



OCATO Spotlight

Meet Laurice Kennedy-Brown: Giving You the Tools You Need for Family Development



Laurice Kennedy-Brown has been with the Council for Economic Opportunities of Greater Cleveland (CEOGC) since November 2001 and has served as an Internal Consultant (IC) for the Ohio Community Action Training Organization (OCATO) since 2004. Laurice offers Family Development certification

through OCATO, as well as other workshops and trainings.

Laurice has a Masters of Social Work and started at CEOGC as a case manager, providing mental health counseling to low-income customers. While she had worked in social work previously, this was her first interaction with Community Action. Laurice applied for a position at CEOGC when returning to work after the birth of her daughter. "I had never heard of CEOGC, but when I got there I thought this is the best agency ever because they offer so many different programs." After serving as a case manager for one year, Laurice was promoted to clinical social worker where she continued working with low-income customers and began providing staff development trainings to the Community Services Department. When her supervisor left the agency she recommended Laurice for her position of family development manager, which Laurice was given and still holds today. She supervises the operations of the Neighborhood Opportunity Centers staff, which provides family case management and counseling services.

Laurice was introduced to OCATO's Internal Consultant program while attending ROMA training. She was discussing some frustrations she was having with another participant and some of her ideas for change when he said she should become an IC. She did not know what that was, but he introduced her to the class facilitator and OCATO staff member who explained that the IC program is a network of experienced Community Action professionals who provide trainings to other Community Action Agencies and their staff members. Laurice was interested in the program and attended an IC training program.

She enjoyed the training and began her service as an IC in December of 2004. She has provided a variety of trainings to Community Action Agencies in Ohio since then, including family development, case management, human resources and ROMA.

Laurice's area of expertise is family development. "I like facilitating and doing workshops. I love doing family development. I always put my own twist on it when facilitating the Family Development Certification," Laurice explained. "I like hearing from the participants and getting feedback, as well as addressing challenges staff may be experiencing with customers and giving them the tools to help alleviate the barriers. I like to apply the book knowledge and experience and expand on it because they can really relate to it and learn what works and what doesn't for our customers." Laurice continued to explain that that is what's great about the IC program, "It takes Community Action staff that has experience in certain areas and I can bring in my knowledge and experience and provide it to the frontline staff." She also enjoys working with managers from other agencies, discussing aspects of their programs or helping them establish a family development program.

"Family development training helps enhance your skills and hopefully enhances the skills of your customers. With case management there is lots and lots of information, and the family development training gives you the tools to pass on specific information to your customers. When you participate in the workshop, you have a resource guide to go back to and the tools you need," stated Laurice. She believes that it's important for managers to promote the use of family development tools. "You don't want your staff to become frustrated because of all the cases they may have. And if they do have a high case load the resources and tools from family development will help them with their customers. You can refer to it and find everything you need."