

Community Level Work – Discussion Guide

This guide is designed to assist in outreach to the CAA Network with the purpose of enhancing understanding of the elements of community level work. This enhanced understanding will hopefully increase the level of response during the initial comment period.

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Resources and Feedback Method

NASCSP has a variety of resources available to 1) guide discussion, 2) provide support in accessing and understanding the intention and methodology of the proposed changes, and 3) collect feedback on the components of ROMA Next Generation and the proposed Annual Report.

We encourage you to review the [ROMA Next Generation Overview Recording](#), which provides an introduction to ROMA Next Generation, the clearance process, and what to expect during the Initial Comment Period.

The following resources will support your review and understanding of the proposed material. They will also assist in presentations during webinars or face to face meetings.

- [Community Level Strategies List](#)
- [Community Level Strategies Report](#)
- [Community Level National Performance Indicators List](#)
- [Community Level National Performance Indicators Report](#)
- [Community Level Efforts in Progress Tool](#)

On March 15th, NASCSP hosted a webinar that provided context, background, and additional details on each of the Community Level components, as well as an opportunity for live questions and answers. We encourage you to review the [Webinar Recording](#), and the [PowerPoint Slides](#) of the presentation.

In addition to this discussion document, NASCSP has released surveys intended to collect feedback, gather comments, and guide survey respondents through each piece of the Community Level components to ensure that all the proposals are understood and evaluated. This survey has been posted [live](#), as well as in [Word](#) and [PDF](#) format, which will allow respondents to review in advance, collect their responses, and collaborate with others to provide thoughtful and robust feedback. Community Action network staff at State Offices, State Associations, and local agencies can review and submit feedback on ROMA Next Generation as one entity, based on your understanding of the needs of the agencies you represent from a state or regional perspective, or collectively, by gathering multiple responses in an organized fashion (host a webinar, meeting or other virtual or face to face meeting) and create a single response to the surveys that represents the input of the different local agencies.

Please contact NASCSP for additional information at romanextgeneration2016@gmail.com.

Overview

This discussion guide will cover the below issue areas related to community level strategies and outcomes:

- The importance of community level strategies and outcomes
- The different methods for employing community strategies
 - Independent, in Partnerships, and as a Collective Impact Initiative
- The elements proposed to clarify community level strategies and outcomes
 - National Performance Indicators (NPIs) List and NPI Report Form
 - Strategies List and Strategies Report Form
- How to report on Community Level Efforts in Progress

Moreover, this guide aims to improve the quantity and quality of network input around community level strategies and outcomes during NASCSP's informal comment period. To this end, the guide helps the network by providing discussion prompts.

What we know about Community Level Work

Per current community level NPI data, it appears Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are strongest in providing and measuring outcomes associated with programs for individuals and families. We currently do not have documentation that CAAs are engaged in larger systemic issues, and have attempted to address this gap in the data through ROMA Next Generation.

What does the current Community NPI data tell us?

Some possible reasons for what seems to be an underreporting of community level strategies and outcomes, includes the following:

- NPIs are not understood
- NPIs are not tracked well enough at the local level to be reported on
- NPIs are not appropriate to the work being done by CAAs

Additionally, some community level strategies may take several years to achieve their intended outcome. So the CAA's work is not seen in every reporting period-- just in the "last" one.

What do we need to improve our story?

Community Action needs to be able to tell a strong story about the community-level impact of the network. This story must be developed using data that is easy to understand and allows for some meaningful summary at the state and national levels. This means a common set of measures to track Community Action's performance with respect to the impact of strategies

provided at the community level. The measures must relate to all of an agency's community activities (not just CSBG-funded activities). Also, the measures need to produce data that helps agencies and states analyze what is working and identify ways to improve intervention strategies and outcomes.

In summary, we need community measures that provide a means of capturing the scope or scale of community level strategies and outcomes. Collecting additional data while initiatives are in progress will create context for telling the story of that particular effort, and provide data to track movement toward the ultimate outcome of the initiative. Additionally, collecting baseline data would allow the network to state the current status of community level issues and then use performance data to conduct a before and after intervention strategy comparison (e.g. How many affordable housing units do we need? How many can we develop? How many did we develop?).

Proposed Changes in Community Level Reporting

Community-Level National Goals

Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

The national Community-Level NPIs are organized in six domains:

- Employment
- Education and Cognitive Development
- Infrastructure and Asset Building
- Housing
- Health and Social/Behavioral Development
- Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

A revised set of NPIs includes 29 Indicators to measure performance related to **Goal Two**.

Employment Community-Level NPI Example:

- *The number of jobs created to increase opportunities for people with low-incomes.*
- *The number of jobs maintained for people with low-incomes.*
- *The number of "living-wage" jobs created in the community.*
- *The number of "living wage" jobs maintained in the community.*
- *Decreased rate of unemployment benefit applications.*
- *"Other" Outcome Indicator.*

Community Level Strategies

The NEW Proposed Community Level Strategies provide documentation of the strategies used by eligible entities to affect community level change. Local agencies will report on strategies utilized by their agency in order to better tell the story of how strategies implemented relate to the community level outcomes achieved. Agency data will be aggregated at the State and National level to aid in local and state analysis of the relationship between community level strategies and outcomes.

Strategies List Local Agency Report Form Example

LOCAL AGENCY Employment Strategies Data Entry Form - Example	
Name of Agency Reporting:	Agency XYZ
Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.	
This table includes the strategies reported by a single agency.	
Employment Strategies	Total Strategies Implemented
Minimum/Living Wage Campaign	1
Job Creation Initiative/Employment Generating Project	1
Job fairs	3
EITC Campaign	1
WIOA One Stop Management	0
Commercial Space Management	0
Employer Education on Low-Income Issues	0
Other: specify below	0

Community Level National Performance Indicators

At the local level, agencies will report on indicators related to their work, providing data that will support both performance measurement and performance management in their community. At the state level, agency data will be aggregated to show the statewide expected and actual change, as well as the number of agencies reporting in each indicator within the domain, the aggregated number of agencies that reported in at least one indicator in the entire domain, and the scale of communities which agencies are working to change. This will allow states to understand agencies' focus and achievements. State reports will also indicate how many of the reporting agencies met their performance targets, and will help states measure and

support agency capacity to achieve change at the community level. At the national level, the outcomes and total number of states reporting on each outcome and indicator is aggregated, as are the number of agencies.

Please note the following assumptions as you review the Community Level NPIs:

- “Community” will be locally defined and dependent on the project/initiative, i.e. community does not necessarily equate to your service area.
- Agencies will report on interim progress using the new *Community Level Efforts in Progress Tool*.
- Agencies will only report on indicators as they apply to their work and will not be required to report on all the NPIs listed.
- An “other” indicator category has been added to each NPI category.

National Performance Indicator Local Agency Report Form Example

Agency Level Data Entry for Employment Community Outcomes							
Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.							
Name of Agency Reporting:		Agency XYZ					
Employment - CREATION	I.) Target Community (Specify city, county, etc.)	II.) Baseline (existing starting point used for comparisons) (#)	III.) Target (#)	IV.) Expected % change from baseline (Target) (% auto calculated)	V.) Actual (results) (#)	VI.) Actual % change from baseline (% auto calculated)	VII.) Performance target accuracy (% auto calculated)
1. The number of jobs created to increase opportunities for people with low incomes.	City	200	50	25%	56	28%	112%
2. The number of "living wage" jobs created in the community.	Neighborhood	50	15	30%	10	20%	67%

Civic Engagement and Community Involvement NPIs

Please consider the following as you review the NPIs in the Civic Engagement and Community Involvement domain:

- The improvements and gains that are tracked will be changes in the community.
- The civic engagement and community involvement will be all-inclusive.
- They may be partners, funders, policy makers, volunteers, board members, business representatives or other community individuals (regardless of their income status).

Notably, outcomes in this domain also have the opportunity of being the basis of Goal Three indicators. Goal Three NPIs include:

- The number of community members working with Community Action to improve conditions in the community.
 - Of the above, the number of people who donate time to support Community Action efforts.

- Of the above, the number of people who participate in public hearings, policy forums, or other advisory boards related to Community Action efforts.
- The number of community members working toward “Other” indicator specified for a Collective Impact Initiative or Partnership with at least one other organization.

Community Level Efforts in Progress

The *Community Level Efforts in Progress* tool will provide CAAs with a mechanism for demonstrating community level work in progress. For all community level change strategies, where the CAA has specific community level outcomes planned, the CAA will either report the actual outcomes achieved during the reporting period using the *Community Level National Performance Indicators* or report the progress achieved during the reporting period using the *Community Level Efforts in Progress* tool.

Because we know that community level work may be complex and develop over time, we need a means of showing progress as well as outcomes. More specifically, we need:

- Process/progress measures to link to the desired long-term community level impact.
- A form to capture work in process/progress.

Community level change is achieved via a range of strategies and approaches. In order to create a framework for capturing community level work in progress the Community Level Efforts in Progress Tool is structured to look at community level work in the following three areas:

- Independent
- Partnership
- Collective Impact

Independent Community Work

This means the CAA’s community level change work does not include coordinated involvement with other community organizations or entities in achieving identified outcomes.

Example:

- A local CAA secures funding to build or renovate housing units that will be affordable for families with low income. The agency acts independently to make new units of housing available to the community.

Community Work Performed in Partnership

This means the CAA’s community level change work includes working with other community organizations or entities to achieve identified outcomes.

Example:

- Several organizations join together to increase transportation resources in the community. Together they bring new resources into the community.

Critical Note: Agencies are not expected to describe every partnership, coalition or group they participate in. The partnership work to include here is community level work designed to achieve very specific outcomes that improve community conditions and well-being. It is not expected for example that an agency would include meetings where local social service partners come together to share information and provide updates designed to maintain good communication among a set of partner agencies.

Community Work via a Collective Impact Initiative

This means the CAA is the backbone organization or a key contributing member of a multi-sector committed group of actors with a common agenda aimed at solving a specific community social problem, establishing shared outcomes and using a structured form of collaboration.

Example:

- An agency aims to double the number of students on track to graduate in a specified community with a postsecondary degree or career credential, and close the achievement gap. This involves implementing a four-pronged approach: aligning cross-sector actors, engaging parents and community members, building stronger and more seamless systems, and leveraging data.

More about Collective Impact

Collective Impact represents the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific problem.

Five Elements of Collective Impact



Common Agenda

- Common understanding of the problem
- Shared vision for change

Shared Measurement

- Collecting data and measuring results
- Focus on performance management
- Shared Accountability

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- Differentiated approaches
- Coordination through joint plan of action

Continuous Communication

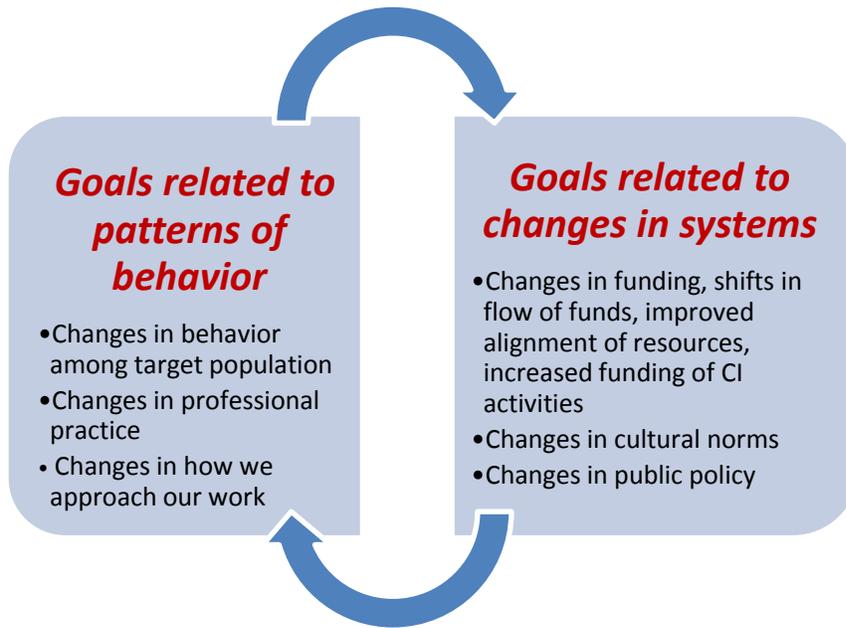
- Consistent and open communication
- Focus on building trust

Backbone Support

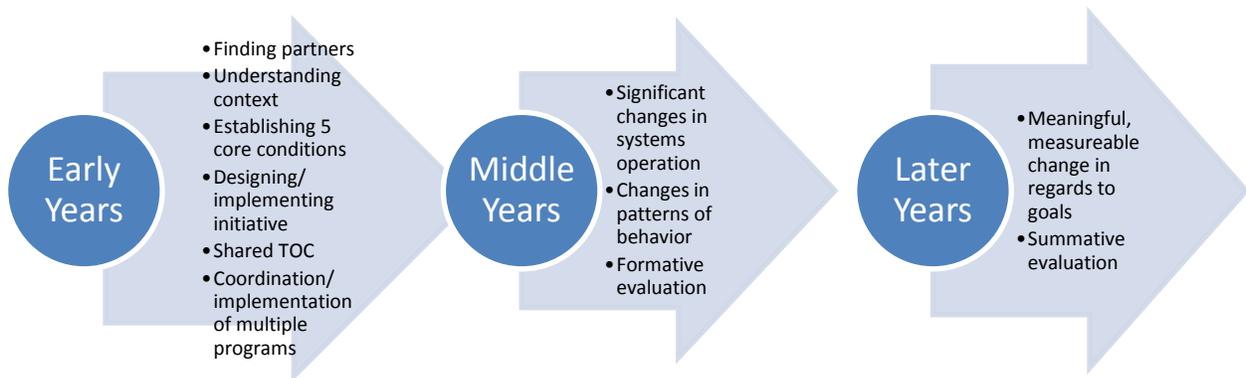
- Separate organizations with staff
- Resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations

Source: FSG.org

Levels of Collective Impact Goals



Collective Impact Development



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Because we know that community level work may be complex and develop over time, we need a means of showing progress as well as outcomes. More specifically, we need:

- Process/progress measures to link to the desired long-term community level impact.
- A form to capture work in process/progress.

The *Community Level Efforts in Progress* tool aims to address the above.

Discussion Prompts for Community Level Strategies, Community NPIs and Community Level Efforts in Progress Tool

1. How well will the **Community Level Strategies** allow you to describe the actions you take to improve conditions in the community (as you have defined it)?
2. How well will the **Community Level Efforts in Progress Tool** allow you to describe the work you do over time?
3. How well does the **Community Level Efforts in Progress Tool** allow you to describe the impact of the work you do independently, in partnership with other organizations, or as part of a Collective Impact Initiative?
4. How well will the **Community Level National Performance Indicators** allow you to describe the impact of the work you do in the community (as you define it)?
5. Will the **Community Level National Performance Indicators** provide the data we need to determine whether we have set the right goals?
6. Will the **Community Level National Performance Indicators** provide the data we need to determine whether we are achieving outcomes on a community scale?
7. Do the three community level components taken together help to showcase the work that you do to achieve community level change?
8. Does the difference between services and strategies make clear the ways in which community action addresses community level change versus individual and family level change?