Leveraging the Connection Between Head Start and Community Action

*Lessons From the Field*

Courtney Kohler, Senior Associate, T/TA, National Community Action Partnership
Jarle Crocker, Director of T/TA, National Community Action Partnership
Welcome! Who’s Here?

- Executive Director?
- Head Start Director?
- Fiscal?
- Human Resources?
- Center Supervisors?
- Front-line?
- Board Member?
- Other program staff?
Overview

• Purpose & Approach to the Research
• Promising Practices for Integration
• Small Groups Discussions & Takeaways
Community Action & Head Start

• Since the 1960’s, Community Action and Head Start have worked closely together to achieve a shared mission of breaking the cycle of poverty and moving individuals and families towards self-sufficiency.

• 50.4% of CAAs run a Head Start Program and 32.7% run Early Head Start.

2016 CSBG Information Survey
The Multi-Service Agency Challenge

- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________
- ____________________________
Known Challenges

- Silos limit the sharing of knowledge across programs and people
- CAA’s capacity to provide integrated services is limited
- Staff may identify more with their program rather than the larger organization
- HR and Fiscal functions may be established internally to each program, therefore potentially conflicting
- Communication issues
- Conflicts over staffing, financial, and leadership decisions
- Development and work toward a common mission can be inhibited by silos
- Mission drift
- Fragmenting the organization
Complexities of Head Start

- Head Start can often end up in a silo due to:
  - Strong brand identity,
  - Shared governance structure between the Head Start Policy Council and CAA board,
  - Extensive program requirements, and
  - Typically large budget that is often a substantial portion of a CAA’s overall funding.
Negative Results of the Silo

• lack of coordination and clarity about governance and leadership roles
• impede the development of a clear strategic direction for the organization
• trigger conflict over issues of authority and decision making
Community Action Agency

Executive Director

Board

CFO/Fiscal Director

CSBG/Other Monitoring

Head Start

Head Start Director

Policy Council

Head Start Fiscal Manager

Head Start Monitoring

Silos
The Organization-Wide Focus

• CSBG Organizational Standards
  – Holistically addressing issues of management and operations

• The benefits of this focus:
  – Holistic Two-Gen Approach = benefits the whole family
  – Integrated Services = benefits multiple needs of the customers
  – Healthy & Sustainable Agency = benefits staff, families, and the community
Community Action & Head Start: C**ases of Integration**

- In collaboration with OCS, OHS, and CAPLAW, identified areas where silos often occur, as well as the roots of monitoring deficiencies
- Examined leadership, governance, finance, and other structures/processes between Head Start & CSBG/overall CAA
- Interviewed 7 agencies
  - 2 Public
  - 5 Private
Community Action & Head Start: Key Findings

• Integration often originates at the governance and leadership levels
• Connecting staff and board through trainings, regular meetings, and even leisure is key
• Mission should connect with all programs – agency visible as one inside and out
• It takes time
Participating Agencies

Nonprofit:
• South Plains Community Action Association, Inc. (SPCAA) – West Texas
• Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (Inter-Lakes CAP) – Eastern South Dakota
• Utah Community Action (UCA) – Salt Lake City, Utah
• Greater East Texas Community Action Partnership (GETCAP) – East Texas
• Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) – Central Coast, California

Public:
• Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA) – Central Sierra Region, California
• Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) – Nashville, Tennessee
Promising Practices for Integration

- Share Knowledge Across the Organization
- Align Organizational Structures and Processes
- Promote the Mission and Direction of the Organization
Promising Practices for Integration

- Share Knowledge Across the Organization
- Align Organizational Structures and Processes
- Promote the Mission and Direction of the Organization
Share Knowledge Across the Organization

• **Use Staff Meetings Smartly**
  – Include the right people
  – Include the right topics
  – Large service area? Offer virtual options to join
  – Rotate meetings in various locations

• **Cross-Program Training**
  – In-service trainings with all staff
  – Program books with eligibility requirements and necessary documentation
  – Shadowing & walk-throughs
Share Knowledge Across the Organization

• Crosswalk Standards
  – CSBG Organizational Standards & Head Start Performance Standards

• Utilize an Employee Council
  – Let staff take the lead on sharing information and planning meetings and cross-training

• Have Appropriate Staff Listen in to Board/Policy Council Meetings
  – Hear program reports and build relationships
Share Knowledge Across the Organization

• **Host Joint Board & Policy Council Trainings**
  
  – **Topic options for both:**
    
    • Head Start History & Philosophy
    • Governance of Head Start Programs & Community Action Agencies
    • Head Start Performance Standards
    • Leadership Issues Related to Head Start & Community Action
    • General Updates on Head Start & the Community Action Agency

  – **Develop a Governance Matrix**
    
    • Educates the Board and Policy Council about the approvals required by each party and allows both bodies to understand their shared roles and responsibilities
Take Action

A collaborative activity to support sharing of information across programs is to ask for staff volunteers to provide short informational sessions during staff meetings or similar opportunities. Topics might include eligibility requirements, typical services provided by the program, and discussion of referral processes.
Promising Practices for Integration

- Share Knowledge Across the Organization
- Align Organizational Structures and Processes
- Promote the Mission and Direction of the Organization
Align Organizational Structures and Processes

• Align the Leadership Structure
  – Utilize a Leadership Team Model with all program and operational directors meeting regularly

• Set the Organizational Structure for Integration
  – Treat programs equally on the org chart
  – Have central support and fiscal positions across programs
Align Organizational Structures and Processes

• Centralize Intake for Services
  – Intake workers take all applications for different programs and refer customers internally
  – Workers problem solve together and collaborate more

• Centralize Intake process for Data Entry
  – Seamless intake and data collection effort
  – System referrals and eligibility determined at the front end
  – Allows for a better unduplicated count
Align Organizational Structures and Processes

• Designate a position(s) to help align services for the whole family
  – “Head Start Parent Involvement Coordinator” working directly with the “CSBG Workforce Unit”

• Align salaries for similar positions across programs
  – Set organization-wide salary structure rather than program-specific
  – Each program is responsible for allocating within their budget for similar increases, so when one does, another can also
  – Example: Cooks in Head Start get paid the same as Cooks at a Homeless Shelter serving meals.
  – Fosters a sense of equity and common identity among staff
Align Organizational Structures and Processes

• Co-locate Head Start Staff with Other Program Staff
  – Staff build relationships, share resources, and provide more holistic services.

• Focus on Team Building
  – Connect staff regularly for learning, leisure, and trust building

• Create Shared Governance Structures
  – Have Board/PC liaisons on each governing body to share information
  – Recruit Board members from Policy Council
  – Have effective committee structures that communicate
  – ED/CEO champions shared governance
Align Organizational Structures and Processes

• Centralize Fiscal Functions and Staffing
  – Clear, defined systems
  – Knowledge/expertise with the appropriate people

Program Tasks
Head Start, CSBG, WAP staff, etc.

Agency-wide Tasks
Fiscal Director

Increased: Understanding, Accountability, and Collaboration
Take Action

**One exercise** an agency can do is to list all the Head Start program’s internal functions (e.g. governance, leadership, finance, human resources, etc) and ask a small group of agency leaders (including Head Start representatives) and score how integrated they are with the rest of the organization on a scale of one to five. This diagnostic is a good starting point to discuss broader issues of integration and where there are potential problems to address.
Promising Practices for Integration

Share Knowledge Across the Organization

Align Organizational Structures and Processes

Promote the Mission and Direction of the Organization
"We don’t exist to run Head Start, we exist to serve Davidson county residents. We are the organization who was designed to combat poverty... Head Start helps to serve the mission of the agency"

-- Dr. Cynthia Croom, Metropolitan Action Commission
Promote the Mission and Direction of the Organization

• Fostering a common vision
  – Discuss the mission and its meaning at staff meetings
  – Make the mission visible online and throughout agency buildings
  – Take the mission into account for decision-making
  – Communicate the mission from the top to encourage unity

• Be visible as one organization, inside and out
  – Leadership has to be first to model this
  – Reflect it through the culture, processes, and even the agency-wide strategic plan
Take Action

One exercise an agency can do is to have staff members discuss how they think programs they work in, as well as other agency programs, contribute to the mission.
Promising Practices for Integration

Share Knowledge Across the Organization

Align Organizational Structures and Processes

Promote the Mission and Direction of the Organization
Most Importantly:

Benefits for the Families
Small Group Discussions

Group up with people outside of your own agency...

1. What are your agency’s top challenges around CA-HS Integration?
2. What are your current solutions?
Community Action & Head Start: 

*Actionable Takeaways*

- Cross-train
- Set an integrated structure
- Promote the mission & direction of the agency
- Take time together
- Find the right people to lead
- Communicate regularly
- Know the regulations, standards, policies, & procedures
- Model trust
What is 1 new action your agency can take to integrate?
Questions
Publication Available!

Cases of Integration
CA + HS

https://communityactionpartnership.com/publication_toolkit/community-action-head-start-cases-of-integration/
Crosswalk: CSBG Organizational Standards + Head Start Performance Standards

Introduction to the CSBG-HSPPS Crosswalk

Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding is the bedrock of every Community Action Agency (CAA). For many CAAs, Head Start funding is another integral component of the organization’s annual budget, and often represents a CAA’s largest funding source. Along with both of these federal funds, CSBG as a priority area for Head Start.

### CSBG Organizational Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category One: Consumer Input and Involvement</th>
<th>Connections to Head Start Act and/or Head Start Program Performance Standard</th>
<th>Reference to Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 C.F.R. Chapter XIII) and/or the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9801 et seq.)</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1.1 Private** The organization demonstrates low-income individuals’ participation in its activities. | **Similar Head Start requirement applies.** Head Start grantees can demonstrate low-income individuals’ participation in: (1) the Policy Council (which must be composed of parents of current/former Head Start children or members of the community served); (2) Parent Committees (which must be composed exclusively of parents of current Head Start children); (3) the Health Services Advisory Committee (which must include Head Start parents); and (4) parent and family engagement activities (Head Start programs must ensure that parents and | - 45 C.F.R. 1301.3 Policy council and policy committee  
- 45 C.F.R. 1301.4 Parent committees  
- 45 C.F.R. 1302.34(b)(5) Parent and family engagement in education and child development services—Engaging parents and family members  
- 45 C.F.R. 1302.40(b) Purpose  
- 45 C.F.R. 1302.50(b) Family engagement | |
| **1.1 Public** The department demonstrates low-income individuals’ participation in its activities. | | |

Head Start & Community Action Integration Resource Guide

This Resource Guide is meant as a companion to the “Community Action & Head Start – Cases of Integration” Publication. The publication shares insights from Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that successfully and proactively integrated their Head Start programs into the overall management and operations of their CAAs. The resource guide includes a variety of resources connected to the various topics touched on in the publication. It includes a deeper dive into Head Start Governance, Best Practice Samples from Community Action Agencies that have well integrated Head Start programs, and presentations that discuss shared governance and integration.

Contact Information

Jarle Crocker, PhD, CCAP, NCRT
Director, T/TA
Community Action Partnership – National Office
jcrocker@communityactionpartnership.com

Courtney Kohler, MPA, CCAP, NCRT
Senior Associate, T/TA
Community Action Partnership – National Office
ckohler@communityactionpartnership.com