



CCAP CANDIDACY GUIDE



1. Enroll as a CCAP Candidate

Earning the designation of Certified Community Action Professional is both challenging and rewarding. Being a CCAP distinguishes you as a qualified, capable leader while at the same time, lending increased credibility to the noble and deserving efforts of our entire Community Action movement. You can get there and we want to help.

The Requirements *(If you are not yet eligible or ready to become a candidate, download the Pathways to CCAP Brochure from the CCAP page on the Partnership website for guidance about how to prepare yourself for future candidacy)*

1. You must be a full-time employee for a minimum of 24 months in a qualifying position* at a CAA or certain related organizations listed on enrollment form p.1. If you have been in your current qualifying position less than 24 months, but your full-time employment in all qualifying positions, current and previous, in any qualifying agency or association, adds up to 24 months, that meets the requirement.
2. Sign the Code of Ethics on page 3 of the enrollment form
3. Gain the support of your Board Chair, or CEO/Executive Director who will sign your enrollment form
4. Gain the support of two other colleagues of your choosing who also will sign your enrollment form
5. Pay the certification fee (See chart below)

(Some agencies purchase a package for qualifying staff and some State Associations purchase a package, making enrollments available to members agencies. If you have questions about how this would apply to you, call the Partnership Office. 202-265-7546. *The payment form is attached at the end of this guide after the enrollment form*)

*Qualifying position = a management level position that fits any 3 of the 5 following:

1. Includes authority beyond the mere responsibility to carry out others' orders. It is given the discretion to make decisions about how to manage one or more programs.
2. Supervises at least one other employee.
3. Includes the responsibility to report directly to the agency's board or to a board committee or to the Executive Director/CEO.
4. Includes the responsibility, and attendant accountability, to administer a budget.
5. Is a member of the Executive Team

CCAP Enrollment Fees for Partnership member agencies		
Package	Individual	Cumulative
One Candidate	\$600	\$600
Two Candidates	\$500	\$1,100
Three Candidates	FREE	\$1,100
Four Candidates	\$400	\$1,500
Five Candidates	FREE	\$1,500
Six Candidates	\$400	\$1,900
Seven Candidates	FREE	\$1,900
Eight Candidates	FREE	\$1,900

How long your CCAP candidacy will be active: Candidacy lasts for three CCAP exam cycles from the date enrollment fee is received at the Community Action Partnership Office. That means that a candidate can have up to three times to take and pass the examination. The CCAP cycle begins on the third Wednesday of January each year (the due date for the CD. (see #4 below).



2. Examine the Community Action Body of Knowledge Outline and Make a Personal Plan

This outline, available on the CCAP page of the Partnership website, is a comprehensive list of areas where CCAPs are expected to demonstrate competency. The outline covers five over-arching categories:

- A: Community Action History
- B: Community Action Vision and Values
- C: Traditional Management Skills
- D: Organizational Leadership
- E: Theories of Causes Poverty and Strategies to Address the Causes.

The Executive Skills Portfolio you will submit is based on this outline (see #5 below). The examination questions are based on this outline (see #6 below). The more you become familiar with this outline, the better your chances of understanding what will be required of you in the CCAP process. You can access the outline on the CCAP Page of the Partnership Website.

Do a “self- assessment.” Once you have gained the active support of your candidacy by you CEO or Board Chair, reflect on your own knowledge and experience with topics identified in the outline. Consider your own areas of strength and weakness. Then develop a plan to broaden your scope of competency by participating in training opportunities. CCAP does not require participation in any specific classes, but many State Associations offer study groups for candidates to assist them in the process of increasing their understanding and competencies in these 5 categories

Identify an experienced CCAP who can serve as your mentor to guide you through the steps in becoming a CCAP. If you cannot identify someone in your own, or a neighboring, agency, contact CCAP Administrator, Dr. Jim Lopresti, who can help you make a connection to the right mentor for you. He can be reached at CCAPContact@aol.com.



3. Understand CCAP’s Point System.

The CCAP is a peer-based program that assess, or measures, your:

1. **Experience** in preparing yourself to be a leader in Community Action, your education, training and involvement in the work of Community Action and your contribution to helping others do the work of Community Action and your efforts to communicate its value to various stakeholders and communities. This is what the Candidate Data Form (CDF) accomplishes
2. **Skills** as a leader who can articulate how you bring the Vision and Values of Community Action to life in making management and leadership choices in the community you serve. This is what the Executive Skills Portfolio (ESP) accomplishes
3. **Knowledge**, specifically about the 5 categories covered in the Body of Knowledge Outline. This is what the CCAP exam accomplishes

Each of those assessment activities is assigned a point value, and a candidate must gain a minimum number of points in each of them to become a CCAP. See below for the points available and the minimum required for each of these assessment activities



4. Complete the Candidate Data Form (CDF): A Comprehensive Means to Evaluate Your Experiences

- The current Candidate Data Form can be downloaded from the CCAP Page of the Partnership website at any time. Do not use any form other than one downloaded from the current Partnership website.
- The CDF affords the candidate the opportunity to catalogue work experience, education and training, networking with colleagues, involvement in activities that advance the work of Community Action at the local, state and national levels, involvement in publication and communication, and more.
- It is read by trained CCAP evaluators and requires the attainment of a minimum of 300 of 500 available points to advance candidates toward CCAP. **Because a minimum of 300 points is required, potential candidates are advised to “do a test run” of the CDF for themselves to estimate their score before choosing to enroll as candidates**
- The CDF is due by the 3rd Wednesday of January in each year of candidacy. It can be attached to an e-mail message to the program administrator at CCAPContact@aol.com (*Note that this is not the same address as you will use to submit your candidacy enrollment*) A candidate can add to the CDF each year as needed, or desired, beyond the minimum required points (*see the point requirements for the ESP below for more details*)
- The CDF indicates point availability per category which enables a candidate to closely estimate the likely score.
- Candidates are not given score results on CDFs until Executive Skills Portfolios have been evaluated.



5. Complete an Executive Skills Portfolio (ESP): A Means to Evaluate Your Skills as a Community Action Leader

- Carefully follow the very detailed instructions on the current CCAP Portfolio Guidelines which are posted on the CCAP Page of the Partnership website. That guide has more details than you see in this brief outline. Candidates are advised NOT to use earlier versions of the Guidelines that may be out of date!
- Pay close attention to how the ESP relates to the Body of Knowledge Outline, especially in the section of the outline entitled Community Action Vision and Values
- Submit the ESP in an e-mail attachment to the program administrator at CCAPContaCT@aol.com by the third Wednesday of February of the year you are expecting to take the examination.
- Your ESP can provide up to 500 points toward qualification to take the examination. To advance to the exam, a candidate must earn a minimum of 300 points on the ESP. ESPs are evaluated by a jury panel of CCAP Commissioners and trained CCAP volunteers.
- If the combined scores of CDF plus ESP equal 700 points or more, and if there is a minimum score of 300 points on each (CDF and ESP), the candidate is qualified to take the certification examination offered in June of that year.
- Candidates are informed about their combined scores (CDF plus ESP) as soon as the panels have completed evaluating all ESPs submitted that year, usually by early April. If you do not gain sufficient points to qualify for the examination, you have two options: Either make additions to the CDF before the next 3rd Wednesday of January to make up the points, and/or prepare a new, or revised, ESP by the 3rd Wednesday of February.



6. Certification Examination: A Means to Evaluate Your Knowledge about Community Action History, Vision and Values, Traditional Management Skills, Leadership Skills, Causes of Poverty and Strategies to Address Poverty

The exam is administered using Moodle® cloud program at approved, proctored sites around the US on the 2nd or 3rd Wednesday of June. These sites are chosen in the Spring to match the travel requirements of the candidates.

- The examination is in two sections and a total of 4 hours is allotted to complete the exam.

Section 1: Objective Questions for all sections of the Body of Knowledge Outline

Section 2: Essay Questions including case study questions based on fictional CAA called *New Hope*.

- Questions are designed more to test understanding and application of knowledge than to test memorization of facts (except for section A: History of Community Action).
- A Study Guide is uploaded in late January to CCAP Page on Partnership website for current year's exam.
- Candidates who qualify to take the examination are provided an ID and Password to access a brief (10 question) "Practice Exam" to familiarize them with logging on to the site and navigating the internet hosted exam. Candidates must access this "Practice Exam" at least once using the laptop that they will bring to the exam site in June
- Exams are scored by Certification Commission approx. 7-10 days after the exam is given and candidates are informed by e-mail about the results immediately after that.



7. Downloadable documents on the CCAP Page of the Partnership website

- ✓ COMMUNITY ACTION CODE OF ETHICS
- ✓ COMMUNITY ACTION BODY OF KNOWLEDGE OUTLINE
- ✓ PATHWAYS TO CCAP BROCHURE (Especially useful if you are not yet ready to enroll)
- ✓ CCAP MENTORS (CCAPs who can help you be a successful candidate)
- ✓ CCAP CANDIDACY ENROLLMENT AND PAYMENT FORM
- ✓ CANDIDATE DATA FORM GUIDE (Orients candidates to what the CDF is all about)
- ✓ CANDIDATE DATA FORM (CDF)
- ✓ CDF ADDENDUM FORM (This is used when you need to add more items to your CDF)
- ✓ EXECUTIVE SKILLS PORTFOLIO (ESP) GUIDELINES (Directions on how to construct a portfolio)
- ✓ STUDY GUIDE FOR CCAP EXAM (Uploaded in late January for the annual June exam)
- ✓ CCAP RELATED WEBINARS (Guidance on each step of the way toward CCAP)