

Understanding and Optimizing Your AT Program Structure

Moderator: Diane Cordry Golden, CATADA

Panel:

- Willie Gunther, IL (Non-Profit)
- Tammy Koger, NC (State - VR)
- Linda Jaco, OK (University)
- Sara Sack, KS (UCEDD)
- Kim Moccia, MN (State)

Leadership & Change (Redux)

If you're not willing to embrace change, you're not ready to lead.

Ongoing Program Review – looking for ways to improve your program

3 Continuums – No right/wrong or good/bad

- **Continuum of Organizational Structures – Where are you?? Is that where you need to be??**
- **Advisory Council – What authority does yours have? Does that best meet your program needs?**
- **Autonomy and Support – What do you give/get from your current administrative unit? Is that best meeting your program needs?**

Definitions

Centralized Organizational Structures

- Operations and Programs/Services are all within one unified structure
- Typically uses a traditional hierarchy for staff organization, line authority and decision-making
- Staff can be located together but do not have to be

Decentralized Organizational Structures

- Operations and Programs/Services are dispersed across multiple different autonomous “units”
- Units can be separate agencies/organizations with connections to the overall program by various types of agreements
- Decision-making authority for staff organization, allocation of resources, and implementation of programs/services within “unit”

Major difference is decision-making authority and direct control not location.

Major Organizational Functions

Staff Expertise/Talent

- Ensure expertise and talent is available to deliver program/services (hire, PD, retain)
- Deploy/redeploy, supervise and allocate resources/support to deliver programs/services

Operations

- Physical space, general utilities
- ICT infrastructure and support including data management
- Marketing, communications, public relations
- Personnel, the operational/legal infrastructure

Fiscal Management

- Budgeting – obtaining and allocating financial resources
- Accounting – tracking and reporting expenditures

Pros & Cons

Centralized

- **Economy of scale, larger infrastructure, specialized supports**
- **Access to wider range of talents & flexible expertise deployment**
- **Consistent activities/services**
- **Direct external stakeholder engagement**
- **Challenge for statewide delivery**
- **Slow decision-making & change**

Decentralized/Outsourced

- **Leverage local “unit” resources**
- **Closer to consumers, more responsive**
- **Multiple units located geographically to support statewide services**
- **More autonomy, speeds decision-making, ability to change nimbly**
- **Difficult to ensure service consistency, risk unit silos**
- **Difficulty ensuring expertise necessary**
- **Diffuses external stakeholder engagement**

Program Panel

Describe your program: # FTE, location(s), structure

Where is your program on continuum?

What works well for you? What is your biggest challenge?

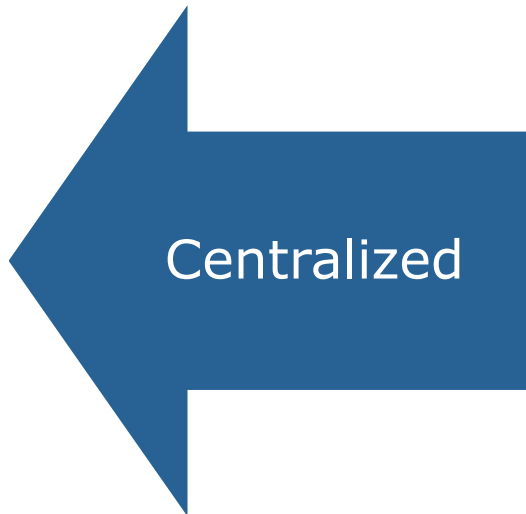
IL

NC

OK

KS

MN



Advisory Council Authority Continuum

Council Required by AT Act

- Prescribed members, can have more if maintain consumer majority
- Exception for existing state statutes, rules or official policies or governing bodies of incorporated agencies

Council Statutory Role

- To advise in planning, implementation and evaluation of AT Act activities
- Option for Council to have expanded authority

Continuum:

- **Advisory Zero:** Advice can be accepted/rejected by decision-makers at will
- **Advisory One:** Decision-makers must justify rejection of advice
- **Advisory Two:** Advice is binding on some decisions (e.g. approval of State Plan)
- **Governing:** Direct control of all decision/resources (personnel, fiscal, etc.)

Considerations

It can always be challenging to get and keep good AC members

- *Even more difficult to engage members who see their role as superfluous*
- *And to keep members who have their advice rejected (without reason)*

An AC can always be helpful in addressing external challenges

- *And the more authority the AC has the more they can use that authority to defend the State AT Program (protect resources, etc.)*

A good relationship with AC is always important . . .

- *And the more authority the AC has, the greater the importance (and the more disastrous a bad relationship can be . . .)*

Program Panel

How would you describe your AC level of authority?

What factors drove that decision?

How has your AC been most helpful and most challenging?



Current State AT Program Administration

22 administratively operated within state agencies

- 14 are units in VR agencies
- 8 in other state agencies (Disability, Administration, Education, Health, etc.)

20 administratively operated within universities

- 15 are units in UCEDDs
- 5 in other university programs

14 administratively operated within non-profit organizations

- 7 are units within a larger non-profit (Easter Seals, P&A, etc.)
- 7 are autonomous State AT Program non-profit organizations

Autonomy & Support

Degree to which a State AT Programs is an integrated part of or autonomous from the larger organization (state agency, university, or non-profit) varies widely --

Greater autonomy and control can help ensure decisions are made and resources are allocated to deliver quality AT programs and services . . .

But it may also mean less infrastructure and support and isolation

Being an integrated part of a larger agency can provide robust infrastructure and supports that help deliver quality AT programs and services . . .

But it may also mean loss of decision-making, resource allocation and identify

Program Panel

How would you describe the level of autonomy of your State AT Program?
Examples: Level of control of resources, other high level decision-making

How would you describe the level of support your program is able to access by being part of a larger organization?
Examples: Access to specialized expertise not otherwise affordable

What strategies have been successful in taking advantage of larger organizational supports?

How can a program safeguard against being “taken advantage of” by a larger organization (protect resources)?

What would your personal utopia be for a balance of autonomy and access to larger organizational supports?

Aim for the Goldilocks Zone

“And this one is just right”

Program Structure

Advisory Council Role/Authority

Autonomy as State AT Program

Support from Administrative Organization



Questions / Contact

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