Introduction to Implementing the Results Oriented Management & Accountability (ROMA) Framework

Board Training Facilitation Guide

ROMA Principles & Practices for Community Action Agency Boards

Created through the Partnership’s Organizational Standards Center of Excellence and funded by the Office of Community Services

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Any opinion, findings, and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
Introduction

This is a series of trainings based on material produced by the Community Action Partnership and the Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers. They are designed to be either short stand alone segments that could be presented at a Board meeting, or to be joined together in as a full day workshop or Board Retreat session. It can be done in conjunction with other Board training activities, or could be provided to Board Members as a “take home” activity (where they would view the power point and read the notes independently). In other words, we hope you will adapt and use them in a way that best engages your Board in the discussion about Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA).

This guide is designed to help a facilitator consider the content in relationship to the information needs of the Board. Not every Board will need in depth understanding of all of the elements of the ROMA Cycle, but the Organizational Standards do require Board involvement in every phase of the Cycle. Therefore, each Board Member must understand the expected roles and responsibilities at each phase.

Contents

ROMA Next Generation Video Series contains seven segments that cover the basic ROMA Principles and Practices and include introduction of National and Local Theories of Change.

The topics are displayed as the ROMA Cycle, and most typically training follows a “normal” sequence, which is moving clockwise around the cycle. However we know that in real life, the topics may be viewed and reviewed in different orders, depending on what is happening in the agency. If the agency has completed a Needs Assessment and is moving into the Planning process, it may be appropriate to hit a few of the major points of the Assessment training and move into the idea of Local Theory of Change or Planning as the first section you present to the Board. The Local Theory of change is a new concept for many agencies and this may be something to start with – getting agencies to think about who they are and what they expect to accomplish. (Note: if the Board wants to develop a local TOC, there is a full day workshop available to help guide that process with activities and a guide. Find this on the Partnership website). It is up to you to design the way you will be presenting the material to your Board.
Learning Objectives for the Series:

Taken together, this training series will provide sufficient information for participants to be able to

- Understand the foundational concepts that will help local agencies and the entire CSBG network increase their performance measurement and management capacity so that the Community Action National Goals are accomplished.
- Recall and describe the basic elements of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) principles and practices
- Discuss how all the elements of the ROMA Cycle, Organizational Standards and the Performance Management Framework work together
- Understand how to meet and exceed Organizational Standards by greater focus on the ROMA Cycle

Learning Objectives for the modules in the Series:

PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

Introduction:
- Understand why a “results orientation” is the focus of the new Performance Management climate.
- Understand the National Theory of Change and how it includes all aspects of the Community Action network
- Acknowledge actions the board must take to assure the implementation of the full ROMA Cycle

Assessment:
- Understand that a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) includes identification of both needs and resources in the community.
- Acknowledge that the CNA is the foundation for all other decisions.
- Describe how collecting and analyzing a broad array of data and information will be used to develop a comprehensive picture of a particular community
- Recall and describe the different kinds of data to be included in the CNA
- Identify actions the board must take to assure the Community Needs Assessment is done properly

Creating a Local Theory of Change:
- Understand that once the agency understands the data from the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) they will have to decide what their anti-poverty work will be.
- Recognize the importance of the agency’s mission statement in the direction of the agency as it prioritizes and selects what they will address.
- Consider the nature of poverty in the local community
- Understand the different roles an agency may plan in helping customers maintain stability for their families and in helping move them to economic security
- Describe the value of a whole agency approach to reaching agency-wide outcomes, not just program outcomes
- Consider how the board can create a local agency Theory of Change.
Planning:
- Describe the value for the agency of a well defined Planning process
- Understand the parts of the Planning Process, and what role the Board should play
- Acknowledge that the Board is responsible for assuring the Plan is connected to the identified needs and is supported by appropriate fiscal and other resources
- Identify actions the board must take to assure the Strategic Plan and the Community Action Plan are done properly
- Recognize that review of the plan over the next year is a responsibility of the Board.

Implementation of Services and Strategies:
- Acknowledge that while the Board is not involved in day to day operations, a general understanding of how services and strategies are implemented is important.
- Understand what data will be collected during implementation that will prove the agency’s success (Identify outputs and outcomes and other data such as demographics)
- Identify how periodic updates of implementation will be provided to the Board
- Acknowledge the Board’s role in assuring the services and strategies the agency provides are of high quality and produce impact.

Observing and Reporting Results
- Acknowledge that while the Board is not involved in actual collection of data, Board members need a general understanding of what data is collected, how it is collected and by whom it is collected.
- Understand the reports that must be submitted to various funding sources, and the timeline for submissions.
- Identify the process for Board review of all agency reporting
- Acknowledge the Board’s role in assuring the reports are correct and meet the requirements of continued funding.

Evaluation and Analysis of Data:
- Understand that the raw data collected for reporting must be analyzed to be useful for decision making.
- Describe the difference between evaluation and analysis of data
- Identify the Board role in reviewing the analysis of the data and the suggestions for adjustments and improvements
- Discuss the qualities of good data (accurate, complete, timely, reliable)
- Consider some questions that would be helpful to decision making
- Understand the importance of accurate targeting of agency performance
- Acknowledge actions the board must take to assure the analysis of their own agency data is done properly
- Recognize that once the data is analyzed, it may lead to new questions to be included in the next Community Assessment process.
# Training Outline for the Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th># of Slides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Brief overview of ROMA cycle and introduction to the National Theory of Change</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment of Needs and Resources</strong></td>
<td>Explains the “why” behind doing a comprehensive assessment of community needs and resources, including a description of the different kinds of data that should be included.</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Theory of Change</strong></td>
<td><em>Introduction to the use of a Theory of Change to identify how the agency will operationalize their mission to achieve results</em></td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Planning</strong></td>
<td>Identifies how the prioritization of needs and consideration of agency mission and local TOC should be used to set the agency wide direction for “whole agency” results. Differentiates roles of Board and staff.</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation of Services and Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Includes ideas of what the Board should be looking for when they receive reports from programs</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observing and Reporting Results</strong></td>
<td>Reviews the data elements that are most important to gather for reporting. Also what data will prove both the agency’s outputs and outcomes?</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation and Analysis of Data</strong></td>
<td>Once the data is collected it must be analyzed before it can become useful for agency improvement, and this section introduces some techniques for this process.</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>20</td>
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Module Description

This module is designed to support a local Community Action Agency in the creation of their own Theory of Change. It is intended to encourage open dialogue among agency stakeholders and critical reflection on the agency’s assumptions about poverty, the role of community action, and the ability to impact change in the local community.

The Theory of Change Module consists of the “Creating a Local Theory of Change” video and an in-person six-hour workshop session. The video can be accessed HERE and should be shared with all workshop invitees at least two weeks before the in-person session.

This guide and the accompanying PowerPoint will support facilitation of the workshop.

Module Learning Objectives:

Participants will

- Understand why a “results orientation” is the focus of the new Performance Management climate.
- Understand the National Theory of Change and how it includes all aspects of the Community Action network
- Acknowledge actions the board must take to assure the implementation of the full ROMA Cycle

Material

Handouts Needed

*Note: these will be referenced in all of the sessions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Material needed</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Slide #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the training</td>
<td>ROMA Cycle handout</td>
<td>1 min</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of ROMA</td>
<td>ROMA Cycle handout</td>
<td>3 min</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why a results orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 min</td>
<td>5-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMA and Org Standards and “next generation” ideas</td>
<td>List of Org Standards</td>
<td>2 min</td>
<td>12-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions for the Community Action Network</td>
<td>National TOC handout</td>
<td>3 min</td>
<td>18-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Action</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 min</td>
<td>24-26</td>
</tr>
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*Be sure to have sign-in sheet or other reference to those present (as in the board roll call) so you can document the training each Board member has received.*

*Learner Centered Feedback should be collected at the end of each session for evaluation.*
Standard 4.3
The organization’s Community Action plan and strategic plan document the continuous use of the full Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle or comparable system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation).

In addition, the organization documents having used the services of a ROMA-certified trainer (or equivalent) to assist in implementation.
This presentation is a part of a series that is intended for Community Action Agency Board Members interested in deeper understanding of

- How to help your Community Action Agency increase its capacity and its results.
- How to meet and exceed Organizational Standards
In this series of presentations, we will be identifying the key principles and practices that are a part of the performance management system that is unique to the CSBG/CAA network. This system is known as Results Oriented Management and Accountability or ROMA.

We will show how the ROMA Cycle as seen here is embedded into the Organizational Standards and will make reference to the video series that is specifically for the Organizational Standards, while not repeating the information found there.

We know that there are some differences in how public and private Community Action Agencies are governed, but in both cases the Board has a role in assuring the agency is being operated with a “results oriented” perspective.

As you look at the ROMA cycle, you can think of many other business models that have a similar approach to this.

To begin, the organization has to find out (or verify) what the community needs and what resources are already in place. This is the foundation on which the organization plans and carries out its mission or work. Then, of course, the organization does its work, (Implementation of Services and Strategies is the 5 o’clock spot on the cycle).

Processes for observation and documentation of the work of staff are identified in the Planning section, but carried out as the work is done and staff sees what “happened” as a result of the work.

Finally you consider and evaluate what was accomplished – and that leads to finding new questions to ask about needs and resources, and back to doing assessment work.
However, these basic steps are not always done in that sequence. Sometimes movement is clockwise (as shown originally) and sometimes it is counter-clockwise. Other times steps are started because of a question raised in another section:

• What we learn while we are implementing services and strategies will affect what we know about the community’s needs and resources.
• The results we observe and report will impact our planning and the analysis of our data will change how we implement services and strategies.

These are just a few connections – but you can see that these elements must be interacting in an on-going way to produce good management and accountability.

Strong agencies recognize they cannot simply complete a community needs assessment every three years and on the off years, ignore assessment of community needs. They recognize while a strategic plan might be in place for three to five years, they need to review and update it regularly based on new information and results.
WHY a Results Orientation?

It’s important for the Board to understand why a results orientation is the focus of the new Performance Management climate.
CAAs have historically measured things like:

- the number of food baskets distributed
- the number of Meals-on-Wheels delivered
- the number of children attending Head Start centers
- the number of families receiving WIC services
- the number of adults attending GED classes
- the number of clients served per day
Baseball Case Study

Here’s the situation:
The local team finished *last* in the prior season. To boost dwindling attendance, the team promotes the following statistics...
Outfielders ran 3X more laps during spring training
Pitchers threw 2x many pitches during spring training
Batters took 4X as much hitting practice during spring training
The team hired 2 new coaches
The team also invested $100,000 in a state-of-the-art communications system to enable the Manager to talk with them & give real-time perspectives on each play from strategic vantage points in the stands during the games
By the All-Star break, the team is taking an average of 17 more swings at pitches per game...
And the fans say, “So what?”

because they’re still in last place, without a single player who deserves to be on the All-Star Team

The fans don’t care about the process if they don’t get the results.

What they care about is winning!
For Community Action Agencies, changing lives and improving communities is how we score runs and win games.

If all we tell the community is how much service we provided, is it no wonder that our “fans” may also say: “so what?”
If we just say we hand out food boxes, what does that matter to the funders?
We have to make it clear that what we do has a profound impact on the lives of the people we serve.
Remember:

While it is important to be able to talk about the services that your agency provides, you must also be able to identify how these interventions produce results.

What has changed because of your agency’s work?

Just like the baseball team that must hit the ball to score runs and win, Community Action won’t change lives without delivering services efficiently, compassionately, and intelligently.

But you have to know why you are doing these services and what impact they have on individuals, families and communities.
Work in Progress

Results Oriented Management & Accountability (ROMA)

WHERE WE ARE TODAY
As of January 2016, the Community Action Organizational Standards became a part of the new Performance Management Framework presented to the CSBG network by the US Office of Community Services.

- All of the ROMA principles and practices are embedded in the Organizational Standards.
- Many of the Org Standards are directed at the actions of the CAA Board of Directors.
- Through the Org Standards, the ROMA principles are reinforced and they are expected to be supported and promoted by the Board.

CSBG = community service block grant
More than half of the Org Standards have Board involvement included in the standard. Information about how you can demonstrate application of ROMA through the Organizational Standards is available.
What’s been called **ROMA Next Generation** is a way of talking about an increased focus on the elements of ROMA.

– It is also about using some new tools to assure the network is implementing the full ROMA Cycle to constantly achieve results for individuals, families and communities.
We will discuss the Theory of Change next and also in a separate video segment. This is an added way to help our network talk about who we are and what we accomplish. It will also help us figure out what the needs assessment data is telling us about our community, and will help us identify what our agency’s focus will be.

ROMA Next Generation is about a renewed focus on community change, because it is more evident than ever before that family and community successes are related – you can’t have family success in communities with no resources or opportunities.

It is also about a renewed focus on analysis of data from all phases of the ROMA Cycle. Not just about collecting data for reporting, but about considering how the data can be connected and used.
ROMA Next Generation is about using your data for continuous improvement.

As we showed you, the ROMA Cycle is not to be taken as just a clockwise series of actions, but those actions are to be on-going and integrated.

And it is important to keep in mind the intention to integrate all aspects of the Performance Management Framework (that includes Organizational Standards too). The next slide identifies all the parts of the PMF.
Elements of the Performance Management Framework

- Organizational Standards
- Automated State Plans
- State and Federal Accountability Measures
- American Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI)
- New CSBG Annual Report Approved by Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
  - Includes new National Performance Indicators at family and community levels
A recent addition to the concept of implementing the ROMA Cycle is the National Community Action Theory of Change. A theory of change is a way to demonstrate the very complicated nature of this network that is tied together by the common receipt of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

At the top are the three Community Action Goals we have for the individuals, families and communities of low income.

In the middle we see the Services and Strategies where we work in many different areas of life, not just in one.

At the bottom we see the Core Principles and Performance Management framework that defines our network and the importance and ability to manage our performance and achieve results.
At the bottom of the TOC, the “foundation” stresses the importance of the local CAAs having the ability to achieve results. It acknowledges that this network is tied together by the common receipt of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

We know there is a lot that goes into maintaining a “high performing Community Action Agency” – having places for staff to work that meet their needs (clean, safe, with places for meetings and dialogue and access to current technology) – having direct service and management staff that is properly trained (providing staff development as needed to assure they are prepared to do their work) – having quality personnel and fiscal staff – and so on. These are not all identified here, but they may find their way into local Theories of Change as each agency assesses their own needs.

Without spending time, energy and resources on maintaining the local agencies, the network would fail. Understanding what your own agency needs to do its work is essential in the implementation of a results orientation.

Of common interest to all of the CAAs in the network is being connected to the state associations, state office and federal partners for the support they can provide and being connected to the local community so they can work together to fight poverty. It is these connections where the individual efforts and results of the 1,000 CAAs are aggregated (added together) into a single message and “One Voice” to advocate on behalf of low-income persons and their communities and demonstrating the positive impact of our programs and services.
Since the beginning of the CAA network, which started with federal funding in 1964, there have been some common principles that have identified our unique approach to the problems associated with poverty.

These were identified as the most common among the whole network. Your local agency will probably have some principles that are specific to your community.

Overall, we know that poverty is not just about a lack of money. Of course that is the basic truth – but it is also about lack of resources. There are resources in communities that have limited access – think about children in school and how some children cannot take advantage of sports or clubs because they do not have funds or transportation or other necessities. And lack of skills. And…. But we will get you thinking about this in a later video.

In fact we will come back to talk more about all of these principles.
In this section of the TOC, we see that our network values accountability at the local level, the state level and the federal level.

There is a series of videos for Boards that is designed to explore the Organizational Standards, and we will reference them throughout our exploration of the ROMA cycle. The Organizational Standards have ROMA principles embedded in them, and your agency will not be meeting the standards without implementing ROMA. Understanding ROMA will help you consider how the agency can meet and exceed the basic standards.

In addition to knowing how well the agency operates – the examination of “what do we do?” – the network is funded to make a difference in issues related to poverty. The TOC references National Performance Indicators – statements that can be used to guide the measurement of specific changes that happen on the way to one or more of the National Goals. These NPIs identify progress for individuals and families and also for communities, because we know that individual success cannot be sustained in communities with serious problems. Individuals cannot work at good paying jobs if there are none in the community.
Some human service providers are focused on only one aspect of an individual’s development. We call these “domains”.

- The WIOA programs focus on employment issues.
- Schools and training programs focus on education.
- HUD has a focus on housing related issues.

But Community Action Agencies typically weave funding streams together to provide a range of services that are designed to address multiple issues. Not every local agency addresses the same domain areas. Remember, each agency bases its work on the assessment of the needs and resources in the community -- so each agency has a different set of services and strategies designed to match their own assessment.

There are numerous connections, combinations and relationships and these a just a few of the possibilities. What we do know is that all domains must be working together in both a person’s life and in their community to move out of poverty or achieve economic security.

Local TOCs may only identify a few of these services, or may identify sub sets of these (such as child care, transportation, nutrition services) But these represent the full range across the country.
In these three national goals, the TOC says exactly what the network aspires to achieve.

Individuals and families move out of poverty – or as the goal says “achieve economic security”

But not only that, but also that they are engaged in their communities and that their communities are healthy and offer opportunities.
We Will Discuss

**Assessment**
- What you need to know, how do you find out, what does it all mean, how will you use it

**Planning**
- What do you want to change, what needs to be done, do you have the resources to do it, who can help, what actions will you take, how will you measure your performance

**Implementing Services & Strategies**
- Family: Who are you serving, how many, what services do you give them
- Community: what community partners are engaged

In the video series we will discuss key elements of each phase of the ROMA Cycle with a focus on Board roles and responsibilities.

It is clear that implementing the full ROMA Cycle requires an organizational culture that understands the purpose and value of performance management and uses data for decision making.

Fostering and supporting this kind of culture takes leadership from the Board as well as from executives and management staff.

This series should provide you with some foundational knowledge on which to build your skills to accomplish this.
We Will Discuss

**Observing, Reporting**
- What happened, was there progress, what changed?

**Analysis and Evaluation**
- Did you do what you thought you would do, why or why not?

**Assessment**
- What new questions do you have about your community?

Remember that once you consider what happened and what it means to your agency and the families/communities you serve, then you may have new questions that the next round of assessment will help you to answer.

Those questions and answers will be important in the next round of Planning and so on.....
Make sure you understand the basic principles and practices that define ROMA
Consider how your agency will use the services of a ROMA certified Trainer or Implementer to help you assure you are using the full ROMA Cycle

Just a few ideas:
- Create a calendar for the board related to appropriate review of Organizational Standards and ROMA
- Create board committees for various aspects that may need additional attention but not full board involvement

This board series should provide you with the foundation you need to understand the basics of ROMA

You will have to develop some processes that will enable you to get feedback from certified ROMA Trainers or Implementers – and consider how you will incorporate that feedback into your on-going activities related to assessment, planning, delivering services, reporting and analysis.

Consider some ideas about how to assure full ROMA implementation (Org Standard 4.3) and meeting (and exceeding) all of the Org Standards.

Note to facilitator: this “take action” slide is at the end of each of the power point sections of the training. It is a way to leave the Board with some specific actions in which they should be engaged to improve their agency’s “results orientation.”
Contact Information

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