

2011

Policy Development & Effective Advocacy

Leadership Development Modules

Modules complimenting the New AIDS Director
Orientation Guide



POLICY DEVELOPMENT & EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Core Competencies - Policy Development/Program Planning Skills

- Collects, summarizes, and interprets information relevant to an issue
- States policy options and writes clear and concise policy statements
- Identifies, interprets, and implements public health laws, regulations, and policies related to specific programs
- Articulates the health, fiscal, administrative, legal, social, and political implications of each policy option
- States the feasibility and expected outcomes of each policy option
- Utilizes current techniques in decision analysis and health planning
- Decides on the appropriate course of action
- Develops a plan to implement policy, including goals, outcome and process objectives, and implementation steps
- Translates policy into organizational plans, structures, and programs
- Prepares and implements emergency response plans
- Develops mechanisms to monitor and evaluate programs for their effectiveness and quality

Link to the [Toolkit on Core Competencies](#)

Understanding the processes through which federal and state HIV/AIDS funding and program decisions are made and being able to positively influence these decisions vis a vis your programs is critically important.

Overview - Role of State AIDS Directors in Advocacy

One important role for a state AIDS director is advocacy. As an AIDS director, you are expected to:

- Provide information on the epidemic and programs in your state;
- Paint the picture to justify increased resources for your programs or support for legislation;
- Build long term relationships with community advocates and Congressional delegation;
- Keep your Governor's office apprised of legislative and funding priorities; and
- Be a host to legislative and gubernatorial staff.
- In your role as an AIDS director, the most obvious thing you may be asked to do is to present information about your program to your state legislature, or answer specific questions on this from them. Sometimes, you'll be required to "drop everything" to respond to these inquiries.

On the federal front, you may be asked – by NASTAD, your Governor, Health Official, or a Federal Partner – to engage in policymaking by participating on various panels, submitting testimony or reviewing policy documents, or participating in Hill visits. NASTAD asks all those AIDS directors who are able to, to participate in Hill Education Visits during its Annual Meeting, held in Washington, D.C. each spring.

The first rule of thumb regarding policymaking, advocacy and lobbying is not to be intimidated by it. Anyone can be a lobbyist - you do it everyday. For example, convincing your health official or PWAs to take a particular stand is lobbying. In many cases, calling this Hill education is more palatable than the often lightning rods that “advocacy” and “lobbying” can be.

In most cases, people who ask for this information rightly view you as their main contact on HIV/AIDS for your state. At the federal level, educational Hill visits focus on information sharing and provide you an opportunity to provide expert and experienced knowledge about the program’s needs. At the national level, Congress relies on experts to assess programs they fund and administer: You are that expert and you are an integral component of our tripartite public health system.

But you don’t have to come to Washington to interact with congressional offices. You can meet with your representatives or their

staff at district offices, town hall meetings, via mailings, and by regular phone calls. The goal is establishing long-term relationships with Members and staff so that you are viewed as a resource on HIV/AIDS issues for your state.

The fact is that only you can provide Congressional staff with the state perspective. It is incumbent upon you to establish a “go-to” relationship. You should view Hill visits as opportunities...for information sharing, to provide expert and experienced knowledge about the program’s needs, and the impact of their work on the state’s funding. It’s also important to take the opportunity to visit your Governor’s office when in D.C.; these relationships can be maintained throughout the year.

At the state level, you can work with your community to add their voice by sharing information they can use, raising issues they may not be aware of but will impact them, and by cultivating trusted allies. One strategy is to provide information community allies can use for state lobby days – often it just takes a one-pager or a presentation to the community, which can then develop the “ask.” Another key aspect of your role in advocacy is to try to get the message far and wide among the community to avoid multiple messages.

It is equally important for you to work with your community to add their voice. You can educate

community advocates about the policy process and how to add their voices, help them raise issues to help collective planning and management during crises and provide information they can use for state lobby days. Some key steps for working with community are:

- Encourage the community to develop the “ask”
- Clarify your role as a state employee and limitations on what you can and cannot do
- Cultivate trusted allies
- Be transparent when possible by keeping the community in the loop
- Try to get the message far and wide among the community to avoid multiple messages
- Create a mutually respectful relationships



Remember, you are a public health expert and while there are many voices with HIV/AIDS/viral hepatitis interests, only you can provide Congressional staff with the state perspective. You may want to take opportunities to visit your Governor’s office when in D.C. and relationships can be maintained throughout the year through district office visiting hours, town hall meetings and specific outreach/phone calls or emails on specific issues or updates.

Advice from the Field: Utilize your peers

- No need to reinvent the wheel
- NASTAD can connect you with states that have had successful state lobby days
- Share process and materials
- Veteran AIDS directors are a resource for samples of leave behind materials for the Hill and for shadowing on Hill visits when wanting to get your feet wet
- For seeking advice when asking for permission to do visits

STEPS TO PARTICIPATING IN CONGRESSIONAL VISITS

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

1. Ask for permission

- Know health department's policy on interacting with legislators. Don't assume they will say no; you won't know if you don't ask. Also, consider whether you can represent NASTAD if you can't represent the state.
- You can provide education without making an "ask"; NASTAD can supply leave-behind materials to make the ask; try and lead staff to ask the questions you want answered
- To visit with the Member, request meeting through the scheduler

2. Gather Information

- State specific materials are very important
- Provide Epidemiologic information – county specific best
- One-pagers are best

3. Research the Members of Congress

- Know who you are meeting with; you'll most likely meet with staff – the Legislative Director (LD), Legislative Assistant (LA), or Legislative Correspondent (LC). Most staff will be young and know little about HIV/AIDS
- Staff will have back-to-back visits; expect your meeting to be no longer than 20 minutes and anticipate that staff may get called away; you may also meet in the hall or cafeteria

4. Know the type of program you are advocating for...

- Mandatory—If you qualify for the program, you get the benefit: Medicare, Medicaid (ETHA), Social Security, Pell Grants, Farm subsidies. You have to pay for changes (Pay-as-you-go)
- Discretionary—Congress decides every year how much funding a program will get: Ryan White, CDC, HOPWA, NIH, etc.

What is an "Ask"?

An "ask" is the main thing you want the legislator to do...it may be, if they sit on an appropriations committee, to ensure the right funding amount for your programs. It may be action to support or not support a particular piece of legislation.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

5. Know what you want to say before you walk in

- Review talking points on issues
- Role play with tips to follow

DURING THE VISIT

6. Follow Specific Etiquette

- Introduce yourself, give staff your card
- Make sure to thank staff for taking time to meet with you
- Thank them for past support - Express appreciation for the support Congress has given HIV/AIDS programs
- Provide quick overview of governmental public health & local epidemic
- Talk about federal funding, the Ryan White Program, prevention, pending legislation, such as Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA), etc. but address state specific issues first
- Be succinct in your ask
- Demonstrate that programs are effective and need to be continued
- If you don't have an answer to a question, say so
- Provide an opportunity for follow-up

7. Attend to Details

- Important to differentiate yourself from other advocates
- If you don't have an answer, say so
- Use statistics effectively; put numbers in human terms and simplify
- Use personal stories effectively; use the story to stress the importance of the issues and to make a request



VISIT FOLLOW UP

8. Build long-term relationships

- Email or fax a thank you note Reiterate "asks" if appropriate
- Provide follow-up materials from staff inquiry
- Offer yourself up as resource
- Offer to host a site visit when staff are traveling back to the district/state
- Extend an opportunity to continue engagement

Tips for Interacting with Legislators: (Using Iowa ADAP Funding as an Example)



Hook – Your Identification: Your name, where you live, the organization you are with (volunteer or staff), or the why and who you represent

Line – Your Message: A personal story, facts about the program or persons living with HIV/AIDS, etc.

Sinker – The Ask: “Currently the ADAP Program receives no state funding. We are one of only 14 states that do not provide state appropriations for the program. If given the opportunity, **Will you vote to provide state funding for the ADAP Program?**”

Who’s Who in Congress

Authorizers:

- Write authorization legislation to establish, continue, or modify an agency or program, and authorize the enactment of appropriations for that purpose: Ryan White, NIH, SAMHSA
- Authorization legislation does not provide funding in the absence of appropriations committee action
- Committees:
 - Senate Finance & Health Education Labor and Pensions
 - House Energy and Commerce & Ways and Means

Appropriators

- Take spending allotments from the Budget Committee to write 12 spending bills that fund the federal government; work done in the Appropriations Committee, which is broken into 12 Subcommittees that write each bill.

Relevant Bills: Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill; State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill; Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill

Resources

Link to the Congress: www.Thomas.gov

Link to the Administration: AIDS.gov

Link to NASTAD Policy and Advocacy: [NASTAD - Policy & Advocacy](#)