Building Leadership and Management Capacity in the Human Service Sector through Training and Professional Development

Andrew J. Germak

Introduction

Effective training programs and professional development initiatives are paramount to enhancing the capacity of employees in today's human service sector. The sector, which includes both public human service agencies and non-governmental organizations, provides services to some of society's most vulnerable individuals, families, and communities. Yet, the sector is financially constrained and presently experiencing increased demand, and organizations are hard-pressed to allocate funds toward training and professional development. For leaders and managers in the human services, ongoing training and development is essential to sustaining mission and impact; often impact starts with the effective leadership of an organization, which requires ample preparation and training.

This brochure:

- *Explores current challenges faced by the human service sector workforce.*

- *Provides case examples of innovative training and professional development programs in the United States.*

- *Makes suggestions for future research and practice in the area of training and professional development in the human service sector.*

Leadership and Management Training and Professional Development

- Leadership training and professional development activities have become increasingly important for public and non-government (NGO) human service organizations as a result of the surge in demand for human services across the United States.

- Unfortunately, as rising public need and financial constraints make the effective management and cultivation of resources ever more important, anxieties grow over whether human service organizations can meet the growing demand for talent brought by overall sector growth and an approaching boom in executive-level retirements.

- While labor market forces may mitigate the anticipated crisis, the recent economic climate is likely to have exacerbated a growing demand for qualified leadership in human services.

- Training and professional development is widely recognized as an important component of preparing new leaders in the public and NGO human service sector.

- In addition to recruitment and management compensation reforms, scholars and organizations continually prioritize investment in existing leadership capacities through professional development activities, such as structured continuing education programs.

Managers and leaders must continually update their skills to remain effective at human service delivery.

Importance of Human Service Management, Leadership Training, and Professional Development

There have been recent calls for human service professionals and agencies to substantially invest in professional development as the evolving nature of service functions, settings, and delivery methods, demand that leaders continually update their knowledge skills and abilities.

- With regard to challenges in management and leadership in the human services, the rising marketization of the public sector and the emergence of the New Public Management orientation have led to the infusion of business practices into the work of human service management and leadership.

- This requires that many leaders need to partake in continuing professional education or another form of training to update their skill set.

- Continuing education, training, and professional development is conceptualized as a lifelong learning process for professionals beyond academic degrees, which aims to improve skills and knowledge for specific occupations. This form of learning can take the form of a:

    - Workshop
    - Lecture
    - Training
    - Short-term non-degree certificate program

Such programs are considered a necessary part of professional career advancement and a mechanism to deliver improved outcomes for both organizations and service beneficiaries.

- Professional development courses targeted to mid- to senior-level professionals may be the best hope at curbing short-term deficits in leadership capacities in the human service sector. Moreover, opportunities for training may be especially useful for aspiring leaders with backgrounds in social work, theology, and the humanities.

Strengthening professional development programs can benefit the human service sector as a whole by helping to retain talented individuals in the field and preparing them to take on future leadership roles.

Importance of Human Service Management, Leadership Training, and Professional Development

The human service sector lacks experience with an established model of leadership development, but several recommendations have been made by scholars:

1 — Focus on complexities of multilevel governance and blurred boundaries and relationships across complex inter-organizational settings.

2 — Combine generic and context-specific elements.

3 — Create structured progressions, focused particularly on early to mid-career development.

4 — Create challenging content that is applied and informed by psychology of adult development.

5 — Be part-time, "blended," and accredited.

Whether educational programs should consider organizational needs in developing learning content is debated in higher education generally; however, at least for management training and professional development programs, this focus seems to serve both students and employers well.

Examples of Effective Training and Professional Development Programs in Human Service Management and Leadership

Management Fellows Program

The Department of Children and Families gathered to begin working on a unique capacity-building project that is focused specifically on developing and enhancing their management and leadership skills. With training modules based on Human Services Leadership Competencies, the project will extend over 16 months. Utilizing various methods of delivery, participants will work throughout this training and professional development program on strengthening their personal and professional management and leadership skills in order to improve program outcomes.

To ensure that the program is highly relevant to their work, participants will take part in an assessment of the competencies and will rate the importance and relevance of the competencies to their own work, and will complete a more detailed self-assessment and prepare an individual development plan. Throughout the year, participants will receive individualized support and guidance from an executive coach and selected mentors in the field of organizational management.

Through a monthly lecture series, participants will be introduced to national experts in various aspects of organizational management and will attend live and virtual discussions focused on various competencies. The goal for each of the participants is to apply the information they receive directly to their own work settings to improve program outcomes.

In addition to attending these training sessions, participants will participate in group problem-solving activities, each becoming a member of a management cluster tasked with completing a capstone project, designed to solve a real and critical organizational challenge.

Rutgers University School of Social Work's Institute for Families will prepare a comprehensive evaluation of the entire training program at the conclusion of the project. All participants will receive the Certified Social Work Manager credential upon successful completion of the program.

Examples of Effective Training
and Professional Development Programs
in Human Service Management
and Leadership

Social Work Leadership Certificate Program

The Social Work Leadership Certificate Program is a professional development project currently in progress and sponsored by the National Association of Social Workers New Jersey Chapter (NASW-NJ) with the overall objective of developing chapter leadership and the prospects for emerging and future leaders. The program will consist of five day-long workshops and three one-hour online trainings. The topics for the day-long workshops include:

- Leadership Skills for Social Workers
- Communication and Professional Development for Leaders
- Creating Diversity and Social Justice
- Understanding Transparency in Management and Governance
- Managing Successful Partnerships and Collaborations

In addition, participants will complete a personalized learning project to provide the opportunity to immediately use the concepts and skills they have learned.

The project is structured as follows:

- The in-person workshop series will be composed of five day-long workshops delivered over a six-hour time period conducted at a centralized training location. These training sessions are scheduled to occur monthly.

- The online component will consist of up to three one-hour webinars. Each workshop and webinar will feature one or more nationally recognized subject matter experts (NSWM consultants) well-versed in specific areas of leadership development.

This training program will accommodate up to 35 participants total. The Institute for Families will distribute an evaluation tool to collect evaluation information at the conclusion of each workshop. The analysis of the collected information will be provided to NASW-NJ and could be used to develop future training programs.

Examples of Effective Training and Professional Development Programs in Human Service Management and Leadership

Nonprofit and Public Management Certificate Program

This certificate program is designed to build and enhance the knowledge, skills and competencies of current and future leaders of nonprofit and public human service organizations and to assist them in strategically managing the many challenges presented in today's human services environment. The required workshops consist of the following themes followed by workshop sub-topics:

Qualities of Leadership

Management of Budgeting and Finance

Managing Change

Human Resources Management

Strategic Management

The Nonprofit and Public Management Certificate Program also requires that participants complete three elective courses offered on a variety of management-related topics. This certificate can be self-paced. That is, a participant can take the required eight courses – five foundation and three electives – at times of his or her choosing. This provides flexibility for working professionals that seek to further their skills in management and leadership.

Examples of Effective Training
and Professional Development Programs
in Human Service Management
and Leadership

Social Innovation Institute

The New Jersey Social Innovation Institute is a training program for social innovators and enterprising non-profit organizations developing business plans and investment proposals for new social businesses enterprises. Special consideration will be given to participants that are significant job creators for New Jersey residents.

The objective of the first statewide Social Innovation Institute was to empower new social entrepreneurs to develop their venture ideas. In January 2012, 15 teams of social entrepreneurs were selected to participate in the institute. These teams completed a six-month initiative that included social entrepreneur-ship training, mentoring and technical assistance in partnership with the Support Center for Nonprofit Management in New York and the New Jersey Department of Labor. Specifically, the initiative:

- Provided training, mentoring and technical assistance to participants
- Facilitated networking with potential investors, experienced business leaders and individual entrepreneurs who were interested in engaging in social venture initiatives in New Jersey
- Developed actionable business plans and investment proposals for local and national foundations and social investors
- Supported the efforts of nonprofit organizations and social entrepreneurs who were actively engaged in social and environmental problem solving through enterprise especially through job creation.

Resources

Ban, C., Drahnak-Faller, A., & Towers, M. (2003). Human Resource Challenges in Human Service and Community Development Organizations: Recruitment and Retention of Professional Staff, Review of Public Personnel Administration, 23(2), 133-153.

Bell, J., Moyers, R., & Wolfred, T. (2006). Daring to lead 2006: A national study of nonprofit executive leadership. California: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and Washington, D.C: Meyer Foundation.

Bell, J., Moyers, R., & Wolfred, T. (2006). Daring to Lead 2006: A national study of nonprofit executive leadership – A joint project of Compass Point Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation. San Francisco, CA, San José, CA, Washington, D.C.: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and The Meyer Foundation.

Burlingame, D.F. (2009). Nonprofit and philanthropic studies education: the need to emphasize leadership and liberal arts. Journal of Public Affairs Education. 15(1), 59-67.

Cantor, J. A. (2006). Lifelong learning and the academy: the changing nature of continuing education. ASHE Higher Education Report, 32(2), 1-100.

County Welfare Directors Association of California & California State Association of Counties (2009). Human services in a time of economic crisis: An examination of California's safety-net programs and related economic benefits for communities. Accessed March 22, 2012 from http://www.cwda.org/uploads/CSAC-CWDA-Joint-Repor0409.pdf.

Coyle, J., and Carter, I. (2011). Can continuing education curricula effectively teach professionals? A case for using a curriculum assessment tool for initial and ongoing evaluation. The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education, 14(1), 19- 26.

Dunleavy, P., & Hood, C. (1994). From old public administration to new public management. Public Money and Management, 14(3), 9-16.

Ferlie, E. (2002). Quasi strategy: Strategic management in the contemporary public sector. In A. Pettigrew, H. Thomas, and R. Whittington (Eds.), Handbook of Strategy and Management (pp. 279-298). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Forbes Funds (2004). Look Here! Attracting and Developing the Next Generation of Nonprofit Leaders. Retrieved from June 10, 2012, retrieved from http://www.forbesfunds.org

Guo, C., Brown, W.A., Ashcraft, R.F., Yoshioka, C.F., & Dong, H.D. (2011). Strategic Human Resources Management in Nonprofit Organizations. Review of Public Personnel Administration, 31(3), 248-269.

Harms, W. (2008, December 11). An economic downturn impacts social services' ability to aid poor. The University of Chicago Chronicle, 28(6). Accessed March 15, 2012 from http://chronicle.uchicago.edu/081211/ poor.shtml.

Harvey, L. (2001). Defining and measuring employability. Quality in Higher Education 7(2), 97, 109.

Harvey, L. (2005). Embedding and integrating employability. New Directions for Institutional Research, 128, 13-28.

Resources

Johnson, J.L. (2009). The Nonprofit Leadership Deficit: A Case for Optimism. Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 19(3), 286-304.

Koch, R. (1999). New public management and management education: Foundations of successful management reform. Australian Journal of Public Administration, 58(3), 97-100.

Linscott, K.G. (2011). Filling the Leadership Pipeline: Driving Forces and Their Effect on the Next Generation of Non-profit Leaders. SPNHA Review, 7(1), 31-50

Nonprofit Finance Fund (2011). Nonprofit finance fund 2011 survey: America's nonprofits struggle to meet fast-climbing demand for services. Retrieved March 18, 2011, from http://nonprofitfinance-fund.org/announcements/2011/ nonprofit-finance-fund survey americas-npos-struggle-to-meet-fast-climbing-demand.

Nonprofit Quarterly (2007). How Do Employers Weigh a Candidate's Degree in Nonprofit Management When Hiring? Nonprofit Quarterly Education Supplement, 35–36.

Paton, R., Mordaunt, J., and Cornforth, C. (2007). Beyond nonprofit management education: leadership development in a time of blurred boundaries and distributed learning. Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly, December Supplement, 36(4), 148-162.

Preston, M. S. (2005). Child welfare management training: Towards a pedagogically sound curriculum. Administration in Social Work, 29(4), 89-111.

Solomon, J., & Sandahl, Y. (2007). Stepping Up or Stepping Out: A Report on the Readiness of Next Generation Leaders. Young Nonprofit Professionals Network. Retrieved June 25, 2012, from http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/ stepping_up.pdf

Stevens, P. (1996). What works and what does not in career development programmes. Career Development International, 1(1), 11-18.

The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center (2012). Accessed March 31, 2012 at http://pennbpc.org/public-safety-net.

Tierney, T. J. (2006). The leadership deficit. Stanford Social Innovation Review, 4(2), 26-35.

Webster-Wright, A. (2009). Reframing Professional Development Through Understanding Authentic Professional Training. Review of Educational Research, 79(2), 702-739.

Wilton, N. (2008). Business graduates and management jobs: an employability match made in heaven? Journal of Education and Work, 21(2), 143-158.

Building Leadership and Management Capacity in the Human Service Sector through Training and Professional Development

Huamin Philanthropy Brochure Series - 6

Huamin Research Center, School of Social Work, Rutgers University
390 George Street, Room 503, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901, USA

China Philanthropy Research Institute, Beijing Normal University
19 XinJie Kou Wai Street, Room 1003A.,Haidian District, Beijing, 100875, China