

Community Organization, Planning, & Development

The community organization and planning (CO&P) curriculum develops student competence for professional community practice. As a social work practice method, it stresses the knowledge, skill and values in mobilizing people and resources to solve social problems and improve the quality of life for people in geographic (neighborhood) or functional (interest/issue/identity) communities. It focuses on role development and conscious use of self, the principles of empowerment and self-determination, and a range of strategies and tactics to achieve progressive social change goals. It emphasizes the concept of client/constituency involvement and a systems approach to addressing social issues and developing relevant services. It focuses on commonalities and disparities within and between communities.

Community organization, planning and development is practiced in three arenas:

- **organization/group development,**
- **planning/program development,**
- **community education/ leadership development**
- **political and policy development**

A.Organizational/Group Development for democratic collective action on social and community problems affecting health, well-being and life-chances; organizing clients, consumers and citizens at the grassroots and agency level to create change among their constituencies and communities to more equitably meet human needs.

B.Planning/Program Development for involvement of professionals and service consumers/community constituencies in the coordination of existing services, as well as the development of new collaborative or agency programs and services to meet human needs.

C. Community Education/Leadership Development for the acquisition of human and legal rights, self-actualization, and self-determination, as well as social cohesion and the support for community/client participation.

D. Political and Policy Development to influence the social policy and legislation agenda and electoral politics at the city, state, and/or federal level, especially vulnerable and oppressed communities and populations including issue and candidate campaigns (new).

Specific assignments should be designed to include knowledge, skills and values identified on the evaluation rating scale. Assignments should be located in one or more of the following components:

Political and Policy Development and Organization/Group Development	Planning/Program Development	Community Education/Leadership Development
technical assistance resource development		
community needs assessment research, fact finding policy/legislative analysis committee staffing/task force work constituency development coalition-building legislative advocacy (lobbying, testimony)		Grassroots mobilization
Self-help/mutual support groups organization-building consumer/community board development social action campaigns	interagency liaison/coordination proposal writing grantwriting/fundraising program monitoring and evaluation	information and referral services education/training (staff, consumers, volunteers) workshop/conference development communications development (newsletters, media, speakers bureau) community outreach

Assignments within and across these areas are targeted to increasing student responsibility for needs assessment/problem analysis, goal setting, program planning, political interventions, community education, collective client empowerment, and evaluation of the process and product of activities.

Settings include: settlement houses and community centers, senior and consumer led advocacy programs (e.g. mentally ill; child welfare parents, gay, lesbian, bi-and transsexual organizations; immigrant service and advocacy organizations, unions, political (elected officials) offices, community-based social service agencies, youth organizations and partnerships/collaborations.

Community organization practice interventions can be at the grassroots, collaboration/coalition and advocacy/policy levels depending on setting/auspice and social problem. Concepts such as power and conflict, social and economic justice, client participation and empowerment, consensus-building, tactical self-awareness, process and task are core in both the classroom and field. This practice method involves working with individuals and groups to develop their capacities to tackle salient issues in their own lives and communities as well as to meet human needs more broadly.

The COP& D curriculum includes three sequential courses:

COP & D I focusing on theory, roles and strategies;

COP & D II on skills, strategies and techniques and use of self;

COP & D III on social planning, client and citizen participation, and coalition and collaboration interventions;

COP & D elective courses in

- **Grant writing,**
- **electoral activism**
- **Political advocacy**