

Karin Annerhead-Harris

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Introduction

Founded in 1969, the Alliance of Community Service Providers (Alliance) formed as an association of organizations that provide mental health, substance use, and/or intellectual disability services to all populations. Utilizing a "community-based service system," the Alliance helps implement the planning and coordinating of the members' services. In addition, the Alliance serves to improve the sustainability of services offered by members, as well as the quality of services.

An important piece of the Alliance's mission revolves around advocacy and lobbying work. As the Associate Director of the Alliance, Karin Annerhead-Harris frequently interacts with local and state policymakers in order to lobby on behalf of the organization, and its members. Karin is a firm believer in the importance of lobbying and has transformed the Alliance into a stronger presence in the legislature over the past three to four years.

Current Lobbying Work

Two years ago, Philadelphia passed a soda tax, and hoped to use the funds to benefit Philadelphia's community

schools. Recently, Philadelphia's Republican representatives crafted a bill proposing to repeal the implemented soda tax. Currently, Karin is lobbying against the aforementioned bill. Karin states that the Alliance went up against the Speaker of the House to advocate for the soda tax, as they believe it is good for lower income residents receiving an education in Philadelphia. Although education is not specifically a part of the Alliance's mission, Karin states that a huge percentage of individuals benefiting from Philadelphia's community schools are also clients of the Alliance's member organizations.

Karin stresses that lobbying is an integral part of human services work. She admits that three to four ago, the Alliance wasn't as focused on policy work as they are now. Karin is spearheading the Alliance's efforts to make the organization a stronger presence in state and local policy.

Leadership Style

Karin believes that the foundation of a good leader is passion and drive behind the work. Karin states that she is passionate about making things better for her population and making a change through her advocacy work. Karin states that her anger for unequal opportunities within the human services field fuels her passion, and therefore is the driving force behind her work.

In addition, Karin is more of a plow horse than a show horse. Although her job requires her to be the face of the

Alliance (along with the Executive Director), she is frequently meeting with state and local legislators to advocate for issues important to the Alliance's members.

Prior to working at the Alliance, Karin worked in the entertainment industry. Although her job paid well, Karin stated that she did not feel fulfilled working for wealthy individuals who didn't understand the issues surrounding inequality. She immediately began her advocacy work for marginalized populations, which led her to the Alliance.

When looking for team members, Karin states that she wants passionate individuals who are able to understand different points of views. In addition, she is interested in individuals who are willing to put in the necessary research for advocacy work. Finally, Karin desires team members who think independently.

Karin is an example of a fiery, passionate leader. She uses what drives her to fuel her work and continue to advocate for the Alliance's members. She is not afraid to confront the brutal facts and improve the Alliance's current pitfalls in order to make the organization a thought leader in policy.