

ILLINOIS PARTNERS

for

HUMAN SERVICE

Quality Services. Adequate Funding. Measurable Results.

**ADVOCACY FOR A STRONG
HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR**

February 23, 2010 Webinar

ILLINOIS PARTNERS



Illinois Partners for Human Service is a **statewide network** of organizations that advocate for high quality, responsible and sustainable approaches to providing human service in Illinois. We engage nonprofit, government, faith-based, business and education leaders who agree that our communities are healthier and safer when residents have access to bedrock public services.

Our focus is **uniting the human services sector** – including programs and services ranging from early childhood, afterschool programs, family support, mental health and substance abuse treatment, to assistance to people with disabilities, workforce training, violence prevention, and homecare for the elderly.

ADVOCACY FOCUS



The collective advocacy of Illinois Partners is focused on three key issues that are essential to a strong human services sector:

- **QUALITY SERVICES** that are capable of helping Illinois residents improve their lives
- **ADEQUATE FUNDING** that reflects the needs of Illinois residents and the true cost of providing quality services
- **MEASURABLE RESULTS** that establish a standard of mutual accountability for achieving meaningful outcomes

PROVIDERS AS ADVOCATES



Why is it essential that human services providers get involved with advocacy?

- We work with individuals and families at the local level and have unique knowledge of current barriers and unmet needs
- We are professionals within our field and can provide insight on effective strategies and best practices
- We have direct experience operating programs and agencies and know best what works and what needs fixing within human services programs and funding streams
- If we are not at the table when human services program and funding issues are being decided, those with less knowledge and experience of our sector will make the decisions

OUR MESSAGE



NO CUTS TO HUMAN SERVICES

Human services are essential services that help families, create jobs, and build strong communities all across our state.

- **Cuts hurt people** - Everyone in Illinois knows someone who has sought in-home care for an elderly parent, needed quality child care in order to work, received treatment after experiencing domestic abuse, needed help for a child with disabilities.
- **Cuts eliminate jobs** – There are over 400,000 jobs within Illinois’ human services sector. Lost services = lost jobs.
- **Cuts are expensive** – Cutting human services doesn’t eliminate need. It is a cost shift – from less expensive and more effective services to significantly more expensive and less effective strategies.

OUR STRATEGY



- Raise our unified voice on behalf of human services via statewide membership
- Deliver clear, consistent NO CUTS message to elected officials and local media
- Organize members for collective advocacy at key points during legislative/budgetary process
- Share resources to equip members for local advocacy – outreach to elected officials, new allies and media
- Educate elected officials on longer term issues impacting the human services sector

2010 ADVOCACY



Our immediate focus is on the FY2011 state budget – communicating a clear **NO CUTS to human services** message to our elected officials. Upcoming budget advocacy opportunities include:

- February 24 – Governor will release preliminary budget information with public comment period to follow
- March 10 – Governor will deliver his FY11 proposed budget and state agencies will hold budget briefings on proposed expenditures
- March – May – General Assembly will work on FY11 budget, appropriations committees will hold hearings, end result will be one or more budget bills passed and sent to Governor

ADVOCACY VS. LOBBYING



ADVOCACY

- Contacting an elected official to explain the needs for mental health services in your area
- Writing a brief or fact sheet on the unmet need for child care among people living in poverty
- Educating elected officials about the services your agency provides with state funds from the Department of Human Services

LOBBYING

- Contacting an elected official to urge them to vote yes on HB1234 to expand mental health services
- Writing a sign on letter urging elected officials to vote yes on SB 222 and asking other organizations to sign on
- Urging elected officials to increase state funding for the Department of Human Services

LOBBYING RULES



Non-profit/501(c)(3) organizations can and do lobby!

- Non-profit lobbying must be non-partisan
- Non-profit lobbying must be limited to an insubstantial part of an organization's overall activities as defined by the IRS
- Government funds cannot, in general, be used to lobby
- All individuals are free to engage in any advocacy and lobbying activity on their own time and with their own resources

Know the rules that apply to you and your organization – for more information contact the Alliance for Justice and the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest.

TWO TYPES OF LOBBYING



Lobbying is a specific type of advocacy that attempts to influence the legislative process. It involves two main types of activity:

DIRECT – communication with government officials regarding legislation or a legislative proposal

- Calling or writing your elected official and asking her to vote yes on HB1234

GRASSROOTS – efforts to encourage, equip and/or organize others to communicate with elected officials regarding legislation or a proposal

- Sending an action alert to your members urging them to call their elected official with the message “vote yes on HB1234”

Lobbying is NOT expressly prohibited for 501(c)(3) organizations.

KNOW YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS



Ongoing communication with elected officials is key to building strong relationships, making sure they know about the important programs and services provided in their district, and educating them on the importance of human services in the community.

Start by knowing which legislators represent the area(s) where your programs are located. If you have multiple program sites, see if they are located in different legislative districts. If you serve people that live in additional areas find out who their legislators are. If you live in a different area, find out who your legislators are.

You can look up legislators by address at:

<http://www.elections.state.il.us/DistrictLocator/SelectSearchType.aspx>

ALIGN WITH ALLIES



Many people and entities are connected to the human services sector. They can be strong allies to work with in conducting advocacy. In addition to engaging with diverse human services providers, spend time to develop these “non-traditional” allies in your area:

- Board members of human services organizations
- Local vendors that do business with human services programs or employers whose workers are impacted by cuts to your programs
- Faith leaders whose congregations are impacted or who advocate on behalf of those in need

Engage these allies in advocacy such as writing letters, going to meetings, speaking directly with elected officials or the media.

TELL YOUR LOCAL STORY



Local information – data, stories, examples – is a powerful advocacy tool when working with elected officials as well as the media.

- Collect information about your program: Positive – people served, outcomes achieved, benefits to individuals and the community, and Negative – amount of delayed payments from the state and the impact.
- Spell out concrete details about what cuts mean to you – staff laid off, people turned away, programs closed.
- Be proactive in communicating – Write letters to the editor, send regular email updates to your elected officials, engage program participants in telling their stories.

ADVOCACY TIMELINE



Coming soon - Key times for Illinois Partners for Human Service members to take action include:

- Week following February 24 – Submit written comments to Governor on preliminary budget
- March 10 – Contact elected officials with NO CUTS message and outreach to local media
- March – May – Continue regular communication with local media
- Week of March 29 and April 5 – Schedule in-district meetings with legislators while they're home on spring break
- April – Continue contact with elected officials and media on the impact of cuts in your local area, participate in action alerts and lobby days TBD

ADVOCACY RESOURCES



Illinois Partners is developing additional materials as advocacy resources. Stay tuned for future information regarding:

- Lobbying and advocacy – Different types of activity and rules that apply to non-profit organizations
- Effective communication – Messages and strategies to get our human services message across effectively with different audiences
- The legislative and budgetary processes – The basics of how and when things happen and key times for advocacy

FOR MORE INFORMATION



For more information about Illinois Partners for Human Service and how to join our statewide network, please visit our website.

www.illinoispartners.org

To request advocacy resources or other information or assistance, please contact Judith Gethner, Coalition Manager at 312.906.2364 or judith@illinoispartners.org.