PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities
Council info: www.mscdd.org
https://www.facebook.com/mississippicouncilondevelopmentaldisabilities
Presenter: Charles Hughes; charles.hughes@dmh.ms.gov

Brief Description of the Practice

The Grantee Meeting

New and continuation grantees attend an in-person meeting to learn more about the history and work of Councils, requirements of the designated state agency and Council, and to network.

How does the practice work?

The meeting is scheduled during the first month of the grant year before any cash requests have been prepared. The length depends on the number of grantees. We usually schedule for three hours. Both program staff and fiscal staff responsible for the grants are invited to attend. The executive director facilitates the meeting and provides an overview of Councils and specifics about the Mississippi Council, including state plan goals and performance measures. The program coordinator presents the information about grant division requirements for reimbursement, quarterly report requirements, and site visits. (We only have three staff members.) Grantees have the opportunity to present their grant summaries and network.

A typical agenda includes:

Welcome/Introductions
Overview of Council/DD Network/DD Act
Five-Year State Plan/Goals
Designated State Agency Responsibilities
Grants Division
•   Ensure receipt and signature of agreement/contract
•   State description of equipment/inventory
Cash Requests
•   Due dates
•   Instructions
•   Budgets
Quarterly Report Requirements
Performance Measures/Data Collection/Evaluation
Site Visits Overview
Grantees Provide Brief Summaries of Their Grants
Final Questions/Comments
Adjourn THEN ....more networking happens after the meeting

Benefits of using the practice

Grantees and Council staff get to meet in person which is always beneficial.

Networking among grantees allows them to share ideas and leverage support.

Grantees learn more about the DD Act and Councils.

Grantees learn more about fiscal and reporting requirements.

Grantees have the opportunity to ask questions that may benefit everyone.

Lessons learned

There is a consistent message since all hear the information at the same time.

Grantees must include travel costs for this meeting in the budgets of their grant proposals.

Other information

Each Request for Proposals indicates a grantee must include in their budget and budget narrative at least two trips to Jackson for staff to attend a grantee meeting or other meeting as requested by the Council. Sometimes they are asked to make a presentation to the Council members during the year.

PROMISING PRACTICE
Performance Measures Guidelines

Council: Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
Council info: https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/icdd/Pages/default.aspx
Presenter: Mariel Hamer, Mariel.Hamer@illinois.gov; Margie Harkness,
Margaret.Harkness@illinois.gov

Brief Description of The Practice

Performance Measures Guidelines: A guidance document that is used to provide grantees with information and support in understanding the assigned federal Performance Measures tied to their grant.

How does the practice work?

Step 1: A funding decision is made by the Council and the grantee is notified. At that time, an orientation is scheduled.

Step 2: Prior to the start of the grant, the ICDD Project Officer works with the grantee to determine the appropriate federal Performance Measures.

Step 3: A required grantee orientation takes place by which a training is provided on the federal Performance Measures assigned to the grant.

Step 4: After the orientation, the grantee will go back to their project team to determine the appropriate Performance Target numbers. That information is updated in DD Suite once approved by the ICDD Project Officer.

Step 5: The ICDD Project Officer will then support the grantee with identifying the appropriate satisfaction survey for projects tied to Individual and Family Advocacy so that the data collected correctly aligns with the federal measures the Council must report on.

Benefits of using the practice

✓ Having the guidance ready to share reduced the amount of direct support Council staff have to provide grantees with quarterly reporting.

✓ PPR reporting for staff is simplified. We love "clean" data!

- ✓ Grantees "get it" and understand the importance of collecting data and how reporting correct, and non-duplicating target numbers provide a "larger picture" of the Council's impact.

- ✓ Grantees better understand how they individually contribute to the Council's 5-Year State Plan.

- ✓ Grantees become familiar with Council terminology and practices.

Lessons learned

- ✓ There is a learning curve. Council staff need to fully understand the federal Performance Measures to be able to explain them. Can be a great tool when onboarding new Council staff.

- ✓ Performance measures and reporting can be a very boring topic to cover with grantees. Do something fun when training grantees on federal Performance Measures. For example, ICDD uses a LINGO BINGO. This makes a not so fun topic more interactive and gets grantees familiar with Council language/terminology.

- ✓ Sometimes there are other measures outside of the standard federal measures that are relevant to monitoring a project.

- ✓ For those using DD Suite, any time there is a change to how the federal Performance Measures are reflected in the system, the guidance document requires an update. The projects then have to be updated in DD Suite as well. Grantees may require/request additional training.

Other information

We have recently created another guidance document titled "What to Include in Your Quarterly Reports". It will support grantees with reporting.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
Council info: www.tcdd.texas.gov
Presenter: Beth Stalvey, MPH, PhD Executive Director;
Beth.Stalvey@tcdd.texas.gov

Brief Description of The Practice

Future Funding Priorities is a practice we use with our DD Council membership to obtain Council approval and direction on projects so we may allocate and disburse funds more efficiently and be more responsive to our state policy environment.

How does the practice work?

Each quarter, the Texas Council identifies new activities to be implemented as part of our state plan. Council members then direct staff to create a *Project Executive Summary* that briefly describes 1) the system gap addressed, 2) project requirements and scope, 3) outputs and outcomes, 4) data collection, and 5) total funding amounts and project duration. Members provide input on project scope and vote to approve funding. The Project Executive Summaries are compiled in a list to be reviewed each quarter for relevance and priority status. The list can be reordered by members based on the current state policy environment. There is no limit to the number of projects that can be on the list.

Benefits of using the practice

This practice not only gives staff direction from the Council on their state plan priorities, it also allows staff to more quickly develop contracts or request for proposals based on available funds. For example, if funds are returned from an existing grantee, we can post the next project on the list since it has already been approved by the Council. This practice also helps keep our Council focused on state plan implementation.

Lessons learned

This practice requires strong fiscal monitoring and budgeting practices. The Council must be able to not only track available funds, but also anticipate any funds that are unused by current grantees, and/or any unused administrative funds that can be made available for state plan activities.

Other information

See attached example

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities
Council info: ccdd.ky.gov
Presenter: Kellie McCain Kellie.McCain@ky.gov

Brief Description of the Practice

CCDD Quality Management Strategy for Federal Program Performance Report

The CCDD Quality Management System (QMS) has been designed to provide a thorough approach for continual quality improvement. One component, the CCDD on-line reporting system, was established to be streamlined, simple and flexible for amendments. The platform meets conditions for Council projects, Council review and federal reporting. CCDD contracted with the UK Human Development Institute (KY UCEDD) Evaluation Unit to develop the user friendly platform with features that are customized to pages by Council project including deliverables in contracts, links to the prospective goal or objective and collects data for federal performance measures.

How does the practice work?

The platform used for this program is Knack, which is a customized business app for data management. Each vendor and appropriate staff enter data on a quarterly basis for their identified Council project. Reports may be entered by project or goal. Quarterly reports are generated (by HDI staff) to collate data for the Annual Performance Review. A user guide has been developed for vendors and staff. In person training is also held as needed. Users are assigned according to contract and staff management.

On the platform, reporting fields include all needed data for the Annual Performance Review. Users input date and time of report, reporting period, update on progress, deliverables met, collaborators, barriers, lessons learned and culturally diverse narratives. Finally, users add data for all federal performance measures. Files may be uploaded to coincide with project reports.

A standard Consumer Survey was also developed for all projects with the ability to add specific questions as needed. The Evaluation Unit at UK HDI develop survey data reports and quarterly reports for review by staff and Council.

The CCDD QMS system also includes a Quarterly Management Review by CCDD staff. During this quarterly review meeting, data is reviewed from the online system. CCDD staff complete annual performance surveys for projects. That survey checklist has CCDD Assurances, contract deliverables and federal reporting performance measures to serve as a check and balance with data that has been reported on line.

Benefits of using the practice

There are several benefits to having an online reporting system and internal quality controls. First, contracting out the reporting piece to the UCEDD Evaluation Unit allows for technical expertise in data analytics and research. Also, the UCEDD staff dedicated to this project are familiar with Council activities and goals. Any needed updates or changes required can be easily completed on this platform; meetings are held with the HDI staff as needed.

The internal quality management meetings serve a check and balance for review of what is being reported. Council staff have the opportunity to see all projects and the progress being recorded. Barriers identified can be discussed and shared with Council at quarterly meetings. The internal quality management meeting is held prior to Council quarterly meetings.

In house activities have been added so that all activities can be reported including public policy and outreach events.

Lessons learned

The initial stages of discussion with the HDI Evaluation team in designing this product was only with CCDD staff. As the process went forward, a meeting was held with vendors for training. It became evident that vendors should have been involved in the initial discussions so that their needs were addressed. Currently, vendors have direct access to HDI staff for questions and any problems.

It was very productive for the HDI Evaluation team to assist in the previous Annual Performance Report (2017 and 2018) prior to developing this platform. The team was able to become familiar with Performance Measures and how data was being collected. Project names and contracts can be confusing. Once a new contract is developed, it is sent to HDI and they update the platform.

In general, it was very valuable to have professionals in research and data evaluation to take this process over and be able to produce formative information on progress.

Other information

The timing was perfect for a system to be developed for the CCDD. The federal reporting requirements had changed, data collection strategies were changing and new leadership both with the Executive Director and Chair occurred during this process. The reporting system is still a work in progress.

The HDI Evaluation Unit consists of:

Chithra Adams, PhD is the Director of Evaluation at the Human Development Institute (HDI), University of Kentucky. In her current capacity, she provides overall leadership for HDI program evaluation and works with HDI staff and external state and local agencies to design and implement state and federal evaluation grants and contracts.

Luke O'Hara is an Evaluation Analyst at the Human Development Institute (HDI), University of Kentucky. In his current capacity he coordinates data collection and provides support for reporting on various local, state and federal grants and contracts.

Home page and by goal:

COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL dis(abilities)

Search by Goal | Results Tables ▾ | Search by Project | Help

In House

Self Advocacy Organization Support	Hispanic Outreach (Targeted Disparity)	Bottom Dollars Preview and Panel Discussions	Legislative Tracker	Disability Benefits 101	Housing
874 Advocacy Training	Outreach Events	Behavioral and Medically Complex Pilot Projects	Self Advocate Network	Partners in Policymaking	Story Telling Projects	Policy Mass Standards
CCDD Advocacy Day at the Capitol	Legislative Priorities	Self Advocates Coalition (In House)	Collaborations	Build Inclusion - "Intelligent Lives"	

Out of House (Vendor) Projects

Exceptional Family Magazine - ARC of Kentucky | Close Up Training - Arc of KY | Self Empowerment Network - Arc of KY | Supported Decision Making - P&A | Self Advocacy Leadership -HDI

Self Advocates in Diverse Leadership Coalitions (CNPE Contract) | Peer Support Teacher Education HDI | KSU Peer Education Program | Post Secondary Education - HDI | Employment Education Project

Information Systems - STABLE - P&A | Transportation Pilot Project - HDI | DD Research and Data Analysis - HDI

COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL dis(abilities)

Search by Goal | Results Tables ▾ | Search by Project | Help

Please select your project by its goal and objective.

If you do not know goal and objective, please use the Search by Project tab to find the correct entry form.

Goal 1 - Objective 1	Goal 1 - Objective 2	Goal 1 - Objective 3	Goal 1 - Objective 4
Goal 2 - Objective 1	Goal 2 - Objective 2	Goal 2 - Objective 3	Goal 2 - Objective 4
Goal 3 - Objective 1	Goal 3 - Objective 2	Goal 3 - Objective 3	

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
Council info: www.fddc.org
Presenters: Valerie Breen; valerieb@fddc.org
              Lisa Taylor; lisat@fddc.org

Brief Description of the Practice

Engaging in leadership practices to assess internal practices. In preparation for funding changes in liquidation, obligation, and monitoring of federal dollars the staff of FDDC serving in leadership positions worked with the Council to begin changes to its internal infrastructure to prepare for liquidation/obligation requirements. This includes the assessment of current practices and techniques for risk assessment and fiscal monitoring of the Council's sub-recipients who carry out work under the five-year state plan.

How does the practice work?

Based on the information provided by ACL, AIDD, and ITACC, Council staff and members explored, developed, and implemented a new way for budget approval and a re-write of its funding allocation, commitment and obligation policy and procedures. Because the FDDC engages sub-recipients to implement a large part of its state plan, a thorough look at current solicitation, contracting, and monitoring processes was critical.

The staff of FDDC engaged an onsite three day desk review with the Director of ITACC to review, discuss and advise on best practice, based on the changing requirements and oversite of the Office of Management and Budget and implementation of Uniform Guidance, so staff could effectively change and/or develop a more streamlined solicitation, risk assessment and fiscal monitoring process to ensure compliance of and technical assistance to its sub-recipients.

We reviewed our current processes in terms of the amount of time each step needed to complete – this included staff time as well as Council member involvement time (committees, workgroups); we determined areas of duplication and identified areas for streamlining. We objectively evaluated our solicitation application to determine what items were not critical to the application phase (but were needed in the contracting phase) and streamlined the application as a way to encourage more applications and shorten the solicitation period and time needed for staff and members to review proposals.

We explored ways to infuse a risk assessment process into our current grant making processes to determine the level of monitoring that would be needed if the Council approved

funding to the applicant. We identified areas that would help us assess risk of potential sub-recipients (grantees); some of the items were:

1) Experience in managing grant funds;
2) Recent audit findings;
3) Rate of staff turnover;
4) Involved in active lawsuits;
5) Ability to identify receipts and expenditures for Council funds separately from other funding for the organization;
6) Capacity to operate on a reimbursement basis;
7) Percentage of Council funds related to overall funding for the entity making application.

Benefits of using the practice

With the demand for a shorter period of obligation and liquidation of dollars, combined with selecting and engaging qualified and effective sub-recipients, it was critical to have a full review of how the current infrastructure of solicitation, selection, contracting, and monitoring was currently being implemented through FDDC.

Engaging ITACC services provided the FDDC staff with a seasoned facilitator with experience in the field, knowledge about current federal requirements both through the office of management and budget and uniform guidance, and who had reviewed and provided technical assistance to Developmental Disabilities Councils from across the country for a number of years.

Lessons learned

By taking the risk to open up our entire processes for a desk review by the Director of ITACC the staff were able to obtain valuable advice and guidance. This information has helped the staff to identify gaps in current processes that would keep the Council in good stead. The staff were also able to obtain best practice advice to establish a process for risk assessment and fiscal monitoring that would meet the current and upcoming requirements of the Council's federal fiscal and monitoring agent and re-vamp its current infrastructure to meet those requirements.

Other information

FDDC staff is in the process of a final draft of proposed risk assessment and fiscal monitoring techniques to be reviewed by ITACC and its external audit and legal entities

before presentation to the Council's oversite committee late this summer with the plan for implementation October 2019.

PROMISING PRACTICE

ITACC: itacchelp.org
Presenter: Sheryl Matney; smatney@nacdd.org

Brief Description of The Practice

Proactively include a monitoring process with programmatic reporting for state plan activities conducted by Council staff members. The monitoring process should be based on and consistent with other programmatic reporting that is required of others working on state plan activities (sub-recipients, contractors, etc.). Monitoring and evaluating activities conducted by Council staff allows for an assessment of expected outcomes and if necessary, "real-time" adjustments can be made during the fiscal year.

How does the practice work?

Step 1: Prior to the start of the fiscal year, meet with staff members conducting state plan projects and activities; develop expected outputs and outcomes associated with the activities; identify the data needed to determine if progress was made; identify projected performance measure target numbers.

Step 2: Require regular programmatic reports from Council staff so they can report on progress on projects and activities.

Step 3: Collaborate with Council staff members to address barriers or challenges encountered with the project/activity.

Step 4: Adjust the work plan as needed.

Benefits of using the practice

Monitoring and evaluation of all state plan activities allow the Council to have an accurate account of yearly accomplishments.

Can clearly see progress made on the State plan objectives as a whole.

Lessons learned

Council leadership (Executive Director, managers, or other directors) must support a staff activity monitoring process.

Identifying activities and outcomes prior to the start of the fiscal year helps everyone focus on state plan related efforts and can see how their work contributes to the overall objective and goals.

Other information

Consider using the annual work plan template as a tool for staff to develop their annual activities, expected outputs and outcomes, what data they need to collect to help them determine if progress was made, and targeted performance measures.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
Council info: www.fddc.org
Presenter: Sheila Gritz-Swift; sheilags@fddc.org

Brief Description of The Practice

Council Performance Measures System: In 2018, new forms and procedures were developed for collecting and reporting on the performance measures, including use of an electronic system that requires providers to enter their performance measures and supporting narrative data with submission of each quarterly deliverable. The Council Performance Measures System was rolled out early in 2019 with webinar training focused on using the new system, data collection guidance and examples.

How does the practice work?

The Council's revised forms mirror the AIDD DD Council performance measure requirements, establish targets consistent with annual work plans, and provide for more accurate reporting of measures based on the type of project being implemented (i.e., individual and family advocacy or systems change). An electronic system was developed for collecting numerical and narrative data on the performance measures. Mandatory webinars were conducted with all providers that covered 1) the Council's big picture data collection requirements; 2) discrete performance measure requirements; 3) the new electronic system; and 4) guidance and examples for collecting data and reporting within the system with submission of each contract deliverable.

Benefits of using the practice

More accurate data aligned with each project's intended outcomes is being entered into the system. Requiring quarterly review and submission forces providers to think about what they must report well in advance of the end of the contract year. The webinars enabled multiple providers to hear the same message and afforded them the opportunity to ask questions and learn from others. Two types of reports (i.e., project specific and goal and objective specific) can be generated for any window of selected time.

Lessons learned

September 30, 2019 will mark the end of the first year of use, and we will have a better handle on lessons learned as we close this first fiscal year. To date, we are collecting far better narratives that explain the numbers being reported than what has historically been received.

Other information

The PowerPoint, which includes links to forms, guidance documents and examples, will be made available via the Information and Technical Assistance Center for Council's on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) website. Forms and resources referenced may also be downloaded via the following link: https://www.fddc.org/node/3092

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
Council info: www.ddpc.ny.gov
Presenters: Vicky Hiffa Vicky.hiffa@ddpc.ny.gov
Kimberly Berg Kimberly.berg@ddpc.ny.gov

Brief Description of The Practice

The NYS DDPC recently revised its quarterly reporting tool to assist grantees in communicating the most important aspects of their grant work over the last quarter. The new template helps grantees highlight the information that best captures their progress toward pre-defined grant objectives, strategic outreach to un- and underserved communities, advocacy and systems-change efforts, and ongoing sustainability planning. Grantees also have an opportunity to request targeted technical assistance from DDPC staff and bring to light any potential implementation barriers they faced or anticipate facing in upcoming quarters.

How does the practice work?

The newly designed quarterly report template provides grantees an open-ended tool to report their progress, and highlight key activities over the last quarter, based on DDPC question prompts. These prompts help grantees to target their responses to provide the most important information program managers need to evaluate grant progress and quality of work, while enabling PPR staff to pull the important federal indicator data for the annual report.

The updated quarterly report form, in addition to several other Technical Assistance documents DDPC staff have recently drafted, are part of our ongoing efforts to better support our grantees to be most effective in their work. We have hosted conference calls. Webinars, and other forums to support our existing grantees to transition to the new report template. Likewise, these, and other newly established TA resources enable our new and upcoming grantees to 'hit the ground running' by providing a clearer picture of grantee expectations and available resources.

Benefits of using the practice

The new quarterly reporting tool will streamline grantee reporting efforts, as well as internal review processes, and provide grantees a clearer reporting framework. We want our grantees to focus their efforts on the intended advocacy and systems-change goals as defined by their respective grants, while not being burdened with extensive administrative reporting tasks. The new quarterly report template frames reporting in a positive way that allows our grantees to highlight the work they have accomplished over the past quarter, and makes it more motivating for our grantees to share their exciting project highlights.

Lessons learned

Before implementing this new tool and process, DDPC staff held a series of webinars and technical assistance calls to inform our grantees of the changes and how to accurately report demographic and other information. DDPC will be receiving the new reports completed by grantees by the end of July. It is anticipated that because we have put more time investment into the front end of trouble-shooting this new process it will result in decreased time on the back-end in trying to fix or amend reports.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Massachusetts
Council info: www.mass.gov/mddc
https://www.ddsuite.org/

Presenter: Daniel Shannon: dan.shannon@mass.gov

Brief Description of the Practice

Collecting the "Right Data" for Federal Reporting: Program Performance Reporting has changed significantly, both in content and the Performance Measures that Councils must report. The Performance Measures provided to Councils in 2017 included multiple percentage measures, but those percentages were not included in the final PPR reporting template. In addition, some data was reported by goal and other data by objective. Councils who utilize the DD Suite online database were prepared for these changes, efficiently collecting the correct raw data required for accurate reporting.

How does the practice work?

The 'DD Suite' is an on-line performance management system developed specifically for DD Councils to manage information and data on State Plan implementation activities in a centralized database. The system provides a user friendly tool for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for federal reporting. In addition to the project management benefits of DD Suite, the system was significantly enhanced in FFY 2017 to account for the changes in federal performance measure reporting. DD Suite contains measures for collecting required demographic data, and will sort data by both goals and objectives. Every time the feds move the ball, DD Suite adjusts!

Benefits of using the practice

Councils who utilize DD Suite for project management have access to tools that will aggregate and sort both qualitative and quantitative data, streamlining the process and saving significant time to complete the annual program report. Using DD Suite results in data that is more consistent, reliable, and valid. Efficiency is significantly improved as less time is spent transferring grantee data to other forms. Councils collect and manage data in real time, resulting in more effective project management.

Lessons learned

Come to the Session and find out!

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council
Council info: https://iowaddcouncil.org/
http://www.infonetiowa.org/
https://idaction.org/
Presenter: Brooke Lovelace; blovela@dhs.state.ia.us

Brief Description of The Practice

Our Council hires a dedicated public policy staff person, called a Public Policy Manager, to position the Council as a leader in the Developmental Disabilities public policy arena.

How does the practice work?

Our Public Policy Manager represents our Council as a spokesperson to the Iowa General Assembly. He develops the public policy agenda for the Council and serves as a resource to the Council, legislators, our DD network and self and family advocates. He registers support or opposition on bills supporting the Council's legislative priorities. He attends legislative and executive branch meetings and workgroups and provides input to relevant policy issues and changes. He also reports activities back to the Council and self and family advocates.

He is also responsible for preparing and engaging Iowans with disabilities and their family members so that they are their own voice, participate in the political process and advocate for the issues that they care about. We call this technical assistance "just in time" training as it is provided before people meet with legislators at the state capitol, prior to coming to town hall meetings, prior to participating in the Iowa Caucuses and upcoming elections.

Our Public Policy Manager also developed an effective relationship with the Secretary of State's Office. This relationship has made voter accessibility a priority for that office. Because of this work along with the partnership with the Department of Human Rights, the Council was able to develop and distribute voting education materials translated in seven different languages.

In addition, our Public Policy Manager manages our policy publication called "infoNet". It is devoted to educating and engaging individuals with disabilities, their family members and other advocates and does so in a straightforward, uncomplicated manner. The publication is distributed bi-weekly during the state's legislation session and monthly during the interim. It is also available online and through Social Media.   InfoNet was developed in response to the need for accurate, objective, nonpartisan and understandable information so people with disabilities can be more effective advocates. InfoNet connects over 4000

Iowans with current and timely information about state, federal and local public policy initiatives, legislative bills, resolutions, administrative rules and public meetings that are of interest to readers. InfoNET's website also offers an up-to-date bill tracker as well as a Grassroots advocacy portal to assist people to write to state and federal elected officials about issues of importance to them.

Benefits of using the practice

A dedicated Public Policy Manager has established the Iowa DD Council as a leader for policy information and the "go to source".

The relationships the Public Policy Manager has created with the Secretary of State and Department of Human Rights and other state agencies and local and state coalitions has also led to system change activities such as the updated voter education material. The Secretary of State's office also presents and exhibits at our annual self-advocacy conference.

Lessons learned

Satisfaction is consistently at 90% for the readers of infoNET. In addition, anecdotes from families, individuals, other organizations and legislators are that they rely on the publication for accurate, nonpartisan easy to understand descriptions of deliberations and actions.

Legislators are automatically registered for InfoNet at the beginning of each session. We frequently receive feedback that they use the publication as a resource.   During the last five years, only eleven legislators have "unsubscribed" to the publication.

Council staff continue to have ongoing dialogue with the Council, self and family advocates, and infoNet subscribers to determine what additional resources are necessary to facilitate greater advocacy and civic participation. This is always a work in progress. This year our Council has partnered with the Department of Human Rights to complete a more in-depth needs assessments with under-represented populations to see how the council can better meet their advocacy needs.

Other information

Our Public Policy Manager also manages the production of a biennial publication for advocates called "Guide to the Iowa Legislature". This includes legislative timelines, legislator contact information, brief biographical information including profession and interests and the committees they are assigned to. This reaches over 4000 advocates.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Arkansas Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Council info: www.gcdd.arkansas.gov
Facebook and Twitter: @gcddar
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5ya84eBiQ2sOab-ePhtRvg/featured

Presenter: Eric Munson, GCDDAR Executive Director
eric.munson@dfa.arkansas.gov

Brief Description of The Practice

Developing and Maintaining Strategic Relationships with Policymakers: Building relationships before you need them, maintaining relationships with legislators through individual contact and by leveraging existing partnerships, and adjusting the approach to each relationship, regularly - or as needed - to change and evolve with time. We build these relationships to better advocate by persuading decision makers on how to act.

How does The Practice work?

This is a cycle of continuous improvement. First, we recognize the importance and value of strong individual relationships. Next, we gain a thorough understanding of the strategic partner. Then we define a strategy and plans for that relationship. Finally, we recognize that relationships change over time and we evolve our practice, as needed, to strengthen and maintain these important relationships. There is no substitute for a face-to-face meeting with your elected officials or her/his staff about the issue at stake, why you are passionate about the issue, and the position you'd like your member of Congress or the state legislature to take.

The Arkansas Council receives oversight and input from The Public Policy & Outreach Committee which takes a leadership role in identifying and following legislation that affects our population. The Executive Director, committee chairperson and other members take an active role by attending legislative meetings and communicating with lawmakers and stakeholders.

The Arkansas Council also uses a policy subscription service as one way to keep our "finger on the pulse" of policy issues. The *Arkansas Legislative Digest* provides an online service that delivers advanced lobbying tools, real-time action alerts, advanced bill tracking, and cutting-edge analytical features to government affairs professionals and state agencies. This is a cost-effective way to acquire credible research on policies, legislative updates, bill research.

Benefits of using the Practice

Legislators feel personally connected to the Council and its mission.

Leveraging support of DD Network and State Agency partners and strengthening those relationships in the process.

Drawing attention to an important issue and direct decision-makers to a solution.

Influencing the decision-making at all levels.

Mobilizing members of the community to include the wider community.

Developing accountability and transparency of local governments and public services/institutions.

Any effective relationship is a two-way street. As you build your relationships you can become a significant resource to policymakers regarding I/DD related issues.

Lessons learned

"Doors can be closed as easily as they can be opened" – Be professional & polite.

Have your facts straight. Be a resource to policymakers and lawmakers by provide quality information that is relevant to your state and local communities.

To offer value – you need the ability to persuade decision makers/public officials to promote the interests of your council. You are effective only when they can explain the value of their points of view effectively to influence political and community leaders. Understanding which political and community leaders the key influencers are.... then focusing on those relationships first are major elements of success.

Having your elected officials be members of a key "committee of jurisdiction" is often a plus, since they will be much more focused on key health issues. So....it is important that you know whether your elected officials are on these key committees and, if so, use that information and "connection" to help advance your issues.

Other information

Advocacy can help your council achieve its policy and political goals (examples):

- Education and awareness
- Improving public services such as transportation, information, etc.
- Accessibility
- Development of community-based services
- More accountability and transparency of elected officials and policymakers
- Building additional grass-roots supports among your DD community

PROMISING PRACTICE

Council: Alaska DD Council
Council info: http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/
Presenter: Kristin Vandagriff, Executive Director

Brief Description of The Practice

Embedding Policy Work at All Levels of the Council and Policy Cross-Disability Collaboration:

❖ <u>Strategy 1)</u> Enabling a strong depth of knowledge in many different narrow policy areas to create impactful change through having all Council staff participate in policy work within their area of subject matter expertise.
❖ <u>Strategy 2)</u> Robust cross-disability collaboration around policy issues to ensure a larger network and leveraging of resources.

How does the practice work?

<u>Strategy 1)</u> We ensure that all Council staff have training on how to track, analyze, and comment on policies, regulations, and bills within their area of subject matter expertise. Policy items with smaller impact often are dealt with entirely within committees, with policy items with a broad impact also interplaying with the Council's Legislative Committee and/or Medicaid Ad Hoc Committee. For example, if a narrow regulation change impacting Alaska's Department of Education is out for comment, this might be responded to from a policy standpoint within the Council's Education Committee itself; however, if a regulation change or a new bill broadly impacting Home and Community Based Services comes out, this may start in our Developmental Disabilities Committee, but then also be routed to the Council's Legislative Committee and or/Medicaid Ad Hoc Committee.

<u>Strategy 2)</u> The Council partners actively cross-disability with respect to its policy work throughout the year as a policy item of common interest comes up, often scheduling as needed meetings with these cross disability partners leveraging a larger network of stakeholders and forming joint public comment letters. For example, when changes to Medicaid come up, the Council engages broadly cross-disability. During legislative session, the Council participates in weekly calls with similar boards who represent individuals with mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse, Alzheimer's and related dementia, traumatic brain injury, etc. These calls feature a common list of bills being followed with boards with the most knowledge serving as point people to track and report back on status. This allows the entire group to stay well informed about a myriad of different items that alone would be difficult to track. This strategy allows for large mobilization of stakeholders when an important bill hearing is occurring and broadens social media and email listserv options for information dissemination.

Benefits of using the practice

Strategy 1)

- ❖ All staff are engaged in policy work, bringing their unique subject matter expertise and allowing for highly detailed comment letters, as well as talking points and position paper development.
- ❖ The Council can be its most efficient with policy work, by allowing committees to work directly on more narrow policy items which they have the most firm grasp of.

Strategy 2)

- ❖ Leveraging resources of other disability boards and groups with common policy interests, allows for a better distribution of bill tracking and analysis as well as larger networks for providing public testimony, broader dissemination of policy information via social media and email listservs, stronger joint public comment letters, et al.
- ❖ Unanimous/nearly unanimous passage of bills which provide benefit across disability groups and thus are most likely to be robustly implemented. An example of this can be seen in Alaska's passage of cross-disability Supported Decision Making Agreements legislation as well as cross-disability Employment First legislation. Both included support and collaboration from many groups outside of the DD field with one ultimately getting unanimous approval and another nearly the same across both house of state government.

Lessons learned

Strategy 1)

- ❖ More policy work gets completed with all staff involved at appropriate level.
- ❖ Policy work includes a greater depth of knowledge.
- ❖ Must have a system in place for an overall check on smaller policy work occurring within committees (i.e. Legislative Committee or similar as the internal check).

Strategy 2)

- ❖ Greater supply of resources to track and analyze bills and disseminate policy information to stakeholders.
- ❖ Larger stakeholder presence for public testimony opportunities.
- ❖ Must have a lead organizer who embraces collaborative policy making.