



ADVOCACY FOR CHANGE 2022: A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



Each family has a voice
Together, our voices will be heard

familyvoiceswi.org



Advocacy for Change 2022: A Virtual Conference

Attendee Evaluation Summary

This year Family Voices of Wisconsin held its annual Advocacy for Change Conference (AFC) on March 23 and 24. This is the second year that the entire event was virtual, using Zoom video conferencing and providing attendees' materials and presenter video recordings via the Family Voices website.

The intent of AFC remained the same as past years: to increase attendee advocacy skills, increase knowledge of budget and policy priorities, and facilitate connections with state legislators. The scope of this conference, however, was slightly more refined than at the in-person event. This year attendees were encouraged to select from four policy areas (*below*) to develop their message to legislators. They were also asked to complete as much of the pre-work of reading and viewing videos as possible before the conference so the group's time could be allocated to educating attendees on current issues and crafting individual messages.

1. Disability Resource Centers for Children and Families
2. Family Caregiver Supports
3. Special Education Funding
4. School-Based Mental Health Services

Attendance for the virtual conference was smaller than in past in-person AFC conferences; 24 people registered, and of this number 12 participated. Eleven attendees identified as parents, one was a graduate student in Rehabilitation Counseling and one was a professional.

This group was highly engaged in the process, actively listening and availing themselves for coaching and question-and-answer sessions outside of conference hours. Ten participants submitted electronic evaluations for the conference and were given \$35 gift cards for completing their forms. Their replies to evaluations follow.

Overall, AFC attendees indicated that this event was extremely useful, had helpful materials, and increased their understanding of advocacy and policy. Families told us they appreciated the virtual platform that was flexible and allowed them to participate without travel or the need for childcare. During the coaching sessions, as well as on the evaluation, attendees reported that the afternoon one-on-one coaching sessions were extremely helpful and increased their confidence to speak with legislators.

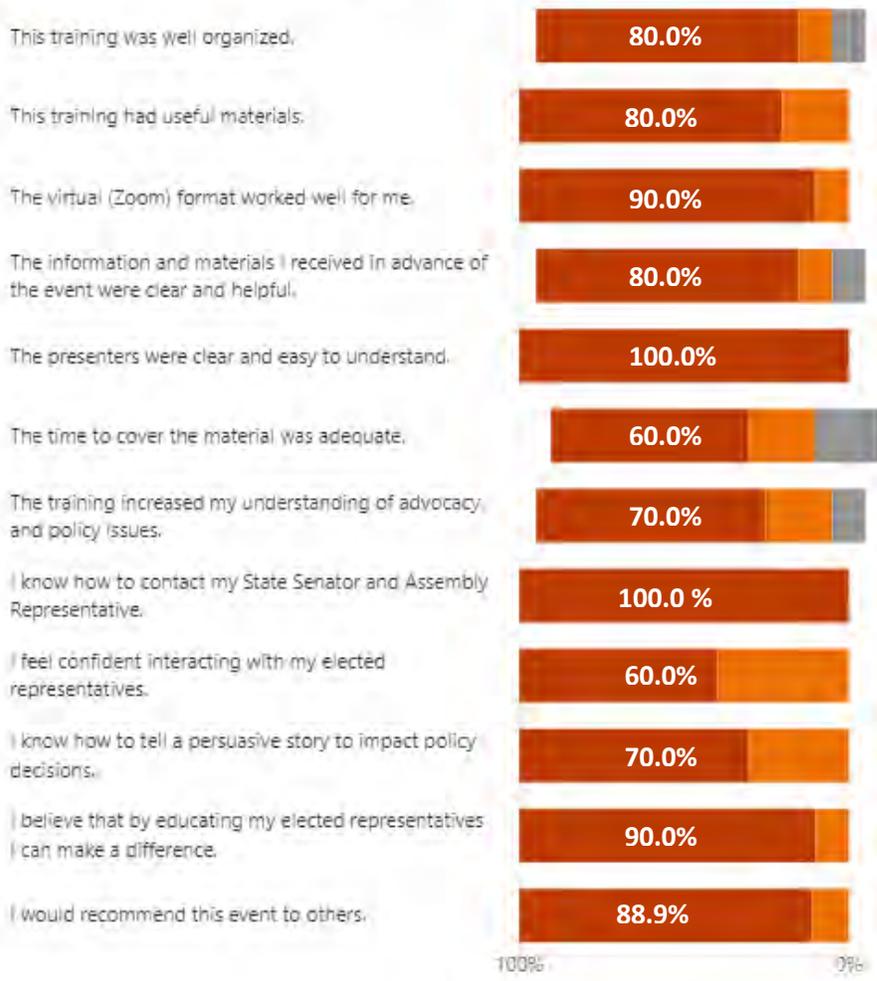
We look forward to hosting Advocacy for Change as an in-person event in 2023.

For additional information about AFC please contact Family Voices of Wisconsin Co-Directors Barbara Katz barb@fvofwi.org, and Liz Hecht liz@fvofwi.org.

1. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the training:

[More Details](#)

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



IMPACT QUESTIONS

(n = 9)	Start of AFC	Conclusion of AFC
I know how to tell my family story to impact policy decisions.	71.0%	100.0%
I have an understanding of current policy topics that impact families who have children with disabilities.	86.0%	100.0%
I feel prepared to meet with my elected official.	63.0%	100.0%

What is one thing you will do as a result of this training? (n = 10)

- Talk with other people about FVofWI because they help us as parents of children with special needs.
- Subscribe to my representative's email to stay better informed.
- Maintain ongoing communication comfortably with my elected officials.
- Continue to research and advocate for my disabled child.
- To continue the conversation and be an ongoing resource.
- Send a thank you note with a picture of my daughter to Sen. Carpenter.
- Keep up with what is happening with the budget.
- Continue speaking with my local reps.
- Refer more of my families that I work with to this group to further extend their training on how to advocate more for their family.
- Tell people about this opportunity.

What did you like best about Advocacy for Change? (n = 10)

- What I liked the best was that all the ones who were in the meeting yesterday had the same focus on our kids, I think if all parents keep working together we will be successful in helping our children.
- The 1:1 coaching.
- The amount of information given in a clear and concise format. The materials before prepped me efficiently to make great use of my time and the conference allowed time for clarification and questions. The personalized training sessions made me much more comfortable once I had to approach my elected officials.
- The information received, felt like I have a voice and can advocate for my child and my family
- I really like the role playing between Barbara and Tim and enjoyed the coaching session with Liz- very helpful and insightful.
- This year due to work schedule I could not have time to do a one-on-one training, it is so important.
- Meeting with parents that are going through some of the same struggles and are aware of resources that I had no idea about.
- Learning how to advocate effectively.
- I didn't have to arrange my meetings on my own with the local representatives.
- Getting to know other people.

Is there anything about Advocacy for Change that you would change? (n = 10)

- Nothing.
- I didn't receive the Zoom link for my meeting with the State Senator. The Chief of Staff was waiting on Zoom for me to dial in. I was able to contact the office and speak over the phone, but it was a few minutes late.
- Allow more time for questions.
- n/a
- Better descriptions about what to complete ahead versus what would be discussed in the session. I feel like I spent all the time watching videos ahead and completed the worksheet to then rewatch the same content but live instead of pre-recorded.
- Maybe have another session to practice the main ideas for visits to legislators when there is more than one family member participating.
- A better understanding of what they are advocating for.
- More possible issues to be represented.
- I feel that further coaching on how to educate officials would have been beneficial for others that were within the group. How to deliver the right amount of emotion with the right amount of volume would have potentially gained more traction with other representatives. It takes practice.
- No.

Please write any additional comments, suggestions or feedback you had about this event. (n = 4)

- The event was very good because it gave us the opportunity for us to give opinions and tell what affects our lives and our kids due to the conditions they have.
- Add suggested time for each area of the legislative visit. Suggest using scripting format for concise delivery of the message.
- Maybe pair a "veteran" parent participant with a new parent participant in the same area to have a follow-up, one-on-one chat.
- I feel that I gained more traction with my representatives because I'm already active within my community. Community involvement and self-education is a huge bonus when advocating for change. Some people require more coaching than others. I feel that more coaching for newer advocates would be beneficial prior to an initial meeting or pairing coaches (advocates) within advocates to pick up when they lose their words.