

AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

National Association of County Human Services Administrators

The National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA) represents the broad spectrum of social services agencies throughout the country. Because of the varied roles that counties play in social services, NACHSA membership includes agencies that provide public assistance, child care, child protective services, adult protective services and everything in between.

Many are umbrella agencies that include workforce development, some also provide health and mental health services, while others also serve as Area Agencies on Aging. In many counties, the human services departments are in charge of providing shelter and emergency assistance to victims of disasters, and often are also in charge of evacuations.

Staffed by Marilina Sanz, NACo's associate director for human services and education, and Tom Joseph, NACHSA consultant, the affiliate has had a long relationship with NACo and has great appreciation for the opportunities its affiliation provides.

NACHSA members are active members in several NACo steering committees, particularly the Human Services and Education Steering Committee, where some of its members serve in leadership positions. This participation helps NACHSA have a voice in the development of national policy in social services.

NACHSA members also have been involved in a number of NACo task forces and initiatives. Most recently, they have been involved in President Bill Hansell's methamphetamine initiative, with a NACHSA member sitting on the task force. Additionally, NACHSA was very instrumental in developing the survey on the effect that meth has on children.

NACHSA members helped develop the

questions, answered the survey and also provided additional information to NACo staff to help prepare congressional testimony. NACHSA president Dianne Edwards also presented testimony for the record.

NACHSA takes advantage that NACo provides to help advocate in Washington, D.C. in several ways. Last year its leadership went to Washington, D.C. a day before NACo's legislative conference to have a series of congressional meetings on welfare and child welfare. Additionally, some of its leaders joined the leadership of the steering committee later in the week in their own set of meetings.

Most recently, NACHSA has been actively involved in opposing numerous cuts that have been proposed to social services cuts as part of the budget reconciliation process. NACHSA wrote a letter of opposition to the House of Representatives similar to the NACo letter.

NACHSA publishes a newsletter, *The Networker*, three times a year. Each issue has a general theme and feature columns such as the President's Message, the Washington Watch and information on NACo's conferences. Some of the issues that have been covered recently include the methamphetamine crisis, responding to disasters, protecting elders from financial abuse, refinancing foster care and interviews with administration and congressional staff on welfare reform.

The Networker is mailed to more than 900 county human services officials. It is also posted on the NACHSA Web site at www.nachsa.org. The Web site provides policy updates, information on upcoming conferences and meetings, information on membership and resource links to NACo and other organizations. Additionally, NACHSA members receive periodic e-mail updates on late-breaking federal legislative

and regulatory developments.

NACHSA also has an awards program. The awards are presented annually at NACo's Health, Human Services and Workforce Conference in November.

There are three award categories: The Elizabeth Prebich Award for Distinguished Leadership in County Human Services; the Director's Award for Individual Achievement in a county; and the Innovation in Human Services Award.

NACHSA membership is open to county human services agencies from NACo member counties, elected county officials, state associations of county human services professionals, county community partner agencies and corporate individual business that support human services programs. Calendar year dues are based on county population or membership category.

NACHSA is governed by a board of directors that has approximately 25 members and an executive committee. The board of directors includes county human services professionals, association directors and county elected officials and is appointed by the NACHSA president.

NACHSA meets prior to NACo's Legislative, Annual and Health, Human Services and Workforce Conference. Its annual meeting and election of officers occurs at the Health, Human Services and Workforce Conference. Additionally, the Executive Committee meets via conference call as necessary.

For additional information on joining NACHSA, please go to the Web site, www.nachsa.org, or call Tom Joseph, NACHSA consultant, at 202/898-1444.

(Affiliate Spotlight was written by Marilina Sanz, NACo staff liaison for NACHSA.)