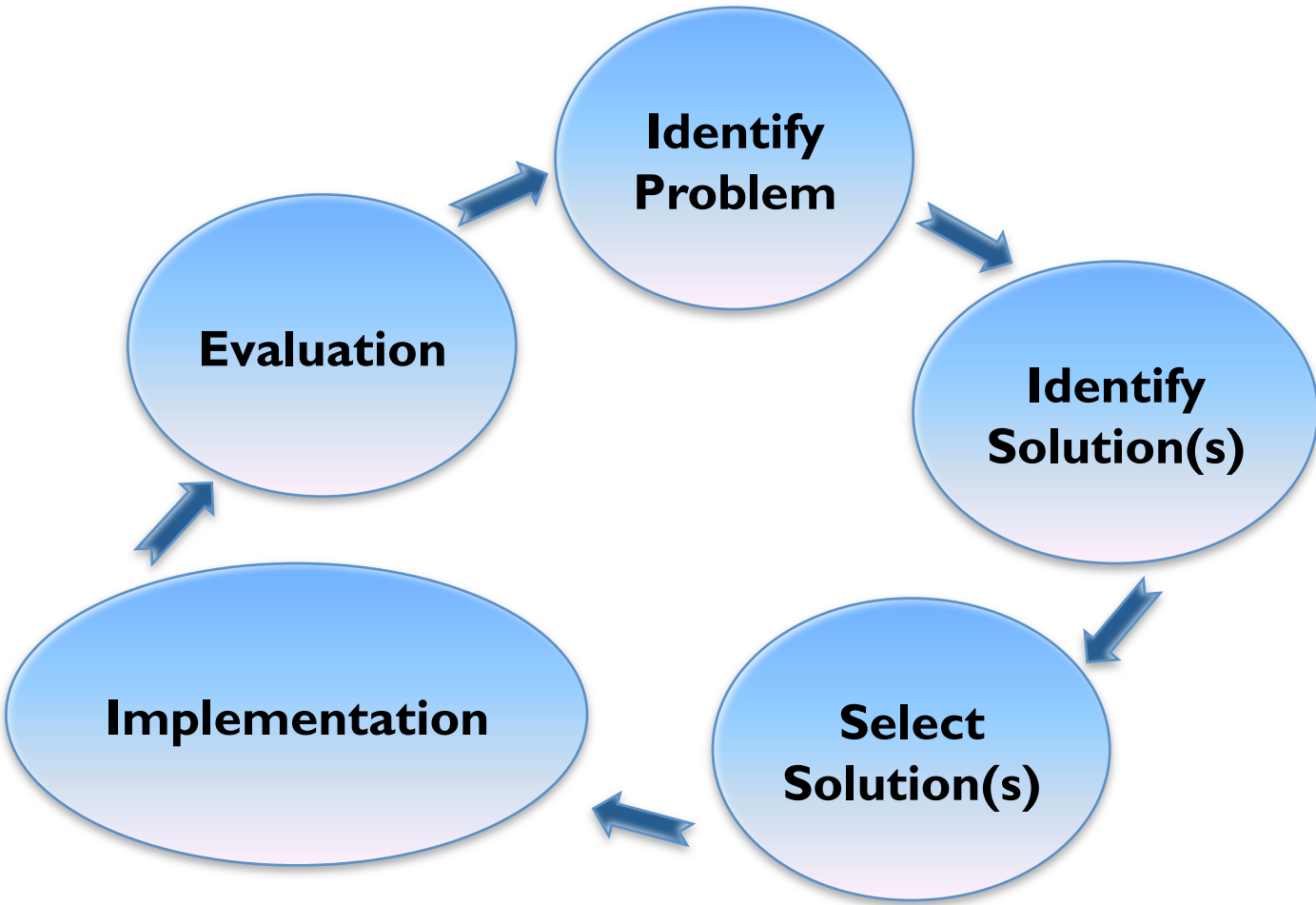
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Overview of the Day

- Setting the Stage

- Legislative Advocacy
  - Legislative Visits

- Organizing/Mobilizing

- Voter Registration in an Election Year

- State Advocacy

- Local Advocacy
  - City Council Hearing

- Community Coalitions

- Working with the Media
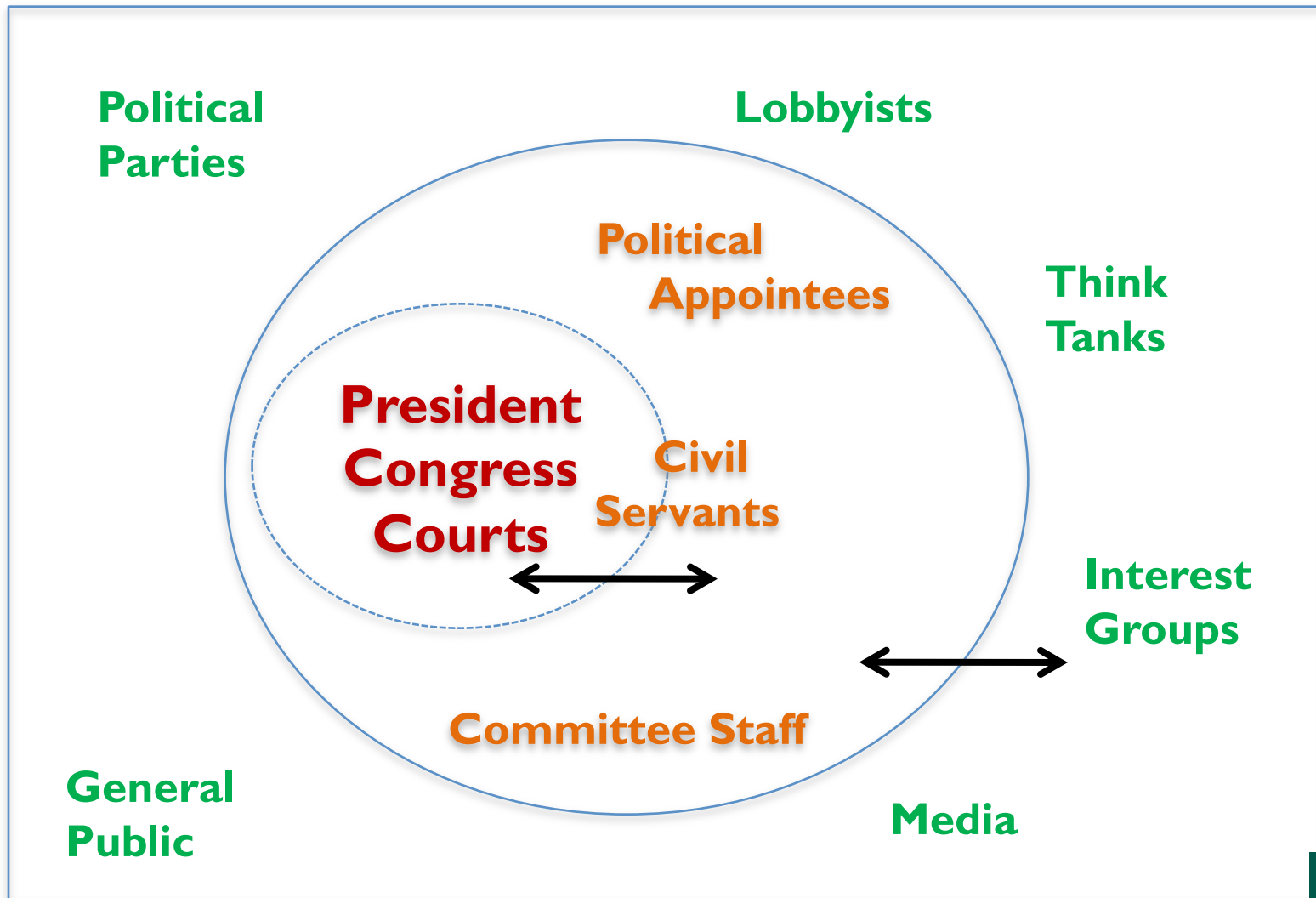 - Talking with Reporters

- Taking it Home

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The Policy Making Process

Identify Problem → Identify Solution(s) → Select Solution(s) → Implementation → Evaluation → Identify Problem

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+ Policy Participants

Political Parties

Lobbyists

Political Appointees

Think Tanks

President Congress Courts

Civil Servants

Interest Groups

Committee Staff

General Public

Media

Local Impact

- Policy process is same for federal, state and local levels

- Participants also similar at state and local levels
  - Admin: Chief executive + appointees + civil servants
  - Legislative/Council: Members + staff
  - Judicial, community, media, lobbyists, interest groups, public

- Develop relationships and focus on specific needed changes at local and state level
  - Gets attention to an issue
  - Stimulates action to address the problem
  - Helps ensure your role in decisionmaking

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Motivational Interviewing in Advocacy

- Moving past resistance behavior
    - Clients: arguing, interrupting, negating, ignoring
    - Advocate: arguing, assuming, shaming/blaming, labeling, hurrying, claiming preeminence

- Building motivation for change
    - Exploring/setting goals and values
    - Establishing intention and partnership
    - Building confidence and trust

- Tailoring interventions based on stages of change/ readiness

- Windows of clarity/opportunity

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Identify Problem

Questions to Ask:

How do we know there is a problem?

How is the problem defined?

Is this a problem for public concern?

Who does it impact?

How can it be measured?

Why is this issue important?

What are the implications of the problem?

Are there similar problems already being publicly discussed?

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Identify Solution(s)

Questions to Ask:

How can the problem be solved?

Has a solution been identified?

How many different solutions are there?

What are the costs & implications of each?

What are the (un)intended consequences?

Is your solution feasible?

How will it be presented?

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Select Solution(s)

Questions to Ask:

- Which option is best/worst (and for whom)?
- Is there a need to use blocking measures?
- How can agreement among partners be achieved?
- Who has the power to decide/influence?
- What will feasibly pass?
- What "decision criteria" and process is being used?
- When do you settle for less?

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Implementation **Questions to Ask:**

- How do you communicate change to stakeholders?
- What regulations will need to be written & how can you influence them?
- Are appropriate resources allocated?
- How many people and steps are involved in the process?
- How will the change be enforced?
- What impact does this change have?

Evaluation

Questions to Ask:

How did the solution impact the problem?

Were there unintended/unexpected consequences?

How was this proven?

What other methodologies might have yielded different results?

How has the problem changed?

Are other solutions recommended?
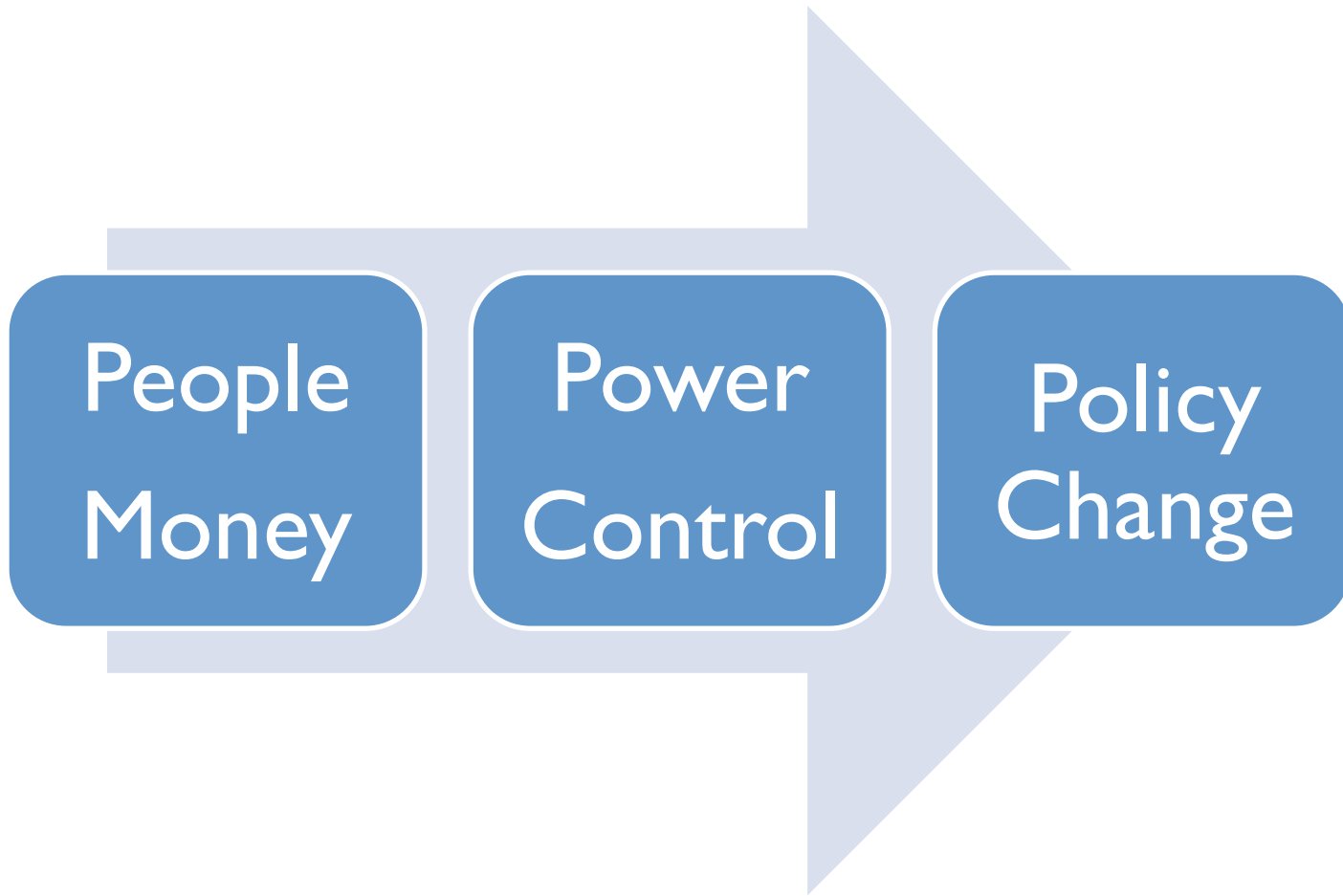
Is anyone still interested?

Challenges in Breaking Through Political Noise

- Appreciating policy v. politics

- There are no enemies, only differences of opinion on specific issues/solutions

- Service providers can be helpful at neutralizing

- Everyone needs a navigator: find yours

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Direct Influences on Policy Change

People Money → Power Control → Policy Change

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Key Points

- The Policy process is continuous & multi-faceted, but has structure

- Advocacy and clinical work use same skills

- Organizing around key questions help build coalition and effectiveness

- Targeting the right players gets the job done

- Move past political "noise"

- Effective organizing of people facilitates policy change

- Change is **always** incremental

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Keeping an Eye on the Ultimate Goals

- Advocacy educates policymakers about client needs = **better policy decisionmaking**

- Advocacy based on trust and experience = **credibility and influence within policy community**

- Informed decisions + influence = **a system that better meets the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness**

- Improved system = **better policy, steps to prevent and end homelessness**

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