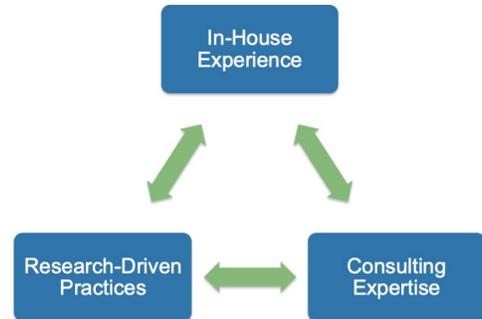




Who We Are:

Advocacy & Communication Solutions, LLC (ACS) is an award-winning national communication, advocacy, and strategy development consulting firm that helps nonprofits, for-profits, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations successfully share their messages about target issues with key audiences, advocate for policy change, and position themselves as leaders in their respective fields. The ACS team reflects more than 70 years of experiences as legislative and communication staffers and leaders within the early childhood, K-12 education, youth development, health and human services, philanthropic, workforce, and economic development fields.



Incorporated in 2004 and headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, ACS is one of the only female- and minority-owned certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE) consulting firms in Ohio. ACS has gained a national reputation for its communication and strategy development expertise and its deep understanding of policy and advocacy. ACS is a member of the Ohio Lobbying Association, Council of Small Enterprises (COSE), Women’s Business Enterprise National, the National Network of Consultants to Grantmakers, Native Americans in Philanthropy, and the Communications Network in Philanthropy.

In 2015, ACS was named by The Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University as a Weatherhead 100 winner. This award was established in 1988 to recognize the region’s fastest-growing and most innovative companies based on revenue from the past five years. ACS received a [MarCom Platinum Award](#) in the Communication Plan category in November 2015. The [MarCom Awards](#) are presented by the [Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals](#) in an international creative competition. ACS was honored for its two-year strategic communication plan for PRE4CLE, Cleveland’s plan to expand high-quality pre-K to all children in the city. ACS was selected from a field of more than 6,500 entries from 34 countries. In November 2018, ACS was selected from more than 1,500 accomplished women-owned businesses from around the world to receive the national bronze medal for the [Stevie Award for Women in Business](#).

ACS’ success and that of their clients is directly related to having been in their shoes – as former staff and board members of nonprofits, for-profit, government, and philanthropic organizations, ACS team members have a unique understanding and commitment to the issues which has garnered significant successes for clients since the firm’s inception.

ACS has applied its expertise to engagements with dozens of public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, successfully developing and implementing strategy, and conducting research for public awareness, political, policy, marketing, communication, and branding campaigns. In particular, ACS has extensive experience in conducting research, gathering input from the community, and guiding continuous communication efforts that help clients build support and partnerships to achieve their goals with local, state, and national organizations and collaboratives nationwide. Below is a snapshot of the ACS team’s experience and expertise related to research,

communication, community outreach, early childhood, and QRIS-related projects throughout the country:

- **Franklin County Department of Job & Family Services – Step Up to Quality (FCDJFS):** By July 2020 the State of Ohio will require all child care providers who receive public dollars to be quality rated through Ohio’s Quality Rating Improvement System – Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) or lose that funding. FCDJFS has engaged ACS on multiple projects since 2014 to improve internal operations of their child care departments and to engage providers and parents to increase awareness about SUTQ and increase the number of providers who are star-rated. Through a strategic communication messaging and training strategy, the FCDJFS project has increased awareness and favorability of SUTQ by 18%.
- **PRE4CLE:** ACS led, planned, and facilitated Cleveland, Ohio’s plan for preschool. This roadmap is guiding the city of Cleveland towards the implementation of a voluntary universal preschool program for all 4-year-olds, and 3-year-olds, throughout the city.
- **First Things First Arizona (FTF):** ACS provided ongoing research, strategy, and plan development to help FTF build short- and long-term communication, outreach, and messages tactics to various target audiences throughout the state including providers, parents, legislators, and business leaders. ACS also led agency-wide strategy development for FTF’s QIRS system.
- **Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children:** ACS helped to design the research strategy and framework for a three-year statewide strategic communication and community outreach plan to build support for early childhood in the state.

Situational Overview in Oklahoma:

The state of Oklahoma has received national recognition for its commitment to provide quality early childhood services. To build on its success, the state recognizes the need for parent and public engagement to expand access of high-quality services and programs. By creating greater awareness of and support for quality early learning experiences, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) seeks to influence policymakers to increase state investment and create positive change to support high quality early childhood education.

Proposed Approach:

OPSR hired ACS to assist with developing recommendations for communication and outreach strategies that will help build awareness among target audiences and create influencers and champions for early childhood in Oklahoma. This work includes the following:

- Reviewing and analyzing messages, research, and communication strategies used throughout Oklahoma to understand content, target audiences, and effectiveness;
- Working with needs assessment grant partners to review, guide, and analyze research;
- Identifying existing and future target audiences as key influencers and likely champions for early childhood, how they may influence public policy, and what actions they could take;
- Developing recommendations about how to effectively reach target audiences with appropriate messengers, methods, and messages that resonate with them;
- Developing strategic communication recommendations for cultivating influencers into champions to create public policy change; and
- Working with stakeholders to inform and guide development of strategies.