NCCNHR ToolKit
Organizing to Improve Long-Term Care
in Your State & Community:
A NCCNHR Toolkit for Citizen Advocates

Today it is very difficult to function without the luxuries of common technological resources such as word processing, e-mail, websites, voice mail, faxes and more. However, due in part to limited funding and a lack of expertise, it is often difficult for nonprofits to keep up with modern technology.

The effective use of technology can help advance the mission of your CAG. Using technology appropriately can enhance the management of your organization and allow you to focus more on your goals and less on administrative issues. Whether through the internet or DVD's, utilizing technology allows CAGs to efficiently and inexpensively share information with the public. The internet also allows long-term care consumers the unprecedented opportunity to learn details about particular facilities including inspection survey results and quality standards.

At first glance, implementing new technology may seem intimidating and too complex for a CAG. However, the goal of this chapter is to provide several simple and easy-to-understand resources that will make utilizing technology possible, even for a small, newly formed CAG.

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1) **Funding for Technology Needs**

Techsoup.org is an excellent resource for nonprofits that provides basic information about organizational technology needs on a shoestring budget. Techsoup also offers nonprofits a competitive discount on computer software. This chapter includes several articles made available by Techsoup.

"How Technology is Funded: The Basics" offers practical tips on how to find and secure funding for technology needs. Another article, "Ten Tips for Funding Technology," offers 10 detailed strategies for funding your technology needs.

2) **Identifying Technology Needs**

The specific language of technology often appears overwhelming. However, thanks to an interactive glossary provided by Techsoup, technology definitions are at your finger tips.

Techsoup also offers step-by step instructions on how to create and implement a technology plan in the article "Introduction to Technology Planning."

ePhilanthropyFoundation.org is another excellent resource for nonprofits seeking to enhance their technology. In a concise article titled "Don't Buy the Software or

ASP Service Unless," ePhilanthorpy advises nonprofits to consider various issues prior to purchasing any software or application service provider (ASP).

"Knowing When You Need a CMS" is another Techsoup article and offers nonprofit organizations a detailed explanation of when to consider implementing a formal content management system or CMS. In other words, when is it time to start formally tracking your activities, members, donors? And, when do you need a standardized, electronic system for distributing information such as a listserv?

3) Examples of CAGs Effectively Using Technology

The Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC) in New York uses its companion website www.nursinghome411.org to educate the public about enforcement actions taken against nursing homes in New York State. LTCCC issues a press release to announce when new enforcement actions are published on the website. LTCCC used an affordable service called Go Daddy to host their websites.

The Coalition of the Institutionalized Aged and Disabled (CIAD), another New York CAG, created a 28 minute videotape titled "Residents Councils: A Voice for Quality of Life." The video depicts a resident council in action and is available for rental through their website. CIAD partners with a team of long-term care residents who use video as a medium to communicate issues related to CIAD's work.

Voices for Quality Care (LTC), Inc., an all-volunteer CAG in Maryland, maintains an active listserv which it uses regularly to communicate with its constituents. Through the listserv, Voices informs its constituents of upcoming meetings, relevant legislation, Maryland nursing home news and more.

Many CAGs now offer supporters the opportunity to donate online. Visit Network for Good for NonProfits for ideas on how to establish or improve your online fundraising efforts.

The Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE), a Philadelphia based CAG, created a new website that allows readers to enlarge the text or change the text to Spanish with a click of a button. CARIE used funding from a successful grant proposal to revamp their website.

Note: The National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine developed an excellent checklist titled, "Making Your Web Site Senior Friendly." The goal of the checklist is to highlight research-based strategies for creating a senior accessible website.

4) **Online Nursing Home Quality Information by State**

The internet provides an unprecedented opportunity for long-term care consumers to research facilities before they themselves or a loved one becomes a resident. While nothing can replace a site visit when choosing a long-term care facility, the internet offers resources for narrowing down options. Long-term care advocates continue to work diligently to ensure that the information available on the internet is reliable. This section provides links to national and statewide resources that provide specific nursing home quality information.

In "Online State Sources of Nursing Home Quality Information," NCCNHR provides links to state websites that contain nursing home quality information, including information about individual facilities. While some state governments merely link users to the federal Medicare website, Nursing Home Compare, others have their own quality information reporting systems. Five states put each facility's entire inspection report online.

One citizen advocacy group, California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, has its own Nursing Home Guide. This unique site describes violations for which each facility in the state was cited; fines and other enforcement actions; and citations. It also includes important information about nurse staffing, such as the number of hours of nursing care residents receive in the facility; turnover rates; and salary and wages. Another non-governmental quality information site in California, California Nursing Home Search, assigns a star rating to every facility. This site is operated by the California Health Care Foundation with the University of California, San Francisco.