

V E R M O N T

EARLY CHILDHOOD
ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

Description of Lead Organization for Alliance Legislative Agenda

Each issue on the Alliance's annual Legislative Agenda has an identified **Lead Organization**, or in some cases organizations, where groups elect to work together. This group performs the following tasks:

- Researches, writes, submits proposal for issue to be on Alliance's Legislative Agenda – may be done with other groups as co-leads
- Serves as policy “expert” on the issue – gathers technical background information, provides expert/technical testimony when needed, etc.
- Provides a staff/Board leader to serve as primary contact and head of the Issue Working Group on the issue
- Works with Alliance staff to engage stakeholders to ensure broad early childhood participation on issue
- Advises and/or provides content for Alliance communications on the issue on a regular basis, including e-newsletter updates, webpage information, images, resource links, calls-to-action, Early Childhood Day at the Legislature talking points, and an end-of-session summary
- As available and appropriate, supports/assists/leads lobbying efforts in State House
- Assists Alliance staff in identifying, recruiting, securing testimony for committees and grassroots/grasstops engagement with legislators by Vermonters impacted by issue
- Works with Alliance staff to consider strategy options during bill/budget consideration
- Works with Alliance staff to make decisions during bill/budget negotiations
- Participates in the Policy/Advocacy Committee to communicate issue status as well as be a sounding board and assist on other issues, as appropriate

Why Establishing a Lead Organization is Important

From a lobbying perspective, coalition ownership/leadership on an issue can be challenging. Legislators want to know the origin of any proposal, and want to be able to talk to the in-the-field, on-the-ground entity that knows the most about the issue. The Lead Organization serves in this role.

When decisions need to be made about when to compromise and on what, and how hard to push (or not), the Lead Organization provides expertise and decides and/or signs off on the decision. They ultimately hold responsibility and accountability for the decision.

Each Agenda item has a different balance point and formulation for how many resources the Lead Organization can or should put into the effort. Some Lead Organizations have contract lobbyists, others are all-volunteer organizations. Alliance staff work with Leads to ensure we make the most of the resources available to help our community's voice be heard in the State House and beyond.

For more information, contact Matt Levin, Executive Director, at 802-229-4281 or matt@vecaa.org