Understanding Community Level Work

Implementing the ROMA Cycle in the
"Next Generation" Performance Management Framework

ROMA Next Generation Video Series

Courtney Kohler
Barbara Mooney

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



ROMA Next Generation Video Series



Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

Results-Oriented Management and Accountability
Family
Agency
Community

Assessing the Needs

When agencies conduct Community Needs Assessments, they identify causes and conditions of poverty that may be unique to their own community.



Standard 3.4

- *The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.*

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Levels of Need – Individual or Family Level

Some situations are identified as being particular to a specific group of people.

- Families with low income need assistance in preparing their children for school.
- Vulnerable senior citizens (or adults with disabilities) cannot care for their homes or accomplish some tasks (as doing laundry, running a vacuum sweeper or change the bed linens)
- Working age adults do not have skills required for living wage jobs.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Levels of Need – Community Level

Some situations are identified as being systemic in the community – impacting the community at large.

- The south side neighborhood does not have early childhood programs.
- The percent of the community that is made up of vulnerable senior citizens is increasing.
- There are limited living wage job opportunities.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Making a Plan

As local agencies move toward making their Strategic Plans, using their local Theory of Change and their Mission Statement to guide them in identifying what actions they will do over the next year (to 5 years), they will consider the findings of the CNA.

Standard 6.2

- *The approved strategic plan addresses reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and/or empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.*

Standard 6.3

- *The approved strategic plan contains family, agency, and/or community goals.*

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Identifying Disconnects

- There is limited affordable housing in our community.
  - We will provide tangible assistance to families who are at risk of eviction or foreclosure.
- There are no doctors in the neighborhood
  - We will assist families in application for health care insurance.
- Businesses in our community do not hire individuals who have a criminal record.
  - We will assist individuals to have their records expunged.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



What have we been doing?

Historically a limited number of CAAs reported on community level results (Goal 2)

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.

28%	**2.1 A**	Jobs created, or saved, from reduction or elimination in the community
17%	**2.1 B**	Accessible "living wage" jobs created, or saved, from reduction or elimination in the community
24%	**2.1 C**	Safe and affordable housing units created in the community
57%	**2.1 D**	Safe and affordable housing units in the community preserved or improved through construction, weatherization or rehabilitation achieved by Community Action activity or advocacy

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.

15%	**2.1 E**	Accessible safe and affordable health care services/facilities for low-income people created, or saved from reduction or elimination
23%	**2.1 F**	Accessible safe and affordable child care or child development placement opportunities for low-income families created, or saved from reduction or elimination
19%	**2.1 G**	Accessible before-school and after-school program placement opportunities for low-income families created, or saved from reduction or elimination
23%	**2.1 H**	Accessible new or expanded transportation resources, or those that are saved from reduction or elimination, that are available to low-income people, including public or private transportation
30%	**2.1 I**	Accessible or increased educational and training placement opportunities, or those that are saved from reduction or elimination, that are available for low-income people in the community, including vocational, literacy, and life skill training, ABE/GED, and post secondary education

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.

6%	**2.2 A**	Increases in community assets as a result of a change in law, regulation or policy, which results in improvements in quality of life and assets
15%	**2.2 B**	Increase in the availability or preservation of community facilities
18%	**2.2 C**	Increase in the availability or preservation of community services to improve public health and safety
8%	**2.2 D**	Increase in the availability or preservation of commercial services within low-income neighborhoods
18%	**2.2 E**	Increase in or preservation of neighborhood quality-of-life resources

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Low Responses

- During the past several years of development of the new Performance Management Framework, local agencies were surveyed to find out why there was such low responses.

We found two main reasons:

- The NPIs do not capture all of the community level work of the CAAs
- It takes many years to reach an outcome at the community level, and so an agency may report only once in 3 or 5 years.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Increased Assets

“opportunities”

“resources”

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



You can see the focus has been on counting the expansion of “assets”

- Many of which have been done independently by agencies who secure funding for a project, develop the project and then manage it as long as funding is available.
- The discussion about this kind of project work has been that it may not follow the broad understanding of community change.
  - The addition of assets is seen in most professional circles to be a strategy not an outcome.
- You will see that the “counts” in the new CSBG Annual Report continue to seek reporting on this kind of community level NPIs, but…..

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



What did the “asset” change?

- What is the purpose of the asset (or resource)?
- What happens because the asset exists in the community?
  - Does the increase of jobs produce a decrease in unemployment?
  - Does the addition of housing units increase the percent of families with low income who can afford to live in safe housing?
  - Does weatherization of housing units change the nature of the community?
  - How does the creation of a new facility impact the community?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



What is Community Level Work?

Key elements

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Our definition of Community Level Work

Must have three key elements:

- A clearly identified community level need
- An expectation of a community change that can be observed
  - and knowledge of how it will be observed and measured
- Community strategies that include those outside the CAA
  - May include your customers, community partners or others in the low-income community

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



STEP ONE:
Identify and verify the need

Support the need with data

Analyze the factors related to the need

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



IDENTIFY THE NEED

How do you know there is a need?

- From Community Needs Assessment?
- From other source?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Establish a strong statement of need

- Statement of need establishes the focus and rationale for the project
  - It must be a concise and coherent statement that is easily understood by the general public
  - If you do not have a compelling need, you do not have a compelling project
- Clearly state why you know it is a community problem
  - Use comparison data to contextualize the need.
  - Provide qualitative and quantitative data to support the need

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Key Points in Identifying a Need

- Don’t assume everyone knows the circumstances and conditions that prompted the project
- Don’t editorialize or bring in emotional appeals — the data will help you focus on the facts
- Make sure statement of need has local data
  - The need/problem may be a national problem as well, but make sure that you establish that it is a local problem through relevant data
- Make sure the data is up-to date (current)

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Avoid circular reasoning

- Some times we think that just identifying the absence of something can be identified as the problem
- For example:

  "The problem is that we have no youth center.

  The solution is to build a youth center."
- But ***why do you want a youth center?***
  - What makes you think a youth center is needed?
  - What data will back up your identification of this as a need?
  - What will change because there is a youth center?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Whose need is it?

- What/who is the target population that you feel needs the agency's help?

- What are the demographics and conditions of that population?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Gather and Review the Assessment Data

Qualitative data:

- What do people tell you about the need?
- Who are the people with the need? What is important to them?

Quantitative data:

- What statistics verify the need?
- How recent is the data?
- What is scope?
- Is there concentration in one neighborhood?
- One segment of the population?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Understanding the components of the need

We will refer to a “factor” or an “element” and we mean:

A **circumstance, fact, or influence** that

- contributes to a result/outcome
- has the potential of affecting a trend line.

Identifying the components that are impacting a trend line will help get to root causes.

Understanding the factors or elements will drive strategy selection and development.





What factors have been known to influence the causes or conditions?

There are two kinds of factors: Restrictive and Contributing

Restrictive factors	Contributing factors





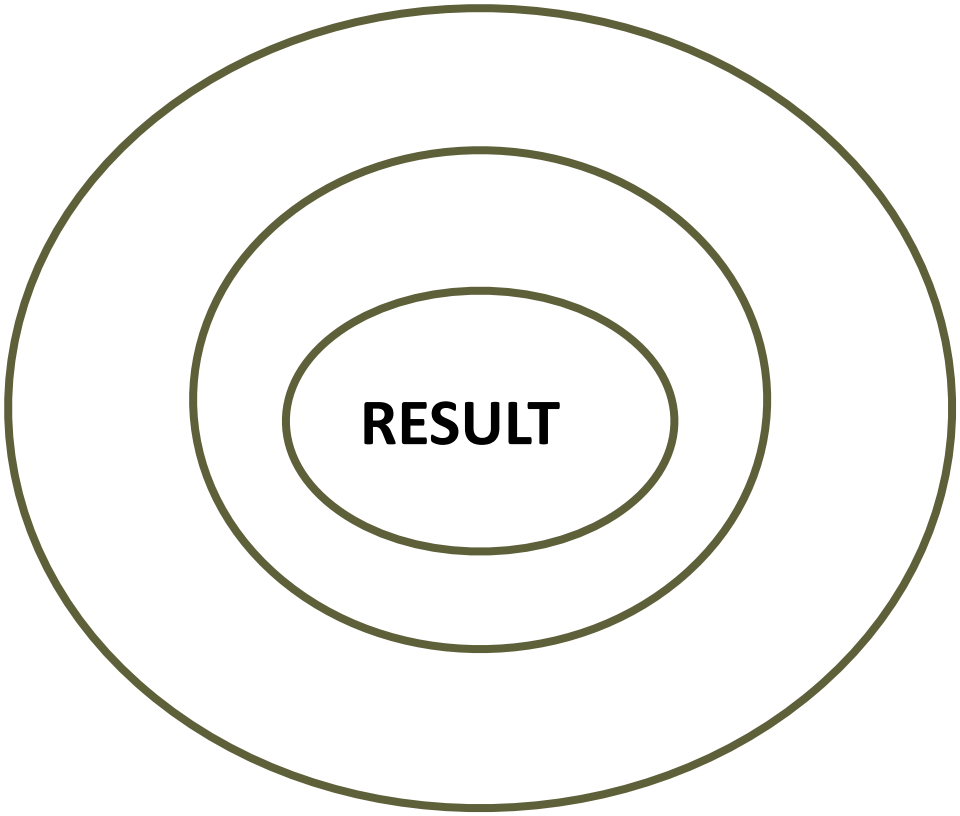
STEP TWO:
Identifying Outcomes

We are "results oriented" so we need to identify what will happen

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



What change do you think will happen?



Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

Results-Oriented Management and Accountability
Family
Agency
Community

STEP THREE:
Identifying Strategies

What will you do?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Watch Out

To assure you are not:

- Jumping to strategy before understanding what is contributing to the condition you want to change.
- Confusing “tactics” with “strategies”

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Identifying Strategies

Pick a Focus Factor:

Articulate the Expected Outcome:

Identify Strategies:

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Community Level Strategies

- Use the list from the CSBG Annual Report, Module 3
- Remember that community level work will engage many different activities that may be pulled together to create a comprehensive strategy.
- It is important to identify the partners that will work together to address the big community need. Each of these will have unique strengths and resources to add to the strategy.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Mutually Reinforcing Activities

The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the **coordination of their differentiated activities** through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

Mutually reinforcing activities ensures that the significant efforts and activities of collaborators are aligned towards achieving the common agenda and shared measures.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



STEP FOUR:

Identify your measures
What are the "indicators" of change?

How do you know your strategies are working?

What will you measure?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Measuring Community Change

- How will you know if there is a change?
- Use the Community Indicators from the CSBG Annual Report
- The new annual report has two ways to measure community change
  - Counts of change
  - Rates of change

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Getting Credit

How do local agencies document their contributions?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



A Well Constructed Plan

- Your plan for the community initiative will clearly define the activities that each of the partners is to take to contribute to the overall goals.

- The plan will articulate how your specific activities will impact on the long term population level changes that are identified.

- If you fulfill your designated role and the initiative moves (makes progress) toward the outcome, you can report these movements

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



The Theory of Aligned Contributions

- This way of thinking about all of the partners taking credit for movement toward a community level goal is sometimes called "Aligned Contributions."
- The theory of Aligned Contributions involves the partners being able to clearly articulate the necessary conditions needed to bridge the gap between desired results and current reality in complex systems.
- This theory posits that population level changes are most likely to occur if a core group of multi-sector, cross-agency leaders not only respond to a call to action, but also take **aligned actions** at scope and scale towards a result.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Bringing it Together

Considering: is it community work?

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



Community Level Work

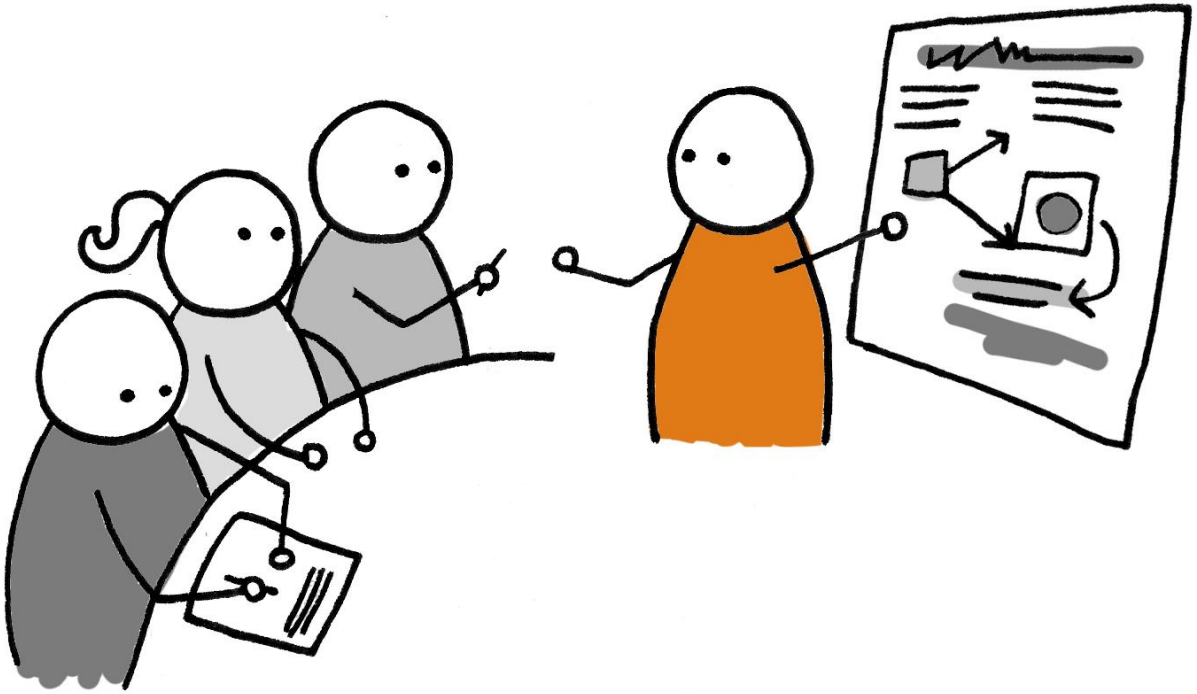
Must have three things:

- A clearly identified community level need
- An expectation of a community change that can be observed
  - and knowledge of how it will be observed and measured
- Community strategies that include those outside the CAA
  - May include your customers or others in the low-income community

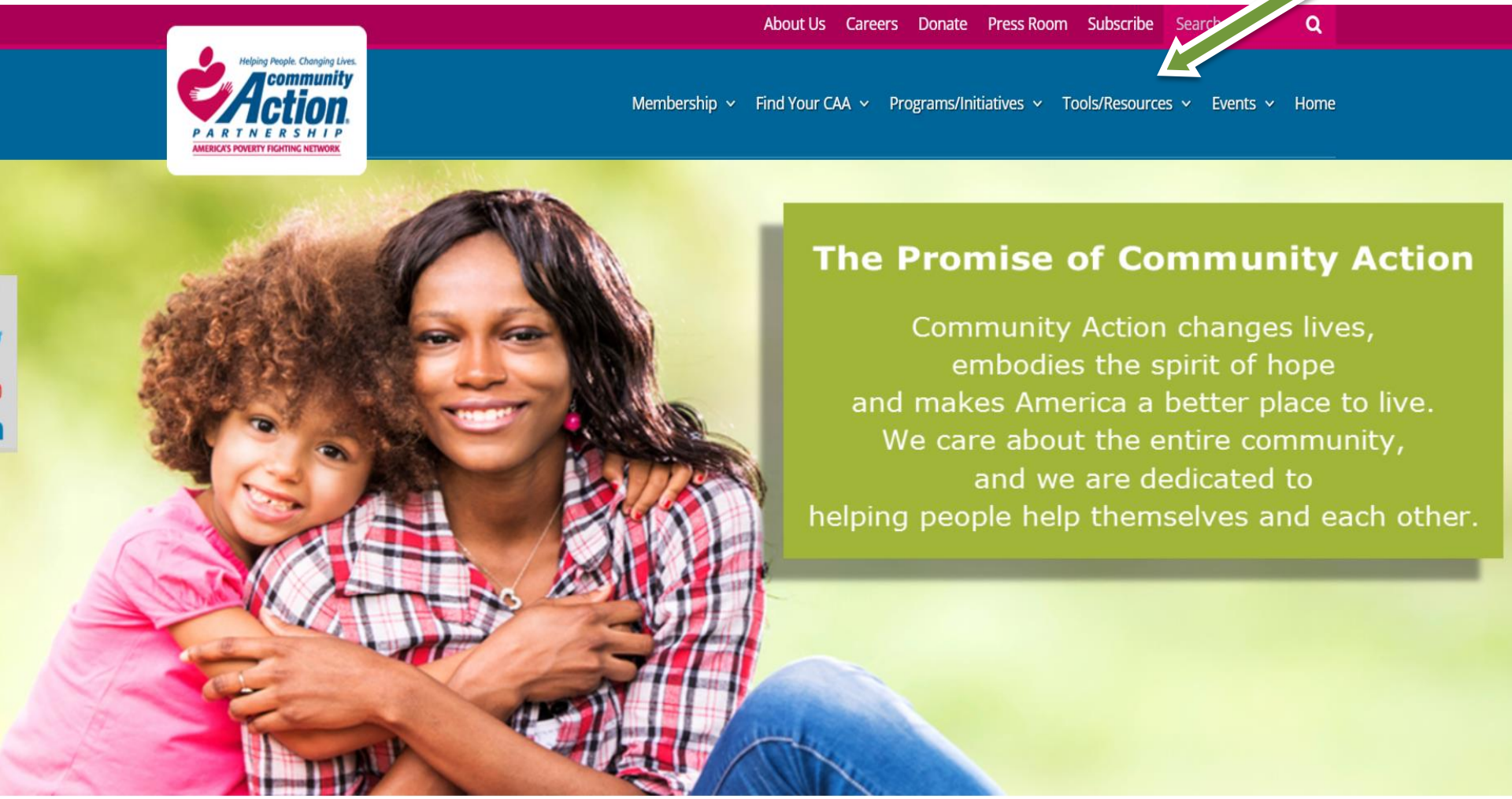
Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK



NEXT STEPS



www.communityactionpartnership.com



For More Information

Barbara Mooney, Director

Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers

barbaramooney@windstream.net

Tiffney Marley, LCRC

Community Action Partnership

tmarley@communityactionpartnership.com

Courtney Kohler, Senior Associate

Community Action Partnership

ckohler@communityactionpartnership.com

Jarle Crocker, Director T/TA

Community Action Partnership

jcrocker@communityactionpartnership.com