

Business Acumen Learning Collaborative Spotlight

Texas

In 2016, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) sought to expand the readiness of community-based aging and disability organizations (CBO) for contracting with integrated care entities, and prepare state and community-based aging and disability organizations to be active stakeholders and partners in the development and implementation of integrated care systems. In response to this request and with funding from ACL, ADvancing States in partnership with national aging and disability organizations¹ convened the Business Acumen Learning Collaborative throughout 2017 – 2019 as one element in this important work.

After a national search, five state teams (Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York and Texas) were selected to represent the Business Acumen Learning Collaborative. Each state team included representatives from state agencies, community-based organizations (CBO²) serving persons with disabilities, integrated healthcare entities and other organizations. Throughout their time together, each team worked together to develop and implement business-related strategies to state-specific challenges to integrating long term services and supports (LTSS) and healthcare services, with the ultimate goal to develop the business acumen of disability-CBOs in their state. In addition to their state-specific work and cross-state sharing, the Business Acumen Learning Collaborative informed the development of the HCBS Business Acumen Toolkit which can be found at:

<http://www.hcbsbusinessacumen.org/toolkit.html>.

Background:

This spotlight highlights the efforts of Texas's Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to prepare CBOs statewide to develop a successful model for providing relocation services within a new managed care system. The goal of the

Key Lessons Learned:

1. Bridge differences early.
2. Break work into small, manageable parts.
3. Be creative in sourcing outside help.

¹ Grant Partners included: ADvancing States, American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD), American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), National Council on Aging (NCOA), National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), University of Minnesota – Institute of Community Integration

² CBO is a broad term to describe local organizations that offer community living services and supports to advance the health, well-being, independence, and community participation of people with disabilities and older adults. CBOs include Centers for Independent Living, developmental disability organizations, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research & Service, behavioral health organizations, Protection and Advocacy Agencies, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Area Agencies on Aging, aging services organizations, faith-based organizations, Native American tribal organizations (American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian), nutrition program providers and other local service providers for persons with disabilities and/or older adults.

Texas team was to help all partners enhance the skills and systems needed to successfully transition people from nursing facilities to Medicaid home and community based services (HCBS) under managed care contracts. Texas HHSC partnered with organizations contracted to provide relocation services, disability advocacy organizations, and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Their state-specific objectives were to:

- Educate and share information among partners.
- Create a system for CBOs to gather relocation data that can help MCOs meet performance metrics and demonstrate the values of relocation services.
- Develop a system for paying for relocation services that adequately compensates for the administrative and program costs incurred.
- Assist relocation contractors (CBOs) in enhancing their financial strength.

Lessons Learned:

One of the team's key lessons learned was the importance of **bridging the differences between the MCOs and CBOs in philosophy, approach, and language**. With many voices and perspectives, it can be challenging to launch into a new task or activity without first achieving an understanding of what those perspectives are. The team approached the need to understand differences and identify commonalities by ensuring there were opportunities for cross-sharing of the rich histories and diverse experiences of both the CBOs and MCOs.

During their collaboration, the team developed an aim statement, *"Assist all partners in enhancing skills that enable us to successfully assist in transitioning to the most integrated setting"*. They revisited the statement regularly to ensure that their work stayed on track and remind everyone that they were working toward the same goal. An aim statement is a clear, explicit summary of what a team hopes to achieve over a specific amount of time including the magnitude of change they would like to achieve³.

As their work progressed in key areas and tasks, the group began to solidify and participation increased among all members. As a result of the work that was done to build trust and bridge differences, the group continued to make progress and was able to agree on key performance measures. The participating MCOs and CBOs demonstrated an ability to communicate and work together on challenges that they agreed are important to resolve, but were previously perceived to be separate issues.

When work as a large group stalled, the state team decided the group would **break into smaller subgroups** to address the most important issues, with each group's members reflecting the whole team. This allowed the group to break things down into more manageable parts and enabled the work to move forward. It was also in these smaller groups that relationships were built, and as a result consensus building became easier.

One of the team's goals was to simplify administration with a single contract format that could be used across CBOs and MCOs. The majority of relocation contractors did not have legal counsel available to them, decreasing their ability to successfully negotiate all the contracts with each of the MCOs that serve each geographic area (25 of more contracts with five different templates). To achieve this goal, the team **sought outside help** and engaged with a statewide nonprofit that provided free assistance. This viable and free legal resource increased the capacity of the CBOs for input and contract negotiations with MCOs.

³ <https://www.nichq.org/insight/qi-tips-formula-developing-great-aim-statement>

Through this resource, the participating CBOs were able to help identify existing or potential issues and contribute to the improvements needed for more efficient administration of contracts. The contracts subcommittee developed a standardized statement of work as part of the contract, and the assigned attorneys interviewed the relocation contractors and reviewed the existing MCO relocation contracts for consistencies and inconsistencies, and then devised a single value-based relocation contract format. This standardized Relocation Services Contract was shared with each MCO for review by their legal departments with the goal of full adoption.

The Texas team demonstrated a commitment to open communication and transparency throughout their work. The resulting trust that was built allowed the state, CBOs and MCOs to resolve issues that otherwise may have been addressed unilaterally and without a full understanding of their impact. Together, they were able to create solutions that worked more positively for all parties.

You can read more about the Texas group's work at:

<http://www.hcbsbusinessacumen.org/texas.html>

Texas Learning Collaborative Partners:

State Department

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

Community-Based Organizations

A Resource Center for Independent Living (ARCIL)

Center on Independent Living (COIL)

Coalition for Barrier Free Living/ Houston Center for Independent Living, Inc. (HCIL)

Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living (CBCIL)

Life, Inc.

North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)

Disability Advocacy Organizations:

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)

Disability Rights Texas (DRT)

MCOs:

Amerigroup

Cigna/Healthspring

Molina Healthcare

Superior/Centene

United HealthCare

United Healthcare Community Plan of Texas

Free Legal Assistance Provided By:

Texas C-Bar