

Advocacy and Protective Services Inc (APSI)
Strategic Plan
October 1, 2011 – June 30, 2014

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Advocacy and Protective Services Inc (APSI)

Strategic Plan

October 1, 2011 – June 30, 2014

In the spring of 2011 APSI launched a Strategic Planning process designed to engage stakeholders in developing a plan that outlines a strategic direction in response to these questions:

- Who are the primary targets of APSI service?
- How can APSI serve these people in an efficient, effective, and responsive manner?
- How can APSI strengthen its responsiveness to stakeholders?
- How can APSI move toward more diverse and sustainable sources of funding?

The Strategic Planning Framework offered multiple opportunities for those that have a stake in the future of APSI to contribute their perspectives and insights. The planning process was designed to:

- Foster engagement of the Board of Directors and APSI staff with key stakeholders around these strategic questions
- Encourage quality conversations that allow time for consideration of complex issues
- Generate widespread ownership and as much consensus as possible about the future of APSI
- Create a Strategic Plan that outlines key commitments, defines objectives to achieve the commitments, and aligns resources and structures to support the commitments.

Part One of this document includes an overview of the Strategic Plan Framework for Stakeholder Engagement. Each of the opportunities for stakeholder engagement is described in detail.

Part Two outlines the key findings from stakeholders, and offers an analysis of the implications for the Strategic Plan.

Part Three of this report lays out the Three Year Commitments and First Year Plan. This section includes First Year Objectives, deliverables, and people responsible for implementation.

It is important to note that the planning process and this Strategic Plan does not purport to serve as research, an evaluation of services, or a review of customer satisfaction. The planning process was more broadly designed to gather ideas from a wide range of stakeholders around pressing strategic questions in order to create a strong and viable plan for moving forward.

PART ONE: STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Kick Off Conversation

The Strategic Planning process was launched in March, 2011 with a gathering of about fifty (50) APSI board members and leadership staff, along with people in key leadership positions in advocacy, governmental agencies, county board associations, and provider organizations. This Kick Off served to introduce the strategic planning process to stakeholders and launch discussion of the strategic questions.

Individual Interviews with People Served by APSI

Individual interviews were conducted with forty –six (46) people for whom APSI is guardian. The protocol for this interview was developed with assistance from OSDA (Ohio Self Determination Association) and People First of Ohio. These groups offered feedback in designing an interview process that was user-friendly and accessible.

A pool of potential interviewees was drawn from a list of people served by APSI who also receive services from organizations representing a cross section of Ohio:

- Huron County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Knox County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Southwest Ohio Developmental Center (SODC)
- Goodwill of Cincinnati
- Lucas County/Lott Industries Adult Options
- Mount Vernon Developmental Center (MVDC)

A staff member from each of these organizations received a list of people who receive services from their organization for whom APSI is guardian. In Huron County, because of the small number on the list, each person was interviewed. In Knox County, because the list was long, staff were instructed to select every third name. (Staff were encouraged to substitute names in the event that the randomly selected individual was not able to participate.) For all other groups, the staff member was asked to select a designated number of people from the list who would be willing and able to participate in a personal interview. The local staff person obtained a release, conducted the interview using a standard interview protocol, and returned the completed interview response forms to APSI.

Individual Focused Interviews with Key Stakeholders

Representatives from statewide advocacy groups and governmental organizations were invited to participate in individual focused interviews designed to solicit unique perspectives and contributions. Interviews were conducted with representatives from:

- Ohio Legal Rights Services (OLRS)
- The ARC of Ohio
- Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council
- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Autism Society of Ohio
- Probate Judges Executive Committee

Group Stakeholder Forums

Groups conversations were held with self-advocates, family members /advocates, and county board staff and provider organization staff from across Ohio. The purpose of these conversations was to:

1. Learn the value that APSI brings now
2. Learn how to improve value that APSI offers
3. Understand concerns that might be unique to the stakeholder group
4. Hear responses to selected strategic questions outlined above

Group Stakeholder Forums were held with:

- Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA)
- People First of Ohio
- Ohio Family Advisory Council
- County Board Association Superintendents Executive Committee
- County Board Association SSA Directors
- Ohio Provider Resource Association Executive Committee

Family and Advocate Survey

Family members and advocates of individuals for whom APSI serves as guardian or trustee were offered the opportunity to respond to a paper survey. A survey was mailed to each family member and advocate for whom APSI had a mailing address. Over 2900 surveys were mailed, and 484 were completed and returned.

Stakeholder Survey

An online survey was sent to the mail lists held by Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards (OASCB), and County Board SSA Directors. The SSA Directors were asked to forward the survey to SSAs. The survey was also distributed to the OPRA Executive Director and provider organization staff, Developmental Center Superintendents and staff and Probate Judges and court staff. Three hundred and six (306) stakeholders responded to the survey.

APSI Staff Engagement

APSI staff had the opportunity to participate in a planning session designed to solicit their ideas about the future of APSI. APSI leadership staff were present for all stakeholder conversations. APSI leadership staff engaged in numerous planning sessions to review the feedback obtained in the stakeholder sessions and surveys and draft Commitments and Objectives that are responsive to this feedback.

SUMMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

PLANNING ACTIVITY	TARGET GROUP	TIMEFRAME
Kick Off Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Section of Stakeholders 	March 16, 2011
Individual Interviews with people served by APSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals for whom APSI is guardian 	May
Individual Focused Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio Legal Rights Services • The ARC of Ohio • Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council • Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities • Autism Society of Ohio • Probate Judges Executive Committee • 	April - May
Group Stakeholder Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) • People First of Ohio • Ohio Family Advisory Council • County Board Association Superintendents Executive Committee • County Board Association SSA Directors • Ohio Provider Resource Association Executive Committee • 	April - May
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family members of people currently supported by APSI • County Board Superintendents and SSAs • Provider organizations Executive Directors and staff • Developmental Center Superintendents and program staff • Probate Judges and court staff 	April -May
Planning and strategy sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APSI Board, Leadership and Staff 	May -July

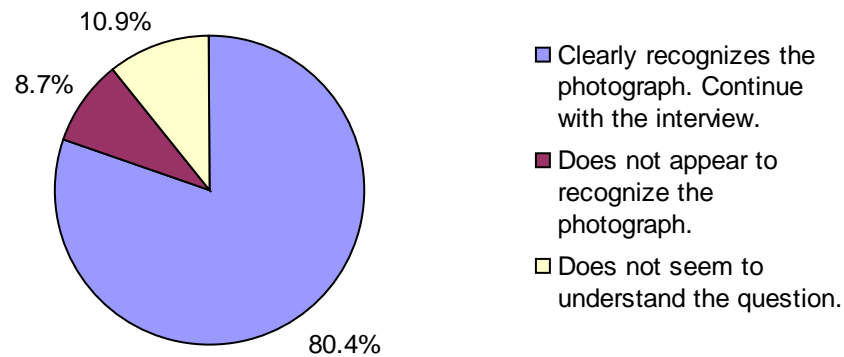
PART TWO: KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH PEOPLE SERVED BY APSI: KEY FINDINGS

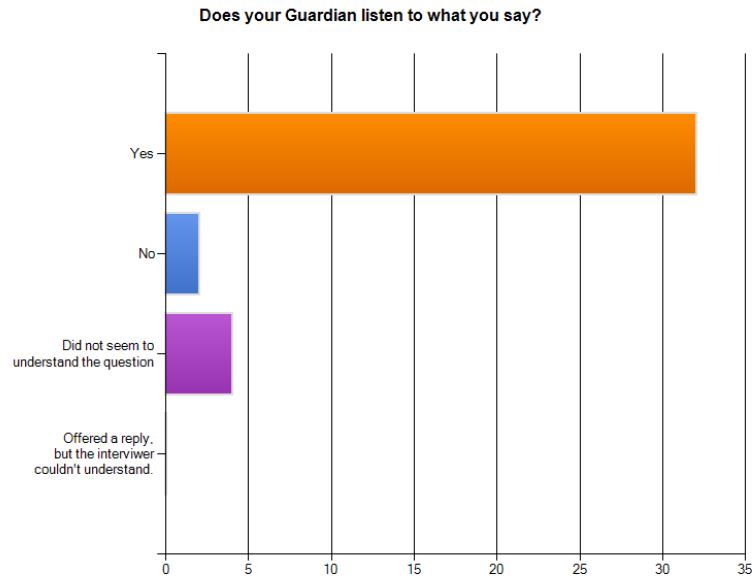
Individual interviews were conducted with forty-six (46) people for whom APSI is guardian. The protocol for this interview was developed with assistance from OSDA (Ohio Self Determination Association) and People First of Ohio. The interviews were conducted by provider agency staff who was known to the person being interviewed.

A photo of the person's guardian was presented to the person served by APSI. The interviewer asked "Do you know this person?" 80% of the respondents indicated that they knew their APSI representative. In 10% of the interviews, it was not clear whether the person understood the question. Another 8.7% did not appear to recognize the photograph.

Show photograph of Guardian again. This is _____. Do you Know this person?



Respondents who recognized the photograph of their Guardian were asked a series of additional questions. When asked, “Does your Guardian listen to what you say?” 84% (32 respondents) said “yes,” two (2) said “no,” and the remainder (10.5%) did not seem to understand the question.



Follow up questions included “Tell me about a time when your Guardian listened to you”; and “Tell me about a time when your Guardian did not listen to you.” Interviewers were encouraged to record the responses using the interviewees own words.

Sample responses to “Tell me about a time when your Guardian listened to you” included:

- “He stated that she listens to everything and she listens to all his questions.”
- “Helped ___ get a phone hooked up at home and cable hooked up.”
- “She’s cool. When I need something, or need to talk to her she’ll come to my house and talk to me. She is a sweetheart and when I need to talk she’s there for me.”
- “She listens to me when I have a meeting.”
- “She listens to me when I’m upset or I’m mad and in a situation I can’t get myself out of.”
- “Awhile back I was having a lot of trouble here at work and wound up having to go to (treatment/service). I told (Guardian) about what was happening at home and that my hallucinations were really getting to me. (Guardian) helped me to get my work days shortened and now I’m doing a lot better... there has never been a time when (Guardian) did not listen to me. I think (Guardian) is a real good guardian because she likes to hear me, listen to me, and help.”

- “She listens to me real good because she cares about me. There has never been a time when she did not listen to me. I want her to stay as a guardian for a long time if she wants to.”

Sample responses to “Tell me about a time with your Guardian did not listen to you” included:

- “I asked her about driving...and (Guardian) said ‘not right now’ because of (medical issues).”
- “When I wanted to live on my own. She won’t let me.”
- “When (interviewee’s) mom wanted a copy of her bank statement.”
- “The only time (Guardian) doesn’t listen is when she doesn’t answer her phone or doesn’t call back right away when I call.”
- “Called her, she was not in her office but she calls me back.”

Interviewees were asked to offer responses to “What are some things you like about working with your Guardian.” Sample responses include:

- “(Guardian) tries to help me take vacations.”
- “I like that she listens to me. I like the fact that she does not hold things against me and that she helps me see my family.”
- “Like her a lot. She helps me stay out of trouble.”
- “She’s a good listener.”
- “I like that we have things in common. She told me she has dogs and one is named _____. She showed me a picture of them, they are nice.”
- “She cares enough to be like a friend and that’s what I like about working with her. She cares a lot about me and I don’t know what I would do if I didn’t have a guardian.”

Interviewees were asked “What could be better about working with your Guardian?” Interviewers recorded thirty-seven (37) responses to this question. Nineteen entries indicated that the person did not seem to understand the question, or did not have anything to say. Five (5) respondents replied with only restatements of positives (e.g. “I like (Guardian) a lot and want to keep her as my Guardian.”) The remaining entries are outlined below. Because of the importance of this question, all responses relating to what could be better are listed.

- “I want her to come see me more often; she is always busy. I understand that. I want to get to know her more.”
- Indicated that he wants his Guardian to meet his mom.
- “She could come over more. She needs to call me and check up on me more.”
- Her calling to talk to him (made gesture to show this).
- “If I had a new one.”
- Indicated that she would prefer not to have permission for every single picture taken of her. She would like more freedom in this area.
- “Everything with my Guardian is okay, but I don’t want my family to come back and see me ever again. I tried it two times and it never seemed to work out.”
- Wants (Guardian) to take her to lunch.
- He wants to move out of the house he currently lives in.
- “I think she is wonderful. She don’t mean any harm. She tells me to relax. I think she could take me out shopping and to Doctor appointments more often.”
- Going on outings with (Guardian).
- “I don’t know painting and drawing.” (Interviewer stated that the person may have been indicating that she wanted her guardian to participate in these activities with her.)

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH PEOPLE SERVED: *ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN*

Several key themes emerge in the individual interviews with people served by APSI. People value a personal relationship with their Guardian. Spending informal time together and getting to know the person's hopes for the future are mentioned often as ways toward building these relationships. People served by APSI place a high importance on being listened to by their guardian. Listening is seen as a building block of a strong relationship.

People were clear about what could be better. They want more phone access to their Guardian. They want their phone calls returned promptly. They want their guardian to spend more time with them and get to know them better. When their preferences or requests (e.g. to drive, move, etc.) are not met, people want opportunities to talk this over and to understand the reasons why.

These themes have strong implications for the strategic plan. In order for APSI to be responsive to this feedback from people served, it will be necessary to consider ways that Guardians can work more efficiently and effectively, and have access to technology to support this. Caseload structures, supervision, and monitoring systems need to be in place to encourage and support spending time with people and responding promptly to phone calls.

2. INDIVIDUAL FOCUSED INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS: *KEY FINDINGS*

Individual Focused Interviews were conducted with representatives from statewide advocacy groups and governmental organizations. The APSI Executive Director participated in all interviews. These Interviews were held with:

- Ohio Legal Rights Services (OLRS)
- The ARC of Ohio
- Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council
- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Autism Society of Ohio
- Probate Judges Executive Committee

Interviews offered the opportunity to ask the strategic questions outlined on page one. In addition, stakeholders were offered an opportunity to offer ideas about the value that APSI brings to them now, and how that value might be enhanced.

Key Findings from these individual interviews include:

- Stakeholders expressed overwhelming support for the success of the future of APSI.
- Stakeholders recognize the importance of focusing APSI guardianship services on a defined group of individuals with complex issues who are not currently able to make decisions without expert assistance, and for whom no alternatives to guardianship currently exist.
- Stakeholders appreciate the need for their organizations, and others, to support alternatives to guardianship so individuals, families, and organizations have viable alternatives to state guardianship. Several stakeholders offered ongoing assistance in developing projects that focus on alternatives to guardianship.
- Stakeholders see the need for a “major philosophical shift” that moves the system from “APSI is the first alternative” to “APSI is the last alternative, and only under certain defined circumstances.” For this shift to happen, lots of advocacy, governmental, and provider organizations need to support the shift.
- Stakeholders recognize the need for a diverse, sustainable funding base, and encouraged exploration of a number of alternatives including Robert Wood Johnson and other Foundations, Medicaid Innovation Grants, private fundraising, and partnerships with fund management groups.
- Some stakeholders also point out that APSI will need to assure the advocacy community that future funding sources will not present a conflict of interest. Potential funding sources should not have a direct stake in the decisions that APSI might make on behalf of any individual it serves.
- Stakeholders acknowledge that the judicial system is a driver for APSI services. They offered insights into potential strategies for engaging members of the judicial system in creative dialogue about the role of state guardianship.
- Stakeholders agree that more siblings are actively engaged in the lives of their brothers and sisters with disabilities. This represents an opportunity for exploration of education and training efforts related to alternatives to guardianship.

INDIVIDUAL FOCUSED INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS: ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

These interviews help APSI lay the foundation for working collaboratively to implement the Strategic Plan. Going forward, stakeholders will play a vital role in supporting APSI to shift its focus to those who meet a revised target definition. Advocacy organizations have a unique contribution in assisting individuals with disabilities and their family members to understand and pursue alternatives to state guardianship. The engagement of siblings of people currently and potentially served by APSI will be critical to future success. Objectives related to this are included in the Three Year Commitments and First Year Plan.

Many of the insights offered by stakeholders will be useful as APSI develops a diverse and sustainable funding base. Because many stakeholders have strong views about the sources of APSI funding, it is necessary to invest in ongoing dialogue with stakeholders. An objective related to this is included in Three Year Commitments and First Year Plan.

3. GROUP STAKEHOLDER FORUMS: KEY FINDINGS

Group stakeholder forums were held with self-advocates family members /advocates, and county board staff and provider organization staff from across Ohio. Group Stakeholder Forums were held with:

- Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA)
- People First of Ohio
- Ohio Family Advisory Council
- County Board Association Superintendents Executive Committee
- County Board Association SSA Directors
- Ohio Provider Resource Association Executive Committee

Common themes emerged across these forums. Stakeholders generally agree that:

- Our system of services needs a healthy, sustainable APSI.
- The success and sustainability of APSI services rests, in part, on focusing its services on a targeted, defined group.
- Stakeholders have a vital role in assisting and supporting APSI to target its services effectively.
- Creating alternatives to APSI guardianship is a system's challenge and requires a system's response.
- Investments in technology and training will allow APSI to function more efficiently.
- Regular, on-going communication with stakeholders, using multiple formats, will continue to strengthen the connection between APSI and its stakeholders.

In addition, some stakeholder groups offered ideas and insights unique to their stakeholder group:

- **Individuals associated with Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) and People First** expressed a desire to learn more about guardianship and alternatives to guardianship. They were clear and passionate about the importance of guardians taking the time to “really listen.” Many expressed the sentiment that individuals with labels of disability can learn to be successful decision-makers when offered opportunities to learn and practice, and when they have the support of a network of friends and/or family. They expressed an interest in having opportunities to learn more about successful choice and decision making and network-building.
- **Individuals participating in the Ohio Family Advisory Council** meeting expressed their concern that many families do not understand guardianship or alternatives to guardianship. They suggested that there are many “myths and misconceptions” about guardianship. They offered many ideas about what families need to know to in order to make good decisions about guardianship. They asked for information and training in a variety of user-friendly formats. A few family members with long-standing objections to APSI services used the forum to express their dissatisfaction with APSI.
- **County Board Superintendents** expressed support for a clearly defined target population for APSI services. They offered many useful ideas about how they and other stakeholders can support this. Superintendents noted that county boards share the challenge of serving people with complex issues who require assistance in decision-making. When there are no alternatives to APSI guardianship for these people, county boards rely on APSI to assist. Superintendents expressed a strong desire to establish effective teams of support that listen to the person and to one another. They encourage APSI to examine Guardian caseload size, training, and support so that Guardians are carrying out their responsibilities in a consistent and responsible manner.
- **County Board SSAs** urged APSI to develop clear policies and procedures congruent with the revised definition of the target population, and to undertake a joint review to determine which people currently receiving APSI services might be assisted to develop alternatives to guardianship. They expressed enthusiasm for shared regional trainings to address waiting lists, build better understanding of county board and APSI services, offer opportunities for team building, and share information about alternatives to APSI guardianship. They observed that APSI Guardians and SSAs share some functions. Continued dialogue will be important to build understanding about opportunities to avoid duplication of services, especially in the monitoring function.
- **Members of the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Executive Committee** shared their view that guardianship services will be in demand due to the aging of the current generation of parents and the increase in the number of individuals served who meet the target definition for APSI services. The waiting list is of grave concern to providers. They expressed strong support for encouraging more alternatives to APSI guardianship, and the necessity of collaborating with providers and county boards on this issue. They recognized the need to engage judges so that they understand and support alternatives to APSI guardianship when feasible. Members encouraged APSI to be creative in using technology to support efficiencies. They suggested a number of possible strategies to achieve efficiencies.

GROUP STAKEHOLDER FORUMS: ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The ideas and concerns raised in these stakeholder group forums are reflected in the Three Year Commitments and One Year Objectives. Commitments and Objectives address the need for a clearly defined and focused target group, and clear policies and procedures for the waiting list. They also address the need to examine the current caseloads to determine which individuals might have their needs addressed via alternatives to APSI guardianship.

The Commitments and Objectives outlined in this plan call for ongoing communication and collaboration with all stakeholder groups so that the ideas and concerns raised by stakeholders can be addressed together. APSI will communicate with stakeholders about this strategic plan so that all parties are aware that their ideas are reflected within the Plan.

4. FAMILY MEMBER AND ADVOCATE SURVEY: *KEY FINDINGS*

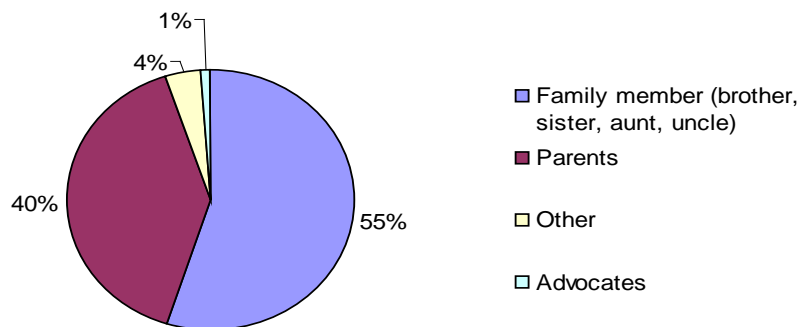
2900 Family and Advocate Surveys were mailed. A survey was sent to the family member or advocate of people currently served by APSI for whom a current mailing address was available. Family members and advocates were offered an option of calling APSI to complete the survey by phone. If survey responses included a request for follow-up assistance or information, this information was relayed to the appropriate APSI Representative or Supervisor for follow up. Four hundred and eight -four (484) people responded to the survey, for a response rate of 16.7%.

The charts and data on the following pages summarize the key findings from the survey. A summary and discussion of implications of these findings is included at the end of this section.

Family/Advocate Survey: RESPONDENT DATA

- Slightly more than half (54.8%) of the respondents are family members (brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles) but not parents
 - 40.2% are parents
 - 4% described themselves as “other”
 - 1% are advocates
- 90% of the respondents indicated that APSI was the guardian for their family member/person for whom they advocate.
 - 78.3% (358 respondents) indicated that they agreed with the decision that APSI become guardian
 - 6.8% (31 respondents) indicated that they disagreed with the decision that APSI become guardian
 - 14.9% (68 respondents) indicated “other” when asked about their agreement. In most instances, they offered comments indicating that the decision was made by another family member who is now deceased, and that they had no direct involvement in the decision.

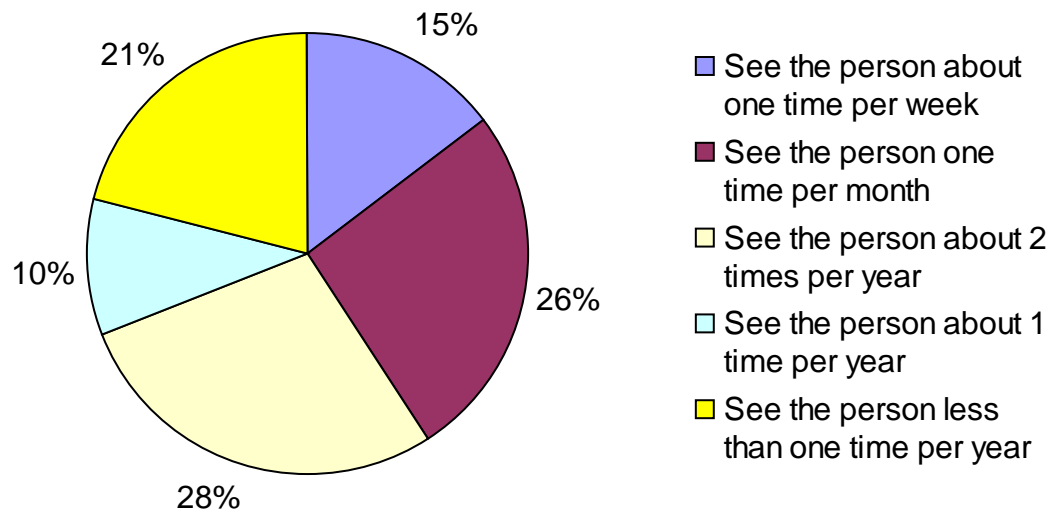
Check the box that describes your relationship to the person served by APSI.



Family/Advocate Survey: FREQUENCY OF CONTACT OF FAMILY MEMBER/ADVOCATE WITH PERSON SERVED BY APSI

- 15% see the person about one time per week
- 26 % see the person one time per month
- 28% see their family member/person for whom they advocate about 2 times per year
- 10.2% see the person about 1 time per year
- 21% see the person less than one time per year

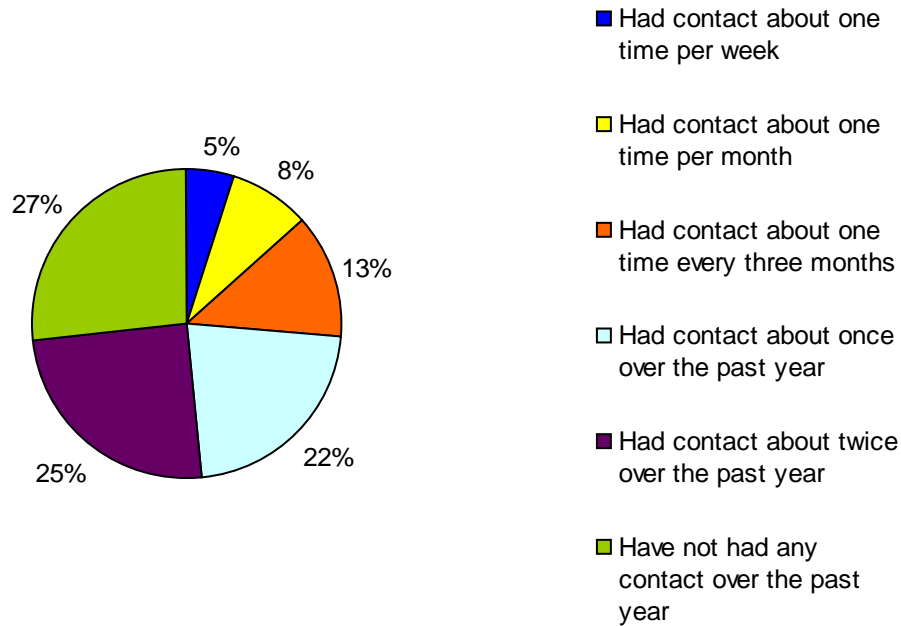
How often do you see your family member or the person for whom you Advocate? Check the answer that most closely describes your frequency of contact:



Family/Advocate Survey: FREQUENCY OF Family CONTACT WITH APSI GUARDIAN OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

- 5.1% had contact about one time per week
- 8.4% had contact about one time per month
- 13% had contact about one time every three months
- 21.8% had contact about once over the past year
- 24.8 % had contact about twice over the past year
- 27% have not had any contact over the past year

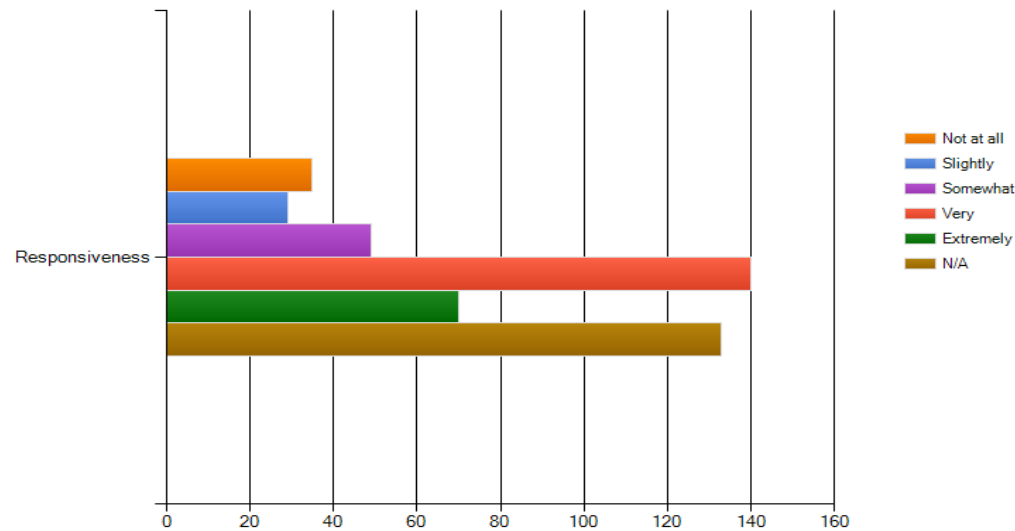
Over the past 12 months about how often have you had contact with your person's APSI guardian? Include contacts by mail, phone, email, and face-to-face contacts?



Family/Advocate Survey: RESPONSIVENESS (responds the same day to emergency situations, within a few days to non-emergency calls, letters, and emails)

- 15.3 % described their experience of responsiveness as EXTREMELY
- 30.6% described their experience of responsiveness VERY
- 10.7% described their experience of responsiveness as SOMEWHAT
- 7.7% described their experience of responsiveness as NOT AT ALL
- 6.6 % described their experience of responsiveness as SLIGHTLY
- 29% indicated that the question was N/A

This question is about the RESPONSIVENESS of the APSI guardian when you try to reach him/her. Please keep in mind that APSI expects that guardians will respond the same day to emergency situations, and within a few days to non-emergency calls, letters, and emails from family members and advocates. Keeping this in mind, check the answer that best describes the OVERALL RESPONSIVENESS of the APSI guardian for your person.



Family Member/Advocate Survey: CONFIDENCE (decisions are made in the best interest of the person)

→ 24.7% described their experience of confidence as EXTREMELY

→ 37.1% described their experience of confidence as VERY

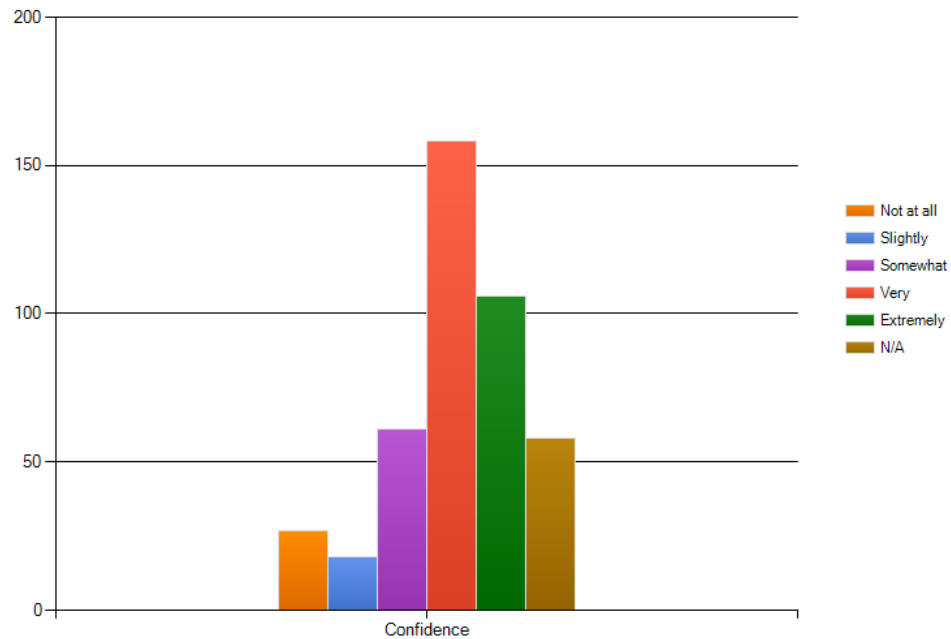
→ 14.2% described their experience of confidence as SOMEWHAT

→ 6.3% indicated their experience of confidence as NOT AT ALL

→ 4.2% described their experience of confidence as SLIGHTLY

→ 13.5% indicated N/A

This question asks about your CONFIDENCE in the decisions that the APSI Guardian makes on behalf of your person. How CONFIDENT are you that the decisions that the Guardian makes are in the best interests of the person?



Family /Advocate Survey Open Ended Question #9: WHAT DOES APSI DO THAT HELPS YOU OR YOUR PERSON?

This was an open-ended question that offered respondents the opportunity to write/enter their own response. This question prompted two hundred eighty-nine (289) responses. Some responses included requests for contact or action (e.g. a request that a guardian call a family member). When comments included identifying information that allowed for follow-up or action, those comments were forwarded to the appropriate APSI staff. For example, when feedback included a request for contact, and a name or phone number was listed, this item was listed for immediate follow-up. APSI staff then followed up on each request.

Responses were reviewed and grouped to determine the major themes. These categories emerged as the main themes in response to this question. They are listed in order of frequency of occurrence:

- Positive Statements about APSI Services
- No response
- Negative Statements about APSI Services
- Requests for More Contact and Communication

Positive Statements about APSI services

- About 69% of the responses were statements about positive experiences with APSI services
- About half of the positive responses were of a general (non-specific) nature. (“Everything, does everything,” “Gives me peace of mind,” “Takes care of my son.”)
- About one fourth of the positive comments specifically mentioned the helpfulness of the communication (“Keeps me informed.”)
- Other frequently mentioned positive response items were
 - Helps with decisions
 - Takes a personal interest
 - Helps with a specific issue (medicine, place to live)

No Responses

- About 10% respondents write the words “N/A,” entered a question mark, or offered entries like “No idea,” “I don’t know” or offered a response that could not be interpreted as either positive or negative.

Negative Statements about APSI Services

- About 9% of the responses to this open-ended question reflected negative experiences with APSI services. Many in this category said “nothing.” Other comments included in this category include: “Try to run his life, won’t leave his past alone.” “Not do much for her and the family.”

Requests for More Contact and Communication

- About 7% of respondents offered a reply that referenced a lack of communication and/or a desire for more or better communication. (“I want to know more information.” “Not sure what she does.” “Let me know what is going on.”)

Family/Advocate Survey Open Ended Question #10: WHAT COULD THE APSI GUARDIAN DO THAT COULD BE OF MORE HELP TO YOU OR YOUR PERSON?

This was an open-ended question that offered respondents the opportunity to write/enter their own response. This question prompted two hundred and seventy-five (275) responses. Responses were reviewed and grouped to determine the major themes. These categories emerged as the main themes in response to this question. They are listed in order of frequency of occurrence:

- More or better Communication
- Positive feedback about APSI (with no additional feedback about how things could be better)
- No response/nothing/ response to another question
- Specific ideas/suggestions related to their family member
- Negative response
- Request for more frequent visits and/or fewer restrictions on visits

More or better Communication

- The desire for more communication was the most frequent response. About 41% of the responses included a reference to more communication. (“Keep me informed of health issues and how she is faring in her environment.” “Just keep me updated on my niece’s ups and downs.” “Return my call.”)

Positive feedback about APSI

- The next most frequent category of response was positive feedback. About 17% of the respondents offered only positive feedback, with no additional feedback about how things could be better. (“APSI is doing a good job.” “We don’t know of anything at present, but if we do need something or have any concerns we can call and our concerns will be addressed.”)

No response/nothing/ response to another question

- Almost the same percentage (16%) offered no response, entered information relevant to another question (e.g. information regarding why they cannot visit their family member), or said “nothing.”

Specific ideas/suggestions related to their family member

- About 12% of respondents listed an issue regarding their family member. (“Keep ___ happy. Just give him dollar bills or quarters.” “Give us ideas on how to make him listen when home.”)

Negative Statements about APSI Services

- About 6% offered strong negative comments. “Just return her to me and stay out of my life for good.” “APSI needs to close their doors.”

Request for more frequent visits and/or fewer restrictions on visits

- Several (10) expressed a desire to be allowed to visit or communicate more, or with fewer limits. (“I would like to see him more often.” “He (APSI) could make sure we have our visits as scheduled.”)

Family/ Advocate Survey Open Ended Question # 11: WHAT OTHER IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR HOW APSI CAN BE MORE HELPFUL TO FAMILY MEMBERS OR ADVOCATES WHO ARE IN A SITUATION LIKE YOURS?

This was offered as an open-ended question. 280 responses were received. Responses were reviewed and grouped to determine the major themes. These categories emerged as the main themes in response to this question. Categories of responses emerged that were similar to Question #10 above, although the order of frequency of occurrence is somewhat different.

- More or better Communication
- Specific ideas/suggestions related to their family member
- No response/nothing/ response to another question
- Positive feedback about APSI (with no additional feedback about how things could be better)
- Negative response about APSI Services

More or better Communication

- The most frequently mentioned item was the desire for more and better communication. About 31% of the responses referenced a desire for more or better communication. ("Notify family when the client requests any changes in her care since we put APSI in charge of our family member for his/her own protection." "Communication is the key. I recently learned of a change in my child's guardian and was not notified at the time. Presently I do not even know the name of my child's guardian, the person who is making decision on my child's behalf.")

Specific ideas/suggestions related to their family member

- About 11% listed specific actions that would be helpful. "Just start family counseling." "Do not move ___ in with roommate that was tried already." "What seems to happen is that there is a lot of turnover in your staff. Continuity w/the clients would be preferred."

No response/nothing/ response to another question

- Almost the same percentage (11%) indicated nothing, no idea, or used the space to elaborate on their response to previous questions

Positive Feedback About APSI Services

- Over 9% offered only positive comments: "It's hard to improve something that works well. Thanks." "We are grateful for all you have done for our son and for us. You have made a difficult situation easier to bear for all of us.")

Negative Responses about APSI Services

- About 4% of the responses reflected very negative sentiments re: APSI. ("They don't know the meaning of the word help." "APSI could be more helpful to family members in situations like ours if they would verify all information received from third party sources"!)

FAMILY AND ADVOCATE SURVEY: ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The survey data suggest several areas of strength, as well as those that call for improvement and attention in this strategic plan. Over 61% report that they are very or extremely confident that APSI makes decisions that are in the best interest of the person. Almost half (about 46%) of respondents described APSI as extremely or very responsive. About two thirds of respondents listed specific, positive ways that APSI helped them or their family member.

The survey responses also indicate a strong desire for more and/or better communication. This desire for more frequent and better communication is readily apparent in the responses to the open-ended questions. Family members and advocates want more information about what is going on with the person (health, living situation, incidents, etc.) and they want to know when/how often the Guardian sees the person. They want this information communicated to them on a regular, reliable basis. This issue formed the development of one of the major commitments to “Strengthen outreach and communication between APSI and individuals served, families and advocates of people currently and potentially served by APSI.” Objectives include a review and update of policies and practices related to family member/advocate communication, training of Guardians, and implementation of quality assurance procedures in order to track the frequency of communication.

This Strategic Plan addresses the importance of enhancing the quality of services that APSI provides by aligning APSI services with National Guardianship Services guidelines. Enhancing APSI services will address many of the issues raised by family members and advocates in their survey responses.

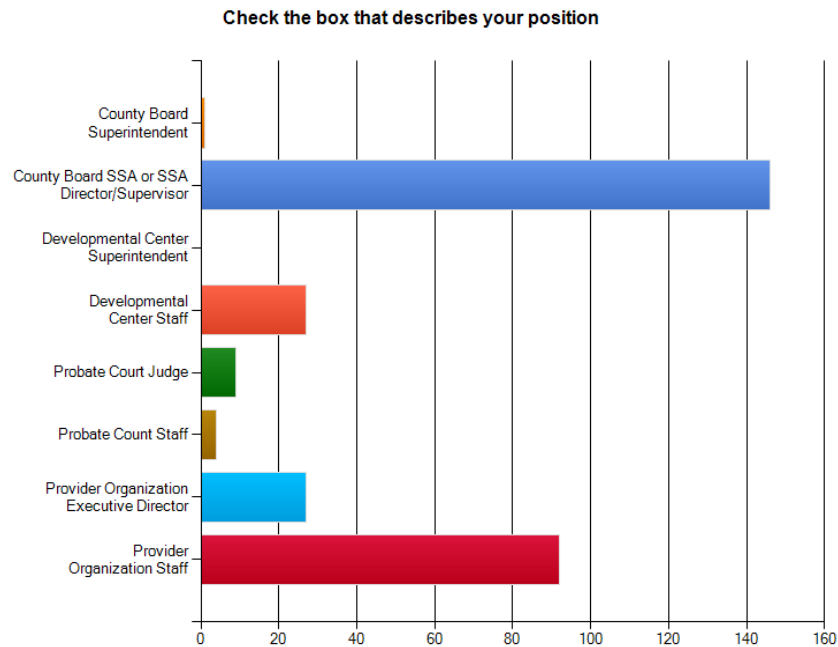
As a context for understanding this feedback, it is important to note that, for a limited number of families, APSI is court-ordered to limit family contact with the ward.

5. STAKEHOLDER SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS

An online survey was sent to the mail lists held by Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards (OASCB), and County Board SSA Directors. The SSA Directors were asked to forward the survey to SSAs. The survey was also distributed to the OPRA Executive Director and provider organization staff, Developmental Center Superintendents and staff and Probate Judges and court staff. Three hundred and six (306) stakeholders responded to the survey. The following pages outline the survey questions and response data.

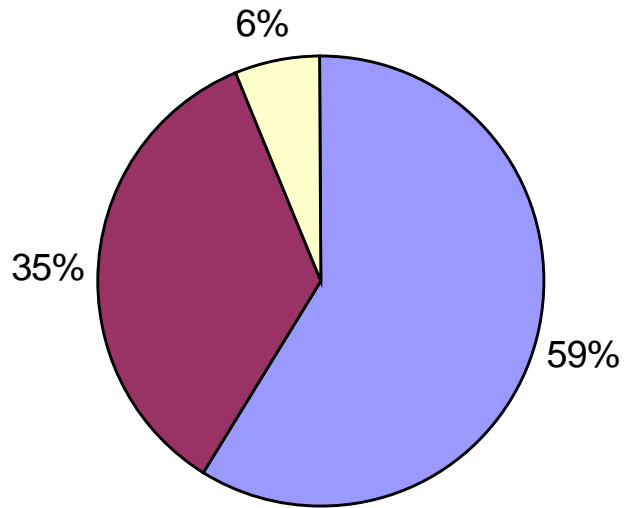
Stakeholder Survey: AFFILIATION OF RESPONDENTS

- Offered via Survey Monkey to County Board staff, Provider organizations, Developmental Center staff, and Probate Court staff
- Three hundred and six responses (306)
 - Almost half of the respondents (47.9%) are County Board staff
 - About 39% of the respondents are affiliated with provider organizations



Stakeholder Survey: NUMBER OF DIFFERENT GUARDIANS IN CONTACT WITH

- 58.4 % had contact with 1-2 different APSI guardians in a year
- 35.4% had contact with 3-5 guardians in a year

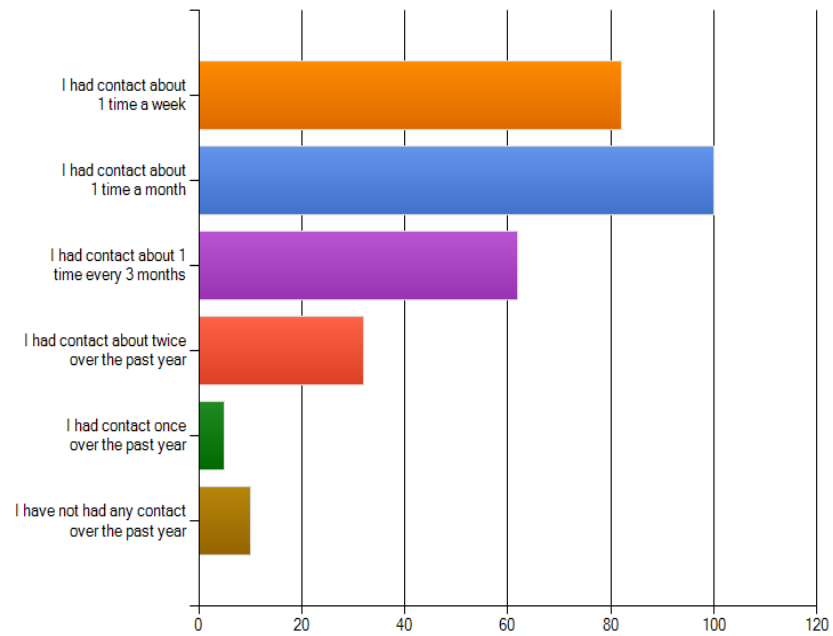


- I have contact with 1-2 APSI different guardians in a year
- I have contact with 3-5 different guardians in a year
- I have contact with more than 5 guardians in a year.

Stakeholder Survey: Frequency of CONTACT with Guardian

- 34.5 % had contact with an APSI guardian or representative once per month
- 28% had contact with an APSI guardian or representative once per week

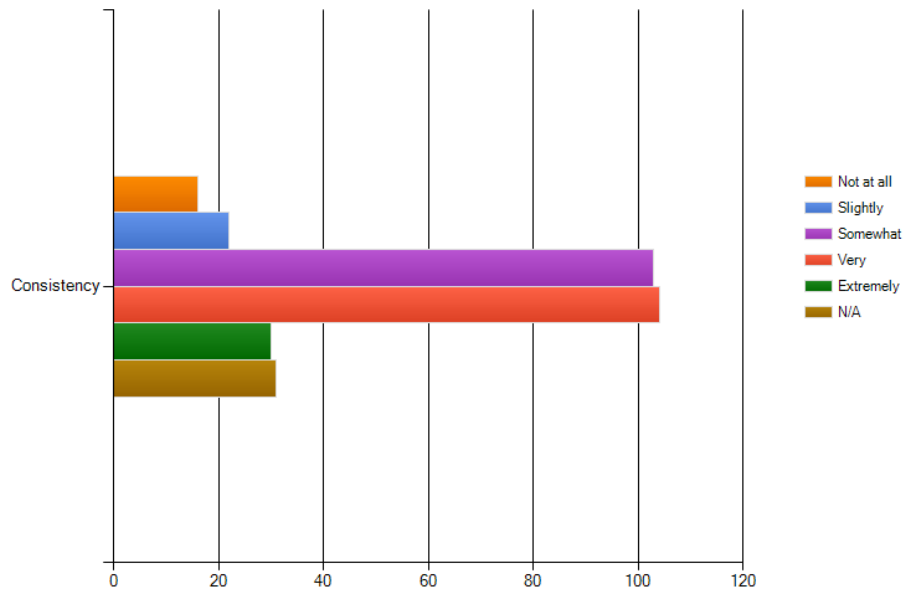
Over the past 12 months, about how often have you had contact with an APSI guardian or representative? Include contacts by mail, phone, email, and face-to-face contacts?



Stakeholder Survey: CONSISTENCY (different guardians make similar decisions and take similar actions in similar situations)

- 9.5 % described their experience of consistency as EXTREMELY
- 34.1% described their experience of consistency as VERY
- 33.8 described their experience of consistency as SOMEWHAT
- 7.2 % described their experience of consistency as SLIGHTLY
- 5.2 % described their experience of consistency as NOT AT ALL

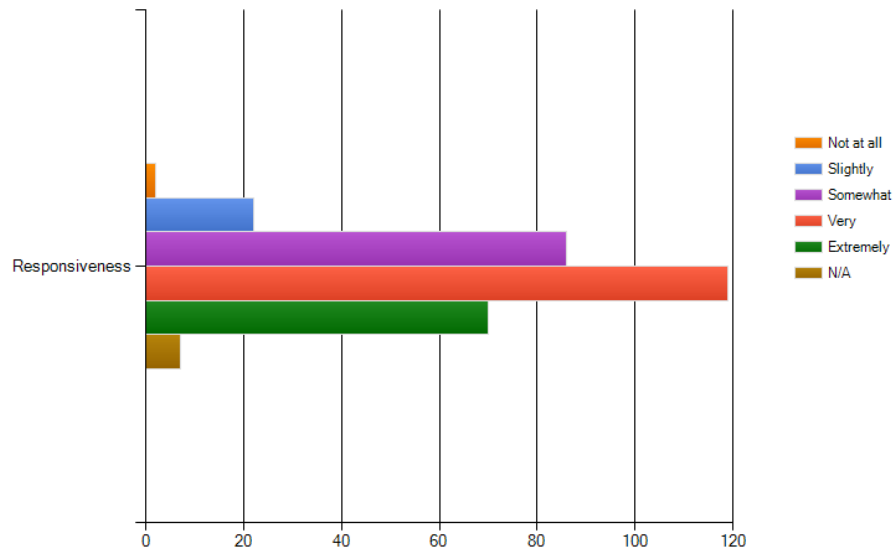
This question asks about your experience with the CONSISTENCY of service across different guardians. Consistency means that different APSI guardian representatives make similar decisions and take similar actions in similar situations. Are services consistent, regardless of who the guardian is?



Stakeholder Survey Results: RESPONSIVENESS (respond the same day to emergency situations, within a few days to non-emergency calls, letters, and emails)

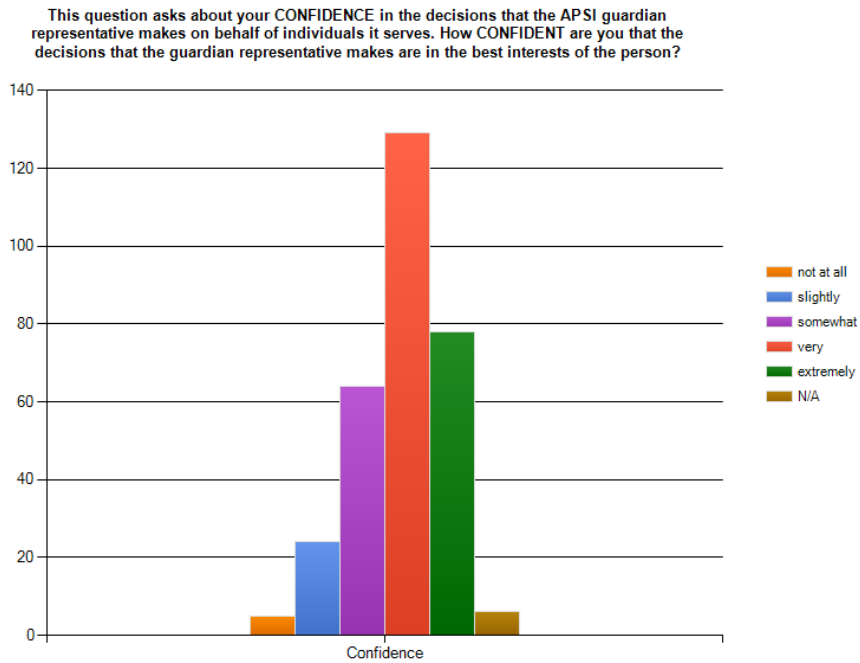
- 23 % described their experience of responsiveness as EXTREMELY
- 38.7% described their experience of responsiveness as VERY
- 28.2% described their experience of responsiveness as SOMEWHAT
- 7.2 % described their experience of responsiveness as SLIGHTLY

This question is about the RESPONSIVENESS of the APSI guardian representative when you try to reach him/her. Please keep in mind that APSI expects that the guardian representative will respond the same day to emergency situations, and within a few days to non-emergency calls, letters, and emails. Keeping this in mind, check the answer that best describes your experience with OVERALL RESPONSIVENESS of the APSI guardian representative(s).



Stakeholder Survey: CONFIDENCE (decisions are made in the best interest of the person)

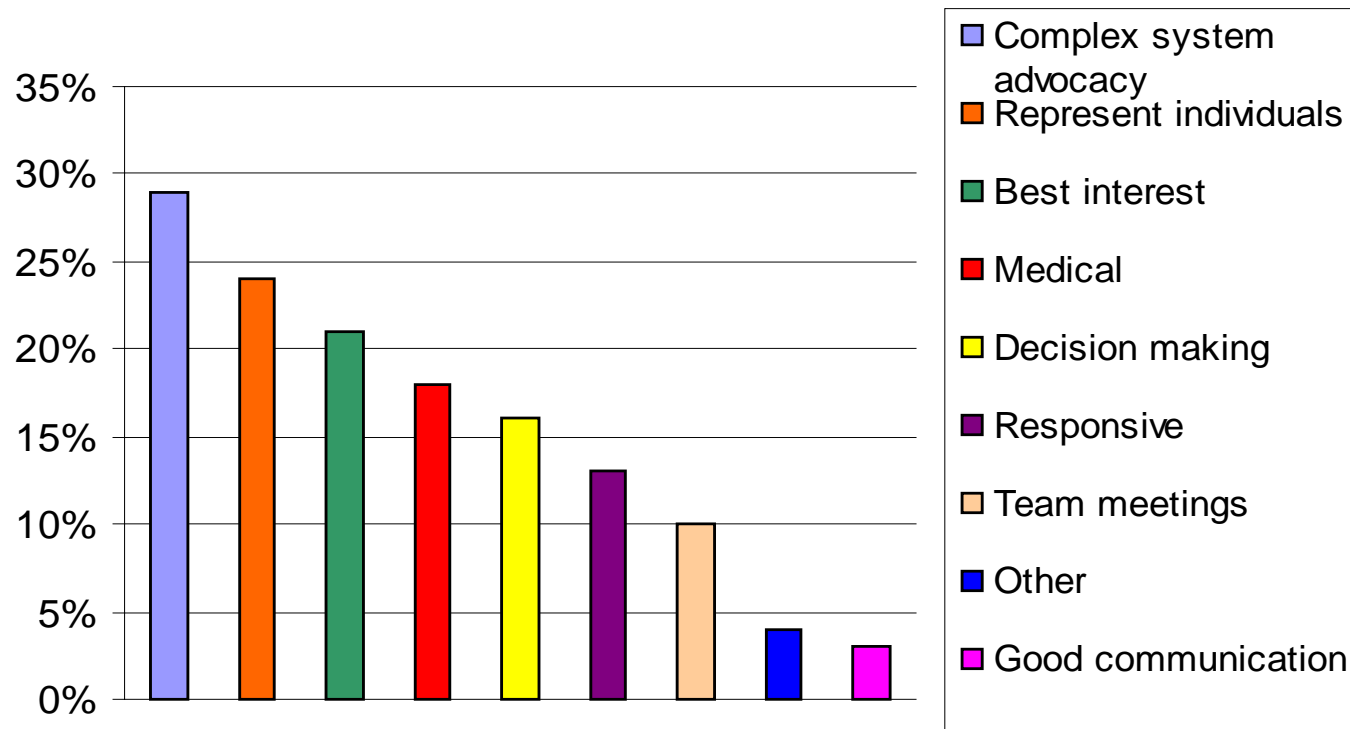
- 25.2 % described their experience of confidence as EXTREMELY
- 42.3% described their experience of confidence as VERY
- 21% described their experience of confidence as SOMEWHAT
- 7.9 % described their experience of confidence as SLIGHTLY



Stakeholder Survey: Responses to Open-ended Question 9: What does APSI do that you find most helpful?

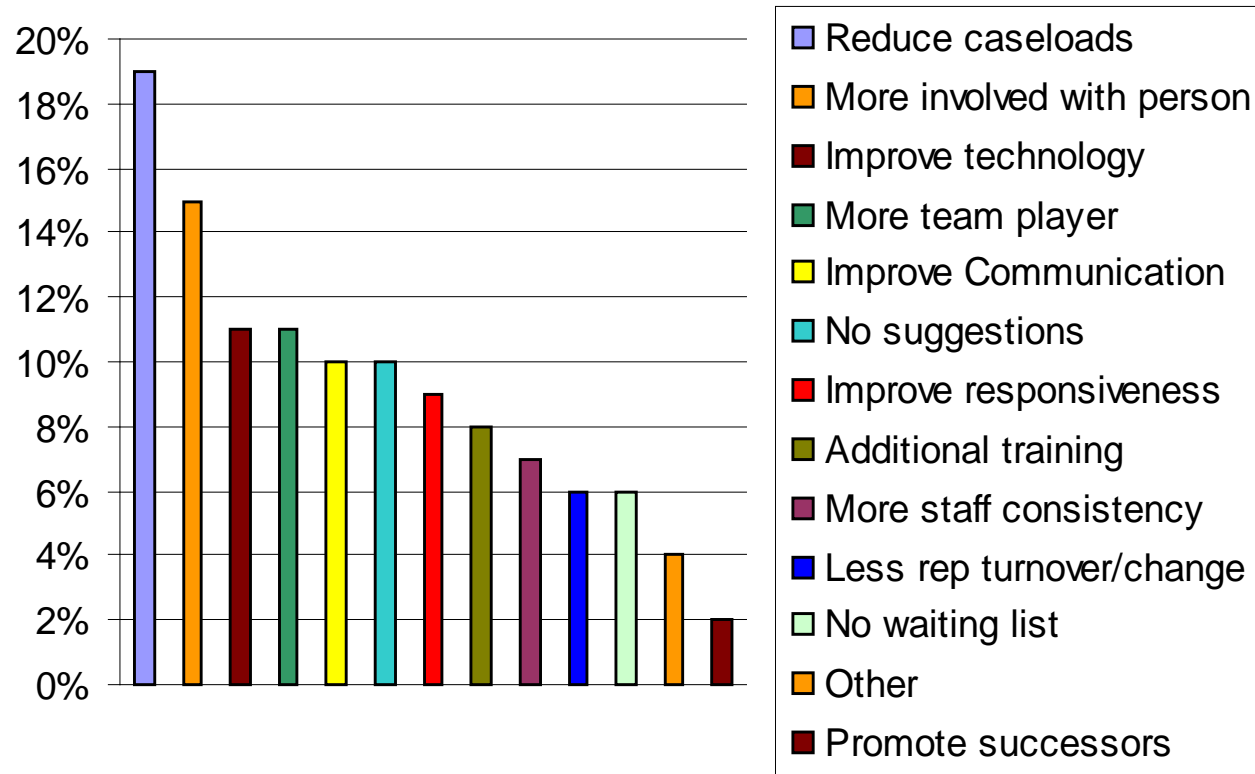
This question offered stakeholders the opportunity to enter a narrative response. Responses were reviewed and grouped to determine the major themes. A category name was given to each group of frequently occurring responses. These categories emerged as the main themes:

- Assisting with complex system advocacy
- Representing the individual
- Advocating for the best interest of the individual
- Assisting with medical services
- Assuming responsibility for decision-making
- Responsiveness to requests for assistance
- Participation in team meetings



Question #10: What changes could APSI make that would have a positive impact on the quality of services that APSI provides?

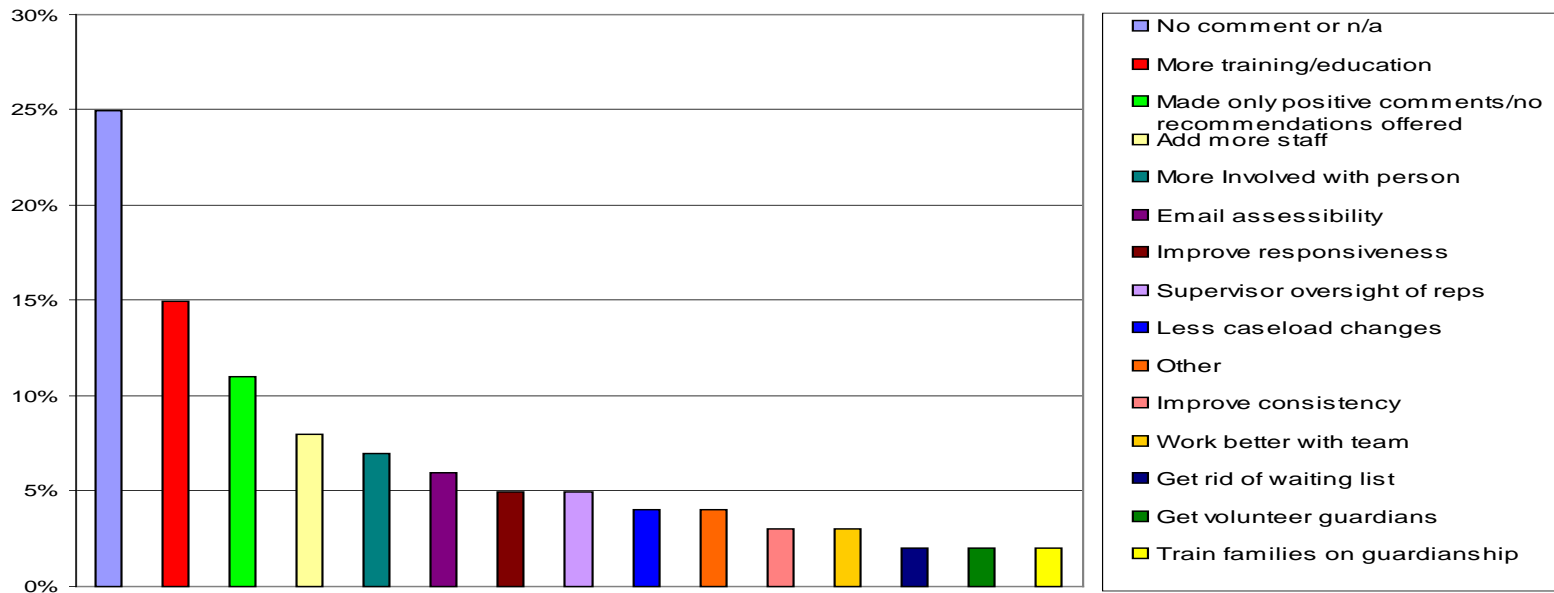
This question offered stakeholders the opportunity to enter a narrative response. Responses were reviewed and grouped to determine the major themes. A category name was given to each group of frequently occurring responses. These categories are shown in the box below.



Question 11: What other ideas do you have about how APSI can improve its services and be more helpful?

This question offered stakeholders the opportunity to enter a narrative response. Responses were reviewed and grouped to determine the major themes. A category name was given to each group of frequently occurring responses. These categories are shown in the box below.

“Complimentary comments” means that the response offered only positive feedback (“Keep up the good work.”).



STAKEHOLDER SURVEY: ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

58% of respondents had contact with 1-2 Guardians in a year. Over 35% had contact with 3-5 Guardians in a year. Over 46% of respondents indicated that their experiences across Guardians was extremely or very consistent.

Responses to questions about responsiveness and confidence follow a similar pattern. Over 61% of stakeholders say that APSI is extremely or very responsive. Over 1/3 (35%) say APSI is somewhat or slightly responsive. More than 2/3 (67%) of stakeholders say they are extremely or very confident that APSI makes decisions that are in the best interest of the person. Almost 29% say that they are somewhat or slightly confident that decisions are in the best interest of the person.

Responses to the open-ended question provide insight into what stakeholders see as important changes that can impact the quality of APSI services. Reducing caseload size (over 18%) and more involvement with the person (over 14%) were the most commonly mentioned ideas. This attention to more personalized services echoes the sentiments expressed in the family and advocate survey.

When asked about other ideas to improve APSI services, respondents clearly indicated their desire for more training for APSI Guardians. Adding more staff and improving the responsiveness of staff were the next two most frequently mentioned ideas for APSI to improve its services and be more helpful.

In response to this feedback, the Strategic Plan includes a Commitment to “Strengthen communication and collaboration between APSI and current and future stakeholders.” A public information plan and quarterly regional meetings with County Board leadership and SSAs will provide APSI with a structured vehicle for on-going engagement and communication with stakeholders.

This Strategic Plan also commits to strengthening the infrastructure to support more efficient use of resources and effective service delivery. The use of improved technology will strengthen the responsiveness to stakeholders and allow for more time spent with individuals served.

APSI's commitment to enhancing the quality of its services is also reflected in this Strategic Plan. Training APSI staff and strengthening supervision and support of Guardians will address the feedback received from Stakeholders through this survey.

6. APSI STAFF ENGAGEMENT: *KEY FINDINGS*

All APSI staff had the opportunity to engage in the strategic planning process through participation in a planning conversation held in conjunction with the APSI Annual Staff Meeting. Staff heard an overview of preliminary findings from the individual interviews of people served by APSI, Family and Advocate Survey, and Stakeholder Survey.

Following this review, staff participated in small group conversations using an Appreciative Inquiry approach to identify core strengths of the organization and name possibilities for positive change.

Staff identified these as core strengths:

- Teamwork and communication
- Person-centered planning and individualization of services
- Consistency
- Compassion

Staff engaged in an exercise designed to elicit their ideas about what is possible to create or accomplish to take APSI to the next level. Staff generated these ideas:

- It's possible that with smaller caseloads we could have a higher commitment to and address the complex/multiple needs of people we serve.
- It's possible that through the use of more creative time management and caseload coverage (including the use of technology) that APSI can further grow as a person-centered organization.
- It's possible to find ways for us to spend more time with the individuals we support.
- It's possible to improve staff retention so that we can offer more continuity for the people we serve.
- It's possible to provide better continuity and consistency of service through improved educational opportunities, reduced caseloads, improved technology, and better pay for staff.
- It's possible to offer specialized training and caseloads to improve our services to specific target groups
- It's possible to develop tools and assessments that aid in furthering independence of people we support.

APSI STAFF ENGAGEMENT: *ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN*

The ideas generated by APSI align with those expressed by individuals that APSI serves, their family members and advocates, and other stakeholders. Ideas from staff about what's possible demonstrate that staff have a sense of ownership for making changes that will allow for better services to a target group that has complex and challenging life challenges. Staff responses seem to indicate an understanding that changes in policy and practice are necessary, and will be welcomed as necessary to improve services. APSI staff are proud of the work they do, and want to be engaged in making positive changes that will impact the lives of people they support.

THREE YEAR COMMITMENTS AND FIRST YEAR PLAN (October 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012)

COMMITMENT #1: Realign APSI guardianship services to focus on a defined target group of people with significant and complex disabilities who need ongoing skilled support to make decisions, and have no suitable family or alternatives to guardianship, and/or are court ordered by the Probate Court to be served by APSI.

These Foundation Activities were completed during the Strategic Planning Process:

1. Stakeholders reached consensus on the general parameters of the target definition during the Stakeholder Conversations.
2. The Probate Judges Executive Committee members acknowledged these general parameters during their stakeholder conversation.
3. APSI is working with DODD to draft an operational definition that insures that APSI is guardian of last resort. This operational definition further defines “significant and complex disabilities,” “requires on-going, skilled support to make decisions,” “no suitable family or alternatives to guardianship.”

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
1.Create a clear and operational definition of target population	1.1 Revised Target Population Definition	Program Directors
2. Update Intake Policies and Procedures	2.1 Updated Intake Policies and Procedures	Program Directors
3. Develop informational material regarding the target definition	3.1 Informational material in a variety of formats (e.g. print, internet)	Program Coordinator Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator
4.Communicate the target definition to all stakeholders	4.1 Documentation of communication with family members, sibling groups, advocacy groups, self-advocacy groups, and county board staff re: target definition 4.1 Documentation of presentation at a state-wide conference	Executive Director, Attorney, Program Directors and Regions
5.Update Waiting List Policy and Procedures	5.1 Waiting List Policy and Procedures	Program Directors and Regions
6. Establish ongoing system of communication with Probate Courts regarding target definition	6.1 Documentation of relevant meetings, conference calls, correspondence, etc.	Attorney and Executive Director
7. Share the revised definition at the presentation for Judges and attorneys on Best Practices in Guardianship	7.1 Documentation of Presentation Agenda and Outcomes	Attorney, Program Directors

COMMITMENT #2: Work with stakeholders to create alternatives to APSI guardianship.

These Foundation Activities were completed during the Strategic Planning Process:

1. APSI used the Stakeholder Conversations to explore potential partnerships with stakeholders who share an interest in generating alternatives to guardianship.
2. APSI used the Stakeholder Conversations and surveys to generate ideas about alternatives to guardianship.
3. APSI will submit a Proposal to the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, outlining APSI's interest in partnering to create Alternatives to Guardianship pilot project.

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
<p>1. Work with stakeholders to develop Alternatives to Guardianship Project that is responsive to the numbers, geographic location, and other findings from the implementation of the Review Protocol. Note: The Alternatives to Guardianship Project Plan could: 1.) Target those identified via the Review Protocol, 2.) Create a plan for developing alternatives for those identified 2.) Identify and implement long term strategies for strengthening alternatives to state guardianship, 3.) Plan for stakeholder engagement in these strategies 4.) Highlight successful strategies used in places (counties and programs) that have a tradition of generating alternatives to guardianship</p>	2.1 Documentation of efforts	Leadership Team
<p>2. Work with the County Boards to develop a Review Protocol to determine if the following individuals meet the target definition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. referrals going forward b. waiting list c. currently served 	2.1 Discussion with OACBDD and SSA work group	Program Directors
3. Utilize the Review Protocol in an identified pilot area.	<p>3.1 List of individuals for whom the Review Protocol has been completed. 3.2 Summary of outcomes of Review process, including numbers of individuals who meet/do not meet target definition.</p>	Program Directors, Regional Program Directors, and Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator

4. Refer individuals who do not meet the target definition for participation in the Alternatives to Guardianship project, once in place.	4.1 List of names	Program Directors and Regional Program Directors
5. Seek outside funding and/or management for the Alternatives to Guardianship Project.	5.1 Documentation of efforts	Executive Director

COMMITMENT #3: Strengthen outreach and communication between APSI and families and advocates of people currently and potentially served by APSI.

Foundation Activities completed during the Strategic Planning Process:

1. APSI used the Stakeholder Conversations and survey results to gain an understanding of family member and advocate impressions of APSI services.
2. APSI conducted a detailed review of all comments obtained via the Family Member and Advocate Survey. All identifiable family members who requested contact and/or information have been contacted by APSI.

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
1. Develop and disseminate information about APSI target definition and services to current families, and advocacy and family organizations.	1.1 Web based and print materials that address the FAQs of family members and advocates	Executive Director/Program Directors
2. Review and update current policy and practice standards regarding communication with family members and advocates.	2.1 Revised and updated policy and practice guidelines	Program Directors/Regional Program Directors
3. Train APSI staff re: policy and practice standards	3.1 Documentation of training	Program Directors/ Regional Program Directors
4. Communicate with family members and advocates re: the revised policies and practice standards so that families know what types/extent of communication to expect.	4.1 Documentation of Communication	All Program Staff
5. Incorporate tracking and monitoring system of Guardian contact with family member/advocate in the IT and Quality Assurance and IT plan.	5.1 Information Technology and Quality Assurance Plan 5.2 Use technology to develop regional and state wide list serves, and acquire email addresses of families for ongoing communication.	Program Directors/Chief Operations Officer

<p>6. Share information and articles re: guardianship (and alternatives) with self-advocacy, family advocacy, self-advocacy groups, and disability services organizations for publication/use in their meetings, newsletters, and web sites.</p>	<p>6.1 Articles and information disseminated.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Program Directors, and Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator</p>
<p>7. Establish a strong working relationship with the Ohio Sibs and other family groups.</p>	<p>7.1 Meeting documentation and Presentation materials</p>	<p>Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator</p>

COMMITMENT #4: Strengthen communication and collaboration between APSI and external stakeholders.

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
1. Develop Public Information Plan for County boards, Providers, advocacy groups, and Legislators	1.1 Public Information Plan	Executive Director, and Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator
2. Host quarterly regional meetings with County Board leadership and SSAs.	2.1 Quarterly Meeting Schedule	Executive Director, Program Directors
3. Share Strategic Plan with interested stakeholders, media/Ohio Legislature.	3.1 Documentation of distribution 3.2 Documentation of follow up discussions with Stakeholders	Executive Director, Attorney, and Program Directors

Commitment #5: Enhance quality of services and best practices.

Foundation Activities completed during the Strategic Planning Process:

1. APSI joined the National Guardianship Association and;
2. APSI joined the Ohio Guardianship Association.

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
1. Review agency policy and practice for conformity with National Guardianship Association Guidelines.	1.1 Results of Review	Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator
2. Incorporate findings into the Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance Plan	2. Quality Assurance Plan	Executive Director, Program Directors, and Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator
3. Develop a Professional Growth and Development Plan for Guardians that aligns with pertinent National Guardianship Association Guidelines	3.1 Professional Growth and Development Plan	Attorney and Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator
4. Work with OGA or other appropriate entity on presentation to attorneys and judges on best practices in guardianship.	4.1 Presentation materials	Executive Director, Attorney
5. Comply with all DODD Contract requirements.	5.1 DODD Quarterly Reviews	Executive Director, Attorney and Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator
6. Review and revise Employee Handbook to comply with stated DODD Contract and Federal regulations.	6.1 New/Revised Handbook	Attorney, Leadership Team

COMMITMENT #6: Strengthen the infrastructure to support more efficient use of resources and effective delivery of services.

Foundation Activities completed during the Strategic Planning Process:

1. APSI used the Stakeholder Conversations and survey results to gain an understanding from stakeholders about ways to improve efficiencies.
2. APSI issued an RFP for creation of a program management Information Technology system and has selected the provider.
3. APSI has changed accounting software and payroll provider, and upgraded to multi-function copier/scanners.
4. APSI hired an IT provider and has begun development of the IT plan, and has begun review of IT policies and procedures.
5. Laptops have been issued to APSI staff. Wireless cards have been added to allow for greater access across multiple locations.

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
1. Develop a Technology Infrastructure Plan to address moving toward virtual offices, moving offices to developmental centers, data access and tracking, remote conferencing	1.1 Technology Infrastructure Plan 1.2 Updated IT Policy and Procedure 1.3 Number of laptops deployed for field staff	Chief Operating Officer, Information Technology Coordinator
2. Review and align policies and procedures (e.g. meetings, document signings) to align with IT implementation	2.1 Revised Policies and Procedures	Leadership Team, Information Technology Coordinator
3. Incorporate a technology training plan into the Professional Growth and Development Plan	3.1 Evidence of Policy and Procedure	Information Technology Coordinator, QA and Training Coordinator
4. Develop an agency-wide Retention and Compensation Plan	4.1 Retention and Compensation Plan	Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Attorney
5. Develop additional strategies to reduce fixed costs. (e.g., office leases)	5.1 Summary of Strategies	Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer
6. Reduce fixed costs associated with office space.	6.1 Evidence of Cost Savings	Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer

COMMITMENT #7: Explore alternative funding sources and diversify APSI funding base.

Foundation Activities completed during the Strategic Planning Process:

1. APSI used the Stakeholder Conversations and survey results to gain an understanding from stakeholders about possible partnerships and alternative funding, as well as stakeholder views of potential conflicts of interest.
2. Met with the Executive Director of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council regarding the Alternatives to Guardianship Project.

First Year Objectives	Deliverable	Responsible Position
1. Pursue targeted support for the development of technology.	1. 1 Evidence of Efforts	Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and Information Technology Coordinator
2. Pursue collaborative funding and/or partnerships for the Alternatives to Guardianship Project.	2.1 Evidence of efforts	Executive Director Board of Trustees
3. Host a Funding Summit to explore alternative funding for Guardianship Services.	3.1 Summit Agenda and Summary of Outcomes	Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer
4. Explore partnership with Community Fund Management.	4.1 Evidence of Efforts	Attorney