

Advocacy, Lobbying and their intersection - ELITE

Posted by Lindley Dupree - 26 Oct 2012 17:18

Hello, Emerging Leaders!

For this week's post, please post your thoughts on two subjects:

1. How you, personally, can be a good/better advocate for Community Action; and
2. How you think your agency could benefit from focused advocacy on an community/agency issue of your choosing. Please include who you would target, the outcomes you would like to achieve, the kinds of stories and data that you would use to make your case, and at least one outcome measure that you would use.

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Re: Advocacy, Lobbying and their intersection - ELITE

Posted by Kim Clark - 06 Nov 2012 15:27

I can personally become a better advocate for Community Action by becoming an effective educator. Many people do not understand what the mission of Community Action is. They still view our services as a band-aid approach to addressing an issue. We are so much more than a band-aid. We teach our customers effectively and move individuals out of poverty quite effectively. Now we need to education others. I too believe that we allow too many opportunities to slip through our fingers. When we have been successful in our efforts to move a family out of poverty, we need to share their story.

The entire community action network would benefit from focused advocacy. Locally I would target our

local, state, and national representatives. I would share client success stories and would include live video. A picture is worth a thousand words!

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Re: Advocacy, Lobbying and their intersection - ELITE

Posted by Bob Brandenburg - 13 Nov 2012 11:58

The Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies uses the Community Action Poverty Simulation as an advocacy tool. The simulation is designed to educate different target audiences about the day-to-day realities faced by limited income families through a role-play exercise. The Missouri Association for Community Action developed the simulation. The most recent simulation that I facilitated (September 2012) was for the Bridges of Hope based in Grove, OK. This is a grassroots effort based on the national initiative, Bridges Out of Poverty. Participants included representatives from law enforcement, clergy, financial institution, state juvenile affairs, tribal, local news media and many concerned citizens. The goal was to impress leaders and other concerned citizens with the stark realities of living in poverty in order to generate support for the initiative. Feedback from the organizer indicates new people are stepping up to pledge their time and talents. Association staff members have facilitated simulations for a variety of groups including community action agency staff members, public school teachers, college students, American Indian tribes, community organizations and a faith-based youth group. In several cases, positive media coverage resulted from the simulation. Facilitating a simulation can be very time consuming. It requires extensive planning and coordination with the sponsoring organization, a certified facilitator and additional staff involvement to facilitate the actual simulation, and time to replenish supplies and restock the simulation kit.

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Re: Advocacy, Lobbying and their intersection - ELITE

Posted by Gloria Wilson - 15 Nov 2012 13:11

1. How you, personally, can be a good/better advocate for Community Action.

I can personally be a better advocate for Community Action by doing theses three things:

- 1. Invite a legislator to visit our program and hear about the work being done.
- 2. Provide the public with information or educational materials on a topic.
- 3. Talk with the media about a specific social issue.

2. How you think your agency could benefit from focused advocacy on an community/agency issue of your choosing. Please include who you would target, the outcomes you would like to achieve, the kinds of stories and data that you would use to make your case, and at least one outcome measure that you

would use.

Agency issue of my choosing would be Section 8 Housing lack of enough administrative funds to lease the total number of units approved by HUD.

Who I would target is HUD and local government.

The outcomes I would like to achieve is to obtain more administrative funds so that we may have enough staff to screen, document eligibility status, inspect and lease the number of housing units approved by HUD.

What kinds of stories and data would you use to make your case? I would create a public service announcement showing a picture of the 1,300 families on our wait-list laying out in the cold. I would have a selected number of them giving personal testimonies of their current living conditions thus showing the need for more housing.

The one outcome measure would be to show how many families received housing due to receiving an additional \$50,000 of administrative funds.

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Re: Advocacy, Lobbying and their intersection - ELITE

Posted by Lana Ross - 19 Nov 2012 17:41

I am a registered lobbyist for Iowa Community Action and spend almost every day at our state Capitol during the legislative session when runs from January through May. So I do lots of advocacy and a lot of lobbying. During this election cycle, I spent a significant amount of my personal time helping a number of elected officials with their re-election campaigns. Community Action has a champion state senator who was in a really tough race. On my own time, I went to his district and door knocked and made phone calls. I also wrote him a check from my personal account. Both time and money were greatly appreciated and, he won!

Every year prior to the session beginning, the ICAA Board of Directors creates a legislative agenda for me to use during my advocacy and lobbying efforts. One of the advocacy activities we do is a Day on the Hill for Iowa's Family Development Program. Our target is the 150 members of the Iowa Legislature and the outcome we want is for at least 75% of them to know about family development and understand how it makes a difference in helping people get off of welfare. We use hard data, like how many families increase their income, access professional services to address barriers, such as mental health services. We also show a return on investment: for every dollar invested in the program compared to the taxes that are paid and the savings that occur in the welfare program. For stories we have participants in the family development program attend the event at the Capitol to talk directly with legislators about the changes they are making and the direction they want to go with their life. The measurable outcome I use to show success is if funding for the family development program is increased over last year.

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Re: Advocacy, Lobbying and their intersection - ELITE

Posted by Elizabeth Porter - 20 Nov 2012 13:18

1. Advocacy means to speak up, plead the case of another or fight for a cause.. For me becoming a better advocate for my agency begins with clearly understanding the needs of the families we serve. Over the years I have built strong relationships in my community. I encounter opportunities with community members, leaders in their fields and the people I work for. I am reminded to carry a clear, positive message about my agency, it's programs, our mission and the needs of those we serve.

2.If provided the opportunity I would create an event to spark community engagement. The event would focus on engaging representative's from state, local and neighborhood programs. I would match these participants with families and individuals to whom we offer services. Participants would be provided a pre questionnaire on what they understand about issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and perceived barriers to success. As I envision the venue to be titled "Walk a Mile with Me"; participants would then engage on topic driven conversation. At the end of the walk participants would then take a post-questionnaire. These questionnaire's would provide outcomes. Did our event raise awareness, did it provide insight as to perceived barriers facing low income families and were relationships built to strengthen support and shared wisdom.

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