FAMILY SERVICES ALLIANCE
San Francisco for All Families

Policy Platform 2024

Development of Annual Advocacy Platform And Delegation of Advocacy Decisions

The Alliance seeks to strengthen advocacy on behalf of San Francisco families living in vulnerable circumstances and the organizations that support them. This document sets forth the processes for adoption of the Annual Policy Platform as well as delegation of decision-making around specific advocacy activities in which the Alliance may engage. On an annual basis, the Alliance shall adopt a Policy Platform–included herein as Attachment A–to guide and define its advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Key Definitions:

Advocacy is the act of supporting or arguing for a cause or issue, (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocate#h2), and involves the active espousal of a point of view or a course of action as well as less visible, more subtle processes of influence, such as shaping public opinion or doing research, https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/What_Is_Advocacy.pdf.

Lobbying is one kind of advocacy and for nonprofits is defined under federal tax law as activities attempting to influence legislation. An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation, https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/lobbying.

There are multiple possible advocacy strategies, activities, and actions that can be used to influence government policy and practice, mobilize public will, and change minds. Certain activities only become lobbying when the intention is to influence specific legislation. Included as Attachment B is a table outlining examples of potential advocacy activities and actions.

Process for Development of Annual Policy Platform & Pursuit of Advocacy Actions/Activities

Criteria for Annual Advocacy Platform

- Aligns with the Alliance's mission and values and promotes the well-being of San Francisco's families and children living in vulnerable circumstances.
- Imbeds a commitment to equity and anti-racism.
- Reflects input received from the Alliance members, their teams, and families.

Procedure for Consideration of Annual Advocacy Platform

Each year, the Alliance's Steering Committee will recommend to the general membership the Annual Advocacy Platform for consideration. The general membership will vote on approval of the Annual Advocacy Platform at a regularly scheduled All-Member meeting unless the Steering Committee determines extenuating circumstances require that the vote take place through an email process. The Steering Committee will provide regular updates to the general membership on the implementation of the Policy Platform through advocacy and policy efforts, including requests to participate in advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Decision-Making on Pursuit of Advocacy Actions/Activities

Any member of the Alliance and/or their constituents may recommend the pursuit of particular advocacy actions or activities to the Steering Committee, Chairpersons, or the Alliance Backbone Organization.

Actions/Activities Within the Annual Advocacy Platform: The decision of whether to pursue advocacy actions or activities that are within the Annual Advocacy Platform is subject to the Alliance's procedures for Rapid-Response Decision-Making set forth in the Alliance's Charter. Specifically, when such advocacy action or activity is recommended to the Steering Committee, Chairpersons, or Alliance backbone agency, the Chairpersons and Backbone Organization, or, when requested by the Chairpersons, the Backbone Organization alone, have the authority to decide whether to engage in the suggested advocacy action or activity.

Actions/Activities Outside the Annual Policy Platform: When Alliance members and/or their constituents recommend advocacy actions or activities on matters outside the Annual Advocacy Platform, the following sets forth the process for determining whether to pursue such advocacy:

Criteria for Consideration

- All above-listed criteria for the Annual Advocacy Platform must be met.
- The -Alliance's and the Backbone Organization's capacity to pursue.

Procedure for Consideration

- If the Alliance has the capacity to pursue a recommendation, Chairpersons will be informed of the recommendation;
- If Chairpersons agree to pursue the recommendation, they shall present the recommendation for consideration to the Steering Committee;

- The Steering Committee will determine whether additional information is needed, and if so, the best method for gathering such information; and
- Once sufficient information is gathered, the Steering Committee shall present to the general membership of the Alliance and ask if there is any opposition to pursuing the recommended advocacy. The Steering Committee may also place various conditions or restrictions related to the Alliance taking a position on or engaging in advocacy outside of the Policy Platform.

Attachment A: Alliance 2024 Policy Platform

The Alliance seeks to use its collective power to promote policies and strategies that empower and support families and respond to the needs of families and family support organizations. We seek to advance policies and increase funding streams to promote the well-being of children and families in San Francisco, including working to address the impacts of structural racism and oppression on marginalized communities.

The Alliance's advocacy efforts will support the mission, vision, and goals of the Alliance. This Policy Platform is a working document reflective of the current needs of San Francisco families and communities and the organizations that support them; as such, priorities will evolve and change as needed.

The Alliance may **lead** efforts to pursue issues and policies that:

1. ***Build the community safety net for families through efforts to increase capacity, sustainability, and high-quality services of community-based, family support organizations.***
   - Examples**:** Increased and sustainable funding for community-based organizations, services, and programs that support families and children; overall issues related to non-profit sustainability and capacity-building (*i.e.* non-profit wages, nonprofit contracting, and reporting requirements); and investment in training, capacity-building, and technical assistance for family support organizations.

2. ***Enhance the community support network for families and their children through increased collaboration and coordination of community-based and public agencies, alignment of systems, and furtherance of the two-generation approach..***
   - Examples: Increased collaboration with the ECE community and pediatric health care and engagement in efforts and initiatives that improve coordination of the community safety net as well as families' access to services and supports, such as the Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) Plan.

Furthermore, the Alliance may support efforts to pursue issues and policies that:

1. ***Reduce poverty and improve economic stability, prioritizing basic needs for children and families.***

- ○ <u>Examples</u>**:** - Guaranteed income; basic needs such as housing, food security, diapers and hygiene supplies, cash assistance, and utilities; and efforts to protect and increase access to benefits for immigrant families and other vulnerable populations.

2. ***Enhance access to healthcare and improve mental, emotional, and physical health.***
   - ○ <u>Examples</u>: Increased support and funding for as well as access to behavioral and mental health for children and families; and, health benefits.
   - ○

3. ***Improve school readiness and access to opportunities to address educational inequities.***
   - ○ <u>Examples</u>: Learning loss, digital divide, community schools, and other efforts to address education inequities for the BIPOC community.

Attachment B: Examples of Lobbying and Other Advocacy Activities

The Alliance is working to organize for policy change, to partner with local government and community partners, and to achieve sustainability of FRCs. The Annual Policy Platform will be implemented through a combination of strategies and activities.

Below is a table outlining examples of potential advocacy activities and actions, (*see* "Understanding Advocacy: A Primer on the Policy Making Role of Nonprofit Organizations," John Casey, Baruch College, City University of New York (July 2011)):

	Categories	**Examples of Advocacy Actions and Activities**
Lobbying	Legislative and Administrative	- Encourage legislators to vote for or against specific legislation, propositions or regulations - Encourage members of the public to express support for, or opposition to, specific legislation, propositions, or regulations - Encourage elected or appointed officials and/or their staffers and advisors to promote changes in regulations, guidelines, and other administrative practices
	Communication and Media Outreach	Organize or promote campaign to contact legislators or elected or appointed officials
	Alliance Building and Capacity Development	- Spearhead creation of Alliances of organizations for specific legislative change - Backbone Alliances of organizations for specific legislative change
Non-Lobbying	Legislative and Administrative	Organize and/or participate in legislative forums/discussions
	Communication and Media Outreach	- Send letters to editors - Post blog entries, tweets, and comments on online forums - Prepare press releases or opinion articles - Express opinion during media interviews

	Research and Policy Analysis	- Prepare and disseminate research reports, policy briefs, etc. - Provide data/access to external researchers - Collaborate with external researchers - Disseminate information on organizational service delivery models
	Coalition Building and Capacity Development	- Spearhead creation of Alliance's organization for shared goals - Backbone Alliance of organizations for shared goals
	Education and Mobilization	- Prepare and distribute print or online materials to educate community and general public about an issue - Organize, promote, or participate in educational and community awareness activities
	Government Relations and Oversight	- Participate in on-going formal government consultation or advisory processes - Participate in ad-hoc consultation or advisory processes such as —town halls and legislative hearings - Respond to requests for advice from government entities - Prepare submission for government inquiry