

Assessing Public Health Advocacy Capacity: Lessons from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Tobacco Policy Change Program Evaluation

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**Presented at the American Public Health Association
Annual Meeting, November 9, 2010
Denver, Colorado**

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Author Disclosures

There are no relationships to disclose

Presentation Objectives

- To identify challenges in evaluating tobacco control advocacy programs
- To identify approaches to dealing with these challenges
- To provide a model for evaluating comprehensive, community-based tobacco control advocacy programs

Background: The Tobacco Policy Change Program

- Funded by RWJF, starting in 2004
- Total of 75 grants
- Currently in 4th round, 11 grantees
- Goal – promote healthier communities & states:
 - Broader advocacy base
 - Stronger partnerships
 - Reduction in disparities
 - More diverse policy infrastructure
 - Policy change

Examples of TPC Advocacy Goals

- Passage of clean indoor air ordinances
- Medicaid coverage of cessation services
- Tobacco tax increases
- Restrictive land use ordinances
- Repeal of state preemption rules

Evaluation Framework

■ Main evaluation questions:

- Were grantees successful in achieving goals?
- What are main elements of success?
- Does program structure facilitate achievement of goals?
- What is lasting impact of TPC?

■ Examine program experiences from dual perspectives:

- Advocacy evaluation
- Community partnerships

Important Applications from Advocacy Evaluation

The policy change *process*:

- ***Key inputs***

(e.g., experience, funding, reputation)

- ***Advocacy strategies***

(e.g., issues analysis, grass roots organizing, legal action)

- ***Key activities***

(e.g., constituency building, issues research, policymaker education, public info campaign)

Important Applications from Advocacy Evaluation, cont.

Advocacy *outcomes*:

- *Contextual factors* very influential
- *Contribution* not attribution
- Importance of *interim outcomes*
- Importance of *realistic outcomes*

Examples of Advocacy Outcomes

- Increased public awareness of TC issues
- Increased public support for TC
- Constituency growth
- Policymaker support for issue
- Movement through political process
- Adoption of policy
- Implementation of policy
- Enforcement of policy
- Maintenance of policy

Important Applications from Community Partnerships

The partnership *process*:

- Engagement of marginalized communities
- Partnership building is ongoing
- Partnership stage of development & readiness is important
- Paying attention to factors influencing partnership functioning (e.g., shared goals; governance & decision making)

Applications from Community Partnerships, cont.

Partnership *outcomes*:

- *Sustainability* of the partnership & health promotion goals
- *Community capacity* development

Evaluation Challenges

(short list)

- Multiple sites (each w/unique goals, plans, strategies, & activities)
- Changing group of grantees
- Grantee staff/participant turnover
- Evolution in program purpose
- Changes in program activities
- Projects at different stages of experience
- Identifying appropriate outcomes
- Complexity

Dealing with Evaluation Challenges

- Input from funding agency & grantees
- Assumption of multifactorial non-linear model
- Quantitative and qualitative methods
- Site visits and case studies
- Focus on understanding dynamic nature of program and big picture

Design Elements: **Triangulation**

■ **Multiple sources of data**

- Program documents
- In-depth phone interviews
- Online survey
- Site visits

■ **Multiple sources of information**

- Grantee organization members
- Other coalition members
- Other TC actors in community
- Funding agency staff
- TA providers

Design Elements:

Indicators of Sustainability

- Increased awareness of value of advocacy
- Increased community capacity for advocacy
- Duration of coalition collaboration post-grant
- New and/or strengthened alliances
- Increased community awareness of TC as health equity issue
- Strengthened coalition funding base for advocacy
- Strengthened relationships between traditional TC players and non-traditional/grassroots players
- Increased capacity to address other PH issues

Design Elements: **Funding Agency Role**

- Origins & history of program
- Program premises
- Program goals & changes over time
- Grantee selection criteria & changes
- Agency role in TA & program implementation

Lessons from TPC Evaluation

- Logic models & evaluation should include program history & funding agency role
- Logic models & evaluation should include a dynamic perspective
- Examine a continuum of outcomes
- Examine capacity building processes & outcomes

Advocacy Evaluation Resources

California Endowment

[http://www.calendow.org/Article.aspx?
id=3774](http://www.calendow.org/Article.aspx?id=3774)

Alliance for Justice

<http://www.advocacyevaluation.org/>
[http://www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-
foundations/reco/](http://www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/reco/)