

Fact Sheet about APSI

About the Agency

- APSI (Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc.) is a private, non-profit agency that contracts with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to provide guardianship and protective services to individuals age 18 or older.
- APSI was created as a result of Revised Code 5123.55-.59.
- There are 10 regional offices throughout the state (six of which are in Developmental Centers) and a Central Office in Columbus.
- APSI has 76 Protective Service Representatives, with average caseload of 60-65 individuals.
- APSI regional program directors supervise a range of 11 to 23 staff.
- APSI has six regions ranging in size from seven counties to twenty-three counties.
- Approximately 4570 individuals are represented by APSI.
- APSI currently has a waiting list of 423 people for services.
- APSI's FY12 budget is \$4,967,148
- APSI received over \$500,000 in budget cuts since 2008, with a \$230,000 cut in FY2013.

Eligibility for Services

- To be eligible for guardianship or protective services from APSI (according to the Ohio Revised Code section 5123.55-59) a person must:
 - Reside in Ohio
 - Be 18 years of age or older
 - Have a developmental disability
 - Have a "presenting" problem or situation requiring protective services.
 - Be found incompetent to make informed decisions.

How Services are provided

- The agency is appointed guardian by the Probate Court.
- APSI utilizes the "Best Interest" Standard in decision making.
- Protective Service Representatives act on behalf of the agency to provide informed consent and to advocate for appropriate services and supports.
- APSI provides 24 hour/ 7 day on-call access for medical/emergency consents.
- APSI consistently follows the individual anywhere in the state regardless of changes in county or placement settings.

Service trends

- The needs of individuals APSI serves have shifted to those with developmental disabilities and co-existing mental health diagnoses and multi-system involvement including legal, criminal and Children's Services.
- Individuals are living longer and have more complex medical needs.
- These complex cases require more team involvement, advocacy planning, and significantly more direct involvement from APSI staff.

Top 3 reasons for requests of APSI services

- Complex needs of individual.
- Aging parents, no family able to serve, or family member has moved out of state.
- Individuals terminated from Children's Services.



Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc.

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Year-One Actions through June 2012

Serving Critical needs, one person at a time

Overview

In the spring of 2011, APSI chose to develop a three-year strategic plan to help the organization meet potential future challenges and to identify and maximize opportunities for defining services and target populations, providing for systematic outreach and sustainable activities, identifying alternative funding opportunities, and targeting operational excellence. The ultimate goal? Positively positioning APSI to provide best-in-class protective services for individuals served, Ohio adults with developmental disabilities.

Methodology

APSI worked with experts to create a planning process designed to engage stakeholders, individuals, families, and employees. Using a variety of information-gathering techniques including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and online resources, data was gathered to answer:

- Who are the primary targets of APSI service?
- How can APSI serve these people in an efficient, effective, and responsive manner?
- How can APSI strengthen its responsiveness to stakeholders?
- How can APSI move toward more diverse and sustainable sources of funding?

Responses gathered helped staff develop a realistic image of APSI, identify weaknesses and propose specific actions for APSI. The actions recommended by the strategic plan will enable the organization to effectively evolve to continue to deliver on its mission providing protective and advocacy services for Ohioans with developmental disabilities.

For the purpose of this strategic plan, stakeholder groups are identified as external groups who may know about and/or fund APSI services such as Ohio residents, media, and legislators. Those who are individuals served, advocates and/or families, probate courts, County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, residential providers are considered to be internal audiences.

The APSI image, current state

Serving all of Ohio, APSI serves more than 4,600 individuals and has a waiting list of more than 385. Currently, APSI is in the position of taking on new individuals only in an emergency situation.

Generally, APSI has a positive image with all groups canvassed including individuals served and families. APSI also enjoys a positive image with specific stakeholder groups (county boards, advocacy agencies, probate courts) and a positive, if somewhat limited, image from the general resident population, legislators and media. (This last positive-if-limited insight was gained more from anecdotal information.)

- *APSI has many strengths; specifically,*
 - Those under APSI guardianship knew and felt engaged with their APSI guardian.
 - Stakeholders expressed overwhelming support for the success of and the future need for APSI services.
 - Confidence level from all groups is high.
 - Rating of responsiveness from all groups canvassed is also high.
- *APSI also has some improvement areas; specifically:*
 - Some individuals and families want more access to and or time with guardians
 - Individuals representing organizations requested that alternatives to guardianship be more available for families and the general public.
 - More consistent communication from APSI to target audiences was identified as an area for improvement.

Changes identified for APSI to evolve

APSI is at a crossroads, but is uniquely positioned to determine the correct course so that the organization will not only survive; it will thrive. To accomplish this, APSI will place particular emphasis on:

- Consider ways for guardians to work with and communicate to individuals served, families, and within the APSI organizational structure more efficiently and effectively, and have access to technology to support outreach and documentation efforts.
- Define and implement caseload structures, supervision standards, and management systems that encourage and support individuals and stakeholder interaction
- Educate all stakeholders (individuals and groups both internal and external) to understand and support APSI-sponsored initiatives targeted in this strategic plan.
- Spearhead a philosophical shift to position APSI *from* the first alternative to the guardian of last resort, under certain defined circumstances—without losing its stature with advocacy, governmental, and provider organizations.
- Target and engage diverse, sustainable funding sources including, but not limited to foundations, grants, and development efforts with individuals and other partnerships.

Strategic plan: How positive change can be maximized

For the changes outlined by the strategic plan to become reality, APSI recognized the need for specific action steps, or commitments, to be developed. Following are the commitments for APSI staff, management and board members to undertake for the identified shifts to become reality.

Commitment 1: Realign APSI guardianship services to focus on a defined target group of individuals who:

- *Have significant and complex disabilities;*
- *Need ongoing skilled support;*
- *Have no suitable family or alternatives to guardianship; and/or*
- *Are court ordered by the Probate Court.*

First-year objectives include:

- Internally, APSI will work to exactly define the target population and update applicable policies and procedures;
- Then, APSI will work to establish an effective outreach plan such that probate courts and other stakeholders understand the defined service population, and the revised policies and procedures.

Commitment 2: Work with stakeholders to create alternatives to APSI guardianship

First-year objectives include:

- Identify and define viable guardianship alternatives.
- Develop and deploy a review protocol to address future, waiting and currently served populations.
- Deploy the program initially as a pilot within a defined geographic area.
- Refine program and deploy to a larger service area.

Commitment 3: Strengthen outreach and communication between APSI and families and advocates of people currently and potentially served by APSI

First-year objectives include:

- Create outreach systems using technology and other means to systematically, accurately and consistently deliver communication.
- Track all outreach methods to ensure target audiences, especially families, are reached.
- In addition to single-focus outreach, obtain economies of scale savings by identifying multiple-audience outreach vehicles.

Commitment 4: Strengthen communication and collaboration between APSI and external stakeholders

First-year objectives include:

- Develop outreach plan for supporter/referral groups such as legislators, providers, county boards to align with outreach information.
- Create outreach systems using technology and other means to systematically, accurately and consistently deliver communication to stakeholders.
- Track all outreach methods to ensure stakeholder audiences are reached.

Commitment 5: *Enhance Quality of Services and best practices*

First-year objectives include:

- Review and align APSI services with established best practices generated by National Guardianship Association and other professional groups.
- Identify additional best practices entities.

Commitment 6: *Strengthen the infrastructure to support more efficient use of resources and effective delivery of services*

First-year objectives include:

- Review and identify needs and align with technology options and strategies.
- Create an information technology infrastructure to provide:
 - Access and review of mission-critical data;
 - A virtual office environment to reduce costs and provide better coverage for all locations;
 - Outreach and dialogue capabilities to provide instant, routine communication with all stakeholders; and
 - Assist with human resources functions such that employee satisfaction and retention are maximized using professional training, compensation and development plans.

Commitment 7: *Explore alternative funding sources*

First-year objectives include:

- Identify priorities and emerging priorities.
- Align potential funding sources with needs (priorities).
- Develop case statement and calendar for funding requests.
- Provide for both statewide and local fundraising possibilities.
- Initiate funding summit to explore additional funding options.

Moving forward

Recognizing history's lessons that organizations not positioned to embrace change will become obsolete, APSI's board and staff are wisely working to implement positive, proactive changes so that organizational, professional and philosophical enhancements and the concurrent necessary outreach can begin. APSI embraces the change agenda outlined here and is eager to embrace the activities necessary to make these commitments a reality. APSI knows this evolution must be accomplished within specific budget constraints and without jeopardizing acceptable service standards. However, the positive changes outlined in this strategic plan are necessary for APSI to optimize its important work—work that benefits individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and all society.

This executive summary is a high-level overview of the first year of APSI's three-year strategic plan. The plan is available in its entirety via the APSI website, www.apsiohio.org.

As we work to serve critical needs, one person at a time, here's what's being said about our efforts:

Observations about our representatives... from individuals served

- *When I need to talk, she's there for me.*
- *She likes to hear me, listen to me, and help.*
- *Everything she has done with my family has helped me feel really good because I don't have to worry anymore.*
- *She'll tell me why something happened when I don't understand.*

Comments from families...

- *They have listened to my concerns and suggestions regarding my brother.*
- *What APSI has done for our family member has been more than anyone could ever expect.*
- *The APSI guardian watches out for the welfare of our son.*
- *I find representatives knowledgeable and compassionate.*

Remarks from our stakeholders...

- *APSI is responsive to the needs of the individuals they serve.*
- *They look at each situation on an individual basis and determine what is best for that person.*
- *I have worked with APSI for many years and feel they are great advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities.*
- *APSI has done a remarkable job of advocating for the individual while working in a complex system.*



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