

**PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH TO BUILD A
COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY NETWORK (CAN)
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Preamble: Persuaded by experience that long-term system changes matter, and with a core conviction that all individuals and families deserve access to services that help them achieve permanent economic self-sufficiency regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious belief, economic condition, or medical and behavioral health status, the Collaborative comes together to support the following key principles to achieve those ends, through awareness, advocacy and action:

Principles:

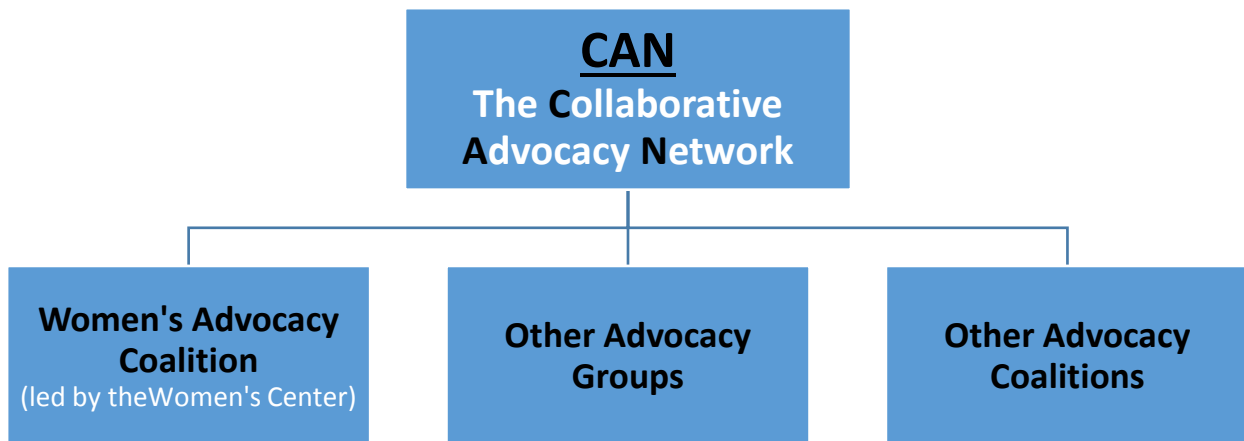
On behalf of Montgomery County nonprofits and the individuals and families they serve, the Collaborative will advocate to empower through education, training, resources and support, a system of economic self-sufficiency for all. The Collaborative Advocacy Network (CAN) will support a public/ private partnership in all advocacy efforts. Advocacy will always be nonpartisan, and will seek to strongly support those in need, guided by the following principles:

1. All individuals and families must have an adequate supply of employment opportunities which pay family-sustaining wages;
2. All individuals and families must have access to high quality, affordable childcare (including early care and education), eldercare, assistance to disabled individuals and caregiver support;
3. All individuals and families must have access to appropriate health care for all family members;
4. All individuals and families must have educational opportunities to achieve financial literacy;
5. All individuals and families must have workplace training and development needed for ongoing marketability and advancement;
6. All individuals and families must have safe, secure, and fair housing opportunities;
7. All individuals and families must have access to proper nutrition and healthy food options;
8. All individuals and families must have access to reliable transportation;
9. All individuals and families must be freed from predatory, exploitive, and abusive practices and persons;
10. All individuals and families must have access to comprehensive integrated services to meet their needs;
11. When assistance is needed, it must be provided in a manner that enables all individuals and families to be as independent as possible and to achieve their full capacity in the economy.

All advocacy efforts to achieve these principles will be guided by data collection and analysis, and accountability of and support for all agencies and organizations working to implement these principles. Benchmarks will be set and reviewed periodically to reflect the inherent dynamics of the economy, while advocacy efforts will be ongoing related to the principles stated above.

Although the proposed Collaborative Advocacy Network (CAN) is still in development, it is the recommendation of the Collaborative's current Advocacy Coalition, chaired by Donna Byrne and Joanne Kline, that the Board for the Collaborative vote to support the following:

1. Vote to support the principles listed above as a guide for the future advocacy work of the Collaborative.
2. Vote to support the continued work to develop a broader network of advocacy, as outlined below. This expanded network will work together in support of advocacy efforts which benefit the human services across Montgomery County, and will seek to pull in other advocacy groups as part of this expanded network, as appropriate and in keeping with the principles described earlier.



Additional work will need to be done to further build the structure and process for this expanded advocacy network under the leadership of the Collaborative in the months to come, should the Board agree to continue this path, and Board input as to this planning is appreciated at this time.