

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy

KEY OFFICE ACTIVITIES POLICY

Policy number:	1.2.4	Approved by Management Committee:	28 th February 2017
Version:	2.0	Signed off by Executive:	28 th February 2017
Responsible person:	Coordinator	Scheduled Review Date:	28 th February 2020

Purpose

To maximise the probability that protégés will experience continuity in their relationships with Citizen Advocates over time despite their changing needs, Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will focus on the efficient and balanced implementation of the seven key office activities in the knowledge that these provide the greatest potential for the establishment of sustainable matches.

Policy

An optimal number staff to effectively undertake the key office activities will be regularly considered during annual planning days. The following seven practices will characterise Capricorn Citizen Advocacy's implementation of the seven key office activities:

1. Key Office Activity No.1 - Protégé Recruitment

1. Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will on an annual basis develop a new Protégé Recruitment Plan which will specify the target groups and a variety of recruitment strategies. This Plan will be developed by the staff in conjunction with delegates of the Management Committee, and shall be ratified by the Management Committee at the beginning of each work year.
2. Active recruitment of protégés will be the primary practice of the advocacy office staff, in preference to passive recruitment.
3. A diverse and creative range of recruitment strategies will be undertaken to ensure that protégés are representative of a wide variety of needs.
4. Settings within which protégé recruitment occurs will span the full range of community environments, including human services and highly restrictive settings.
5. During the recruitment of protégés staff will develop a deep understanding of the needs of the individuals, their personal characteristics and relationship requirements and preferences, so that this can inform the advocate recruitment and orientation process.

2. Key Office Activity No.2 - Advocate Recruitment

1. The Co-ordinator will develop an annual Advocate Recruitment Plan in conjunction with the Protégé Recruitment Plan.
2. Advocate recruitment strategies will be diverse, but will primarily focus on active recruitment based on the specific, known needs of the protégé.
3. Recruitment of advocates will include the exploration of all known networks of Capricorn Citizen Advocacy and social groupings within the local community of the protégé.
4. All advocate recruitment strategies will promote a positive image of the protégé for whom an advocate is being sought.
5. The variety of roles that can be undertaken by an advocate will be addressed during advocate recruitment, but the predominant advocacy role for the specific relationship will be emphasised.
6. Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will meet the prevailing legislative requirements in respect of the screening of citizen advocates eg. Positive Notifications (Blue Cards) for advocates who are to be matched to a protégé younger than 18 years of age. See 4.6.0 Criminal History Screening Policy.

3. Key Office Activity No.3 - Advocate Orientation

A comprehensive orientation program will be tailored by the Co-ordinator to suit the specific Advocacy role to be undertaken by the Advocate. This will usually extend over a period of two or more weeks (both before and after the matching process) and will include:

1. Basic understanding of citizen advocacy
2. The common life experiences of people with disabilities
3. The principles of citizen advocacy
4. The full range of citizen advocacy roles
5. The benefits of advocate and protégé involvement in voluntary associations
6. The specific responsibilities to the protégé to whom the advocate is to be matched
7. Clear explanation of the citizen advocacy office
8. The advocate's legitimate expectations of staff and advocate associates
9. Information about effective advocacy strategies and other relevant resources
10. Other information which will assist the advocate to effectively fulfil their advocacy role

4. Key Office Activity No.4 - Advocate-Protégé Matching

1. The success of the relationship between advocate and protégé will largely depend upon the skill of the Co-ordinator in providing the necessary information to both parties to ensure a best fit. This will require the Co-ordinator to deeply understand the protégé's circumstances and needs, which in turn will enable him/her to best identify the right characteristics, commitment, needs and skills needed within the advocate.
2. Prior to initial matching, the Co-ordinator will check with another person involved in the program to affirm his/her intended match between the advocate and protégé.
3. Structuring positive connections during the initial matching between the advocate and protégé will engender the formation of a positive relationship.
4. The Co-ordinator's insight into possible areas of conflict or disappointment within the advocacy relationship could help to appropriately prepare and skill the advocate to respond to such situations in a positive manner.

5. Matching procedures will be regularly reviewed and amended as the practice experience determines.
6. The Co-ordinator will ensure that a clear explanation of the advocate's role and the expectations of the relationship is included in the Advocate Match Letter provided to the advocate.

5. Key Office Activity No.5 - Follow Along and Support

1. Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will always ensure the availability of support from the Co-ordinator by providing an answering service which is regularly monitored. This shall be advised during advocate orientation.
2. During the times when the Co-ordinator is on leave, the responsibility for provision of competent support will be delegated to a member/s of the Management Committee.
3. Support to advocates will not detract from the importance of other key office activities.
4. In providing support to advocates, advocacy office staff will resist any temptation or invitations to undertake actual advocacy.
5. Follow up of advocacy relationships will be frequent in the early stages of the relationship, and will initially be in person where possible.
6. The independence of the advocacy relationship will be uppermost in the mind of the staff engaged in follow up activities, so that the information they are gathering meets the need for accountability, but does not intrude on the relationship itself.

6. Key Office Activity No.6 - Ongoing Training

1. Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will establish an annual plan which shall incorporate regular opportunities throughout the year - with at least four events on offer each year.
2. Advocates will be routinely be advised of all relevant external training events, and referred to other training sources which will assist in the fulfilment of their advocacy role.
3. Where possible, Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will sponsor the attendance by advocates at relevant training events, specifically those that are about Citizen Advocacy practice or values.

7. Key Office Activity No.7 - Advocate Associates

1. The recruitment of Advocate Associates representative of a variety of technical backgrounds, will occur to provide pools of skills and knowledge which will support advocates in their roles.
2. Advocate associates will receive orientation to their role so that they are fully conversant with the concept and practice of Citizen Advocacy, and the specific role of the Citizen Advocate.
3. Advocates will be informed of the availability of Advocate Associates and the way in which they can be contacted for advice, support, and to utilise their services.

Related Documents

1. Policy 1.0.0 Vision, Mission and Principles
2. Policy 4.6.0 Criminal History Screening Policy
3. Policy 3.1.1 Recruitment of Protégés Policy
4. Policy 3.2.1 Meeting Individual Needs Policy
5. Policy 3.2.2 Policy for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Each Match


References

Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE) Reviews

Ratification

This policy was adopted by Capricorn Citizen Advocacy's Management Committee at its meeting held on 28 /02 /2017.

SIGNED:


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President

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Secretary

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