LEADERSHIP IN ADVOCACY, ADVOCACY IN LEADERSHIP

ASSESSING YOUR CAPACITY, ALIGNING WITH YOUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS, LEVERAGING YOUR RESOURCES FOR ADVOCACY IMPACT
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘ADVOCACY’?

• Advocare: “to call to aid”
  • Rally around a cause
  • Engage stakeholders
  • Promote social change
  • Address root causes

• So, NOT just lobbying!
WHY ADVOCACY, IN SOCIAL SERVICES?

• Address root causes
• Prevent burnout
• Strengthen alliances
• Raise your profile
• Create the context in which your services can succeed
• Bolster your base
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR ADVOCACY

• Studies of nonprofit organizations with demonstrated success in advocacy find two related factors strongly determinant of outcomes:
  • Adaptive capacity, or the ability to read the landscape and modify approaches in response to opportunities and threats
  • Executive leadership, including the willingness to harness necessary resources, take calculated risks, sustain effort through difficulties, commit to addressing root causes, and scan the horizon for what might be coming
A Framework for Understanding Advocacy

AUDIENCES

PUBLIC

INFLUENCERS

DECISION MAKERS

OUTCOMES

AWARENESS

WILL

ACTION

Voter Outreach

Public Education

Policymaker Education

Influencer Education

Public Polling

Policy Analysis/Research

Policymaker Education

Lobbying

Litigation

Model Legislation

Regulatory Feedback

Champion Development

Political Will Campaigns

Messaging

Public Forums

Communications and Leadership Development

Advocacy Capacity Building

Community Organizing

Media Advocacy

Community Mobilization

Coalition Building

Public Will Campaigns

Demonstration Programs

Voter Outreach

Public Awareness Campaigns

Public Education

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ALIGNING YOUR ADVOCACY APPROACHES WITH YOUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS

• This landscape can look overwhelming, but the good news is that, with so many different entry points and so many paths from A to B, organizations can choose where and how they want to engage:
  • Seeking greater visibility? Consider media advocacy or public education
  • Looking to build a reputation as an issue expert? Think about policy analysis or policymaker education
  • Need to build buy-in internally first? Demonstration programs and influencer education can be ways to ease into policy change
ASSESSING YOUR ADVOCACY CAPACITY, TO PLAN

• Dimensions of advocacy capacity:
  • Adaptability
  • Leadership
  • Management capacity
    • A well-capacitated organization may not necessarily be an effective advocacy force, but a poorly-run organization is unlikely to be
  • Technical capacity
    • Knowledge of policymakers, policy systems, policy processes
    • Skills in communications, tactics, analysis, coalition management
ENGAGING YOUR WHOLE ‘TEAM’ IN ADVOCACY

• Clients
  • How do you currently honor clients’ voices and cultivate their sense of leadership and empowerment? What are the benefits or impacts of these efforts? If you were to do more to empower your constituents, how might you restructure an existing program to achieve that goal?

• Direct-service staff
  • How do you currently incorporate advocacy opportunities into direct service staffs’ job responsibilities? How can advocacy responsibilities currently held by executive staff be diffused to other employees? What learning opportunities could you access to build staff capacity?

• Donors
  • How could conveying information about your cause(s) and the need for advocacy invite donors to feel more deeply invested in your work? Where would your donors’ voices make a particular impact? What types of strategies/arenas lend themselves well to engaging your donors?

• Volunteers
  • How do you engage volunteers in your organization? What questions might your organization ask in order to collaborate with the broader community in confronting social problems?
EXAMPLES: BUILDING CAPACITY WITH YOUR WHOLE TEAM

• Service Participants
• Direct-Service Staff
• Volunteers
• Donors
LEVERAGING YOUR STRENGTHS AND SUSTAINING YOUR COMMITMENT

• You don’t have to do it all. How can you build a field? Where are your allies strong, and how can you draw from the field’s strengths?

• Identify interim measures of success, and then measure them. Policy change can be slow, and you need to know you’re on the right track before you reach the actual destination. What’s shifting in:
  • Community norms
  • Organizational capacity
  • Alliances
  • Base of support
  • Improved policies
  • Impact
RESOURCES

• Building Movement Project and the 5% Shift
• Bolder Advocacy
• Case studies for the Advocacy Capacity TA Project (available from Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City)
• Case studies on nonprofits and social change, available from California Endowment
• Center for Evaluation Innovation, on advocacy evaluation
• Innovation Network
Questions?

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