

Executive Summary

This study questions if the advocacy efforts of community based organizations, like community development corporations, voluntary member associations, and community action agencies, can achieve policy development. Policy development is defined as the proposal of a policy by a community based organization. That policy proposal receives the attention of local decision makers for consideration. This study uses the stages of the policy process to assess what coordinated activities are most effective to achieve policy development. It was concluded that community based organizations can achieve policy development, if they identify an issue or problem, conduct some level of strategic planning, create a policy agenda, and seek access to decision makers. In all three case analyses, the hybrid organization, community action agency, and the voluntary member association were able to achieve policy development. This research does not focus on policy impact or evaluation. The goal was to ascertain how effective an organization can be at proposing a solution and receiving the attention of local decision makers.

This research explores how organizational development can become the foundation for advocating for issues and achieve policy development. Community based organizations are not only government funded service providers, but also community collaborators and educators who stimulate citizen participation and increase public awareness about social issues. Their role as autonomous service providers puts them in a conundrum because of their funding streams. Since the 1950s, researchers have explored the roles and responsibilities of government-funded service providers. This study provides an overview of the roles of community based organizations and activities that

define their political participation. It explores how these organizations mitigate issues to ensure overall community success.

Introduction

Nonprofit organizations have been the primary service vehicle for the underrepresented sectors of society since the 1950s. Filled with passionate workers and volunteers, these organizations, in some areas, are the heart and soul of local communities. They strive to fulfill their mission and ensure that their clientele have access to much needed resources. Much of the research about these organizations stemmed from the influx of community, advocacy, social movement, and interest groups that were birthed out of the Anti-Poverty, Civil Rights, and Equal Opportunity legislation during that same time period. In the 1950s, Michael Harrington, author of *The Other America*, released riveting research on the state of America's poor that shook the conscious of society. The research exposed the qualms of living below minimum wage with access to minimum resources. At the same time, racial minorities began advocating for equal rights, especially the right to engage without threat or fear in the political process. Thus began the perfect storm of events where political science, public policy, and sociology connected. Researchers in all three academic fields struggled to uncover how social factors were impacting policy decisions and who were the primary drivers behind these changes. Public interest groups or nonprofit organizations seemed to be the best approach to garner the most attention and achieve more equality in policy development. They could drive the attention, focus, and resources of the social movements of their time.

The structure and function of these organizations have evolved since the 1960s. Census data from 2010 indicates that populations are shifting from rural communities to urban and educational centers. Census data also indicates that the state of poverty has

remained stagnant-families are not moving closer to self-sufficiency as many had hoped. Now, today's public interest groups are community based organizations that provide social services and advocate for policy change. These organizations have learned the environmental change must be systemic. They must interact with their local, state, and national policy makers to drive resources to their areas. They are integral members in public-private partnerships that ensure their underrepresented communities have services. They spawn community and economic development in their areas through job training, business development, and social service delivery. They are primarily funded by the government and supplemented with private funding. They are social enterprises with active and engaged boards of directors and are advocates for change-not just social advocates, but also policy advocates. With the rise of new social movements in poverty, health care, civil rights, immigration, and education, questions have arisen about their capacity to serve as policy advocates. As governmentally funded social service agencies, can they remain autonomous and advocate for policy change, especially if the policy institution is their funder? It is here that the intersection of advocacy (or political participation to political scientists), public policy, and sociology meet. This intersection is the foundation for this research. Public policy advocacy for community based organizations is still an inter-disciplinary research area between political science, public policy, and sociology. Using that framework, this research asks the question: "Do advocacy efforts of community based organizations achieve policy development?" This research seeks to understand how advocacy plays a role in the policy process and what types of advocacy efforts drive policy development. This qualitative analysis will focus on three community organizations in Indiana who were formed after 1960 and sought

policy development for their target audience. To begin, this research will operationalize advocacy, and policy development using academic research from political science, public policy, sociology, and the law.

The Role of Advocacy with Community Based Organizations

Nonprofit organizations have become some of the most essential institutions in today's society. Nonprofit organizations assume various forms, such as voluntary member associations, interest groups, and social service agencies (LeRoux, 2007, 410). That has also been identified as public interest groups, social movement organizations, and advocacy organizations. All names are fairly synonymous for not for profit organizations who seek to provide a public benefit. However, this research will focus on nonprofit organizations classified as "community based organizations" and use the definition of nonprofits provided by Jeffrey Berry. Community based organizations are "nonprofits that are highly efficient, low-cost organizations staffed by professionals and volunteers who are passionately committed to their missions" (Berry, 2005, 569). In many instances, these organizations provide human and social services to lower income and underrepresented subsections of their service territories. Many community based organizations have become "the administrative arm of the welfare state" because they have been administering federally funded programs since the 1960s (Berry, 2005, 569). Service delivery for these community based organizations has transcended from just providing basic social services to being social service providers that advocate for policy changes and increase broad-based awareness about issues adversely impacting their clientele.

What is advocacy? According to Boris and Mosher-Williams, *advocacy*, in its most general terms, is defined as "efforts used to influence policy" (1998, 488). For community-based organizations, advocacy has become one of the most integral activities of these organizations' basic operations. It is the vehicle that organizations use to bring

education, awareness, and policy solutions to community issues. Therefore, Boris and Mosher-Williams believe that the definition of advocacy should be expanded to encompass the role that nonprofits play in providing a public voice that sustains a democratic society (1998, 488). Advocacy is a holistic approach that seeks to bring change to a policy, program, process, or system. Advocacy efforts seek to request change to something by creating an open forum for dialogue about an issue. Advocacy efforts increase public awareness about an issue and the community that the issue impacts. Advanced advocacy efforts will include a solution and appeal to decision makers. Through these activities, community based organizations become the voice for a private issue. Community based organizations provide a “public voice for issues and concerns” that adversely impact their clients (Boris and Mosher-Williams, 1998, 488). According to Berry and Arons, these organizations have provided a public voice for their clientele that may lack access to political institutions or lack knowledge about to participate in politics (Leroux, 2007, 411). Advocacy, reviewed in silo, is an organization’s attempt to increase education and awareness to a particular issue. Advocacy, in holistic context, is an attempt by organizations to participate and impact the policy process. In many instances, the goal of advocacy is to bring about a policy change that positively impacts the organization’s clientele or local community. Community based organizations have gained a realization that environmental change must be systemic. They must connect with the local, state, and national decision makers to present their case (or issue), mobilize resources in their communities, and bring attention that will resolve their local problems.

The question arises: “what activities truly constitute advocacy for community based organizations?” According to Chaves, Galaskiewicz, and Stephens, advocacy can

take many forms including litigating, lobbying, researching, publishing, testifying, and organizing collective action (2004, 294). In more simplistic forms, organizations can conduct a letter writing campaign, post information on their website, host a town hall meeting, or host a community stakeholder forum. A board member, agency leader, or community ambassador can write an editorial in the local newspaper. In political science, it may be referred to as *political participation* or *civic engagement*. For community based organizations, they classify their activities as: civic awareness or public education.

According to Leroux, nonprofits have been recognized as being integral participants in the federal policy making process (2007, 410). Advocacy brings attention to an issue and creates an opportunity for awareness. Advocacy sparks the conversation among parties that may be impacted by issues and forces them, in some instances, to create a solution. These activities bring greater awareness of not just about the issues, but also how the issue impacts a community or specific group of individuals. Andrews and Edwards identify five categories of activities that would be considered advocacy: agenda setting, access to decision making arenas, achieving favorable policies, monitoring and shaping policy implementation and shifting long-term priorities and resources of political institutions (2004, 492). Because the primary focus of this research is to focus on advocacy efforts that impact policy development, this study will focus on three types of advocacy: agenda setting, access to decision making arenas, and achieving favorable policies. The other two strategies- monitoring and shaping policy implementation and shifting long-term priorities and resources of political institutions- are geared more heavily toward effective policy impact and evaluation rather than policy development. Evaluating the impact of a policy occurs once the organization has achieved its favorable

decisions and is working toward long term sustainable solutions for the community. This research seeks to understand more closely how policies are created rather than how the policies impact their community.

It has been carefully explained that community based organizations provide service delivery for different community demographics. They are integral partners in public-private partnerships and are well-equipped to serve as policy advocates. Building upon that framework, the question has also arisen about the attributes that community based organizations offer as advocates for their clientele, local communities, and community issues. First, nonprofits serve as vehicles to promote civic awareness (Leroux, 2007, 411). By promoting civic awareness, advocacy by community based organizations will draw attention to community issues that need a comprehensive solution. Increasing civic awareness will bring potential benefits to the organizations and its clients; therefore, the advocacy is usually targeted at state and local policy makers (Mosley, 2011, 436). They bridge the gap in knowledge between the clientele who are impacted, the decision makers who make policies, and the communities they serve. Increasing civic awareness is not always conducted in silo. Second, they seek collaborative partners to increase the exposure, resources, and impact of an issue. These organizations understand their landscape by maintaining an inventory of localized groups with similar issues, missions, and clientele. Some issues cannot be effectively endorsed alone; they must be done in tandem with other groups. Organizations will collaborate with organizations of similar mission, vision, and goals to expand the audience and resources around a particular issue. Inter-organizational collaboration can be a more effective tool to increase civic engagement in the policy process. These collaborations are sometimes referred to as:

coalitions, alliances, partnerships, and joint ventures. Joan Roberts describes each type of collaboration with the following definitions:

- Coalitions are “organized primarily to achieve health or public policy outcomes” (2004, 1).
- Alliances are “organized to operate joint programming initiatives” (2004, 1).
- Partnerships are “organized when two or more organizations come together to operate for a mutual benefit” (2004, 1).
- Joint ventures are “organized when two or more organizations come together to maximize efficiency and opportunity” (2004, 7).

Why would organizations choose to organize efforts with other organizations? Joan M.

Roberts is a leading expert on inter-organizational collaboration. Her research, *Alliances,*

Coalitions, and Partnerships: Building Collaborative Organizations, states that inter-

organizational collaboration provides the following benefits:

- Allows organizations to combine their knowledge and resources to add some form of added value to their existing service or product line (2004, 7);
- Mobilizes individuals and institutions to address a particular aspect of a problem and create an integrated solution (2004, 7);
- Provide an avenue where consensus building can take place (2004, 6); and,
- Create policy change on a broader scale (2004, 8).

It is the policy change on a broader scale that truly undergirds the collaborative process.

It has been proven that there is impact in numbers. Roberts contends that group collaboration occurs as a result of changes to the environment and technology (2004, 14).

The efforts of the groups will create a more effective government, increase social capital, and create more democratic organizations (Roberts, 2004, 14).

Third, nonprofits stimulate citizen participation in the political process, especially among underrepresented communities (Leroux, 2007, 411). For some organizations, citizen participation is federally mandated for board and funding compliance. In other organizations, citizen participation is strictly prohibited. The overarching goal is to ensure that citizens play an active role and have a stake in decisions that impact their local communities. Early pioneers in social welfare reform believed that mobilizing the poor politically was the key to them mitigating their circumstances (Leroux, 2007, 414). During the development of the community action network, this citizen participation was called “Maximum Feasible Participation”. According to guidance issued the Office of Economic Opportunity(OEO), “maximum feasible participation” was defined as “essential to enabling the poor to become self-sufficient, but also to insure that the community changes and improvements...are responsive or relevant to the low-income citizens to they are they addressed” (1970). It is suggested that community based organizations are better suited to engage underrepresented populations in the political process because their mission is formed around those specialized populations and interests (Leroux, 2007, 413). The OEO Instruction also went on to say that:

“...effectiveness depends heavily on its ability to work closely with, and enlist the support of, State and local public officials and agencies. No community can ever be fully responsive to the needs of the poor without the active participation and cooperation of its duly elected or appointed officials” (1970).

Granted, this guidance was issued more than 42 years ago, but the basic principle of citizen participation and public-private partnerships are still relevant today. Finally, community based organizations provide resources and a non-intimidating environment

for their clientele to learn about the political process, how to properly advocate for change, and who the decision makers are.

It is important to review why advocacy occurs and how it plays a role in the policy process. Some organizations conduct a needs assessment or community survey to ascertain the impediments that their clients are facing. However, some issues are birthed out of social disturbances that require immediate attention. An event or policy, or series of events or policies, have disenfranchised their clientele's access to needed resources. These impediments need some level of remediation from decision makers. In group formation theory, these impediments are called social disturbances. David Truman called this dynamic, the "social disturbance theory". These individuals had experienced some sort of political, social, or economic change that has caused them to lose some of their most fundamental necessities. This loss forces them to join together; if the loss becomes increasingly intense, they will create an association to represent their collective interests in a more organized manner (Walker, 1983, 391). As stated by Truman, all social disturbances die down and systematic equilibrium is reached, once high interest politics are over. It is more difficult to gain journalism coverage and the public loses interests. The ability of these groups to garner governmental attention and affect policy becomes less pronounced (MacFarland, 1991, 263). Though the concept of social disturbances is nearly 30 years old, the cyclical nature of issues and the policy process still remain the same. The activity of the organizations remains constant, but the participation of community based organizations will depend on the economic stability and collective action of the members. If the social disturbance is created by the government, community based organizations are put in a precarious situation. How do they advocate for policy

change when the decision makers are their funders? Thus presents the conundrum of community based organizations.

The Conundrums of Community Based Organizations

Community based organizations are supposed to be autonomous vehicles that can impact the political institutions and affect change. It is perceived that organizations with greater autonomy are more like to promote political activity (Leroux, 2007, 413). How does the organization maintain that autonomy when sustainability is highly dependent the group's economic position? Thus, the conundrum of community based organization is exposed—or, the relationship between their advocacy efforts and their funding streams. As mentioned by Jack Walker, these organizations became the primary vehicle for providing services and referrals to its constituents, or members. In exchange for providing these services, the government, as well as other organizations with a vested interest in community improvement, became the primary funding streams for these services. Leroux explains this relationship using Salamon's "partnership theory". Community based organizations and the government have a complementary relationship whereby the government provides resources that expands the capacity of the organizations to provide social services; and, the governments gets to capitalize on the volunteer labor, flexibility, and creative programming provided by the organizations (2077, 413). As a result, some social scientists believed that these organizations lost their capacity to actively and effectively engage in the political process because they were afraid of losing their funding. Chaves, Galaskiewicz, and Stephens added to the body of knowledge by conducting analyses on the impact of government funding on nonprofit

political activity. Their research asked the question, “Does government funding suppress, enhance, or have no effect on nonprofits’ political activity?” (2004, 294). These organizations play a critical role in the political process by advocating to the government on certain issues. Their advocacy efforts, or participation in the political process, can take many different forms like lobbying, letter writing, testifying, researching, and publishing (2004, 293). Do these organizations maintain the same autonomy to fulfill these roles if they are advocating an issue to their primary and tertiary funders? These researchers found that government funding does not suppress the organizations’ ability to advocate for issues important to them. Funding does not prevent them from fulfilling their role in the political process. They stated that “civil society’s capacity (i.e. nonprofit organizations) for political action does not seem to be reduced by its increased reliance on government funding” (Chaves, Galaskiewicz, and Stephens, 2004, 314). However, the funding makes the organizations more cautious about the types of activities that they choose to take part in. Regardless of their funding relationships, organizations play an integral role in the policy process. Organizations must understand where they fit in the policy process in order to be most successful without breaching their funding relationship.

Understanding the Policy Process

According to policy formation research, there are five basic stages to the political process: problem identification, agenda setting, advocacy and education, policy formation and implementation, and policy analysis and evaluation. Hal Colebatch stated that the “policy process is an exercise in informed problem solving” (2006, 309). The process begins with identifying an issue. According to Paul Burstein, “issue creation is a cultural and social process” (2006, 331). An individual or group experiences harm (or potential harm) and requires someone to mitigate the situation. Eventually, a group of individuals form because of the identified problems and demand resolution. Colebatch contends that policy work is the combination of “...people making choices...” and “...others engaged in them to make the best choice” (2006, 309). Once the group forms, they must create an agenda of issues and a plan of action to inform others of these issues. Through strategic planning, the group creates an agenda and a plan to advocate and educate others about the issues. Agenda setting is a pivotal step in the process because it requires the organizations to decide what issues are important, identify potential community partners, and develop a communications plan to educate others of the issues. Through this planning process, the organization must identify key stakeholders and decision makers who must be informed of how their decisions, i.e. policies, will impact the organizations and their target audiences. So, gaining access to decision makers must be included in the plan of action. Organizations will evaluate its membership for potential outlets of access and spheres of influence. Eventually they gain access to policy and decision makers who have the ability to formulate policy that would provide some level of resolution. Through this access, the organizations provide the decision makers with their best alternatives and help them

understand how reacting improperly can result in negative consequences to their constituents. Colebatch continues by stating that policy is a collective attempt to construct a solution to a problem that has been addressed (2006, 311). Based on the information provided, the decision makers will develop and implement policies that they see as the best resolution to the issues. When the policy is implemented, the governing body and stakeholders evaluate the success or failure of that policy. Unfortunately, policy implementation and evaluation are beyond the scope of this research. Additional research to follow will focus on how groups politically participate in stages two through four of the political process: agenda setting, advocacy and education, and policy formation.

Agenda Setting

Once an issue has been identified, one must take action to ensure that policies are developed that will provide the best resolution to the issue. Advocacy begins with agenda setting. Agenda setting is identified as one of the major dimensions of the political process (Andrews and Edwards, 2004, 480). In some scholarly research, agenda setting is the first step of the political process; while in other research settings, it is the second step. When Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier define the stages of the political process, problem identification and agenda setting are lumped together as the first step (1994, 176). In order to receive a governmental response, it is important the organizations create a strong foundation and set the agenda of issues that need governmental response. Agenda setting requires the organizations to identify the needs (or issues) they wish to address, and then tie those needs to activities connect to the group's mission, vision, values, and anticipated goals. Therefore, it is the result of a strategic planning process whereby the

organization's leadership and stakeholders identify key issues and develop short and long terms solutions. . Intertwined in that planning process, organizations must identify key stakeholders, community partners (if needed), and key decision makers who directly impact the political process. Agenda setting is not a silo-driven procedure, but rather takes place in a very dense and congested environment because there are numerous organizations raising awareness and making claims. Through this solution creation, advocacy becomes the vehicle by which they educate, empower, and engage their constituencies. The goal of agenda setting, as defined by Andrews and Edwards, is to "bring greater attention, raise awareness and create urgency around certain claims" (2004, 493). Not all community issues are guaranteed to garner attention; and not issues that receive attention are guaranteed to have policies passed to remedy them. Community based organizations must prioritize which issues are important and strategically time attention on those areas. More importantly, they must strategically plan who to access, how to align with like-minded organizations, and when to advocate to ensure that their claims and information are effectively received.

Agenda setting cannot be fully understood without a clear understanding of group formation because they are complementary activities. According to Colebatch, agenda setting would have occurred after problem identification, in the political process. In some instances, agenda setting may be best completed through the efforts of an effective leader or group entrepreneur, as stated by Salisbury (1969, 7). To be effective, the group may need a leader, or "entrepreneur", to streamline this process and ensure that the communication about the mission, vision, and values are carefully crafted. Actions are based on the premise that group mobilization around an issue will evoke a response from

the governing authority (Johnson, 1979, 350). There may be many organizations making the same claims simultaneously; therefore, organizational competency and sustainability becomes crucially important. The goal is to garner as much effective, positive attention as possible and make their specific issues or concerns a public priority. As a result of this mass participation among groups, extant organizations like public authorities will also mobilize to ensure that the group mobilization is controlled (Johnson, 1979, 349). With that prioritization, the organization can mobilize resources to resolve issues. It is believed that agenda setting is where most organizations have their greatest impact. Why? At this point in the policy process, organizations have identified their issues, collaborative partners, key stakeholders, important decision makers, and available resources. Through this identification, they would have completed a multi-faceted plan of action to address the issues and offer potential solutions. Here is where agenda setting is the first step toward two more important steps- gaining access to the decision making arenas and achieving favorable policies.

Gaining Access to Decision Makers

Like agenda setting, gaining access and achieving favorable policies become complementary and integral activities in the political process. The primary goal of community- based organizations is to achieve favorable policies because, as stated by Colebatch, policies are the solution. One way that they achieve these policies is through gaining access to the decision makers. Why is gaining access to decision makers important? As Colebatch indicates, “public policy is how politicians make a difference” (2006, 317). Garnering the attention and support of election officials is one of the key

pathways to policy formation. Decision makers are not always privy to the finite details of issues presented by their constituents. Therefore, direct participation in the decision making process gives the advocacy organizations a greater sense of legitimacy and recognition than merely advocating for policies (Andrews and Edwards, 2004, 495). How does an organization gain access? First, the organization should have political capital. Political capital gives the organization access to local political arenas, allows a community individual to advocate for his or her own issues, and gain attention of the local decision makers (Gittell, Ross, and Wilder, 1999, 344). Colebatch furthers this point by commenting that “policy work is less about giving well-crafted advice to a decision maker, more about the construction and maintenance of relations among stakeholders” (2006, 314). Second, the organization should have partnerships, collaborations, and identified influential stakeholders who have a vested interest in the issue. Advocating for favorable policies is pluralistic because it involves the interaction between organizations, the citizens, and the governmental institutions. MacFarland states that research implies that the general political system is a composite of hundreds of separate issue areas (1991, 261). Advocacy organizations have issue areas where they attempt to deflect their power toward individuals and groups that will meet their needs and intentions (MacFarland, 1991, 261). It is important that organizations consolidate their group formation and effectively mobilize resources to be successful at this phase of advocacy (Johnson, 1979, 349). Finally, the organization should have internal competency, or the internal professionalism and skill sets necessary to run effective operations. Organizational competency allows the organization to have continuous stable leadership and leverage

that stability to mobilize more resources (Gittell, Ross, and Wilder, 1999, 344). Why are all of the characteristics important? These actions ensure long term sustainability.

Failure to create a sustainable organization and mobilize sufficient resources prevents organizations from gaining access to the decision making arena and achieve favorable policies. When advocacy groups make claims that need attention, their goal is that they can use their position not only to participate in the decision making process, but to also ensure that their policies are implemented. According the Andrews and Edwards, achieving favorable policies is the “most visible and celebrated indication of influence in the policy process” (2004, 497). Elected officials are fully aware of this goal. It is not guaranteed that groups with common interests can successfully mobilize enough people and resources to have impact. According to Johnson, elected officials take this issue into consideration before giving into the demands of a group’s agenda because there is a possibility that the group may not be in existence long enough to reap the benefits (1979, 358). For this reason, organizations with a solid infrastructure, a long withstanding history, and substantial resources have a greater chance of being invited into the decision making process, and ultimately, achieving their favorable policies.

Policy Development

The fourth stage of the political process is policy development. For the purpose of this research “achieving favorable policies” is policy development. “Government is a very complex, random process involving the intersection of a wide range of participants with differing agenda, and policy is a concept mobilized to secure support for particular concerns”, as stated by Colebatch (2006, 312). How do community based organizations

achieve policy development? Organizations in the 1960s were able to leverage the needs and political climate of that time and achieve policy development from local governments to the federal government. How can their actions be replicated in today's society? Some have argued that the organizations of the 1960s benefited from an intervening variable of extreme social disturbances on numerous fronts. Therefore, massive response was needed to achieve "social equilibrium" as Truman would state. Before delving to the activities of today's organizations, it is important to gain a historical perspective of the 1960s.

To begin, this research will use the definition of community based organizations as provided by Jeffrey Berry. Then, this research will explore the advocacy roles that these organizations play in achieving policy development. This research seeks to understand how the advocacy efforts of today's community based organizations can be used to impact policy development. This research asks the question: "Do advocacy efforts of community based organizations achieve policy development?" This research seeks to uncover if these community based organizations have lost their ability to have the same impact in policy development as previous generations have shown. This research will focus on community based organizations whose primary purpose is something other than political activity and were formed after the 1960s.

History of Community Based Organizations

According to James Davis, democracy is operationalized by three characteristics: (1) the presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preference about alternate policies and leaders; (2) the existence of institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive; and, (3) guarantee civil liberties to all citizens in their daily lives and conduct political participation (1963, 72). Since this research does not focus on the roles of any branch of government, the second characteristic will not be discussed. Institutions are defined as:

- sets of rules that emerge from and subsequently structure social and political interactions;
- informal and decentralized;
- what happens when the rules are breached;
- self-enforcing; and,
- individuals act according their preferences or beliefs (1963, 280).

For that reason, this research focuses on community based organizations, or organizations that make public interest claims either promoting or resisting social changes that, if implemented, would conflict with social, political, and economic interests or values of other constituencies or groups, as defined by Andrews and Edwards. At times, these organizations find it necessary to collaborate with other likeminded organizations to expand its reach and impact-hence inter-organizational collaboration becomes of paramount importance.

During the 1960s, organizations were feverishly forming to fight poverty, civil rights, and social injustice that many people were experiencing. Many communities, particularly low income and minorities, were unable to access the political institutions

and were negated the opportunity to enjoy their basic civil liberties. People were feeling deprived and frustrated because they lacked the economic equity and social justice that only a few, it seemed, had the opportunity to experience. Through this loss and intensifying frustration as stated by Truman, groups of individuals began to organize all over America. Not only did they organize, they created formal advocacy organizations to ensure that their presence was known, heard and institutionally sound. Many of them legally formalized in the nonprofit advocacy organizations to ensure that they had the legal infrastructure for future endeavors. Some groups organized to ensure that all groups were created equal, while others formed to ensure that only a few enjoyed the fruits of social justice and economic freedom. These two social disturbances created the perfect storm that would spark the most prolific governmental response in American history—the War on Poverty and the Civil Rights Movement.

Throughout history, the federal government has worked intensely to provide viable solutions to the poor conditions identified in many American communities. Some would argue that the first institutionalized response to the poor began with the New Deal programs under President Roosevelt. Alice O'Connor states that the New Deal programs in housing and social welfare laid the foundation for federal aid to declining communities (274). As anti-poverty assistance continued in the 1950s and 1960s, nearly 22.4 percent of Americans lived in impoverished conditions—that is one in every five people were poor (Billiteri, 2009, 10). Unemployment was hovering between six and seven percent in the 1960s; and, people began looking for a more structured unemployment program to fight the downward spiral of the economy (O'Connor, 275). These conditions prompted Michael Harrington to expose the truth in a book that opened America's eyes to a society

of poverty that existed in every community. Michael Harrington's *The Other America* cast a spotlight on America's "secret society of poverty" and brought strong attention to a need for better intervention for the poor (Billiteri, 2009, 10). Around the same time, minorities, particularly African Americans, were beginning to fight for the social justice so deserving of them as American citizens. Separate, but equal, was no longer acceptable and there was a call for the government to respond and to provide them with the same, equal rights that white Americans had enjoyed since the formation of the United States of America.

Some have argued that the first real governmentally structured program for community revitalization took place under President Lyndon B. Johnson. When President Johnson created the "Great Society", he struck at the hearts of blighted urban, suburban and rural communities in need of a structured governmental policy and funding to fight the everlasting war. According to Brent Smith, "Since the beginning of the Great Society initiatives under President Johnson, a myriad public and publicly sponsored nonprofit programs have addressed the needs of the urban disadvantaged" (2003, 181). From these needs, community action and development began. The community based organization was born. Through this War on Poverty to relieve the ails of the poor, numerous social welfare programs were created to ensure economic equity in housing, education, transportation, health care, consumer protection and civil rights (Walker, 1983, 397)—all of the basic necessities for a viable life. Community development was structured as a strategic collaboration between the government, private industry and community based organizations. All three parties work in tandem to ensure that the underprivileged were socially represented, given access increased access to governmental resources and had the

economic backing through private industry to ensure their sustainability long term. More importantly, these disadvantaged persons were given the opportunity to become active participants in their revitalization—a “bottom up” approach to government. The formation of community based organizations was essential to ensuring that the interests of the underprivileged were properly advocated and well represented. With the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the “maximum feasible participation” of groups resulted from attempts to originate “autonomous and self-managed organizations” for the poor so that they could exert substantial influence over the poverty program (Berry, 1978, 380). This requirement ensures that the affected groups are active participants in the political process.

In 1967, Roy Innis and the Congress of Racial Equality proposed the Community Self-Determination Bill to assist with the community development strategies in low income communities. It was one of the first bills presented to Congress by a black organization. The bill received bi-partisan support. According to the bill, areas in need of community are typically low income, plagued with disinvestment, and lacked access to quality resources and jobs. The poor in these areas have been stripped of their dignity and have resentment toward the social service system (Harvard Law Review, 1969, 644). The poor needed a community structure that allowed them to take active participation in the process of revitalizing their communities so that they did not have resentment toward the changes and felt further stripped of their dignity. According to the Community Self-Determination Bill, there were four basic tenets to this strategic community development approach:

- Help the poor play a more meaningful and rewarding role in building a better, stronger and more confident America

- Help the poor achieve gainful employment
- Obtain ownership and control of resource allocation in their neighborhoods
- Reinforce the notion of local self-help with an undue interference from local policy (Harvard Law Review, 1969, 644)

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, there was a great influx of community based organizations fighting for the interests of the poor. MacFarland states that corporate groups became less effective because there was increased government regulation and countervailing groups against corporations inhibited activity (1991, 265). More importantly, the reform clock was set for that time period for many issue areas like Civil Rights, economic stability of the poor, and government regulation for corporations. The community based organizations became a mechanism to strengthen the social capital in troubled neighborhoods (Dreier, 2007, 14). According to Walker, government agencies and foundations began to use the voluntary and community organizations as service providers to the poor (1983, 397). As a result, these organizations were able to harness the attention of legislative officials and gain attention on their agendas. They were social service providers who understood policy. They were able to mobilize political participation and gain meaningful, not just representative, policy development. This research will focus on three types of community based organizations that arose during this time period: community action agencies, community development corporations, and voluntary member associations.

Community Action Agencies

Community action agencies are public and private nonprofit organizations that were established through the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The goal of these agencies were to assist low income client strive toward self-sufficiency. According to OEO Instruction on the mission of community action, these organizations were created to:

“to stimulate a better focusing of all available local, State, private, and Federal resources upon the goal of enabling low-income families, and low-income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain skills, knowledge, and motivations and secure the opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient” (1970).

To carry out their mission effectively, their foundation must be based in public-private partnerships that stimulate citizen participation among their clientele. Their target populations are households up to about 150 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$33,525 for a household of four members based on 2010 federal poverty guidelines. Many of these clients have barriers that have prevented them from living a stable lifestyle. Barriers include education, employment, legal issues, health, mental disabilities, and social factors. According to the Community Action Partnership, community action agencies provide services to 96 percent of the nation’s counties. The network of community action agencies have grown to more than 1,000 organizations serving the poor in every state and Puerto Rico. Nationally, community action agencies receive policy information from two national associations: The Community Action Partnership and National Community Action Foundation. Locally, the agencies are connected to a state association that works as a liaison between policy makers and their state offices.

According to the Community Services Block Grant of 1998, these organizations are required to have their Board of Directors composed as followed: at least one third comprised of low income clients, exactly one third comprised of public officials (or officially designee), and up to one third comprised of the private sector. This requirement meets the “maximum feasible participation” requirement mentioned from the OEO Instruction in 1970. This Board composition ensures that community action is a collaborative effort between the three primary components of the community: the public sector, private sector, and the people. It can be argued that the bulk of community action funding is received through federal block grants. As a result of this primary funding streams, these agencies have been touted as federally funded service providers, as opposed to community based organizations.

Community Development Corporations

Community development corporations are private nonprofit organizations that were established to provide comprehensive community development. Like community action agencies, this integrated approach incorporated the participation of the community, the private sector, and the government-local, state, and federal. Community development corporations ensure that localized needs are met and that the local residents play a participatory role in the process. Also like community action agencies, a substantial portion of their revenue streams are government funded in many instances. Unlike community action agencies who primarily focus on social service delivery, community development corporations, commonly referred to as CDCs, focus on community planning, organizing, infrastructure development, and advocacy. The goal of CDCs is to

create and maintain sustainable communities. Cities have used the CDC model as community based work engines to research the needs of a concentrated area, collaborate with other organizations to strategize solutions, and coordinate the revitalization process. Because CDCs tend to primarily focus on infrastructure, CDCs will work in tandem with community action agencies, neighborhood associations, and other community based organizations to address the issues and concerns of its constituents.

There has been a historical evolution of the model and function of the CDC in local communities. In “Community Development Corporations: Critical Factors that Influence Success”, Gittell and Wilder stated that the first generation of CDCs were political advocacy organizations birthed out of the civil rights and religious movements (1999, 342). There were primarily funded by the Ford Foundation’s Gray Areas Program and the Special Impact Program during the War on Poverty Era (Gittell and Wilder, 1999, 342). The goals of these efforts were to persuade the federal government to set aside funds for low income housing developments. Over 40 years later, the basic tenets of the Community Self-Determination Bill still hold true in the community development process. Through the use of the community development corporation, rehabilitation is a collaboration rather than a dictatorship. According to researchers on this delegation authority, there has been “tacit acceptance of federal devolution and the ascendancy of community based strategies” (Gittell and Wilder, 1999, 341). The CDC model is being recognized as the sustainable model of community development.

Voluntary Member Associations

Not every organization forms to serve a specific geographic area and provide a specific service. Some organizations form to ensure and protect the rights and privileges of civil society. As stated by Sobieraj and White, “theorists of civil society and democracy have pointed to voluntary associations as the sources of social solidarity, as collaborations of citizens maximizing their democratic power, and as indispensable counterweights to potential abuses of state power” (2004, 740). These organizations may primarily socially or typically apolitical in nature. They are less focused on the political process, but more focused on issue identification and mobilizing resources. Their ultimate goal is to ensure that fundamental principles of civil society are protected. Formation of these organizations goes back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Much of the work completed by Alex de Tocqueville focused on the activities generated by voluntary member associations. According to Tocqueville, these organizations were able to counterbalance state power because they act and form on the basis of a shared self-interest and work to shift public opinion (Sobieraj and White, 2004, 741). Today, these organizations take many shapes, forms, sizes, and financial budgets. They may be as information as a group of women hosting monthly book club meetings to multi-million dollar associations preserving human rights. Some organizations have professional affiliations whose primary purpose is to lobby government for institutional change that will impact their professional field. This research will focus on voluntary member associations whose primary mission is not professional or political in nature. It is important to carefully define the activities of these organizations.

The Case Analyses of Policy Advocacy

The Methodology for the Case Analyses

What activities should these groups engage in to achieve policy development?

This research will review the advocacy efforts of three community based organizations in Indiana. In each case analysis, the goal is to see if the advocacy activities achieved policy development. Based on the information gleaned from the literature review, the advocacy efforts will be defined by agenda setting, advocacy efforts, and gaining access to decision making arena. The activities may include, but not limited to: conducting strategic planning sessions, creating a public policy agenda, hosting community meetings, and publishing articles in local media outlets. The goal is to assess how the organizations achieved favorable policies through policy development by decision makers. Policy development occurs when the organization proposes a policy to elected officials, or subsequent governing body with authority to make a final determination, that would alleviate an identified problem. This research asks: “Do advocacy efforts of community based organizations achieve policy development?” The research method will be a case analysis of three community based organizations that do not have a primary staff person designated to conduct public policy or advocacy activities.

The case analysis was based on a step process. Step one was the identification of three organizations who met at least two of the following characteristics: 1) met the definition of community based organization, as explained by Berry; 2) had 30 years of history or service to a particular demographic; and 3) conducted some level of advocacy as a part of their agency operations. Step two included a review of public information materials about the organization. The public information materials included, but limited

to: the website, marketing plans, strategic plan, and communications plans (if available). Step three included an analysis of the organization's annual report, if available. The annual report analysis included the review of listed funding streams, programs and services offered, and a calculation of what percentage of total revenue is government funded. Step four included an organizational analysis. Based on the information provided, each organization was reviewed based on how it documented the process for issue identification, strategic planning, agenda setting, gaining access to decision makers, and achievement of policy development. If information provided in Steps three and four were unclear or ambiguous, informal communication was made to clarify public information. Step five included an analysis of the findings and implications.

Case Analysis 1: Indiana Youth Services Association, Inc.

Established in 1973, the Indiana Youth Services Association Inc. (IYSA) IYSA is membership association comprised of youth service bureaus in 52 counties throughout the state of Indiana. IYSA is tiered membership base, whereby the youth service bureaus provide the community based programming and IYSA provides the expertise, research, advocacy, and policy development. Given its organizational structure, IYSA would be considered a hybrid between a community based and voluntary membership association. The mission statement is "to advocate for the children and families of Indiana by enhancing its members' ability to implement the core roles of youth advocacy, delinquency prevention, information and referral services, and community education". This organization strives to serve vulnerable youth and families and provide positive youth development in their local communities. As stated in the organization's mission statement, the organization has streamlined its activities to four target areas that are

designated by state statute: Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, Information and Referral Services, Community Education, and Advocacy for Youth. IYSA not only advocates for the resources needed to assist vulnerable youth, but it also advocates local and state elected officials about policies that affect the youth's ability to receive adequate services. According to the organization's only published Annual Report, IYSA received \$424,652 in funding, of which \$60,060 is government funding. IYSA is governed by a 20-member Board of Directors. The Board of Directors reflect a cross section of the various sectors that would impact a child's life including elected officials, local college and university offices, representatives from the Youth Service Bureaus, media representatives, attorneys, and other funding nonprofit organizations. IYSA has paid staff, including an executive director and a paid staff person that focuses on tracking and updating the organization and Board on public policy issues. Public policy advocacy is major activity of the Board of Directors.

Setting the policy agenda is an integral part of the organization's strategic planning. The public policy process begins with participating in the policy meetings conducted by the Children's Coalition of Indiana. From these meetings, the organization is better able to gauge the issues and potential legislation that will affect all of the youth development organizations. Then, the organization conducts a Summer Legislative Summit where the Board of Directors and the local Youth Service Bureaus discuss the issues in their local areas and bring potential legislation to the attention of the Board of Directors. From these meetings, the Board of Directors creates a public policy agenda. As stated in the organization's strategic plan, the organization then creates a communication

plan that ensures that the issues outlined in the public policy agenda receive the maximum attention.

IYSA uses multiple methods to gain access to decision making authorities. First, the communications plan outlines the methods by which the organization will reach its target audience. The communications plan includes, but is not limited to, releasing issue briefs, writing editorials in local newspapers, meeting with elected officials, and holding local town hall meetings about the issues identified in the policy agenda. Second, the organization assists local elected officials in writing legislation that will be presented in the coming session. To ensure that the legislation represents the needs of the disadvantaged youth, the organization and the elected officials will create a product that will be presented in the next session. Third, the paid staff at the local Youth Service Bureaus, as well as the staff at the IYSA office, meet with the elected officials in their areas to discuss the issues concerned disadvantaged youth. Fourth and most important, the organization ensures that the Board of Directors has an elected official as apart of the membership. There is no better way to gain access to the legislative process than to have a member of the legislature as a member of the organization's governing body. All of these methods may occur simultaneously to help it achieve favorable policies. How is this process applied to actual issues?

Research was released the exposed the severity of problems that occur when youth decide to run away from home and are forced to return to unstable living situations. They are commonly referred to as "unattached youth". The issue was then discussed at the annual policy meeting held by the Children's Coalition of Indiana and during the Legislative Summer Sessions conducted by IYSA. It was decided that the organization

needed to take draft and promote legislation that would assist the Youth Service Bureaus with handling runaways and unattached youth in Indiana. IYSA felt so strongly about the need for a governmental response on the issue that the organization partnered with a few state legislators to draft legislation that would be presented in the coming session. In 2007, the Indiana State Legislature proposed the legislation regarding unattached youth that would directly impact the services provided by the local youth services bureaus as well as the services provided by IYSA. IYSA believed that the Indiana State Legislature needed to define the term “unattached youth” in the state’s statute, form a commission to research the severity of runaway and unattached youth, and create a formal process for handling youth that have run away from their homes. The identified outcome was to ensure passage of the legislation drafted the organization about unattached and runaway youth.

Once the legislation was completed, IYSA implemented its communication strategy to increase awareness about the issues surrounding runaway and unattached youth. To begin, the organization released several position briefs that gave a clear picture of the impact this issue was having on Indiana’s youth. Each brief included a summary of the issue, presented the quantitative impact in Indiana, proposed solutions to the problem, and how the Indiana State Legislature should respond. The Executive Director published editorials in the *Indianapolis Star*, the city’s newspaper, about the issue. The staff, the Board, and the local Youth Service Bureaus testified before the Indiana State Legislative Committees about the issue and the proposed legislation. Because the organization had a state senator as a member of the Board, IYSA was able to leverage its Board membership to gain greater access to other legislators and host informal meetings, sessions, and

forums to discuss the impact this legislation would have on Indiana's youth. During the conference committee session, some of the language and principles to the original draft were changed to ensure that both parties could agree to the terms being proposed, but the changes were not so drastic that IYSA would not support the legislation. Through a coordinated effort by the organization, the legislation regarding unattached youth was passed in the 2007 Legislative session.

Case Analysis 2: Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation

Established in 1965 during the era of the Equal Opportunity Act, Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corporation (HUEDC) is one of the 23 community action agencies in Indiana and is designated by the Governor of Indiana to serve Lawrence, Martin, Orange, and Washington counties. This agency is also designated as the Area 15 Agency on Aging and Disability Services for those same counties. This mission statement is to: "to plan, implement or cause to be implemented, and provide comprehensive services to the poor, elderly, and disabled". HUEDC is a federally funded social service agency that strives to alleviate the conditions of poverty by providing access to health care and social services that will lead its clients toward self-sufficiency. This organization provides services in the following areas: Aging, Children's Services, Community Services, Home Health Care and Hospice, and Housing and Family Services. According to the 2011 Annual Report, the agency received \$24,103,056 in federal, state, local, and private funding. The Board of Directors is a cross section of the area's public officials, private industry leaders, and community residents. Federal statute requires that Board of Directors represent the public-private collaboration between all partners of the community action network.

Elimination of poverty is the agency's primary focus. As required by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act, all community action agencies are required to complete a community needs assessment every three years and a community action plan (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Information Memorandum 49). Because of this requirement, the state's lead agency requires that agencies complete the community action plan annually to receive funds. The needs assessments ensure that the agencies are abreast of the changes to the conditions of poverty within their service territory, and the community action plans ensure that the agencies have developed programs that will offer some form of remedy. Every three years, the state's lead agency, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, designated to oversee CSBG funds contracts with the Indiana Community Action Association to ensure that community needs assessments are developed for each agency. After the needs assessments are development and disbursed, each agency conducts strategic planning to ensure that its programs meet the needs identified in the assessment. All strategic planning is conducted by the agency's Board of Directors and focuses on creating innovative programs and partnerships that will eliminate poverty and drive its clients toward self-sufficiency. Those strategic initiatives are then passed along to the agency's senior management team. The agency's senior management sets the agenda, develops programs and initiatives, and creates a communication strategy. That information is sent to the Board for approval, as needed. This agency has dedicated a department to strategic development and consulting services. According to the 2011 Annual Report, the strategic development team identified health issues such as tobacco cessation and health center management as two primary focus areas.

Advocating for public policy is a bit of a conundrum for community action agencies. Accessibility to elected officials is an integral part of the agency's activities, partly because state and local government officials are important stakeholders when serving low-income communities. As required by the CSBG Act and Indiana Code, the agency must have a tripartite board, of which one third is represented by public (elected) officials or their representatives. Public officials have the option to serve as members of the Board or appoint someone to represent them. Though they have an easier access to elected officials, advocating for policy or program changes can be challenging, since they may be appealing to their primary or secondary funders in most cases. Only in extreme local matters does the agency take a position to advocate for or against public policy.

Second, the agency is a part of the statewide community action network, and much of the network's advocacy efforts take place through the state association's staff. If there are issues of extreme importance, the network can implore the association staff to advocate on their behalf. Finally, interpretation of the Internal Revenue Service's code for political activities of nonprofits inhibits the agency's capacity to be a policy advocate. Many nonprofits and social service feel that they cannot lobby elected officials about issues. This interpretation about political activity is commonly held through the community action network. Therefore this agency, like many community action agencies, advocates for issues only when there is substantial research and impact to justify the agency's intervention in policy matters. However, this agency created an advisory board and a community coalition, comprised of non-HUEDC board members, to provide community feedback on issues identified in the needs assessment.

Through agency research and strategic planning, tobacco cessation and awareness is one of the many important community issues that have required agency intervention. Increasing the community's education and awareness about the impact of tobacco is crucially to low-income communities. Therefore, agency continuously seeks funding to increase its revenue around the issue. In 2011, HUEDC was awarded tobacco prevention and cessation grants from the Indiana State Department of Health for Daviess, Lawrence, and Orange counties. Please note that Daviess county is not a part of the agency's designated territory, but funding was designated to this agency for this particular county. The funding source, or the Indiana State Department of Health, became an integral partner in this policy initiative through intervention between its local Tobacco and Prevention Office and the agency. This office had already researched counties and school systems without tobacco fee policies. The funder was able to direct the agency with the best fit for this advocacy campaign. As a result of the research, the local office had already developed a work plan. The agency collaborated with the local office to develop an agenda and communication strategy to collaborate and educate potential local partners.

The local Tobacco and Prevention Office identified that the Paoli Community School system did not have a tobacco free policy for its schools. Because this school system was within HUEDC's service territory, it became the perfect candidate for the tobacco free policy campaign. The agency and the local office created a multi-faceted communications plan to increasing awareness around the issues. First, they collaborated with other like-minded organizations such as the American Lung Association and other cancer prevention groups. These collaborations provided the agency with a broader base of support and diversity in smoking statistics. Second, the agency and the local office

formed community coalitions that consisted of agency staff, local and state office staff, school board members, and local citizens who supported the tobacco free policy. Their primary responsibility was to testify or give presentations about the tobacco free policy proposal at the local town hall, school board, and community meetings. Third, the agency hosted town hall and community events to raise awareness about the effects of tobacco products and the importance of tobacco free policies in schools. The agency conducted meetings with the mayor, city council members, insurance members, business owners, cessation specialists, school board members, and health care providers. Finally, the agency created a communications plan that included the dissemination of pamphlets and brochures to surrounding communities.

Presentations at the meetings prompted the school board to form a committee and conduct a feasibility study about the impact of the policy change. The committee consisted of agency staff, local office staff, the school's principal, the superintendent, and a school board member. The committee concluded that it had enough data and support to propose a policy change to the full school board. The committee drafted the policy and presented it to the full school board. While the committee was drafting the policy, members of the community coalition continued to advocate the policy change and its impact to school board members. The result was the institution of tobacco free policies for the Paoli Community Schools. After achieving policy development, the Paoli Community Schools were awarded the Gary Sandifur Award for their smoke free campus policy.

Case Analysis 3: National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Indianapolis Chapter, Inc.

Established in 1981, the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. (NCBW).

NCBW is a voluntary member association who was founded to advocate for the economic welfare of women of color. The mission statement of the Indianapolis Chapter, similar to the national association, is to “advocate on behalf of women of color through national and local actions and strategic alliances that promotes its national and international agendas on leadership development and on gender equity in health, education and economic development”. NCBW is a tiered membership association, whereby there is a national office that handles the fund development, strategic planning, marketing, and communications while the local, city-wide chapters provide the community based programming and advocacy. Within a few months of the creation of the national association, the Indianapolis Chapter was formed as an immediate outgrowth. Many of the founding members of this organization came from Indiana and believed in the need for the organization to promote the sociopolitical and economic development of women of color. Since its inception, the Indianapolis Chapter has remained one of the strongest chapters in the network in the area of advocating for women’s issues. The national president of the association resides in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Indianapolis Chapter has been known for its grassroots approach to advocacy and communication for issues like HIV/AIDS Awareness and teen pregnancy prevention.

At the national office, the staff and Board of Directors are a combination of paid staff and volunteers from the local chapters. Due to the exclusivity of membership, there are no external members within this network of people. At the local level, there is no paid staff, nor is the Board of Directors comprised of members external to the organization. It

is grassroots style organization, where by all participants are volunteers who have joined by invitation and have paid membership into the organization. In 2009, the organization's roster was comprised of 55 active, paid members, with an annual budget of approximately \$55,000, none of which is government funding. The Board of Directors is comprised of internal members who are elected by the membership at the annual meeting and serve two-year terms. There is no executive director; instead, a new president is elected every two years. The organization focuses on five program areas that impact the lives of women of color: Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Community Affairs, Personal and Professional Development, and Education. Women's issues are broad and far reaching; therefore, the organization's target program areas are broad, far reaching, and all encompassing.

For this voluntary member association, strategic planning is a slightly different process. There is no "strategic plan" in the traditional sense of service-oriented organizations. Instead, there is a public policy agenda. The public policy agenda is a collaborative effort between the national office and the local chapter. The national office creates a list of issue areas that affect women of color; then, all chapters create advocacy campaigns around those issues. For example, the current public policy agenda has focused on HIV/AIDS awareness, teen pregnancy, numerous health issues that affect the minority communities, and women's economic development. Once these issues were identified at the national association, the Indianapolis Chapter, like the other local chapters, incorporates these issues into its local activities. The Indianapolis Chapter does not create a formal public policy agenda to allow flexibility as new issues arise. Because of the organization's mission and purpose, community decision makers will present

issues and policy ideas to the organization to gain feedback or suggestions. Therefore, issue identification and agenda setting becomes a very fluid process. Most of the advocacy issues and activities are identified and coordinated through the Community Affairs committee. Community Affairs and Public Policy are often interchangeable in this network of chapters. For some areas, community affairs are an inter-collaboration between the public and private sectors. In other areas, public policy strictly focuses on policies that are developed by governmental institutions. In Indianapolis, Community Affairs is the desired approach for advocacy. In the past, this committee has hosted town hall meetings, candidate forums for highly contested local elections, letter and email campaigns, and collaborated with other advocacy organizations to host community forums to discuss solutions to local issues.

Gaining access to the decision making authorities is a coordinated effort through the membership. The membership intake process targets women with social, political, and economic capital who have their own particular spheres of influence and can quickly mobilize needed resources. Because there is no paid staff, the membership intake process becomes an important tactic for bringing elected officials and other community decision makers into the fold of the membership. Since the organization is nonpartisan, all issues are vetted by both sides of the party lines to ensure neutrality. By default, the advocacy and awareness reaches a broader audience. Often times, the goal of this organization is not policy development, but rather providing an issue-based approach to communication. The goal is to make decision makers more aware of the implications of potential policies, especially if those policies adversely affect communities of color.

In 2009, the city of Indianapolis presented a referendum to remodel the one of city's oldest hospitals, the Health and Hospital Corporation known as Wishard Hospital. The Health and Hospital Corporation mailed marketing materials to all community based organizations within Indianapolis and surrounding areas to gauge its impact on local residents. Referendums must be passed by the residents to be effective. The Corporation believed that this feedback was most important to its passage. The Corporation conducted a presentation before the Chapter's membership during a general membership meeting and requested the organization's assistance in increasing awareness about the referendum to communities of color, given the Chapter's history of advocacy and educational awareness on health issues. Advocacy and awareness were needed to ensure that the hospital's referendum was passed. Of the many organizations advocating for the referendum, the Indianapolis Chapter engaged in an advocacy campaign to ensure that people understood the importance of voting for the issue.

The identified outcome was to ensure passage of the Wishard Referendum. To begin, the organization hosted discussion sessions, forums, and meetings to allow the hospital to explain to the membership why the referendum was being proposed. At each session, each member was given education materials so that she would be eloquent in framing the issue for others. Then the organization conducted a mail campaign whereby hundreds of letters were mailed to citizens about the importance of voting for the reference in the November 2009 election. A position brief was posted on the organization's website, and an email campaign followed to ensure that an electronic message was ongoing. The Indianapolis Chapter collaborated with similar organizations to host community meetings about the referendum and expanded the hospital's reach in

increasing awareness about the referendum's passage. In November 2009, the Wishard Hospital referendum was passed in the city of Indianapolis.

Implications of the Case Analyses

This research questioned if the advocacy efforts of community based organizations would achieve policy development. In all three case analyses, the advocacy efforts of the organizations achieved policy development in some capacity. It can be deduced that policy development was the culmination of strategic planning, agenda setting, gaining access to decision makers, and increasing education and awareness to the community about an issue. One major finding from the case analysis was that the agency should have the policy proposal drafted, with corresponding data analysis, and use this information to advocate for its position. By formulating the policy, the organization has the leverage to create more effective organizational collaborations. It was deduced that organizational collaborations can be diverse and broaden the range of support around the particular issue. The collaborative bodies can expand the organization's position on the issue by diversifying the impact of the policy on different communities. Second, and more importantly, the collaborations can increase resources-financial, educational, political, and social. These collaborations can offer a greater range of access to policy makers.

Strategic Planning and Agenda Setting

Strategic planning and agenda setting are identified as the most important steps of the political process for community based organizations. Often times, it is through this strategic planning process that major issues are identified and tied to key stakeholders. This process must be handled by key leadership of the organization. The goal is to set forth a plan that ties back to the mission, vision, and values of the organization. However,

issue identification and agenda setting must be complementary activities. Scholarly research states that issue identification must take place before agenda setting and advocacy can begin. However, the case analyses presented an interesting finding. Issue identification occurs in the strategic planning process or as the result of a community needs assessment. Scholarly literature indicated that issue identification was the primary reason for the organization's creation in the first place. But for long-term organizational sustainability, issue identification must be an ongoing process that is directly linked to the strategic planning and agenda setting activities. For example, IYSA conducted strategic planning and then coordinated with local legislators about their needs assessments and issue identification. Sometimes issue identification can be driven by the funding source. Funders may not have the flexibility to stage grassroots campaigns for particular issues, but are willing to fund them. This process eliminates the conundrum that some social service agencies face when advocating for policy changes. In this instance, tobacco prevention was driven by the Indiana State Department of Health, through its grant award.

Gaining Access to Policy Makers

Public policy research indicated that gaining access to policy makers is a crucial portion of the policy development. For this step to be most beneficial, the agency must have an effective and thorough communications plan in place. This plan should be a multi-faceted approach and should include strategic positions for community partners. Effective use of community partners can send a stronger message, increase access to elected officials, and diversify the agency's reach and approach to advocating for the policy. For example, HUEDC developed a communication's strategy that included the

creation of an advisory council that served as ambassadors at local meetings. While the feasibility study was being completed, the council continued to educate school board members and the community about the importance and impact of the policy change. The creation of the advisory council did more than serve as a communication tool. It served as a way to gain access, get buy-in, and involve local decision makers in the process.

Second, it is important that organizations properly interpret the IRS's guidelines on lobbying and political activity. All organizations advocate for issues, seek to build relationships with policy makers who have the capacity to provide issue resolution, and educate the general public about ways to get involved in the policy process. The goal is to educate and increase awareness about issues and propose remedies, not endorse a particular political party or instruct elected officials how to vote. One of the major conundrums of community based organizations is ensuring their activities maintain their obligations as not-for-profit organization with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Organizations have the option to file for not-for-profit status with the IRS and receive tax exemption on federal, and sometimes state, tax liabilities when purchasing goods and services. In exchange for the tax exemption, the IRS has very strict guidelines about the political activity. This tax exemption restrains their capacity to participate in the policy process. According to Salamon, there are 27 types of nonprofits, as defined by the IRS, which makes the term "nonprofit" an imprecise term" (Berry, 2005, 569). Tax exemption is a voluntary step; it is not required by the IRS. Because not for profit corporations are not required to file for a 501 (c) 3 status, they have the option to file other types of tax exemptions with fewer prohibitions on political activity. Community development corporations and community action agencies, or public interest groups who strive to

provide a public benefit service, tend to find for the 501 (c) 3 status because it allows them the greater benefit for the types of programs and services they offers. Social welfare organizations, business leagues, voluntary member associations, and labor organizations may apply for a 501 (c) 4, 501 (c) 5, 501 (c) 6, or 501 (c) 7 statuses, which allows greater leniency with lobbying and endorsement types of activities. Depending on the status, organizations can show unlimited support for or against a political candidate or issue so long as those activities are the primary purpose of the organization.

What types of advocacy efforts are restricted by the IRS? Advocacy that seeks to influence the voting patterns of elected officials is considered lobbying. Lobbying is strictly prohibited to 501(c) 3 organizations. The IRS defines legislation as “an action taken by Congress, any state legislature, any local council, or similar governing body with respect to bills, acts, resolutions, or other similar items”. Organizations may engage in “some” lobbying that increases awareness around an issue, but excessive lobbying will risk the organization’s tax exempt status. According to Berry, this language is a principle means of regulating the political activity of nonprofits, but is ambiguous about defining the limit of allowable legislative advocacy (2005, 570). When organizations choose to host a town hall forum or conduct a letter writing campaign, these activities are permissible as long as they do not drive the primary activities of the agency, nor seek to change the way an elected official votes on a policy. The IRS also strictly prohibits them from engaging in any partisan activities. Endorsing a candidate or political party is not allowable. However, nonprofits may “hold forums, sponsor debates, register voters, and invite candidates to come to their offices”, but all of these activities must remain nonpartisan in nature. As stated by Berry, many nonprofits, especially social and human

service agencies, may refrain from these types of activities for fear that they may run into issues with the IRS at a later time (Berry, 2005, 571). Therefore, it is important for community based organizations to understand the IRS regulations, define what types of activities will be conducted by their organizations, and confirm that those activities meet federal guidelines.

Conclusion

Policy development was defined as “occurring when the organization proposes a policy to elected officials, or subsequent governing body with authority to make a final determination, that would alleviate an identified problem.” This portion of the policy process is an area of opportunity for scholarly researchers who study interest groups and political participation. Achieving policy development is not an activity that happens in silo. It is the culmination of the various activities aforementioned.

First, strategic planning is the most important step of the process. The strategic plan will identify areas of opportunity and community issues. It is the road map for all of the organization’s activities. Organizations can plan for a single year or for multiple years. The plan will identify the organization’s stance on issues, what resolutions seem most feasible, and most importantly, provide a basis for identifying key decision makers and stakeholders in the community. Second, the plan will lay the foundation for developing the public policy agenda, resource development, and communications plan. This study indicated that the major reasons for aggregated political participation were the increased awareness, access to more resources, and increased communication to a diverse community pool.

The most important aspect of the public policy agenda is to identify issues and propose resolutions. This study identified that proposing resolutions makes the advocacy process easier and more effective. The organizations should build relationships with community decision makers who can provide a positive impact to the organization’s public policy agenda and who will use their proposals as a basis for policy development. Relationship building should occur in two ways: allow the decision makers to serve in a

leadership capacity with the organization or serve as subject matter experts on particular policies. First, this study indicated that a more tangible way to develop a relationship is to offer the decision maker a leadership role on the organization's Board of Directors or policy council. This leadership role allows the decision maker access to information about their constituents as well as become more informed about the issues that impact their communities. Second, the organization should establish itself as a subject matter expert on particular issues, including the development of policies that will resolve community issues. The communications plan should include talking points for the decision makers about the issues and their impact. As decision makers, their legacy hinges on how well they can provide a positive impact to their constituents. Those talking points should include how the issues and proposed resolutions will impact the decision makers either positively or negatively.

Finally, the organizations should ensure that they maintain a role in the policy development process after they have built the connection with decision makers. By becoming a part of the process, the organizations can become a subject matter expert about the potential impact that the policies may have as well as serve as ambassadors to educate constituents. Often times, decision makers have a limited amount of time to do extensive research about particular issues. Serving as a subject matter expert gives the organization greater exposure to the policy development process and a voice at the table when decisions are made. Whatever approach these organizations choose to use, they should ensure that their activities do not breach their obligations as IRS- certified not-for-profit corporations. Some subject matter experts may choose to use the role of lobbyists, while others may choose a less aggressive approach as advisors. As lobbyists, they would

breach their 501 (c) 3 tax exemption and lose financial benefits. That status is most beneficial to public service groups like community development corporations and community action agencies. Their role may be better suited as advisors. In contrast, voluntary member associations, with 501 (c) 7 statuses, may choose the more aggressive route as lobbyists because it will reap greater benefits to the stature of their organizations long-term.

In this economy, it is important that organizations ensure that they have the maximum capacity available to serve their clientele. They are not operating in silo. They are competing with organizations of similar size, funding, clientele, mission, and access. Sometimes they are able to collaborate, but often times they work alone. Systemic change can be the best option for ensuring that they have safe communities. Systemic change requires public policy advocacy. To be effective public policy advocates, community based organizations should engage in the following activities: strategic planning, set a public policy agenda, and relationship building. These activities must be driven by the agency's leadership and must be seen as an integral part of the organization's overall growth and development. It ensures that they are subject matter experts about local issues. If done properly, these activities can position the organizations as the primary point of contact when local decision makers need an unbiased opinion on a particular policy. Most importantly, these activities ensure long-term sustainability. Planning and mediation require constant research and activity on the part of the community based organization. Though these organizations are primarily government funded, continual issue identification opens opportunities for more funding. If these organizations understand the need and have the capacity to implement the solution, local governments

and funders may be more inclined to import more resources to that organization, and ultimately the community. Advocacy becomes a perpetual cycle that maintains these organizations as the cornerstone of their local communities.

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