Harnessing the Power of Data to Inform and Grow Your Program

Jeanette Harder, PhD • Jamie O’Gara, MSW • Samantha Weiss, MSW student
University of Nebraska Omaha, Grace Abbott School of Social Work
Corrie Kielty, Executive Director, Nebraska CASA Association
National CASA Annual Conference, June 9, 2014

Where we’re headed today...

• Context
  • Data has power?! You’re kidding, right?
  • Nebraska
• Logic model
  • Data from judges on counties not yet served by CASA
  • Geo mapping
  • Needs assessment
  • Data from judges being served by CASA

“What does this mean for me?”

Harnessing the Power of Data to Inform and Grow Your Program

through COLLABORATION

Nebraska CASA Association

Participatory Approach to Evaluation

• Evaluation is a partnership between the evaluation team and actively engaged stakeholders
• Interchangeable roles and sharing of control
• Present throughout evaluation process, and can result in continuous process of program improvement and learning

A logic model is...
• a picture of what you’re doing
• and what you’re hoping to accomplish by doing it

A logic model shows...
1. what you’re investing in the work
2. the work you’re doing
3. what you hope will happen as a result of your work
• both in the short- and long-term
We set out to answer two questions:

1. Which Nebraska counties should CASA target for starting new programs? • Growth
2. How satisfied are judges in counties currently served by Nebraska CASA? • Sustainability

Findings

Most judges and attorneys:

- Had favorable views of CASA
- Were supportive of program growth in their county

Judges’ Perceptions in Counties without a CASA Program

Procedure

- Invited 27 judges and 53 county attorneys in the 56 Nebraska counties not currently served by CASA
- Provided data on children in foster care in their county and information on CASA
- Survey link emailed to judges by the State Court Administrator
- Made follow up emails and phone calls

Findings

Most judges and attorneys:

- Had favorable views of CASA
- Were supportive of program growth in their county

Barriers to Judges’ Supporting CASA Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of judge/county attorney support</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much time commitment</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of community need</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about benefits</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor paid experience</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promo and other</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure of community support</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Judges' Types of Support Willing to Offer CASA Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicly support</td>
<td>10, 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate county officials</td>
<td>8, 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage community support</td>
<td>6, 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate community leaders</td>
<td>5, 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4, 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whatever I could do*</td>
<td>2, 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage officials to include in budget</td>
<td>1, 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*not included as an option

### What other data might inform program growth?

- Population of county, especially children
- Reports of child abuse and neglect
- # of children in care

### Geo Mapping

- County-specific total and child populations
- # of abuse/neglect reports
- # of children in care
- Judge’s perceptions of CASA program

### Judges’ Perception of CASA

- has CASA
- no survey
- good perception
Needs Assessment

What is a needs assessment?

- What is the social problem being addressed by the program?
- What is the extent of the problem?
- Who has the problem?
- Who else is affected?
- Is funding available to address the problem?

Why is a needs assessment important?

(Think, Pair, Share)

Needs Assessment

- Judge’s survey results
- County’s square mileage
- Distance to and between county seats
- Distance to the nearest CASA programs
- Phone and face-to-face inquiries with key stakeholders in the county
  (like judge, county attorney, NE DHHS, nonprofits)
  - to gather further pertinent data
  - to begin to build rapport with stakeholders

Judges’ Perceptions in Counties with a CASA Program

Jaimie O’Gara

Procedure

- Invited 32 judges in the 36 Nebraska counties currently served by CASA
- Provided data on children in foster care in their county and information on CASA
- Survey emailed to judges by the State Court Administrator
- Followed up in person and by email

Responses

- Received responses from 18 judges in 25 counties (56%)

Judges’ Perceptions of CASA Volunteers and Court Reports

- 94%: CASA Volunteers are very professional
- 72%: Always receive court reports
- 83%: Very satisfied with court reports

Judges’ Perceptions of CASA Programs

- 94%: Influential on positive outcomes
- 77%: Very helpful in making decisions about children
- 94%: Keep children safer
- 41%: Move children to permanency faster
- 82%: Very cost effective
Evidence (Data)

Your ability to raise funds

Your work with children

Your ability to tell the story of what you do

Next Steps for Nebraska CASA

1. Update geo maps
2. Continued outreach based on data
3. Continued collection of informal data
4. Use of process and outcome evaluation data from programs
5. Continued work to inform and engage program stakeholders

Tools we've demonstrated for harnessing the power of data:

1. Collaboration
2. Participatory approach
3. Logic model
4. Procedures for surveying judges and results
5. Geo mapping
6. Needs assessment for program growth
7. Use of data for both sustainability and growth

Now it's your turn...

1. What about the experience in Nebraska is similar or different from your experiences in your state?
2. What are the unique opportunities and barriers to harnessing the power of data in your community?
3. What expertise and tools do you need to better harness the power of data in your program?
### Logic Model for CASA (Nebraska)

**Target population:** Children (and youth) who have been abused and are now in out-of-home placement (foster care). *(Determined through a needs assessment.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Throughputs (Activities)</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>CASA staff:</td>
<td>Number of:</td>
<td>Children:</td>
<td>• Children spend less time in out-of-home placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds</td>
<td>• Recruit, screen, train (pre-service, continuing education), and supervise volunteers</td>
<td>• Training sessions completed</td>
<td>• Have an individual who is stable/consistent in their lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office space</td>
<td>• Communicate with systems impacting the child</td>
<td>• Volunteers recruited, screened, trained, and supervised</td>
<td>• Have fewer school and placement changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td>• Complete fundraising and administrative responsibilities</td>
<td>• Continuing education hours completed</td>
<td>• Receive needed services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and office supplies</td>
<td>• Collaborate with Board of Directors</td>
<td>• Grants and donations received</td>
<td>• (Youth) have increased independent living skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>• Engage with the community</td>
<td>• Community events and contacts</td>
<td>• Are not abused/neglected while in out-of-home placement (foster care)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National curriculum</td>
<td>CASA volunteers:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Court:</td>
<td>• Children are in permanent placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State office</td>
<td>• Monitor – facilitate – advocate - investigate</td>
<td>Number of:</td>
<td>• Receives more information on behalf of the child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community support</td>
<td>• Visit and build relationship with child</td>
<td>• Hours volunteered</td>
<td>• Receives recommendations in best interest of the youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to case information/records</td>
<td>• Communicate with child’s family, teachers, therapists, foster family, and others</td>
<td>• Miles driven</td>
<td>Increase in communication and collaboration between systems impacting the child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community referrals</td>
<td>• Maintain and review records</td>
<td>• Cases served</td>
<td>Increased community awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend court hearings</td>
<td>• Contacts with child and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write and submit court reports; make recommendations in child’s best interest</td>
<td>• Court hearings attended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stay with case until child is in a permanent placement</td>
<td>• Court reports written, recommendations made and accepted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Determined through:**

*Cost-benefit analysis | Process evaluation | Outcome evaluation*

in collaboration with Jeanette Harder, PhD, UNO Social Work, 3-28-2012