

Section 29. Additional Information

Include any additional information, suggestions, comments or explanations not included elsewhere in the report.

This information is cross-referenced from Section 26, Objective 2, related to the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network (SSAN) survey distributed to its volunteers at the local level by the SSAN sites. The survey was sent out in the first quarter of the year to assess the impact systems advocacy has on factors such as levels of personal empowerment and self-determination. The SSAN Coordinator, NYAIL, pulled together a report based on the results in the second quarter.

SSAN Volunteer Survey Results

(NOTE: This was a SPIL measurable indicator for the SSAN in 2018)

February 20, 2019

As part of NYAIL's SSAN Coordination grant, NYAIL was required to develop a survey for the SSAN volunteers. The purpose of these surveys is to assess the value of systems advocacy and the impact systems advocacy has on factors such as levels of personal empowerment and self-determination. NYAIL developed this brief survey in collaboration with a small workgroup composed of a NYSILC representative and advocates from the SSAN with experience in creating surveys.

Methodology

The brief survey consisted of only ten questions. The survey questions were a mixture of multiple choice, yes/no, and open-ended questions.

Advocates from the 15 centers distributed the survey directly to their volunteers. The committee felt their volunteers would be more likely to respond if the survey came directly from the SSAN advocates, as opposed to NYAIL. Committee members also raised concerns over privacy; some of the advocates had previously promised not to share the volunteers' contact information with anyone. As a result, NYAIL distributed the survey to the 15 SSAN centers, and the lead SSAN contact at each center distributed the survey to their volunteers. NYAIL received 62 total responses. NYAIL did request the number of volunteers each center was sending the survey in order to report on response rates. The response rate for the survey was 8.2%.

Executive Summary

The SSAN volunteer survey began by asking which activities volunteers do among a number of options. Completing education alerts got the highest percentage with 77% responding they complete education alerts. Next, volunteers were asked which activities they most enjoy doing. These responses were varied, with attending programs or presentations at the local ILC being the most popular activity with 49.2% of volunteers selecting that option. Responding to education alerts and meeting with elected officials came in right behind, being selected by 42.6% of respondents.

Volunteers were then surveyed on which areas of systems advocacy they would like assistance or additional support in doing. Only 45 people responded to this question, with 53% of volunteers reporting needing more assistance with meeting with elected officials and 40% indicating they would like additional assistance with attending events. NYAIL believes the reason for the lower response rate for this question was that we did not provide “none” as an option, so 17 people did not identify an area on which they would like greater assistance.

Volunteers were surveyed on whether they feel they are encouraged to provide input on issues which are most important to them, or that they would most like to work on. Everyone responded to this question, with 51 or 82.3% responding in the affirmative, and only three people responding “no”.

Volunteers then responded to whether they feel more confident making decisions about their life as a result of their participation in the SSAN. Responses were very positive, with 79% responding “yes”.

When asked if they feel more empowered to share their opinion and make their voice heard, an impressive 88.5% responded “yes.” Next, when asked if their involvement in systems advocacy lead either directly or indirectly to achieving any new social, educational or employment opportunities, only 33.9% responded positively that it had. Volunteers who responded yes to the previous question were asked to share examples. 18 people responded, and a few examples include:

- I was a volunteer for a number of years and was then offered a paid position at local ILC and have been here 8 years.
- My involvement in systems advocacy has achieved social justice regarding voting rights for individuals with disabilities. Especially, for visual impaired people. In addition, the public transportation (access-a-ride) fare was to be increased, but through our systems advocacy, the fare remains the same up to present.
- Due to my volunteer work and advocacy I'm now employed as a peer specialist.
- I have enhanced my skills in helping others find employment within the community.

When asked if their involvement with systems advocacy helped prepare them to share their personal story in their advocacy efforts on behalf of disability rights and independent living, 67% responded “yes.” The survey concluded by asking volunteers whether participation impacted their lives in any other way. Here are a few responses:

- My appreciation and empathy for people with a wide variety of disabilities is enhanced.
- Gaining confidence, but it has also given me knowledge in many areas as far as government and politics.
- Yes, my participation has impacted my life, in several ways. First of all, it has enabled me to speak in public, for the right of people with disability. Secondly, it has also provided me the opportunity to travel to Albany, to talk to our state representatives, regarding the right of people with disability.

Statewide Systems Advocacy Network

2018 Volunteer Survey Results

Question 1. Systems advocacy offers many opportunities for volunteers. Which of the following activities do you do? (Check all activities you've done before)

- a. Complete education alerts - 77%
- b. Attend programs or presentations at your ILC on topics related to your personal advocacy efforts or interests - 67.7%
- c. Participate in meetings with elected officials or other public officials - 58.1%
- d. Share your story with local media or on social media - 35.5%
- e. Participate in press conferences or events - 37.1%
- f. Provide public comments either in person or in writing - 56.5%

Question 2. Which activities do you most enjoy doing? (Check all that apply)

- a. Education alerts - 42.6%
- b. Attend programs or presentations at your ILC on topics related to your personal advocacy efforts or interests - 49.2%
- c. Participate in meetings with elected officials or other public officials - 42.6%
- d. Share your story with local media or on social media - 23%
- e. Participate in press conferences or events - 27.9%
- f. Provide public comments either in person or in writing - 41%

Question 3. What areas of systems advocacy would you like assistance or additional support in doing? (Check all that apply):

- a. Education alerts - 20%
- b. Attend programs or presentations at your ILC on topics related to your personal advocacy efforts or interests - 31.1%
- c. Participate in meetings with elected officials or other public officials - 53.3%
- d. Share your story with local media or on social media - 33.3%
- e. Participate in press conferences or events - 40%
- f. Provide public comments either in person or in writing - 33.3%

Question 4. As a volunteer, do you feel you are encouraged to provide input on issues which are most important to you, or that you would most like to work on?

- a. Yes - 82.3%
- b. No - 4.8%
- c. Unsure - 12.9%

Question 5. As a result of your participation in systems advocacy, do you feel more confident making decisions about your life?

- a. Yes - 79%
- b. No - 11.29%
- c. Unsure - 9.68%

Question 6. As a result of your participation in systems advocacy, do you feel more empowered to share your opinion and make your voice heard?

- a. Yes - 88.5%
- b. No - 3%

- c. Unsure - 4%

Question 7. Has your involvement in systems advocacy lead either directly or indirectly to achieving any new social, educational or employment opportunities?

- a. Yes - 33.9%
- b. No - 33.9%
- c. Unsure - 32.2%

Question 8. If yes, please briefly explain.

- My relationship with the Suffolk Independent Living Organization has vastly expanded both my knowledge and my skill as an advocate and spokesperson for people with disabilities. This is especially true in terms of providing alternatives for growth that- as CEO Joseph M. Delgado emphasizes- "levels the playing field for people with disabilities." Thanks, Dr. Richard Morfopoulos CEO/Universal Abilities
- After starting Amsterdam youth leadership at the RCIL Amsterdam office I went on to teach autism as a paraprofessional in Aurora, Colorado at the elementary school level
- I was a volunteer for a number of years and was then offered a paid position at local ILC and have been here 8 years.
- My involvement in system advocacy have achieved social justice, regarding voting right for individual with disability. Especially, for visual impaired people. In addition, the public transportation (access-a-ride) fair was to be increase, but through our system advocacy, the fair remains the same up to present
- Information is shared regarding employment opportunities and other helpful information involving educational and training opportunities.
- Educational
- advocating for developmentally disabled individuals and personal experience support in career path
- Too many systems changes to list!
- Due to my volunteer work and advocacy I'm now employed as a peer specialist.
- I have enhanced my skills in helping others find employment within the community.

Question 9. Has your involvement with systems advocacy helped prepare you to share your own personal story in your advocacy efforts on behalf of disability rights and Independent Living?

- a. Yes - 67.2%
- b. No - 16.13%
- c. Unsure - 16.83%

Question 10. Has your participation impacted your life in any other way? If so, please explain.

- Advocacy for others
- My appreciation and empathy for people with a wide variety of disabilities is enhanced- thank you SILO and other ILC organizations! Keep up the good work.
- Increased awareness of disability issues

- Gaining confidence, but it has also given me knowledge in many areas as far as government and politics. Participation in Advocacy has also helped me make contacts.
- I will always continue to advocate for health care and other issues due to child's vaccine damage and husband's terminal diagnosis and cancellation of health insurance due to diagnosis.
- It has made me so much more aware of the issues facing our community and the ignorance and lack of understanding for these issues.
- My involvement in systems advocacy has created a fervent desire to vote in the Mid-Term elections on 11/6/18. Otherwise, I fear that many services for disabled individuals will be eliminated.
- it has helped me to be more confident and knowledgeable regarding issues effecting Americans with disabilities.
- I am able to live independently with the community at large.
- Increased sensitivity and awareness of varied individual needs and abilities
- Networking! I love talking to person to help them and those who can help me help others persons with a disability. I am willing and able to learn.
- Speaking about my problems is more easy
- I am more knowledgeable and can share the information learned with others who are where I once was, clueless!
- I have been able to get help for many people as a direct result of my advocacy volunteer work.
- It has allowed me to help others and to advocate for them.
- To teach others and make resources more available to help the community at large. Mostly in early childhood education.