

Community Lawyering



CENTER FOR
Legal Aid
Education

Course Description

As the training opens, a television news story appears on screen in the front of the room. It involves a recent discovery that because of leaks in the roof of a local middle school, a basement furnace room is being used for classes. The School Superintendent, interviewed for the piece, expresses sympathy but reports that with the current school budget crisis there is little that can be done to immediately address the problem. A group of concerned parents meet to discuss the situation and what they can do about it... They ask for help from a local legal services attorney.

So begins a journey of discovery in which participants consider and experiment with an expansive view of legal aid lawyers' roles in their communities. Thinking beyond litigation (but with litigation one of the tools at their disposal), participants build a multi-tactic advocacy campaign to address the issues presented by the case study, while also learning the tools employed in the non-litigation elements of such a campaign: media and communication, policy advocacy, campaign feasibility and power analysis, campaign planning, facilitative leadership, action research, campaign management, and so forth.



More than virtually any other of CLAE's courses, Community Lawyering and Affirmative Advocacy intertwines case study work with exploration of real issues in local communities. Small group sessions alternate between analysis and work on the case problem and preliminary assessment and brainstorming regarding real community issues back home. Every element of the curriculum is reinforced by an ethic of storytelling.

Nearly all sessions are designed to include a "tale from the trenches," a real legal aid community lawyering story mined from the participants' local area or exported from another region as necessary, with each story designed to highlight an effective use of one of the particular campaign elements and tactics taught in the related session. CLAE has available a trove of Power-Point stories to be used for these purposes but we will also help you discover your own, explore them with your advocates and turn them into engaging content-rich parts of the learning. And we'll work with you to tailor this unique training to your needs, emphasizing the skills and tools you think are most relevant to legal aid practice in your region.

Last of all, this training can be offered exclusively for legal aid staff or can be organized with legal aid staff and local community leaders attending in teams, thus becoming a relationship building exercise in and of itself.

Sample Agenda

Day One

	Overview and Welcome
2:30 – 4:30	Community Understanding and Relationship Building: Introduce notion of relationship building and asset/deficit thinking
4:45 – 6:00	Community Understanding and Relationship Building
7:00 – 8:30	Community Lawyering in the Region: sharing our work

Day Two

8:30 – 9:00	Community Lawyering and LSC: Myths and Realities Community Lawyering Tools What Community Lawyers Do
9:00 – 10:15	Introduction to Case Scenario Choosing Issues Assessing Feasibility: Stakeholder and Power Analysis Applying the Tools
10:30 – 12:15	Review Additional Case Materials Apply Power Mapping and Stakeholder Analysis
1:30 – 3:30	Identity and Difference
3:45 – 5:00	Community Organizing, Leadership, and Relationship Building
5:15 – 5:45	Relationship Building Tools and Day One Closure
7:00 – 8:00	One to Ones

Day Three

8:30 – 8:45	Day Three Welcome and Overview Communications and Public Policy Advocacy
8:45 – 10:00	Public Policy Advocacy Communications Strategy Communications Exercise
10:15 – 11:15	Small groups create a message campaign for the case scenario or for a local campaign back home
11:15 – 12:00	Strategy Development and Action Planning Tactics and Campaigns Strategy Development Applied
1:00 – 2:15	Small groups develop a campaign plan for the case scenario or for a local campaign back home Carrying the Work Back Home
3:00 – 3:45	State delegations meet to discuss remaining in relationship around this work

At a Glance

Time Frame: 2 1/2 to 3 Days

Faculty to Student Ratio: 1:4

Skills and Concepts Explored (tailored to regional needs):

Relationship Building Techniques; Community Listening and Needs Assessment; Advocacy Campaign Planning; Organizing Theory and Methods; Feasibility Analysis (Stakeholder Analysis, Power Mapping, Environmental Scanning); Communications, Media, Storytelling and Framing; Meeting Planning and Facilitation; Legislative Advocacy; Diversity Training; Campaign Strategy Development; Community Lawyering for LSC programs

Learning and Production Materials Provided:

- Participant manuals
- Trainer manuals, including timed outlines and instructions for each session
- Coordinator and Lead Trainer manual (logistics)
- Extensive case file materials including mock news articles, city budget documents, and other “put you in the moment” elements

Video Demonstrations and Other Media Included:

- Video case study including mock news footage
- Video demonstrations of community meeting, used to explore lawyer’s role in meeting and different approaches that could have been utilized
- Print and electronic media used to demonstrate effective communications strategies and messaging

ABA Civil Legal Aid Practice Standards addressed:

1.2: Governing body members’ responsiveness to the communities served; **2.1:** Identifying legal needs and planning to respond; **3.1:** Full Legal Representation; **3.2:** Legislative and administrative advocacy; **3.3:** Community Economic Development; **3.5:** Assistance to pro se litigants; **3.6:** Provision of legal information; **7.2:** Client participation in the Conduct of Representation; **7.13:** Legislative & Administrative advocacy by practitioners; **7.15:** Transactional Representation; **7.16:** Representation of Groups and Organizations