
Advocating for Funding for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

Presentation by:

Susie Cambria, MSW * Deputy Director/Public Policy * DC Action for Children

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DC Action for Children

1616 P St NW, Suite 420

Washington, DC 20036

(202) 234-9404 * (202) 234-9108 fax

scambria@dckids.org * www.dckids.org

About DC Action for Children

DC Action for Children is an independent, non-profit, multi-issue advocacy organization dedicated to improving conditions for children, youth and their families in the District of Columbia.

We were founded in 1992 and currently have a professional staff of five. Our work focuses on youth safety, equity, school readiness, accountability and youth opportunity.



Why engage in budget advocacy?

- The budget is the single most important piece of legislation the mayor and council will prepare each year
- The budget represents policy priorities for issues and populations



Some examples from FY 2007

- Child health – Medicaid eligibility was increased to 300% of poverty
- New Communities
- Great Streets
- Affordable housing
- Education



The budget process

See “The District Budget Process – Step-by-Step”



Of note for FY 2008 budget development (1)

- Cost inflation for nonpersonal services is not allowed to increase unless the increase is taken from another part of the budget
- Requests are for new initiatives, expanding existing initiatives, restoring services and technical adjustments



Of note for FY 2008 budget development (2)

- Requests must include rationale including legislative mandate, mayoral initiative, etc.
- Mayoral initiatives are: youth at risk, jobs and economic opportunity, affordable housing, health care and other



Of note for FY 2008 budget development (3)

- Requests must consider alternatives – agencies must provide documentation about the problem or issue as well as provide alternatives, including doing nothing, and the reason(s) why the alternatives were not selected



Of note for FY 2008 budget development (4)

- The deadline for the Department of Human Services to submit their request to the Office of Budget and Planning (OBP) is November 28 (as of October 26, 2006)



Targets for budget advocacy

- Agency(ies) – in this case, DHS
- Mayor
- City Council
- Supporters and allies



Department of Human Services

- Brian Wilbon, Interim Director –
brian.wilbon@dc.gov, 671-4200
- Barbara Ferguson Kamara –
barbara.kamara@dc.gov, 727-1839



Presumed Mayor

- There will be a Human Services Team organized after the general election on November 7
- Members of the public may join the Transition Team
- The ECE group is co-led by Susie Cambria and Jesse Bailey



City Council

- There will be a new chair of the Committee on Human Services for Council Period 17. This should be determined in either late December 2006 or in early January 2007.
- Communicate with current members who will continue on the Council
- Communicate via campaign offices for new members



Supporters, Allies

- Develop a good list of individuals and organizations



Developing the strategy

- Policy
- Budget
- Tools



Policy decisions to make

- Change of definition of disability – does this require legislation?
- All kids? Poor kids?
- Others?



Budget decisions to make

- What do the changes cost?
- What are the benefits?
- How do the changes fit within the mayoral priorities?



Tools

- Mayor
- Council
- Public education
- Advocacy



More about public education

- Develop a one-pager
- Develop a longer paper with more details
- Communicate with supporters and allies

Generally, get the buzz going!



More about advocacy

- Who to get to and when?
- Visits to key officials
- Budget recommendations
- Policy recommendations

Keep the budget development schedule in mind!

