Strengthening your Advocacy and Community Organizing

Welcome to the webinar!

Everyone is using computer speakers for audio

Please use the chat box to post questions/comments

If you are experiencing technical problems please email Ryan Carter: rcarter@rivernetwork.org

Please don’t forget to fill out the post-webinar survey so we can improve!
Strengthening your Advocacy and Community Organizing

Capacity Building and Assessment

March 16, 2017
Sue Hoechstetter, Wyatt Closs
sue@afj.org
River Network empowers and unites people and communities to protect and restore rivers and other waters that sustain all life. We envision a future of clean and ample water for people and nature, where local caretakers are well-equipped, effective and courageous champions for our rivers.
Changing Political Landscape

• New President
• New Congress
• New Cabinet
• Supreme Court Vacancy
• New Governors & State Legislatures
• Mayors Elections in 2017
Objective

Learn How Capacity Tools Help Assess and Strengthen Advocacy & Community Organizing
Webinar Overview

• Same Page

• Survey Results

• Talking to Funders

• Tools to Assess Strengths & Gaps
  -- Advocacy Tools
  -- Community Organizing Tool

• Resources
Same Page
Advocacy Avenues

- Administrative
- Legislative
- Ballot Measures, Referenda & Initiatives
- Electoral
- Litigation
Advocacy Activities

- Organize Communities
- Educate Public
- Nonpartisan Voter Ed.
- Change Corporate Behavior
- Educate Legislators
- IRS Lobbying Exceptions
- Influence Regulations
- Encourage Voting
- Educational Conferences
- LOBBYING
- Litigation
- Research
- Leadership Training

PARTISAN POLITICAL
Continuum for Organizing & Advocacy

- Mainly Policy
- Policy, Some Power
- Policy & Power
- Power, Some Policy
- Mainly Power
Advocacy & Organizing
Need Each Other
Nonprofit Capacity

Can you Sustain the Journey?

Skills, Resources, Knowledge, Practices
Readiness to Act

Not Effectiveness of Campaigns
Capacity and the Readiness to Act
Bolder Advocacy Capacity Tools for Organizational Assessment

ACT! (International Advocacy Capacity Tool)

ACT! Quick (Community Organizing Capacity Assessment Tool)

PowerCheck

bolderadvocacy.org
Survey Results/ Talking to Funders
Survey Results: Top Areas To Strengthen

1. Messaging

1. Plans, Strategies, and Adaptability

3. Funding Advocacy

4. Media Relations

5. Influencing Decision-makers

5. Field Operations
Talking to Funders

- Organization leaders understand advocacy
- Advocacy value to foundation mission
- Flexibility of law
  - Can support groups that lobby
  - General operating support
- Capacity building funding
- Examples of peers’ support for advocacy
- Ongoing relationship
Advocacy for Foundation Mission

$150,000 in grants from the George Gund Foundation for Advocacy

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio obtained $50,000,000 per year for low income housing
Foundations Can Support Advocacy

- **Make Lobbying Grants**
  Public or community foundations can fund lobbying directly to nonprofits

- **General Support Grants**
  Public and private foundations fund grantees that advocate through general support

- **Specific Project Grants**
  Private foundations can fund non-lobbying portions of advocacy projects

- **Fund Electoral Activities**
  Advocacy includes nonpartisan electoral activities.
Funding Capacity Building

Building Capacity:

“Supporting the development of the staff, infrastructure… is one way to enable long-term change. Providing core [general] support over an extended period of time enables advocacy groups to build toward more effective efforts in the future or to seek new, like minded groups.”

The Atlantic Philanthropies, *Atlantic Reports, Investing in Change*
Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT!)

The most effective advocacy work happens when groups and coalitions know where they stand and can leverage their organizational strengths to work for social change. With the free Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT!), nonprofits can benchmark their advocacy skills, identify specific gaps and opportunities in their advocacy strategies, and efficiently focus resources to get the best results. The tool can also be used in evaluations.

NEW: ACT!Quick has arrived!

ACT Data & Analysis: The First 280 Advocacy Capacity Tool Users — These findings offer a snapshot of what nonprofit staff and directors say they need to become better advocates, as well as what their current advocacy strengths and gaps are.

bolderadvocacy.org/act
One Size Does Not Fit All Organizations!
Advocacy Goals, Plans & Strategies

Conducting Advocacy

Advocacy Avenues

Organizational Operations to Sustain Advocacy
Advocacy Capacity Tool Indicators

I. Advocacy Goals, Plans & Strategies

Preparation

Agenda

Plans, Strategies & Adaptability
The organization analyzes **what it will take to accomplish each written agenda item**, including who has the power to make decisions in legislative, administrative, electoral, litigation, and other areas.

The organization develops a **plan for how it will strategically advance each written agenda item**. The plan identifies appropriate targets, tactics, major activities, and expected results.

The organization monitors **internal and external changes in the policy environment and adapts its strategies as needed**.

The organization has a plan for **assessing advocacy capacity** and for strengthening its capacity as needed.

The organization plans to **test new, improved strategies and tactics**, such as new methods of communication or of mobilizing networks.
Advocacy Capacity Tool Indicators

II. Conducting Advocacy

- Research & Analysis
- Field Operation
- Advocacy Partners & Coalitions
- Messaging
- Media Relations
- Influencing Decision Makers
## S2.2 Advocacy Capacity Tool - Field Operation

Assesses how the organization communicates with, educates and engages its network and the public.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rely on Partners</th>
<th>Not Strong/ Rarely/ Never</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong/ Sometimes</th>
<th>Moderately Strong/ Usually</th>
<th>Very Strong/ Always</th>
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The organization has a network or various networks of individuals and organizations that it can activate to **advocate** or collaborate on key policy issues.

The organization **communicates with its network on the status** of advocacy efforts, opportunities to **engage**, messages and results.

The organization identifies **segments of the public** to educate about its agenda.

The organization conducts phone banks, informational mailings, online communications and/or canvassing to **educate and mobilize their network** and gain public support.

### S2.2 Field Operation: Advanced (Optional)

The organization implements a plan to **expand the size and diversity of its network**.

The organization works to **expand the issue knowledge and advocacy skills** of those in its network.

The organization activates **segments of the public** to influence decision makers in support of organizational priorities.
III. Advocacy Avenues

- Administrative
- Legislative
- Ballot Measures, Referenda & Initiatives
- Electoral
- Litigation
Advocacy Capacity Tool Indicators

IV. Organizational Operations to Sustain Advocacy

Organizational Commitment
Funding Advocacy
Decision-Making Structure & Process
Fiscal Management & Sustainability
Capacity Tools for Organizational Assessment

How Can They Be Used?

- Identify Strengths/Gaps
- Communicate Well
- Strengthen Organization
- Choose Partners
- Evaluate
- Plan Role And Strategy
- Fundraise

ACT!Quick
ACT!
PowerCheck
IACT!

BOLDERADVOCACY.ORG
PowerCheck

A Tool for Assessing Community Organizing Capacity

Does your organization have what it takes to accomplish your community organizing goals? AFJ’s free self-assessment tool can help.

PowerCheck helps groups measure their capacity to effectively engage in community organizing. It’s useful for a range of organizations—whether big or small groups fighting to resolve problems and empower communities, or a coalition of groups working together, or a foundation looking for ways to support its grantees.

This free online tool contains a series of questions designed to gauge whether groups are working in ways that can empower the communities involved, bring about solutions, and help sustain the organization. The tool generates immediate results. Results for multiple groups can be aggregated to view combined strength.
PowerCheck Capacity Sections

I. Pre-Organizing: Goals, Power Analysis, Planning

II. Empowerment/Constituent Leadership

III. Organizing for Change

IV. Community Consensus Building

V. Organizational Operations/Infrastructure
PowerCheck Section I

Pre-Organizing: Goals, Power Analysis, Planning

- Commitment to Organizing
- Power Analysis
- Planning and Evaluation
PowerCheck Section II

Empowerment/Constituent Leadership

Constituent Leadership Development
Participatory Process
Political Consciousness & Empowerment
Organization has a defined process for developing constituent leadership along a progressive path that incrementally builds skills.

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Constituent leadership represents the diversity of the community and is concentrated in those who are most directly impacted by the issues being addressed.

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From the tool itself--
PowerCheck Section III

Organizing for Change Pt. 1

Campaign Strategy

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Activating Stakeholders

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Coalition Building/Partnering

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Messaging

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Media Relations
PowerCheck Section III

Influencing Decision-Makers

Change Avenues
Action

Negotiation and Follow-Through

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PowerCheck Section IV

Community Consensus Building

- Asset Mapping and Stakeholder Engagement
- Community Planning
- Community Plan Adoption
- Implementation and Re-visioning
PowerCheck Section V

Organizational Operations/Infrastructure

- Community Connectedness
- Organizational Staff and Board Resources
- Organization/ Constituent Communications
- Fiscal Management and Sustainability
- Funding Community Organizing
Bolder Advocacy Tools

- **Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT)**
  
  [www.bolderadvocacy.org/act](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org/act)

- **ACT! Quick**
  
  [www.bolderadvocacy.org/actquick](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org/actquick)

- **PowerCheck for community organizing**
  
  [www.bolderadvocacy/powercheck](http://www.bolderadvocacy/powercheck)

- **Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (RECO)**
  
  [www.bolderadvocacy/reco](http://www.bolderadvocacy/reco)
Bolder Advocacy Resources


- **Advocacy Readiness Series: Working with Grantees to Build and Measure Advocacy Capacity**

- **Capacity/Evaluation Training and Technical Assistance**

  [advocacy@atj.org](mailto:advocacy@atj.org) or 1-866-NP-LOBBY
River Network Membership

Join a community that shares your passion and provides a vital resource and sounding board for all of your professional questions!

Benefits For All Your Needs

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<td>• 30% off webinars and access to online publications</td>
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<th>Access Best Practices &amp; Networking</th>
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<td>• 25% off River Rally conference registration &amp; get access to scholarships!</td>
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River Rally 2017

Join us in the largest gathering of freshwater advocate and share your experiences, celebrate your successes and build important professional relationships!

Where?: Grand Rapids, Michigan, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
When?: May 8-11, 2017

Agenda and registration details:
https://www.rivernetwork.org/events-learning/river-rally/about/

Note: April 7th is when Early Bird registration ends and April 30th is the deadline to become a member and be eligible for discounts.
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https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/rnwebinareval
Questions?
Recording of this presentation will be available online

Thank You!