



**NETWORK**  
of Jewish Human  
Service Agencies

# VISION

**NJHSA**  
Annual Conference

# 2020

CONVENE. CONNECT. COLLABORATE.



2020  
Advocacy Pillar  
Award Winner

# Advocacy

## Making an Impact Beyond Direct Service

Presented by  
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# About JF&CS of Greater Boston

Jewish Family & Children's Service helps individuals and families build a strong foundation for resilience and well-being across the lifespan.

- Originated in 1864
- Located in Massachusetts
- Over 100 communities
- Over 40 programs and services in four primary services areas:

# Goals for this Webinar

1. Share what we have learned
2. Demystify advocacy
3. Provide some tools
4. Inspire you to broaden the impact of your own work

# Why be involved in Advocacy?

- Changes to large scale policies impact the lives of our clients
- Advocating for improvements for our most vulnerable populations
- Results of our efforts benefit the Jewish community *and* the broader community
- Tikkun olam

# And in our Experience

- Taking action, creating change and having an impact is inspiring and empowering
- JF&CS is seen as a leader in the community and is sought out to participate in these efforts.

# What is Advocacy?

Leadership strategy for  
advancing missions that  
require taking a public position  
on a cause or an issue  
to influence decision making.



# JF&CS Advocacy Involvement



Advocate for policies that are in the best interest of our clients



Oppose rules that would cause harm or negatively impact our clients



Partner with local advocacy groups on matters related to our programs

# Advocacy Activities

- Sign-on letters / Joint statements
- Advocacy campaigns
- Submission of public comments
- Coalition participation

# Recent Examples

# Federal Advocacy

**Advocacy Goal:** Protect SNAP in Farm Bill

**JF&CS Program Lead:** Bet Tzedek Legal Services

**Partners:** Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI)

**JF&CS Action Taken:**

- Signed on to letter with 50 organizations urging the Conference Committee to adopt a Farm Bill that strengthens and protects SNAP.

**Result:**

- Farm Bill was passed without harmful SNAP provisions.

# State Advocacy

**Advocacy Goal:** Increase SNAP Access for Seniors

**JF&CS Program Lead:** Bet Tzedek Legal Services

**Partners:** SNAP Coalition, MLRI, Department of Transitional Assistance, Executive office of Elder Affairs

**JF&CS Action Taken:**

- Made specific proposals to DTA to improve SNAP access and simplify application for seniors.

**Result:**

- Senior Assistance Office
- Simplified Senior SNAP Application
- Improved reporting

# State Advocacy

**Advocacy Goal:** Repeal the Family Cap Rule

**JF&CS Program Lead:** Center for Early Relationship Support

**Partners:** Greater Boston Legal Services and MLRI

**JF&CS Action Taken:**

- Signed on to statement as supporting agency
- Provided oral and written testimony at a public hearing
- Meeting with local state legislators about the issue

**Result:**

- Family Cap Rule was repealed.
- Eligible families received retroactive benefits

# JF&CS Infrastructure

# Policy

- Our agency promotes and engages in systems-level advocacy and lobbying activities on behalf of the individuals and communities the agency serves.
- Our agency does not engage in political activity, i.e. any support of an individual political candidate up for election/re-election.



# Procedure

- Advocate for policies that are in the best interest of our clients
- Identify program lead
- Identify partners: agencies or coalitions
- Identify action needed
- Take action
- Track progress/results

# Advocacy Tracking

- Create a system to track advocacy efforts
- Excel spreadsheet
  - Name of the initiative
  - Federal/State level
  - Agency action
  - Community partners
  - Impact/status of the advocacy
- Designate a central person responsible for maintaining advocacy tracking across the agency
  - Serves as a resource across the agency
  - Provides guidance on how to write letters in response to proposed rule changes

# Working with Community Advocacy Agencies

Staff are members of or participate with various local advocacy groups

- SNAP Coalition
- Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
- Jane Doe

# Partnerships/Listservs/Committees

## Local

- Benefits Coalition
- DTA Advisory Board
- EA Coalition
- Greater Boston Food Bank
- Housing & Benefits Committee
- SNAP Coalition
- SSI Coalition
- Utility Network

## National

- Coalition on Human Needs
- FRAC
- MAZON
- National Immigration Law Center
- NJHSA Advocacy Committee
- NJHSA listserv

# Lessons Learned

- Recognition of value and interest in advocacy
- Create an agency policy
  - Identify priorities: on behalf of clients, related to mission, specific to programs and services
  - Identify types of involvement: Share statements, sign-on letters, advocacy campaigns, coalition participation, submission of public comments
- Create a process for reviewing and approving efforts
- Seek out partners who engage in advocacy work
- Focus on efforts that will have the best result for the amount of effort

# Thank you

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## Upcoming Vision 2020 Offerings

**June 9 @ 1 p.m. EDT**

**Vision 2020: Return on Mission: Leveraging  
Technology for Visibility, Insight, & Investment**

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**JUNE 16 @ 1 p.m. EDT**

**Vision 2020 Plenary: Poverty in the US and  
implications of COVID-19 in developing and  
delivering innovate service responses**

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Registration links can be found in our newsletters or on our website: <https://www.networkjhsa.org/>.