

Protocol: Initial Interviews

[For the first interview for a given case, we begin with question 1a. For the second and later interviews on the same case, we begin with question 1b. Subsequent questions are identical.]

- (1a.) Could you take the **most recent** issue you've been spending time on and describe what you're trying to accomplish on this issue and what type of action are you taking to make that happen?

The issue we talk about doesn't have to be associated with a particular bill, rule, or regulation, and it doesn't have to be an issue that's been receiving coverage by the media—whatever issue you've most recently spent a significant amount of time on is fine so long as it involves the federal government.

[If the interviewee seems uncomfortable picking an issue or expresses concern about boredom, etc.] How about if we talk about whatever issue most recently came across your desk?

?? probe about lobbying activities, lobbying targets

- (1b.) As I mentioned on the phone, I'd like to talk about your efforts on *[issue]*. What are you trying to accomplish on this issue and what type of action are you taking to make that happen?

?? probe about lobbying activities, lobbying targets

Questions 2 through 7 are identical to those used in the Issue Identification Interviews.

- (2) *Recap what they're doing and what they're trying to accomplish.* So who else is involved in this issue both inside and outside of government?

?? probe about coalition partners (formal or informal)

?? probe about who they are speaking with about this issue

- (3) So you're talking to these various people *[be specific if it's relevant]* about why it's necessary to move forward on this issue [or, if relevant, why it's necessary to prevent something from happening, etc.]. What's the fundamental argument you use to try to convince people to do this?

?? probe about different arguments for different targets

?? probe for secondary arguments

?? probe for partisan differences in terms of how people respond to this issue

- (4) What impediments do you face in achieving your objectives on this issue—in other words, who or what is standing in your way? What arguments do they make?

?? *probe for the arguments of opponents and others*

- (5) I was wondering if you could tell me a bit about whether and how your organization uses research when you communicate with other organizations and people in government. From talking to people in organizations like yours I've noticed that some emphasize research and try to supply their representatives with a steady stream of original research and data to be used in presentations with government officials, their aides, and others. Others say that if research or data are needed they can be gotten from think tanks, universities, research organizations or consultants. And then there are others who don't spend a lot of time gathering issue-related research at all.

Where along this continuum would you place this organization? Do you rely a lot on research when you talk to people in government/other groups? If so, do you do much research in-house?

?? *probe for examples about the type of research they do in-house, whether and how often they gather it from outside sources, and what types of outside sources they rely on*

- (6) Now I'd like to ask you a couple of general questions about your organization. How are you organized here in terms of people and units that are involved in public affairs and advocacy?

?? *probe for the different units within the organization that play a role*
?? *probe for the number of people in these units*

- (7) Before we finish up, could you tell me about yourself and how you came to work at this organization?

[If appropriate, ask for permission to follow up later. Also obtain copies of documents and web site citations.]