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COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP
Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP)
Executive Skills Portfolio (ESP) Requirements and Guidelines

The Executive Skills Portfolio (ESP) combines a written sample of the CCAP candidate's leadership work in Community Action with a series of four brief essays in which the candidate demonstrates the ability to apply management/leadership skills and Community Action Vision and Values.

The ESP is scored by CCAP Commissioners and CCAPs who are trained to evaluate the candidate's submission. The maximum score is 500 points. A candidate must score a minimum of 300 points to qualify to take the CCAP examination. Additionally, the candidate must achieve a minimum score of 700 points when totaling the scores on both the CDF and the ESP.

CONTENTS OF THESE REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

- A. Required Content and Format of ESP
- B. The Work Sample
- C. The Essay Questions
- D. Instructions for Methods of Submission
- E. ESP Cross Reference Check Sheet for Essay Question 3

A. REQUIRED CONTENT AND FORMAT OF ESP

The ESP contains three distinct sections. They must be assembled in the order listed below:

1. Introductory Items:
 - a. A description of the candidate's role in producing the work.
 - b. Evidence that the work was done within three years of the date of the candidate's enrollment.
 - c. The exact purpose or goals of the work.
 - d. The budget for the work, if applicable.
 - e. Documents coming from the work which show results, such as statistical reports, letters, newspaper articles and the like.
2. The Work Sample. A work sample may be the relevant portion(s) of any kind of document. A work sample might be any of the following:
 - a program report
 - a grant proposal
 - organizational documents
 - a policy or procedures manual
 - a publication written by the candidate,
 - or similar items

Whatever is chosen, the sample must demonstrate the candidate's skills in management and leadership and it must manifest the candidate's understanding, and application, of Community Action vision and values.

3. Four Brief Essays: The questions posed in this section of the ESP are designed to give candidates the opportunity to show how the work sample demonstrates (#1) the use of management and (#2) leadership skills, (#3) an application of Community Action Vision and Values and (#4) an understanding of organizational excellence. Each essay is limited to 750 words

B. THE WORK SAMPLE

The sample must demonstrate and support the answers to the essays (see C below.)

- That document may be no longer than fifty (50) pages.
- The pages must be numbered in sequence.

These guidelines are based on the criteria given to readers who will evaluate your portfolio.

As you choose your work sample for submission, be sure that it describes a project or activity:

1. *Which is your own work.*
If your ESP describes work done by a team or committee, you must clearly describe your leadership role in that team or committee. If the evaluators cannot determine your own leadership role on the team, your ESP will be disqualified and not scored.
2. *Which is done no more than three years before your enrollment as a CCAP candidate.*
If the evaluators cannot determine that the work was done no more than three years before your enrollment as a CCAP candidate, your ESP will be disqualified and not scored.
3. *Which demonstrates your management choices and implementation in the following 4 areas:*
 - a. *Planning*
 - b. *Organizing*
 - c. *Directing/Controlling*
 - d. *Evaluating.*
4. *In which you took a leadership role contributing to the building and/or development of relationships of teams, partnerships, or coalitions either in your agency or within the community it serves.*
5. *In which you can show that you have contributed to carrying out the vision and values of community action.*

C. THE FOUR ESSAY QUESTIONS

Answer the following four questions in order of Topic Area as listed below. There is a **750 word limit for each essay**

These guidelines are based on the criteria given to readers who will evaluate your portfolio

The challenge in the portfolio is to be simultaneously very concise and informative. That takes careful preparation. ESPs are scored by the quality of the response to these essay questions. As you respond to these questions you must:

1. *Number each response in the same sequence as the questions appear below.*
2. *Adhere to number of words requirement.*
3. *Refer to specific pages in your work sample when you answer questions about it. Failure to include those references may significantly reduce your score. Denoting a specific paragraph or chart is helpful. (Note the "ESP Cross Reference Check Sheet" for essay question 3 is the format you are expected to use for this purpose in your Topic 3 (Vision and Values))*
4. *Present a logical flow of ideas.*
5. *Use appropriate grammar and punctuation.*
6. *Clearly express yourself.*
7. *Present an appealing and clearly understood portfolio. All parts of the work and essays must be easy to read, especially charts and copies of documentation*

FIRST TOPIC AREA: TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS.

In 750 words or less, explain how the work sample shows that you understand, and can use, traditional management practices as applied to Community Action in each of the specific areas:

- a. Planning
- b. Organizing
- c. Directing/Controlling
- d. Evaluating

These guidelines are based on the criteria given to readers who will evaluate your portfolio

The evaluators want to see evidence that you have made management choices reflecting your abilities in each of these specific areas. To assist your preparation to respond to the questions in the Portfolio Guidelines, ask yourself:

- a. *Do I know the management choices that were available to me in the project I chose to submit?*
- b. *Did I actually make a choice?*
- c. *How can I summarize the rationale that informed that choice?*

SECOND TOPIC AREA: COMMUNITY ACTION POSITIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

Every leadership style has both benefits and drawbacks. Consider your style of leadership as reflected in the activities reported in your work sample, and answer both sections:

Section a: How has that style helped you as a leader in an organization?

Section b: (You must answer EITHER i or ii)

- i. How has that style limited your role as a leader in an organization?
- ii. How could that style limit your role as a leader in an organization?

Answer all sections of this question in a total of no more than 750 words.

These guidelines are based on the criteria given to readers who will evaluate your portfolio

The evaluators will be focusing on how well your work sample demonstrates that you have addressed at least one of the following areas either in your agency or in the community it serves:

- a. Team Development (either initiating a team or supporting its work),
- b. Partnership Development (either initiating an inter-organizational or departmental partnership or supporting the work of the partnership), or
- c. Coalition Building (either initiating a coalition or supporting its work).

If your work sample presents a project done by a group of which you were a part, your answer should differentiate between what you did and what others did.

The evaluators are also looking for signs not only that you can be a good leader but that you also understand principles of leadership. That is why your ability to show both the advantages and disadvantages of your style of leadership will enhance your score for this section.

THIRD TOPIC AREA: THE VISION AND VALUES OF COMMUNITY ACTION

In 750 words or less, explain how the work sample shows that you understand and have used the vision and values of Community Action.

- **SEE COMMUNITY ACTION VISION AND VALUES CROSS REFERENCE CHECK SHEET ON THE LAST PAGE OF THESE GUIDELINES. FAILURE TO USE THE WORKSHEET WILL RESULT IN A LOSS OF POINTS, INCLUDING POSSIBLE FORFEITURE OF ALL POINTS FOR THIS SECTION.**

These guidelines are based on the criteria given to readers who will evaluate your portfolio

The evaluators will be looking for ways in which your work sample carries out the vision and values of Community Action. The Community Action Body of Knowledge Outline lists the components of Community Action Vision and Values in section B. Study that outline before you write. Then, relate your answer directly to the topics listed in that outline. The evaluators will be looking for indications that you have made those connections

FOURTH TOPIC AREA: COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

In 750 words or less, demonstrate either:

- How your work sample contributes to your agency's attainment, or enhancement, of the Partnership's Standards of Excellence,

OR

- How it has the capacity to contribute to that standard.

Specifically, identify both the ONE category (*among the 7*) and the ONE specific standard (*within that one category*) from the current Standards of Excellence document found on the Community Action Partnership's website. There are 7 categories and 34 standards distributed across those categories.

These guidelines are based on the criteria given to readers who will evaluate your portfolio

The work sample you have chosen to submit is expected either to have impacted your agency in some way in relation to one of the 7 categories of management/leadership identified in the Community Action Partnership's Standards of Excellence or to have the potential to make an impact in one of those categories. Clearly demonstrate how that is the case in this essay.

D. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF THE ESP

An internet transmitted ESP is preferred, but not required. ALL items must be included in the electronic submission. A candidate may not send part of the ESP electronically and another part in hard copy. All documents are to be sent by the published due date to CCAPContact@aol.com. The only acceptable formats are (1) MSWord, (2) MExcel, (3) JPG and/or (4) PDF. If the Work Sample is in Powerpoint format, it must be converted to PDF for submission. The transmission must be complete on the date that ESP is due at the Partnership Office.

All ESPs sent in this way will be acknowledged by return e-mail from CCAPContact@aol.com within 7 days of its receipt at that e-mail address.

If the ESP is being submitted by surface mail, **two copies** of the portfolio must be sent to:

Certification Program
Community Action Partnerships
1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1210
Washington, DC 20036

Candidates should use a trackable delivery system for purposes of verification of receipt of hard copies. The CCAP program will not acknowledge receipt other than by signing for the delivery.

SEE THE NEXT PAGE OF THIS GUIDE FOR

E. ESP CROSS REFERENCE CHECK SHEET FOR ESSAY QUESTION 3

ESP Approved by CCAP Commission, June 27, 2018. This replaces all early versions

COMMUNITY ACTION VISION AND VALUES – ESP CROSS REFERENCE CHECK SHEET

This form MUST be completed and attached to your ESP submission)

In essay # 3, you are required to explain how your work sample shows that you understand and have used the Vision and Values of Community Action. Consider which of the 22 items from the outline below are referenced in your essay. Mark the page(s) from your work sample where your evaluator will find evidence of each item you address in your essay. *The more items on the outline you can address, the better your score will be. **But be careful not to check more items than you can be well justified by what the evaluator will see in your work sample. An over-reach can lead to a lowered score.***

Note the page(s) from work sample	I VISIONARY CONCEPTS
	1. Poverty can be eliminated by creating an environment that encourages opportunities for everyone.
	2. Community Action is development of these opportunities.
	3. Serving the best interests of the poor is in the best interest of all people.
	4. Systems and people have the potential for change.
	5. Community Action's success is dependent upon the collective efforts of the entire community
Note the page(s) from work sample	II VALUES AND BELIEFS – a. The Misery of Poverty Must Be Addressed
	6. Poverty is unacceptable, painful, and far-reaching.
	7. Easing the misery of poverty is good, right, and essential in an affluent society.
	8. Community Action identifies and addresses the causes of poverty.
	9. Community Action removes obstacles, fills gaps, and confronts the causes/conditions of poverty.
Note the page(s) from work sample	II VALUES AND BELIEFS – b. Despair Can Be Replaced by opportunity and Hope Through Community Action
	10. Empowerment of the poor for economic and social self-sufficiency through a variety of means.
	11. Local flexibility/control creating a program mix: responsive to customers and community's needs.
	12. Anti-poverty initiatives must be related to assessed community needs.
Note the page(s) from work sample	II VALUES AND BELIEFS – c. The Plight of the Poor Must Be Made Known
	13. Community Action is the voice for the poor.
	14. Use of full range of public relations techniques.
Note the page(s) from work sample	II VALUES AND BELIEFS – d. Attainment of Self Sufficiency and Independence
	15. Agencies move to shift focus from self-serving to selfless endeavors.
	16. Agencies move from abstract ideas to achievement of self-sufficiency on and individual/family basis
	a. <i>Listen to the poor/interact one on one in partnership</i>
	b. <i>Encourage, assist and strengthen the abilities of the poor to play major role in programs, services and systems</i>
	c. <i>Accept the presence of the positive in people, work from an individual, asset-based model</i>
Note the page(s) from work sample	II VALUES AND BELIEFS – e. A Coordinated Response to Poverty Causes/Conditions Facilitated by the CAAs = Effective Approach to Moving People Out of Poverty
	17. Effective use of CAA Board structure
	18. Development of networks, coalitions and/or task forces
	19. Mobilization of resources internally and externally
	20. Initiation of grassroots activities
	21. Community capacity building and development
	22. VALUES AND BELIEFS: The vision and values of Community Action must be modeled internally and projected externally