State Associations and Advocacy: Strategies from the Field

Presented By:
Lana Shope, Iowa Community Action Association
Kelley Hall, Connecticut Association for Community Action
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Moderated By:
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Introductions

Lana Shope, Executive Director

Kelley Hall, Development, Communications, and Grant Manager

Cynthia Zwick, Executive Director

Natalie Kramer, Policy Associate
What is Advocacy and How Do I Do It?

National Community Action Partnership

August 2016

Lana Shope

Iowa Community Action Association
Objectives

• Increase skills and knowledge of advocacy
• Increase knowledge about creating an advocacy plan
• Equip participants with resources to advocate
Why Do We Advocate?

• Be the voice for the vulnerable
• Be the voice for justice
• Be the voice to create change
• We are required by law to address the causes and conditions of poverty
You *might* be an Advocate if You’ve Ever....

- Given your opinion in a town meeting
- Stood up for someone who was being unfairly treated in public
- Written a letter to a business about poor or outstanding services received
- Met with a policymaker to discuss concerns in your community
Breaking the Barriers & Myths

- I’m not an activist
- I don’t have time
- I don’t know how
- My cause isn’t important enough
- It won’t make a difference
- As a nonprofit, I can’t advocate
How does Advocacy Fit Your Agency?

• Ask the following:
  
  - How can advocacy contribute to our organization’s mission?
  
  - How can advocacy expand our services and make them more effective?
  
  - How can telling policymakers and the public about our cause enhance other parts of our organization’s efforts?
  
  - What is the right balance among services, advocacy, and other activities for our organization?

Source: National Council of Nonprofits
Strategies for Planning and Creating Your Advocacy Plan

• Statewide Advocacy Plan
  – Created by board of directors
  – Use data and antidotal information
  – What is the current conversation?
  – Past experience
  – Partner with state office Commissioners
Strategies for Planning and Creating Your Advocacy Plan

- CAA Advocacy Plan
  - Make it part of agency strategic plan
  - Use staff and board to develop plan
  - Use state plan as a guide if you have one
  - Use your board to implement the advocacy plan
Engagement and Mobilization

- Meet with legislators
- Meet with Congressional delegation
- Event at capitol - Day on the Hill
- NCAF Spring Conference
- Meetings with staff, families, board about legislative process
Communication and Messaging

• How you communicate varies
  • Story bank
  • Social Media outlets - Twitter, Facebook, Website

• What you communicate varies
  • Framing for Republican or Democrat
  • What does the policymaker like, data, stories, or both?
Resources

• State Legislative Web Site
• CAPLAW (www.caplaw.org)
• Alliance for Justice (www.afj.org)
• National Council on Nonprofits (www.councilofnonprofits.org)
• U.S. Senate (www.senate.gov)
• U.S. House (www.house.gov)
HSI and Transformational Leadership: Proven Results for Connecticut’s Families & Economy

Kelley Hall, Development, Communications, and Grants Manager
Topics covered

- Background: Human Services Infrastructure (HSI)
- Vision and method
- HSI process and goals
- Results and reporting
- Advocacy
- Outcomes
- Summary
What is HSI?

- Human Services Infrastructure (HSI) is a comprehensive, holistic, multigenerational, customer-focused, statewide integrated service delivery system
- “No door is the wrong door” approach
Context for the HSI Initiative

- State budget crisis put extra pressure on human services delivery system
- All human service providers, including CT Department of Social Services (DSS), faced significant budget cuts
- From 2001-2004, CAA state funding decreased by 31%
- Needed a plan for a more cost-efficient and comprehensive human services system
HSI Approach: Vision

- Cultural competency; meet people where they are
- Holistic, customer-focused service delivery
- No wrong door: universal intake and referral
- Use data to establish benchmarks, demonstrate results
HSI Approach: Method

- Coordinate among CAAs and partners
- Cross-train CAA staff on HSI process
- Connect dots: CAFCA’s Automated Benefits Calculator (ABC)
- Align practices, principles, and IT systems
Connecticut Human Services Infrastructure

Low-Income Individuals and Families
Walk-ins and Referrals from DSS, InfoLine 211, and others

CT’s 12 CAAs

CT Community Action Self-Sufficiency Centers
Comprehensive Intake & Assessment
DSS Pre-Application Assistance
Direct Services
Referral to Services outside the CAA
Case Management, Tracking and Outcome Reporting

CAA Services

CTA Services

Low-Income Household Energy Assistance Program and Weatherization

Early Childhood Education:
Head Start, Family Literacy, School Readiness, Child Day Care

Food and Nutrition:
WIC, Food Pantries, Meals-on-Wheels and Senior Congregate Meals, Child and Youth Meal Programs

CBOs & Non-Profit Providers, Faith-based, State Agencies, and Municipal Government

Fatherhood
SDE
Domestic Violence
AIC
Trans.

Civic Engagement

Health Services

Domestic Violence

Libraries

Food Stamps

Child Support

TFA

Substance Abuse

AAA’s

Disability

DOL

Medical

AIC

DMHAS

Section 8 & RAP

Eic

DOL

Mental Health

Libraries

Child Support

Disability

AIC

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DSS Programs:
Upon “triage” intake, CAA staff immediately refer clients with significant barriers to DSS. CAA staff assist other clients with applications to DSS Programs and Services.

InfoLine 211:
CAA staff work with 211 to get referrals for client. Referrals entered into client’s action plan by CAA staff for tracking and outcome reporting.

Family Services

Housing & Shelter

Legal Services

Food and Nutrition:

WIC, Food Pantries, Meals-on-Wheels and Senior Congregate Meals, Child and Youth Meal Programs

CTA Services

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HSI Process

- Universal client intake
- Pre-Assessment (triage)
- Full client assessment (holistic case management)
- Pre-application assistance for DSS programs
- CAFCA’s Automated Benefits Calculator (ABC)
- Service and referral
- Data collection and maintenance
- Follow-up/engagement
- Track client progress towards self-sufficiency
HSI Goals

- Better use of existing resources: multi-agency coordination
- Breaks down silos between programs and among agencies for service delivery
- Connect clients to agency and community resources efficiently and effectively by using a standardized intake and assessment
- Identify client barriers early in the process and coordinate bundled services
- Utilize a multi-generational approach
Results Based Accountability (RBA)

- CAAs are accountable agencies that get results
- Can show individual and family outcomes – not just count client services provided
- Allow Return-on-Investment (ROI) calculations and documentation of the impact of Community Action in CT
- Able to show reporting activity and who we serve
HSI and ROMA

- ROMA integrated in HSI and CSBG data collection and reporting
- Cross walked ROMA and RBA for State of Connecticut
- Only statewide network in CT using RBA
HSI and Results

- Customer-focused approach (not program-based)
- Application of proven management approaches: RBA and ROMA
- Better customer results and the ability to prove it
- CSBG-IS Reporting
- CAFCA and CAA annual reports (see example)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Press releases and events
Advocacy and the Legislature

- Use outcome data to:
  - Advocate to protect, and sometimes increase, state funding
  - Enhance legislative testimony
  - Demonstrate bipartisanship
  - Show who we serve by district
  - Save taxpayer dollars
Outcomes for CAFCA

- Strengthen relationship with DSS and the State of Connecticut
  - Enhanced collaboration with CAA network
  - Monthly meetings with DSS Commissioner
  - Advocate for network against state budget cuts and on our behalf

- Increased opportunities
  - Statewide SSBG Case Management Grant
  - Helps align agency and network data reporting
Outcomes for CT CAA Network

- Individuals and families are better served
- CAA staff and agencies have been renewed – vibrant, not stagnant, agencies
- Legislators and other policy makers better understand CAAs’ work and its purpose
- Increased partnerships and collaborations
- Identified agency strengths, weaknesses and gaps in service
HSI: Improving CT’s CAA Network

- Redefining success in human services
  - Customer-focused, integrated service delivery
  - A sustainable, client-driven hand up
- Vast partnerships/fast mobilization
- Reducing silos via effective, efficient coordination
- Accountability
  - Tripartite board structure
  - State and Federal oversight
- Transparency
  - Complete public disclosure
  - Unmatched results and reporting
Message for CAA Networks & State Associations

- CAA network and CSBG Partners must be united in strategy
- Client focused – not program or agency
- Be open to new collaborations and partnerships
- Identify and market your value to your community and state
- Market CAA capacity and outcomes to policy makers and funding sources
WHAT IS ADVOCACY?
Advocacy is...

- Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy
- Deliberate process of influencing institutions and individuals with power

“A nation’s greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members.”
—Mahatma Gandhi, humanitarian and civil rights leader (1869–1948)
VOICE FOR THE COMMUNITY
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MESSAGING
Can You Answer the Following?

• What is your issue?
• What is your solution?
• What is your goal?
• How will you get there?
• What resources do you need to get there?
• Who are your allies?
• Who can you influence?
• Who do you need to influence?
• Are they open to education/awareness?
• Who can deliver your message?
Tell A Story

Story of Me

Story of We

Call to Action
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Identify Assets in Community

Celebrate Wins

Establish Relationships

Mobilize Assets for Plan

Build Partners/Trust
Asset Based Community Development

- Mobilizing individual/community talents, skills and assets
- Identify individuals and organizations
- Utilize local resources, build local networks
ENGAGE POWERFULLY
Attend Session
Call for a personal meeting
State position tactfully with respect
Thank for their service
Call again in a few weeks, cont. to attend mtngs
Invite to your event
We Won!

But they’ll be back

• General Lessons Learned:
  – Never, never, never give up
  – Never underestimate who else may be interested in your issue
  – Continue to show up and pay attention
  – Be present and aware (petitions)
  – Stay in touch with your allies – regularly
  – Use technical resources whenever you can (CRL, CFA)
  – Always say thank you!
Questions and Discussion
Contacts

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