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/Listsersvs/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

Sponsored by

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

Sponsored by

Registration links can be found in our newsletters or on our website: [https://www.networkjhsa.org/](https://www.networkjhsa.org/).