Project Spotlight:
Propel America

ANAVI STRATEGIES

Project Type: Advocacy Strategy
Timeline: March – June 2024

About the Client

Photo Credit: Propel America

Propel America is a national workforce development organization dedicated to providing young people with affordable training pathways to start careers in healthcare through an accelerated program focused on job-readiness. They offer a variety of training programs in four states–Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Louisiana, and California–at no cost to participants, and include additional support such as career coaching, transferable credits, and connection to wraparound services. Their primary focus is on high school graduates seeking both a job and a credential, with the ultimate goal of setting them on a long-term career pathway.

Project Scope

As a rising leader in workforce development, Propel America is frequently invited to participate in policy advocacy discussions as an on-the-ground expert to share how local, state, and national policies impact their participants' ability to complete training programs. However, as a nonprofit organization focused on direct service delivery, Propel initially faced challenges in developing a policy advocacy strategy that suited their current stage of growth.

With limited staff capacity and a lack of experience in policy work, Propel needed guidance on balancing the risks and benefits of increased advocacy efforts. In March 2024, Anavi Strategies was brought on to help Propel identify elements of an advocacy strategy that aligned with their capacity and goals. Anavi provided background context, policy research, and strategic advice to Propel's executive team ahead of the organization's strategic planning process in Summer 2024. Additionally, Anavi created a decision-making tool for Propel's leadership to assess potential advocacy opportunities that align with the organization's capacity and strategic objectives.

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Project Activities

Document & Context Review	At the outset, Anavi Strategies reviewed Propel's internal documents, including past strategic goals, tools for identifying advocacy opportunities, and their latest impact report.
Interviews with Propel Staff & Partners	Anavi Strategies conducted semi-structured interviews with Propel staff and service provider partners to understand key barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare access, documentation) faced by program participants. The interviews also highlighted policy areas impacting Propel's program goals.
Policy Research	Based on interview insights, Anavi Strategies conducted research to identify high-impact advocacy areas, analyzing legislation, reviewing model laws from other states, and identifying potential advocacy partners at the state and federal levels. This resulted in a ranked list of policy priorities organized by potential advocacy impact.
Development of Advocacy Resources	Anavi Strategies developed resources to guide Propel's advocacy, including a list of tactics, information on potential advocacy partners, and an Advocacy Decision-Making Tool to assist with cost-benefit analysis for specific advocacy efforts.
Facilitated Discussion with Propel Leadership	Anavi Strategies facilitated a session with Propel's executive leadership team to review policy research, advocacy resources, and considerations for aligning advocacy efforts with their upcoming strategic plan.

Photo Credits: Propel America

Results & Deliverables

Anavi Strategies received positive feedback from Propel's executive leadership team, who felt the resources provided were an accurate representation of Propel's current challenges and the decisions that lay ahead for Propel's advocacy planning.

Acknowledging that many organizations face challenges in advocacy work, Anavi Strategies has made a standardized version of the Advocacy Decision-Making Tool available for free on our website. The tool is accompanied by a blog post that highlights best practices for engaging in policy advocacy.

Photo Credit: Anavi Strategies

Participants in Propel's Philadelphia program celebrate at their graduation ceremony.