

# National Community Action Partnership

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## Maximizing Impact Through Effective Board Governance

August 28, 2025



# What Motivated you to Serve on the Board?



# Agenda



**Community Action Context**



**Community Action Boards**



**Board Purpose**



**Board Approach**

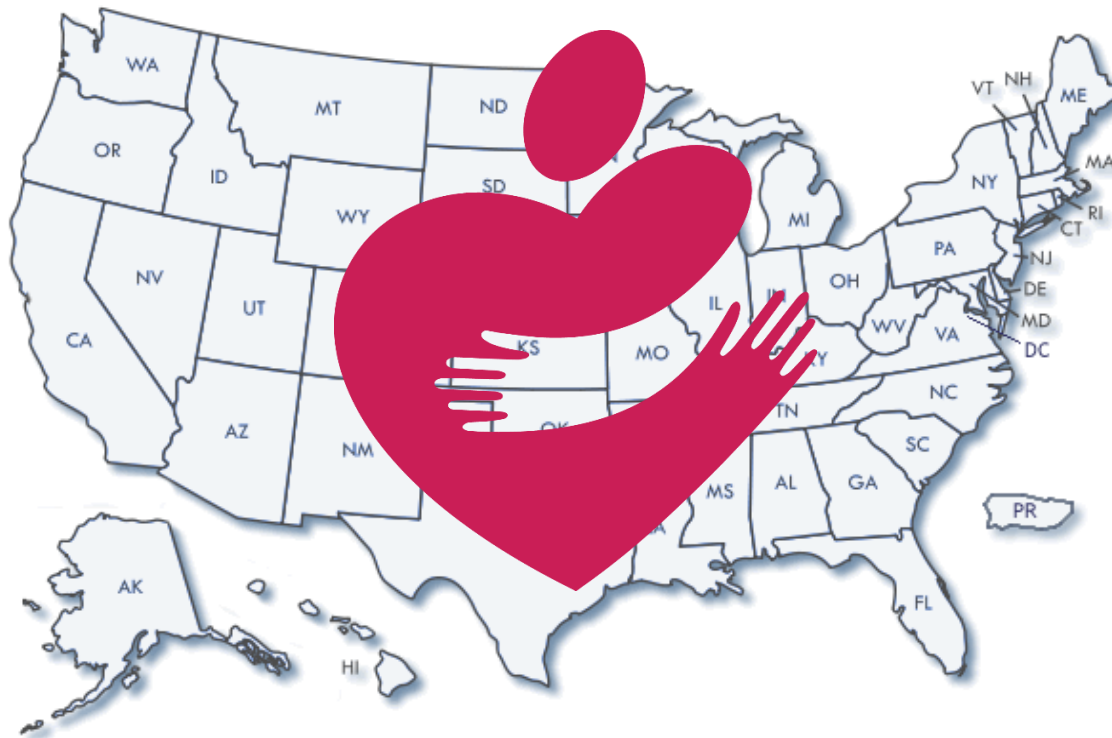


**Board Strategy**

# Community Action Network

*Red, Blue,  
Purple States*

*Board and Staff  
on All Sides of  
the Aisle*



1000+ Agencies | 44 State Associations | 50+ State CSBG Offices | National Partners  
More than 15 million served

*We work together to promote workable solutions that connect more families to opportunity*

# The National Community Action Network Theory of Change

## Community Action Goals

**Goal 1:** Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

**Goal 2:** Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

**Goal 3:** People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.



## Services and Strategies

Employment



Education & Cognitive Development

Income, Infrastructure & Asset Building



Housing

Health/Social Behavioral Development



Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

### Core Principles

- Recognize the complexity of the issues of poverty
- Build local solutions specific to local needs
- Support family stability as a foundation for economic security
- Advocate for systemic change
- Pursue positive individual, family, and community level change
- Maximize involvement of people with low incomes
- Engage local community partners and citizens in solutions
- Leverage state, federal, and community resources

### Performance Management

How well does the network operate?



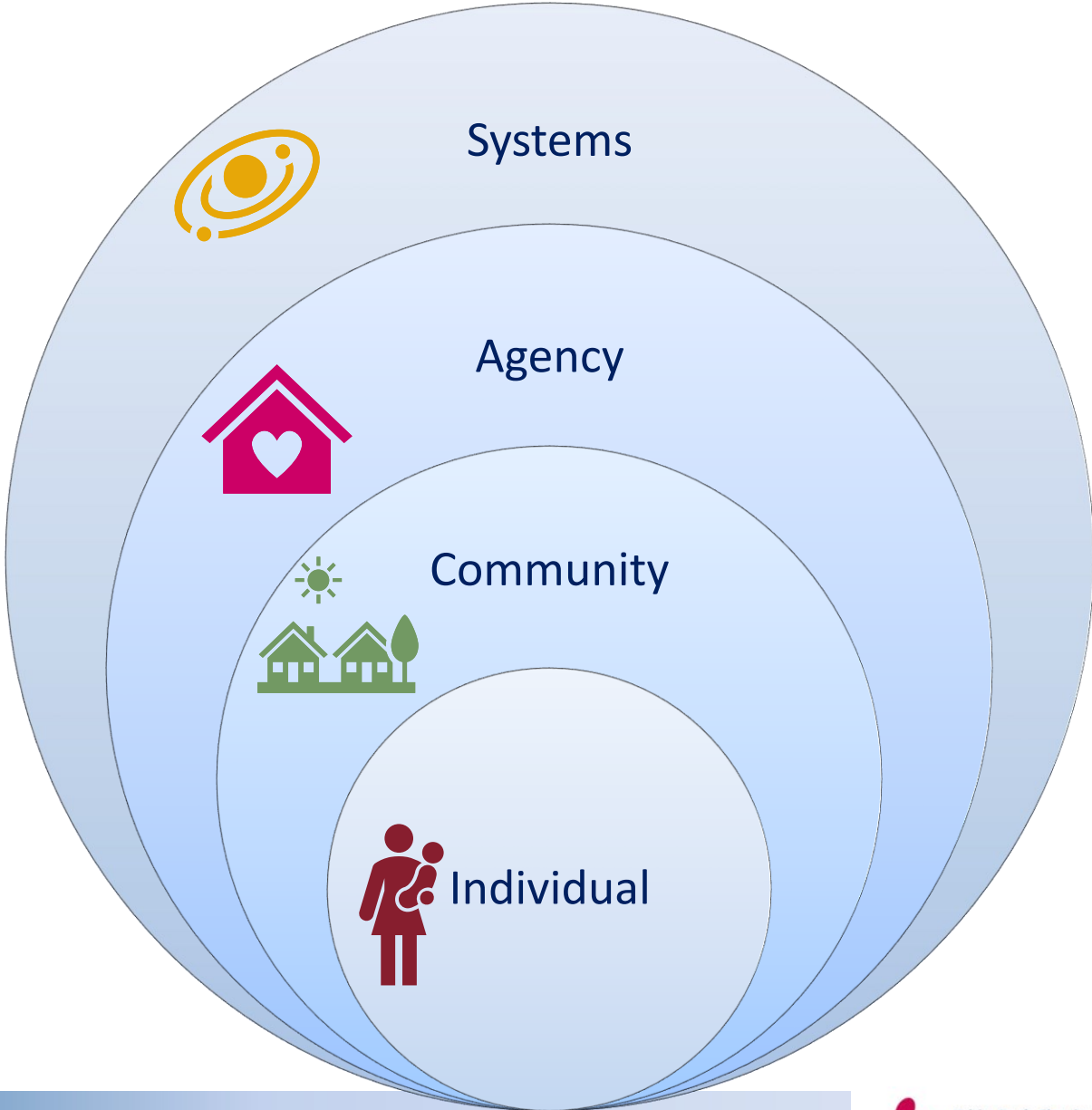
What difference does the network make?

- Local Organizational Standards
- State and Federal Accountability Measures
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability System

- Individual and Family National Performance Indicators
- Community National Performance Indicators

*A national network of over 1,000 high performing Community Action Agencies, State Associations, State offices, and Federal partners supported by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to mobilize communities to fight poverty.*

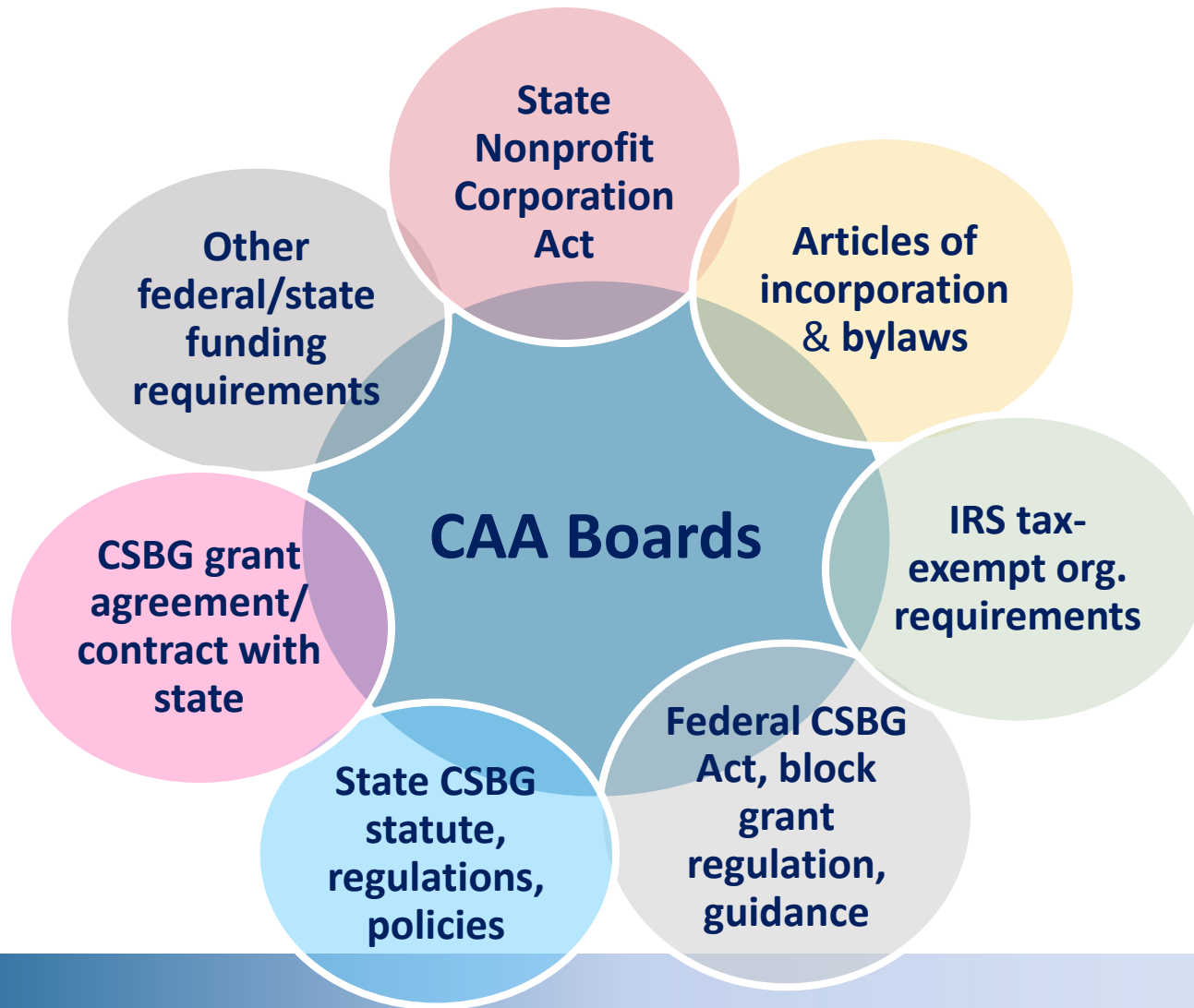
# Levels of the Work



# The Community Action Board

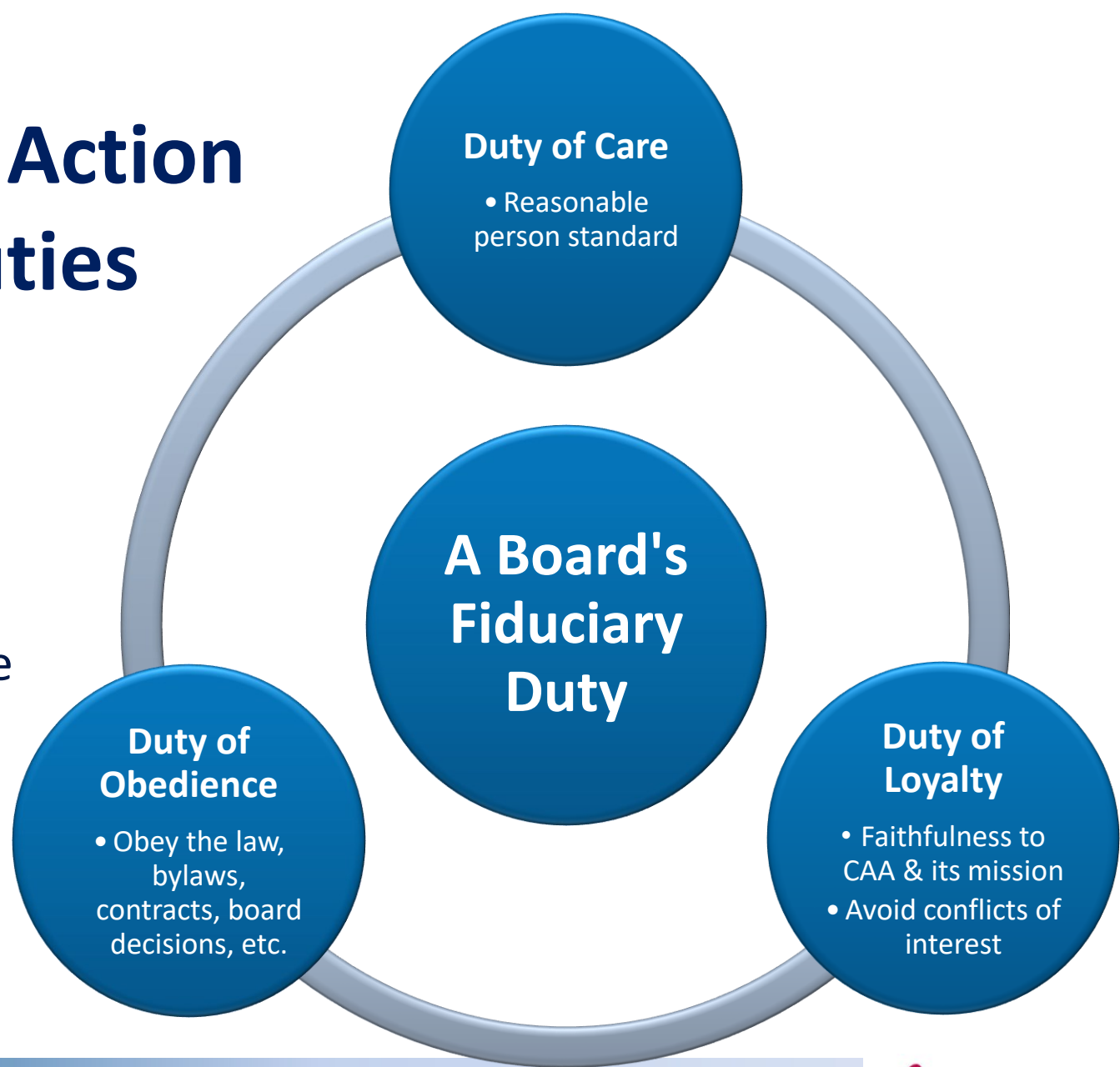
- Community Action Boards are governing bodies that set out the high-level vision, mission, strategic direction of the CAA/CSBG eligible entity
  - The vision and mission establishes the purpose to which the agency resources are to be devoted
  - Boards are required to fully participate in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of CSBG (and the agency as a whole too!)
- Boards govern the entire agency, not only CSBG\*
  - For a private nonprofit, the governing body IS the board

# Board Legal Requirements



# Community Action Board Duties

Board members are **fiduciaries**. They have the duty to **act for someone else's benefit** and hold the **agency's interest ahead of their own**



# Board Members are Expected to:

- Attend board meetings
- Actively prepare for and participate in board meetings
- Understand the financial position and the fiscal documents provided
- Be knowledgeable of the organization's actions
- Do their homework
- Vote on decisions
  - *Honor and respect the overall decision of the board*
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Honor the sensitive nature of the work
- Be ambassadors of the mission and organization in the community



# Roles of the Board

Vision, Mission & Purpose

Strategic Direction

Financial Oversight & Sustainability

Strategic Resource Allocation

Board Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Oversight & Support

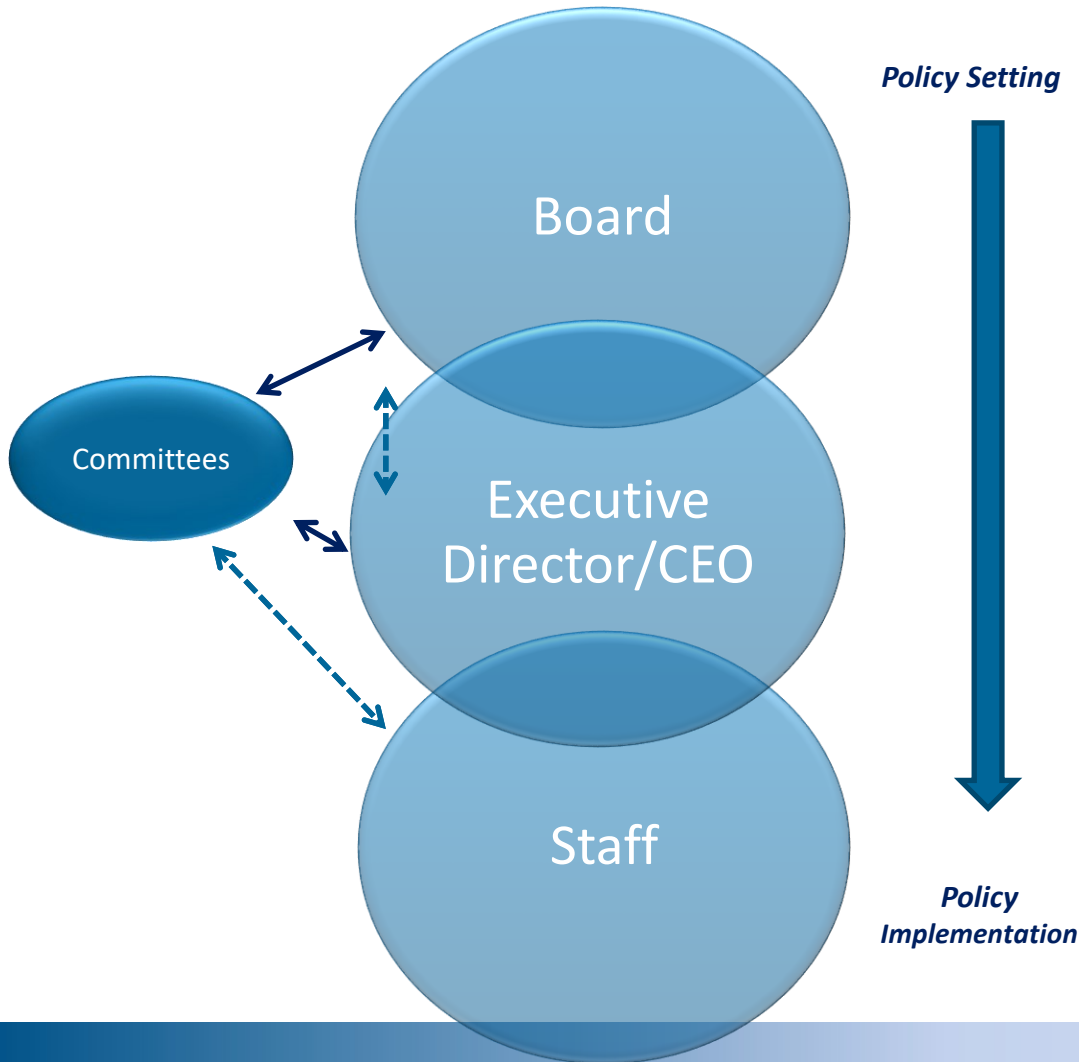
Advocacy

Power Building

Community Engagement

Performance Management & Evaluation

# Board Structure & Function



The Board understands its purpose and role, and appropriately stays focused on governing, leading managing up to agency leadership

Its structure supports the organization's purpose and ensures effective oversight

# Purpose



# The Board has a lot of work to do...



... but how does this work further the mission & purpose of the organization?

# In the for-profit sector, purposeful companies outperform the market by 42%

## > Impact of Purpose on Financial Performance



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Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-do-purpose-driven-companies-better-peter-fisk/>



**WORK = RESULTS**



**PURPOSE + WORK = RESULTS  
THAT MATTER**

# A Shift in Models...

## a GRANTS MANAGEMENT business model



# A Shift in Models...

## the **COMMUNITY ACTION IMPACT** model

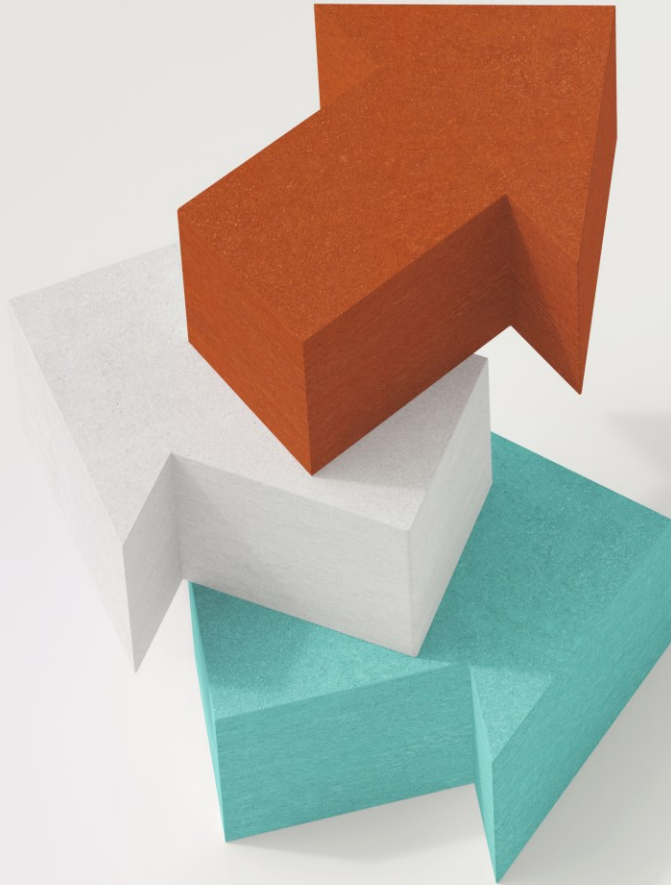


# Board Purpose and Meaning

- The essential work can be the least meaningful. Holding the CAA accountable is not compelling.
- However, when we focus the board only on accountability, we have created a job without a compelling purpose.
- When purpose is not compelling people disengage. The more disengaged they are, the less likely they are to ensure accountability-contrary to the fiduciary responsibility.

# Boards Set the Strategic Direction of the Agency Based on Purpose & Mission





**What is at the  
core of your  
agency's work  
that should drive  
and guide the  
board and staff  
above all else?**

# Scenario:

## Should we keep the LIHEAP program that doesn't pay its full freight?

### Traditional Frame

What is best for our organization?

How would this impact our organization?

How will our strategy advance our mission?

What do we\* think is best?

### Purpose Frame

What is best for the outcomes we are trying to achieve?

How would this impact all the partners and dynamics within our broader system? Will it help us—working together—do the most good?

How will this decision or strategy move us closer to achieving lasting impact? Are there potential unintended consequences, and—if so—what can we do to minimize them?

Does our board include the perspectives and voices of those most connected to the work we do? Are we listening closely to what our stakeholders tell us is most important?

# Scenario:

## Should we close our county satellite office?

### Traditional Frame

What is best for our organization?

How would this impact our organization?

How will our strategy advance our mission?

What do we\* think is best?

### Purpose Frame

What is best for the outcomes we are trying to achieve?

How would this impact all the partners and dynamics within our broader system? Will it help us—working together—do the most good?

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# BASICS OF BOARD FUNCTIONING



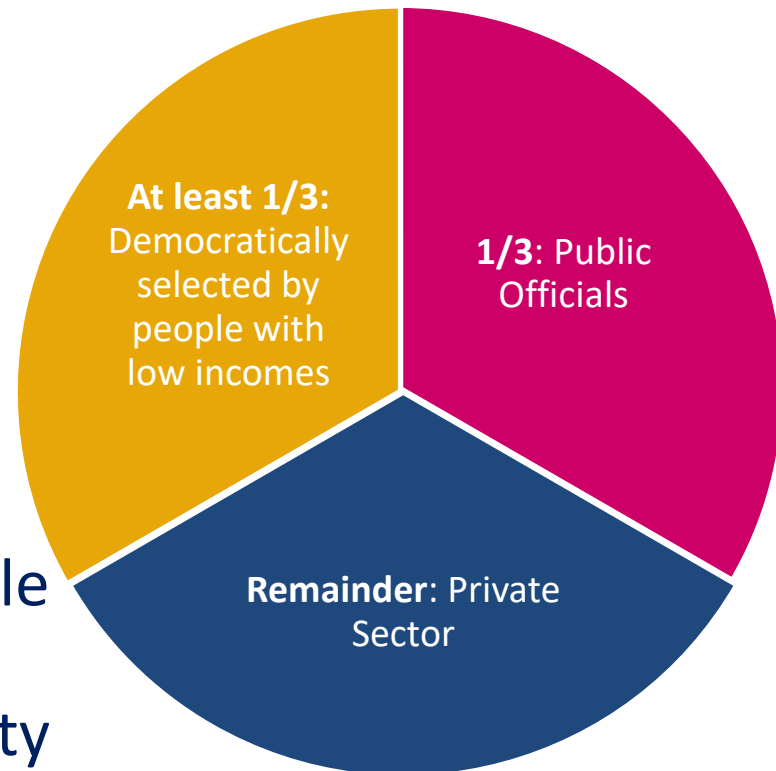
# Good Governance is Good Leadership

- Board and Management
- Tone at the Top
  - Compliance
  - Ethical Behavior
  - Avoiding Conflicts of Interest
- Bylaws that work for the organization
- Board Directors and Officers Liability Insurance



# Structure & Composition

- Does the board meet legal requirements for structure?
  - State nonprofit laws
  - Federal CSBG Act
  - State CSBG laws
  - Other funding sources
- The tripartite structure reflects the values of Community Action:
  - Centering in the voice of people with low-incomes
  - Building power and opportunity
  - Multi-sector collaboration



# Board Recruitment

- Use a Governance Committee to actively & continuously anticipate vacancies, needs, and strategically recruit
- Think strategically about key skills needed on the board
  - Finance, Legal, Fundraising, Administration, Advocacy, Research, etc.
  - Use a Board Matrix to identify board strengths and needs

# Use a Board Member Inventory/Matrix



Propel Nonprofits Board Profile Worksheet

	Board Member Name	Term Ends			Term Ends			Term Ends			Identified Need
<b>Categories to Consider</b>											
Areas of Expertise/Skills											
Advocacy/Policy											
Business Analysis/Planning											
Finance											
Fundraising											
Governance											
Human Resources											
Legal											
Marketing/Communications											
Mission Specific Expertise											
Nonprofit Management											
Real Estate											
Social Enterprise											
Social Media											
Strategic Planning											
Technology											
Other:											
Other:											
<b>Connections</b>											
Client/Constituent											
Community Member											
Corporate											
Government											
Nonprofit											
Philanthropy											
Small Business											
Other:											
Other:											
<b>Gender</b>											
Male											
Female											
Transgender											
Other:											
Prefer not to say											



Propel Nonprofits Board Profile Worksheet

	Board Member Name	Term Ends										Identified Need
<b>Categories to Consider</b>												
<b>Qualities</b>												
Critical thinker												
Connector												
Entrepreneur												
Leadership skills												
Team Builder												
Visionary												
Other:												
<b>Ability</b>												
Blind or low vision												
Deaf or hard of hearing												
Developmental or other cognitive disability												
Hidden or undisclosed disability												
Medical disability												
Physical or mobility disability												
<b>Age</b>												
Under 18												
19-25												
26-40												
41-50												
51-65												
Over 65												
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>												
African/African-American												
Asian/Pacific Islander												
Hispanic/Latinx												
Native American												
White												
Mixed race												
Other:												

Additional Comments:

<https://propelnonprofits.org/resources/board-profile-worksheet/>



# Board Member Roles and Duties: Use a Job Description

Opportunity to make expectations clear, ensure everyone is on the same page, and articulate skillsets needed



Potential areas to include:

Mission

Responsibility  
and general  
duties

Term and time  
commitment

Fiduciary and  
financial  
responsibilities

Qualifications  
and skillsets

# Example Job Descriptions



IN YOUR CORNER

## Board of Directors Job Description

### WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1966, Community Action Marin is the official anti-poverty agency of Marin County. As a Community Action Agency, we are charged with eliminating the causes and consequences of poverty. We envision all of us in Marin County having an equal opportunity to live our lives with dignity and respect.

Our mission is to make it possible for people to achieve wellbeing by providing the education, mental health, and vital services they need. Together, we break down the barriers that get in the way of fair and lasting change in service to better outcomes for all.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Community Action Marin's Board of Directors is responsible for selecting and supporting the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), providing financial oversight, ensuring the agency has adequate resources, enhancing the agency's public standing, setting the mission and purpose, and assisting in monitoring its strategic plan.

As a Community Action Agency, the Board of Directors is tripartite, made up equally of individuals representing the private sector, public sector, and those receiving services or representing low-income community.

### WHO YOU ARE

All board members must reside in Marin County, CA and represent one or more of our three tripartite areas: professionals from the private sector, public sector, or individuals representing low-income communities or those directly receiving services through the agency's programs.

Additional desired qualifications include:

- Commitment to public service and the people of Marin County
- Interest in developing and/or leveraging philanthropic relationships
- Previous experience on a nonprofit board of directors and with governance responsibilities
- The financial acumen to read and understand the agency's financial statements and to otherwise help the board fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities

<https://camarin.org/wp-content/uploads/23.12.11-BoardOfDirectorsRoleDescription.pdf>



## AGENCY EXPECTATIONS OF A MEMBER OF THE BOARD:

### A. Expected Meeting Attendance:

1. Regularly attend standing meetings as scheduled (11 per year)
  - a. Be prepared for meetings and read all materials provided
  - b. Be willing to ask questions, exercise healthy skepticism
  - c. Be willing to make decisions
  - d. Become familiar with Board by-laws, policies and procedures, organizational structure, decision-making processes, and parliamentary procedure in order to be an effective representative
2. Notify main office if unable to attend scheduled meeting, to assure the attendance of a quorum
3. Attend Board retreats, orientations, n-service workshops, and other Board development activities
4. Attend and participate in special events as needed
5. Work toward the achievement of Agency-wide strategic plan goals, strategies, and measures
6. Embrace, advocate, and carry out the mission, vision, and core values of the Agency

### B. Obligations:

1. Determine personnel, fiscal and program policies
  - a. Develop the long-range financial plan
  - b. Review and approve the annual audit to ensure that funds are spend responsibly
  - c. Members of the Finance Committee have the responsibility to oversee fiscal management monthly
2. Hire, supervise and evaluate the Executive Director
  - a. Participate in the annual performance review and annual compensation review of the Executive Director
  - b. Realize that the Executive Director has supervisory responsibility of all Agency staff
3. Mobilize resources and understand the needs of your community to meet needs and achieve goals
  - a. Find out where there are unmet needs in your community
  - b. Gather input from the community about how to meet those needs

<https://www.caplp.org/assets/files/2024-BoardMemberJobDescription.pdf>

# Recruitment Strategies

Proactive and continuous recruitment

Nomination process

Social media

Local council of nonprofits

Open board meeting

Board member speed dating

Leverage current networks

Create leadership pipelines

40 under 40 lists/young professionals organizations

What else has worked for you?

# It's About More than Recruiting Great People...



# Board Orientation Resources

## Boardsource Orientation Checklist

## CAPLAW Board Roles & Responsibilities

BOARD MEMBER  
ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is a general outline to guide the orientation of new board members. Your organization should modify it as you see fit to ensure that all new board members are provided with the information necessary to fulfill their responsibilities.

**PROGRAM**

- ✓ Tour facilities
- ✓ Presentation by chief executive, key staff, video, or other electronic media.  
*Materials to share with board members:*
  - Organization's web site address
  - Annual calendar
  - Publications and programs list

**HISTORY**

- ✓ Ensure that new board members understand the history of the organization. When was it founded? Why? How has it grown and developed over time?  
*Materials to share with board members:*
  - Brief written history or fact sheet on the organization
  - Brochures
  - Newsletters
  - Articles of incorporation
  - Note whether Directors and Officers insurance has been used in the past

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS**

- i Know the organization's mission, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths, and needs, as well as the larger ecosystem and its collective purpose.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- ✓ Review strategic plan  
*Materials to share with board members:*
  - Most recent strategic plan
  - Current case statement
  - Recent press clippings

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS**

- i Follow trends in the organization's field of interest and keep informed.

BoardSource

TEXT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.



### Training & Orientation Tool for Nonprofit CAA Boards

Governance, Training, Tripartite Board  
Board of Directors, Executive Director  
2017

This presentation was created in response to a need in the network for training and orientation materials that state Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) offices, state associations, and individual Community Action Agencies (CAAs) can use to educate their own boards and staff that work with the board on the board's vital role in the organization. This presentation is specifically for tripartite boards of nonprofit CAAs and acts as a guide for those training or orientating board members on the board's responsibilities.

The full presentation includes **five** main sections:

1. **Brief Introductions**
2. **Legal Requirements Governing Tripartite Boards**
3. **A Few Brief Points About How a Board of Directors Operates**
4. **Role of the Tripartite Board**
5. **Key Responsibilities of the Tripartite Board**
  - o Mission
  - o Planning
  - o Engagement
  - o Generating Funds
  - o Performance
  - o Accountability

# Onboarding



BOARD MENTORS

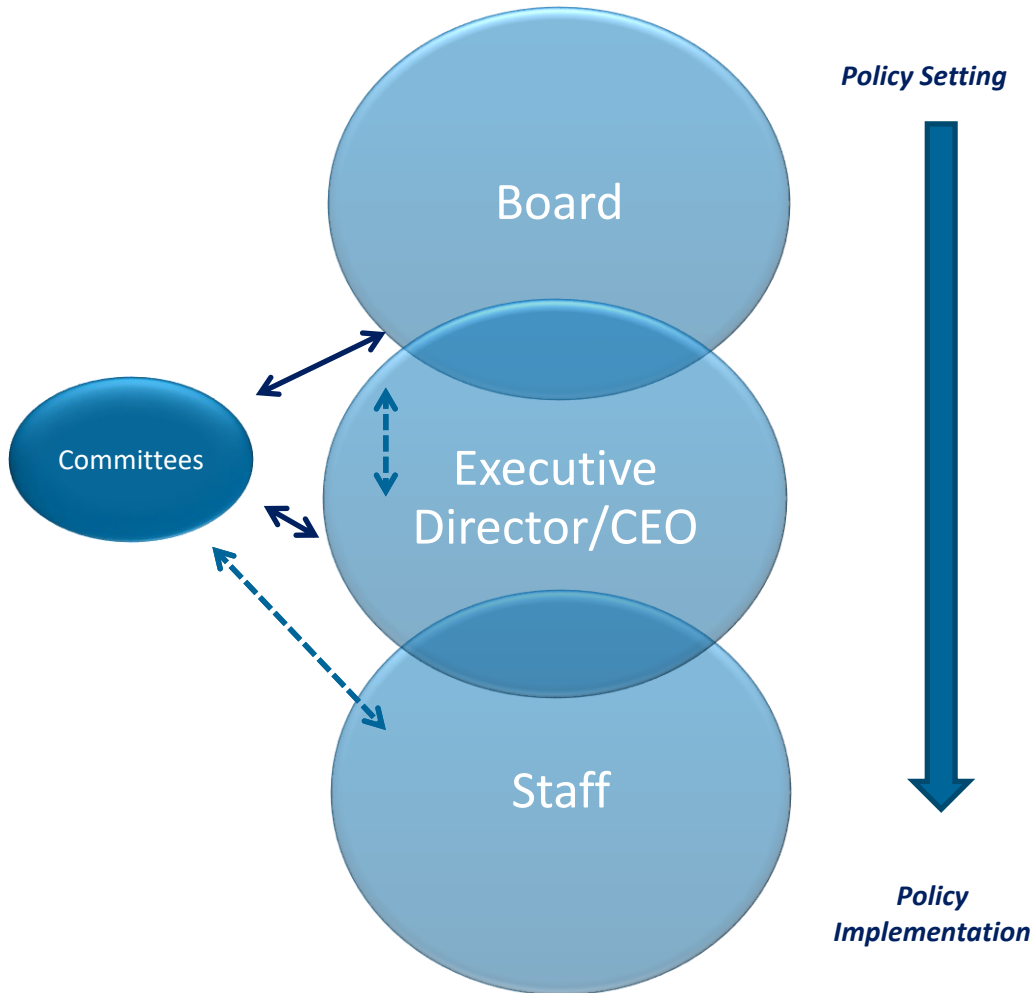


FOLLOW UP/CHECK IN CALL  
FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



IF NOT COLLECTED IN AN  
APPLICATION, BOARD  
MEMBER PROFILE

# Committees



- Clearly define each committee's role and authority
- Get the appropriate people on each committee
- Be sure committees meet as often as needed
- Give committees meaningful assignments in between board meetings
- Have written committee charges

# Look at Your Committees

Executive

Finance/Audit

Personnel

Board  
Development

Fund  
Development

Program/  
Planning/  
Evaluation

Strategic  
Planning

Other?

Standing  
Ad Hoc?

# Fiscal Oversight



Ensure resources to achieve mission



Full board is responsible, not just the Treasurer or Finance Committee



Protect assets and provide proper fiscal oversight



Review Financial health of the CAA

# The Dual Bottom Line: Mission Impact and Financial Return

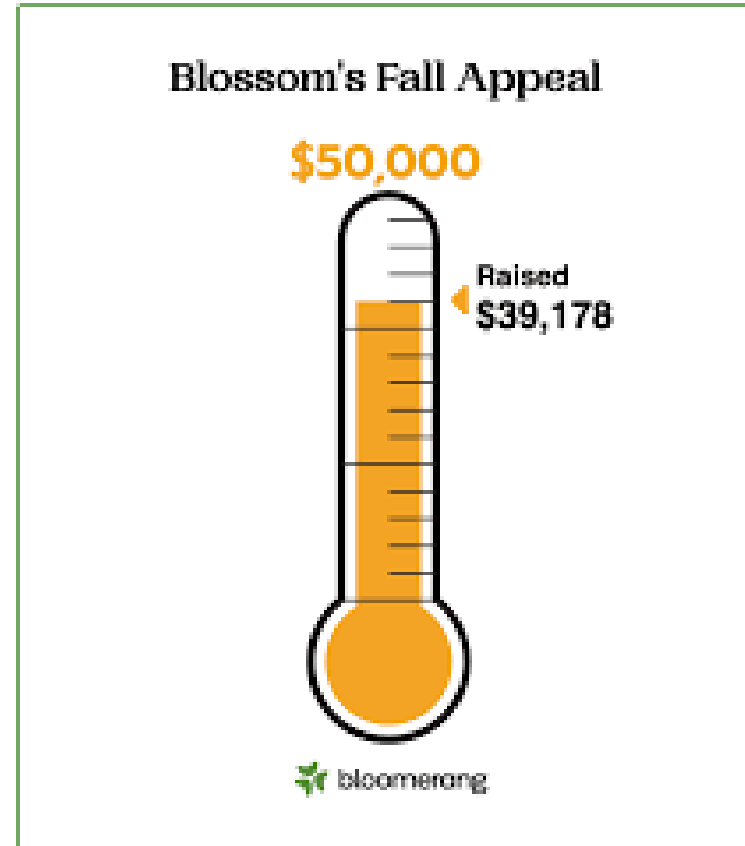


**“Non-profit” is a tax status, it is not a business model!**

A key element of managing performance is making difficult, strategic decisions that balance the achievement of mission with organizational sustainability

# Board Fundraising

- Start by centering purpose
- Consider your strategic priorities
- Get clear on responsibilities for fundraising:
  - Articulate requirements in job descriptions, recruitment processes, orientation, etc.
- Set targets – how much?
- Make personal giving requirements clear
- Training and Ongoing Support
  - Toolkits, talking points, promotional language
- Monitor and report



# The most valuable asset of the organization is its people

## Executive Director

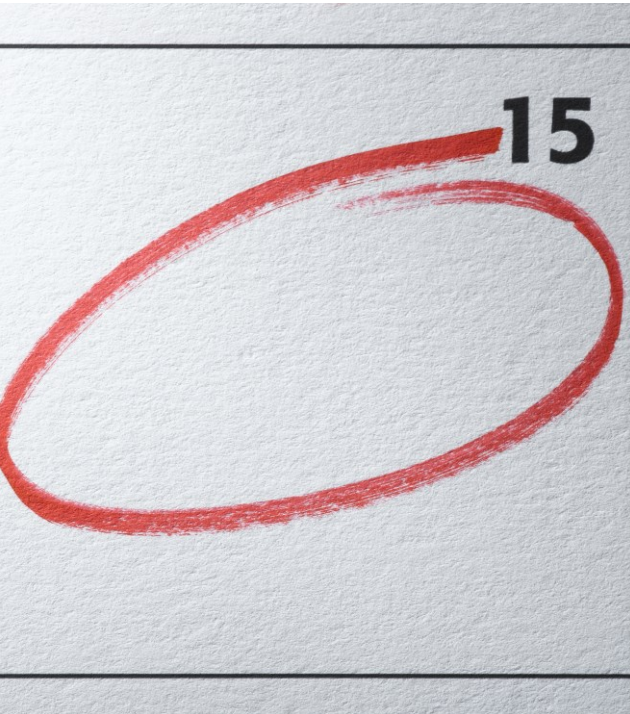
- Hiring, Support, Evaluation
- Succession Planning

## Setting the tone

- Personnel Policies
  - Fair compensation, benefits
- Training, development
- Fostering a supportive culture and sense of well-being



# Board Process: Meeting Schedule



- How many hours a year do we have as a board to conduct business?
- As frequent as needed; not so frequent that commitment is difficult/there is limited action
- Consider deadlines for key activities (strategic planning; agency audit; Grant Applications; ED performance & compensation review; Community Assessment; etc.)
- Time of day so it maximizes potential engagement
- Consider location opportunities & constraints

# Board Process: Meeting Agendas

- **Agenda Development**
  - Chair and Executive Director
- **Standing Items for Agenda:**
  - Review & approval of prior meeting minutes
  - Financial report
  - Programmatic report
  - Next Meeting date & time reminder
- **Timing and Flow**
  - Balancing Time Regulative/Fiduciary, Strategic, and Generative Discussions

# The Magic of the Consent Agenda

- Group routine items and resolutions under one action item for one vote
- Conditions for a consent agenda:

Familiar

Require no  
discussion

Involve no  
conflict

*Never include financials in a consent agenda*

# Board Process: Board Meetings



Know:

Attendance required for Quorum  
Voting Decision Thresholds  
Required items of action



Run by Chair, but the Chair shouldn't do everything in the meeting



Create space and time for discussion



Create space for informal connection building

# ... But why are we doing all of this?



**WORK = RESULTS**



**PURPOSE + WORK = RESULTS  
THAT MATTER**

# The Role of the Board in Strategic Planning

- Setting the mission, vision, and strategic direction are key functions of the Board
- Strategic Planning is a **board-led** process; the process starts and ends with the board
- Strategic Planning is an *engagement* opportunity
- Boards are responsible for managing the performance of the CAA – not just compliance. The Strategic Plan helps provide a container for managing that performance.

# Using the Strategic Plan

Priorities & Goals as Filters for Decision Making

Frame board reports around the Strategic Plan

Managing Performance to the Strategic Plan

- Performance framed by the agency, not funders
- Scorecards and Dashboards

# The Board is Active in Reviewing and Managing the Performance of the Agency

**Standard 2.1:** The agency Board has formally adopted and *actively uses* an agency-wide strategic plan. The plan serves as a framework for an agency-wide performance management system ...



# CMCA Dashboard

Agency Operations

<https://cmca.us/our-impact/>

Pdf



- P Agency Operations		Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value
+ PM	strategic plan % members receiving multiple CMCA services	-	-	-
+ PM	strategic plan # members engaged in program planning & service delivery	Q3 2022	6	-
+ PM	% members reporting a good relationship with their coach	FY 2022	96%	-
+ PM	% members satisfied with their experience with CMCA	FY 2022	89.0%	-
+ PM	% staff members who feel CMCA is a good place to work	FY 2022	89.0%	-

# CAPSLO Scorecard

1. Mission/Vision Focus – ROMA Goals 1, 2, 3	Method of documentation	Level of achievement 90-100% = 3; 80-89% = 2; <80% = 1 Yes = 3; No = 0	Result	Score
<b>Strategy 2. Enhance efforts to increase public awareness of agency – ROMA Goal 2</b>				
% of clients who respond strongly agree/agree to: perception of agency on client survey “I would tell a friend or family member about this program.” (Standard 6.4, 7.2)	Client survey	90-100% = 3; 80-94% = 2; <80 = 1	92%	3
% of surveyed clients who respond to “Staff told me about other CAPSLO programs.” (Standard 6.4)	Client survey	90-100% = 3; 80-94% = 2; <80 = 1	84%	2
% of surveyed employees stating strongly agree/agree on satisfaction survey that CAPSLO has positive image in the community (Standard 6.4)	Employee survey	90-100% = 3; 80-94% = 2; <80 = 1	91%	3
% of surveyed board members stating strongly agree/agree on satisfaction survey that CAPSLO has a positive image in the community (Standard 6.4)	Board survey	90-100% = 3; 80-94% = 2; <80 = 1	100%	3
# of presentations and information sessions given to inform community members about CAPSLO services (Standard 6.4)	Board reports	3/mo. = 3; 2/mo. = 2; <2/mo. = 1	106	3
# external reports (annual agency, HS/EHS, MSHS, needs assessment) posted on agency website (Standard 6.4)	Planning manager	3 = 3; <3 = 1	3	3

# United Planning Organization

Divisions & Offices	Overall Tactical Plan Progress	UPO Strategic Goals					
		Goal #1 - Offer Pathways to the Middle Class through Economic Security programming directed at family strengthening through asset enhancement.	Goal #2 - Create and Grow Social Enterprise Opportunities.	Goal #3 - Expand Portfolio of Services offered Regionally.	Goal #4 - Leverage Government Funding by 20% with Private Sector Support.	Goal #5 - Employ the Baldrige Management Practices of Continuous Improvement.	Goal #6 - Develop and Implement a coordinated marketing and development approach.
Early Learning	98%	100%	N/A	92%	100%	100%	N/A
Youth Services	55%	17%	33%	52%	43%	24%	N/A
Advocacy	92%	100%	N/A	95%	92%	85%	N/A
Affordable Housing	67%	33%	N/A	78%	N/A	89%	N/A
Community Impact	84%	N/A	84%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community Reinvestment	52%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community Health	52%	53%	65%	33%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Workplace Institute - Employment	86%	73%	N/A	75%	100%	N/A	100%
Workplace Institute - Training	60%	N/A	N/A	33%	60%	67%	67%
Human Resources	59%	N/A	33%	33%	38%	67%	100%
Finance	46%	N/A	38%	67%	58%	38%	39%
Performance Management	68%	100%	55%	67%	85%	46%	50%
OTIS	58%	96%	63%	N/A	9%	73%	78%
Legal Affairs	97%	100%	N/A	100%	100%	93%	100%
Resource Development	81%	100%	100%	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A
Development & Communications	58%	67%	67%	N/A	N/A	42%	N/A
Average Goal Progress	70%	76%	60%	66%	67%	66%	76%

## FY 2023 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT REPORT (OPERATIONS) July-23 WORKFORCE INSTITUTE - TRAINING DIVISION

MACROMETRICS						
YTD Unduplicated Number of Customers Served						309
YTD Weighted Average Performance						61%
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS						
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	FY 2023 PLAN	YTD PLAN	YTD ACTUAL	% YTD ACTUAL	% ANNUAL ACTUAL	
# Individuals - Enrolled	265	221	165	75%	62%	
# Individuals - Case Management Plans Initiated	40	40	34	85%	85%	
Obtained certification, Credential, or degree	221	184	106	58%	48%	
# Partnerships	42	34	40	118%	95%	



# Programmatic Reports

Good board processes include programmatic reports that allow board members to stay abreast of program development, planning, implementation and evaluation activities and to provide input into the process.

Keep board reports high level and focused on the information the board needs to make good decisions

# Some Notes on Reports...



## READ THEM!



Avoid the Weeds



Make expectations clear



Consider what you need to make a good decision



Give feedback

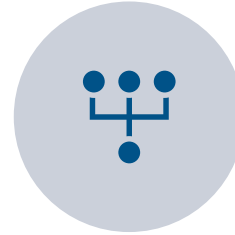
# Strategy



WHAT ARE WE  
ASKING BOARD  
MEMBERS TO  
DO?



WHAT DO  
BOARD  
MEMBERS WANT  
TO DO?



WHAT DOES THE  
AGENCY NEED  
FROM THE  
BOARD?



WHAT DOES THE  
COMMUNITY  
NEED FROM THE  
BOARD?

# What does the Board WANT to do?

- Remember, boards change with time - checking in about what the board is doing is a proactive practice to help you right-size engagement
- Not everyone will want to (or can) engage in the same way
  - Use an inventory to understand skills and interests
  - Right-size engagement

# Possible Engagement Points for CAA Boards



Strategic  
Planning



Program  
Development



Advocacy



Fundraising



Community  
Engagement



Volunteerism



Other ideas?

# On Engagement...

- Engagement does not cost everyone the same, or provide the same value
- Implement systems and policies that make the board engagement more accessible
  - Allow for Virtual Meetings
  - Offer supportive services, such as childcare, transportation, etc.
  - Interpretation services
  - Ensure the board is trained on fundamentals of Customer Voice
- Structure & Facilitation
  - Committees
    - Leadership & Membership
  - Facilitation



# Board Process:

## Assessing the Board's Performance

- Excellent Boards take time to consider how they are performing in key areas such as governance, recruitment, leadership, fulfilling the mission, ethical practices, etc.
  - Build board consensus and clarity
  - Gives direction for continuous improvement efforts
- Many tools to help boards complete this type of assessment!
  - [Dalhousie University Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#)
  - [McKinsey & Company Nonprofit Board Self Assessment](#)
  - Can build your own



# TOOLS AND RESOURCES

# Critical Relationship: Board Chair-ED/CEO



## DYNAMIC DUO

### A Guide to Enhancing the Board & Executive Director Partnership



## IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR RELATIONSHIP

The board chair and executive director work closely together to ensure that all board members and senior management are receiving the information they need to execute their respective responsibilities.

### A. Establishing the Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the board chair often include:

- Working with the executive director (and executive committee, if applicable) to establish the agenda for the board meetings;
- Acting as the liaison between the executive director and the full board;
- Serving as the spokesperson for the full board (if so authorized by the board);
- Convening and conducting regular board meetings and ensuring a quorum is established;
- Moderating and facilitating board discussions to encourage varying points of view; and
- Helping to organize and lead new member orientations (with the executive director and governance committee).

The specific positions, titles and duties of an organization's officers, including the board chair, should be set forth in the CAA's bylaws. For nonprofit CAAs, the majority of state nonprofit corporate laws require officers of a nonprofit board to include a president, secretary, and treasurer, in addition to any other position that the board may wish to designate. A board president is often referred to by a CAA as the board chair. If state nonprofit corporate laws require a president, but a CAA has a board chair, the CAA should specify in its bylaws that the board chair serves as the president for purposes of the state's corporate laws. The board chair, along with the other officers, is elected by the board. Officers typically serve for an annual term but the bylaws may specify a longer term. For public CAAs, a local ordinance, if one exists, that establishes the authority of the tripartite board and its bylaws will govern the designation and selection of officers of the board.

### B. Cultivating a Partnership

The chair may work with the executive director to help him/her navigate and achieve the goals and objectives established for the executive director by the full board or a board committee. The chair often serves as a sounding board for the concerns of the executive director. When the executive director is under stress or experiencing some difficulty in communicating with board members,

*Dynamic Duo: A Guide to Enhancing the Board & Executive Director Partnership*

25

# CAPLAW Resource: Working with an Elected Public Official's Representative on the Tripartite Board

## CAPLAW FAQ



A series of common legal questions and answers for the CAA network

### Working with an Elected Public Official's Representative on the Tripartite Board

By Allison Ma'luf, Esq.  
September 2018

Elected public officials serve a crucial role on a Community Action Agency's (CAA) tripartite board. Not only do they raise awareness of poverty in the community and at various levels of government, they are also integral in fostering close coordination between local public agencies and Community Action efforts. Recognizing the often overwhelming demands elected public officials regularly face, the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act gives a public official invited to serve on the tripartite board the option to have a representative serve in his or her place. This FAQ addresses a variety of questions received by CAPLAW about the selection and management of representatives serving in place of elected public officials on tripartite boards. The answers to these questions often depend on the requirements in a CAA's bylaws. While this FAQ discusses the federal CSBG Act's requirements and offers recommended practices, CAAs should note that they must continue to follow their bylaws as currently written until they are amended pursuant to the applicable bylaws provisions and/or state or local laws.

1. What legal requirements apply to how representatives of elected public officials are selected and managed?
2. Can a representative serve as an alternate or proxy rather than in place of the elected public official?
3. Who may serve as a representative of an elected public official?
4. Is a tripartite board required to accept an elected public official's choice for a representative?
5. What if an elected public official delays in appointing a representative to serve in his or her place?
6. If an elected public official is no longer in office, can the representative continue to serve on the board?
7. Can a representative of an elected public official be unilaterally removed by the elected public official?
8. What happens when a representative of an elected public official is no longer able to serve?

[https://caplaw.org/resources/faqs/Governance/CAPLAW\\_FAQ\\_WorkingwithElectedPublicOfficialsRep\\_Sept2018.pdf](https://caplaw.org/resources/faqs/Governance/CAPLAW_FAQ_WorkingwithElectedPublicOfficialsRep_Sept2018.pdf)

## Raising the Low-Income Voice: Case Studies in Democratic Selection Procedures

- Seek applicants through social media, word of mouth, civic/community involvement and other entities that serve low-income population.
- Qualified applicant(s) is/are elected by low-income population in service area.
- Ballot election is held:
  - » In Community Services Department
  - » During high volume service time
  - » Bio for applicant available during the election process
  - » Educate voting participants in person and in written document as to the need for low income Board representation
  - » Voter sign in sheet
  - » Ballots are tallied when election is complete
  - » Hold orientation for newly elected Board member before the next scheduled Board of Director' meeting
- Outcome of election is presented to Board of Directors for approval at the next scheduled meeting
- Ballots/Voter sign in sheet retained in Board Minutes permanent record

[https://www.capl原因.org/resources/PublicationDocuments/CAPLAW\\_RaisingtheLowIncomeVoice\\_Introduction\\_April2021.pdf](https://www.capl原因.org/resources/PublicationDocuments/CAPLAW_RaisingtheLowIncomeVoice_Introduction_April2021.pdf)

### Raising the Low-Income Voice

Case Studies in Democratic Selection Procedures



#### INTRODUCTION

*Updated April 2021*

Since the inception of the Economic Opportunity Act, a fundamental goal of Community Action has been to provide low-income individuals with a voice in the administration of its poverty-alleviating programs. With the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act's call to achieve "maximum participation" of the low-income community in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of CSBG-funded programs, a critical venue for the low-income community's participation is their representation on the tripartite board.

Despite the importance placed on maximum participation of the low-income community,

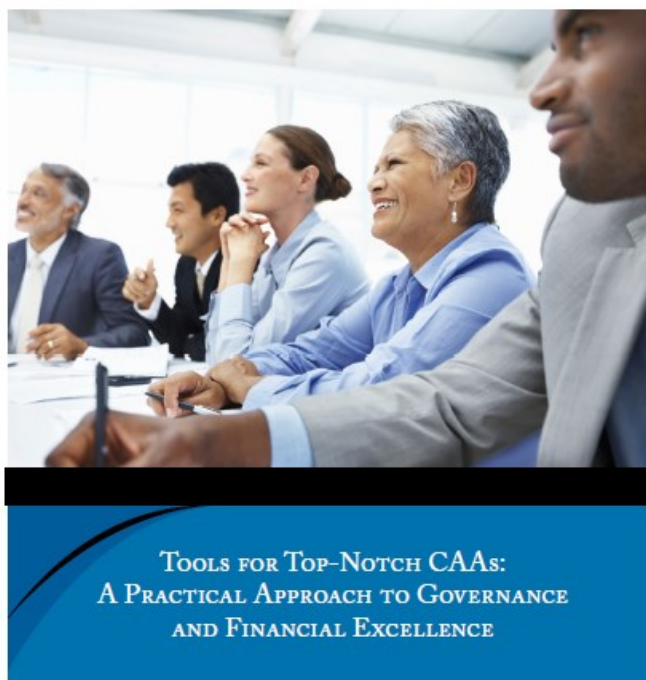
such as election to a position of responsibility in another significant service or community organization such as a school PTA, a faith-based organization leadership group; or an advisory board/governing council to another low-income service provider."

IM 82 advises CAAs to ensure democratic selection procedures "directly through election [or] public form," but if that is not possible, it lists a number of alternatives. The case studies in Raising the Low-Income Voice are focused on the "direct" democratic procedures. If a CAA determines that direct democratic procedures are not possible, it will likely be able to comply with the law by creating what may be called

# Board Engagement with the Audit

- National Council of Nonprofits suggests boards ask the following 6 questions after the Audit:
  - Was the management team cooperative and forthcoming with requested information and documentation?
  - How do our accounting policies and procedures compare with those of other comparable nonprofits?
  - Are there any items that might be disputed by the IRS? If yes, what documentation should be on hand to bolster the item?
  - Did the management team follow suggestions noted by auditors in prior years to correct weaknesses in the internal accounting system?
  - Did you discover anything regarding the financial statements or internal financial management procedures that should be brought to the attention of the board of directors?
  - Do you have any suggestions for improvements in accounting, reporting, or operating procedures?

# Toolkit for Top Notch CAAs



**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

2017 Edition

**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

## TOOLS FOR TOP-NOTCH CAAs: A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE

Preface: Compliance with the CSBG Organizational Standards	1
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Do the Right Thing

## GUIDEBOOK



# Toolkit: Do the Right Thing

## SECTION III. HOW CAN CAA LEADERS CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE AND HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS?

How CAAs Can Cultivate a Culture of Compliance and High Ethical Standards

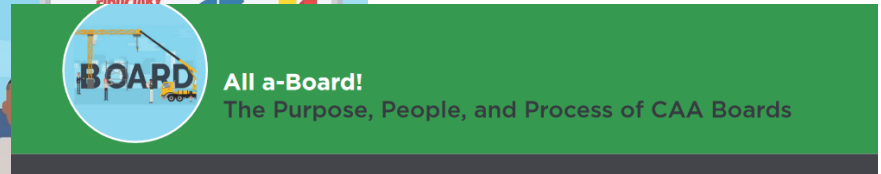
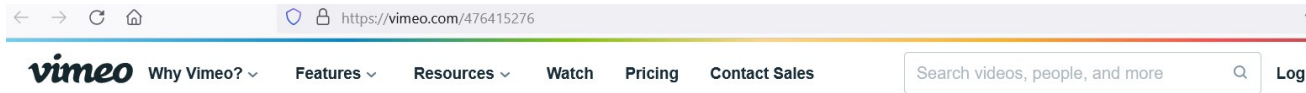
Following are 10 actions CAAs leaders can take to ensure compliance and ethical behavior throughout their organizations:

**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.



These actions – which need neither be expensive nor complicated – represent a continuous process that can and should be integrated into the organization’s existing operations. This Guidebook describes each of these actions in further detail.

# CAPLAW All A-Board! Board Training Videos



**6. Process: The CAA Board Meeting Ecosystem - Consent Agendas and the Conservation of Time**  
Discussion Guide

**Length:** 7:56"  
[Stream](#) | [Download](#)

#### Video Summary

Like a complex ecosystem, a board of directors of a CAA has a highly-developed set of structures and processes that help it navigate survival in its world of compliance and governance responsibilities. This video, which is narrated in a manner similar to a nature documentary film, follows a board of directors as it uses a consent agenda to save time and resources at a board meeting. It provides an overview of a consent agenda, what it includes, and how it can be used effectively to allow for in-depth analysis and discussion of important issues, such as strategic planning or development priorities.

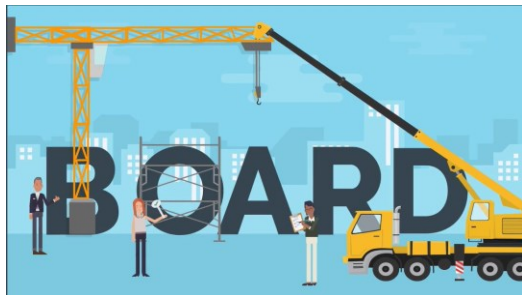
#### Learning Objectives

After watching this video, participants will be able to:

- Understand what a consent agenda is and how a board can use it to help streamline board meetings and improve board efficiency.
- Understand the process required for a board to adopt and implement a consent agenda.
- Highlight the types of items that a board may and may not include on a consent agenda.
- Consider the benefits and drawbacks of a consent agenda and discuss whether it is right for your board.

#### Using the Video Effectively

Suggestions for how to use this video include:





## CAA Board Meetings: Template Meeting Minutes and Index of Form Resolutions

### Introduction

Community action agency (CAA) boards perform vital governance and oversight functions for their organizations. Nowhere is this more evident than at board meetings, where board members hear reports, deliberate, and make decisions that guide organizational efforts. Meetings are the main venue where board members fulfill their fiduciary duties of care and loyalty to the organization. The duty of care is a legal obligation to act diligently in service of the organization, to be informed about the issues that impact the board's oversight of the organization, and to actively participate in discussions and decision-making. The duty of loyalty requires that when engaged in board business, members place the interests of the organization above their own personal interests.

**Board meeting minutes**, the written record of what happens at a board meeting, serve as critical evidence of board members' exercise of their fiduciary duties, since they describe key items presented and discussed by directors at the board meeting. They also help to show that the board considered the best interests of the organization and observed its conflict of interest policy. The decisions made and official actions taken at a board meeting are reflected in written **board resolutions**, which are typically incorporated into the meeting minutes and, in some cases, also kept separately for reference purposes. Meeting minutes and resolutions are important indicators to the general public, funding sources, and federal and state regulators that a CAA has maintained compliance with applicable laws and regulations. This includes the CSBG Organizational Standards, which require CAA boards to take certain actions in their organizational leadership and governance functions. Meeting minutes and resolutions are also an important resource for the CAA board itself: a continuous, contemporaneous record of where the board has been, where it is, and where it is going.

Given the importance of these documents, CAPLAW has created this resource to help board members and the staff who work with them create effective meeting minutes and resolutions. As discussed below, minutes and resolutions vary greatly in their degree of formality and detail. We encourage you to customize the templates we have provided to reflect the way your CAA operates, focusing on the function of each document rather than its form. Remember that meeting minutes and resolutions are just two tools in your agency's toolbox for documenting compliance with the CSBG Organizational Standards and other applicable laws. Formal board action is not necessary for compliance with most of the Organizational Standards, but where it is, we hope this resource will be helpful.

# Template Meeting Minutes and Index of Form Resolutions Resource

## 2-part template:

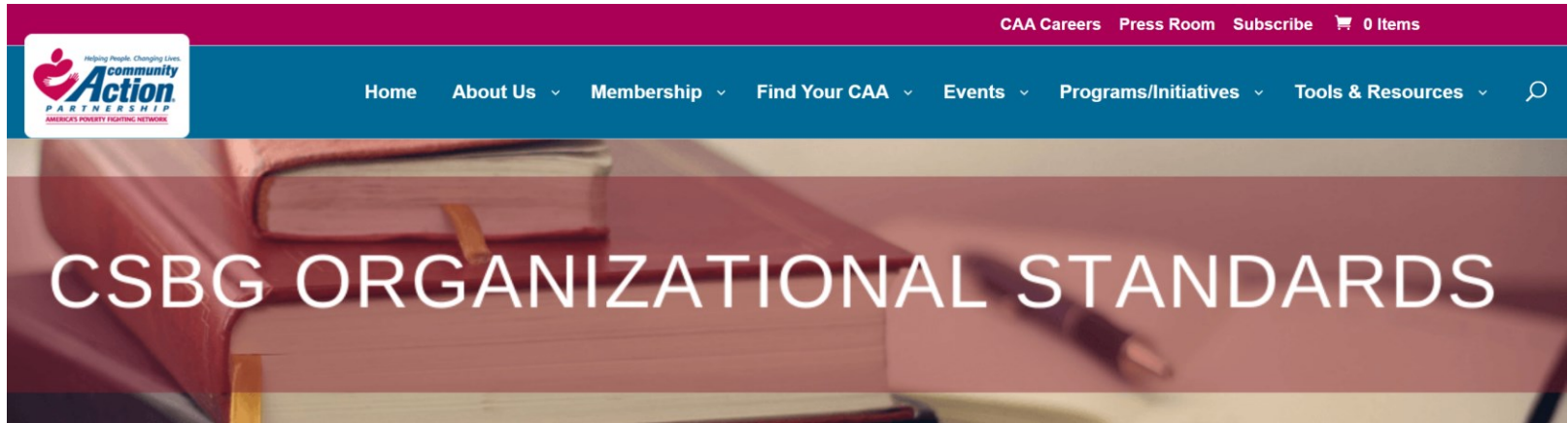
- Board meeting minutes
- Index of board resolutions

Available on the CAPLAW website:

<https://resources.caplaws.org/resources/template-meeting-minutes-and-index-of-form-resolutions/>



# CSBG Organizational Standards Tools



## A Brief History...



## What are the CSBG Organizational Standards?

The **CSBG Organizational Standards** are a comprehensive set of standards developed with input from the entire CSBG Network through a three-year multi phase process led by the Center of Excellence. The Organizational Standards were announced in January 2015 with the OCS release of *IM 138, State Establishment of Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities*, directing States to establish organizational standards by fiscal year 2016.

The Organizational Standards are organized in three thematic groups comprising nine categories and totals of 58 standards for private, nonprofit entities and 50 for public entities. The purpose of the organizational standards is to ensure that all agencies have appropriate organizational capacity, in both critical financial and administrative areas, as well as areas of unique importance to the mission of the Community Action network.

<https://communityactionpartnership.com/organizational-standards/>

# BoardSource Fundraising Policies

## Key Board Fundraising Policies:

- Personal giving policies state whether a board member is expected to give a certain amount or to give according to their means. BoardSource recommends a policy setting the expectation of 100% board giving and individual gifts at a level personally significant to each board member. Funders often ask if 100 percent of board members give.
- Fundraising policies establish expectations for board members to make a personal donation and to participate in solicitation efforts. The policy may list examples of how board members can or should be involved, such as providing names of potential donors, writing or signing fundraising letters, thanking donors personally, accompanying the chief executive on donor and foundation visits, or making the ask themselves.
- Some organizations use a special pledge form that guides board members in thinking about the array of fundraising activities taking place throughout the year and asks them to make an annual fundraising commitment.
- If the organization has a separate fundraising body, such as a foundation or supporting organization, it is still important to outline the role of board members and how they relate to this body – and vice versa.

<https://boardsource.org/resources/board-fundraising-policy-key-elements-practical-tips-and-sample-policy/>



# FUNDRAISING COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT for Board Members

# BoardSource Fundraising Communications Toolkit for Board Members

<https://boardsource.org/fundraising-communications-toolkit-for-board-members/>

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a fundraising communications toolkit for board members is to provide them with the "tools" that they need to effectively raise funds for your organization. As board members are often in a face-to-face situation where they are speaking with potential donors on behalf of the organization, this recommended toolkit focuses on providing key information about the organization to board members, often in a script format or a concise document with easily-digestible bullet points. Information of this kind needs to be provided in spoken language, not written language, so that it is easy for board members to use the information in conversation.

Although the development of the toolkit will likely be a staff-driven project, the toolkit will be much more effective if it is developed in collaboration with the board members on the development committee. The development committee can make recommendations for the table of contents, review the content that the development staff prepares, and advocate the use of the toolkit to other board members.

This toolkit should be designed to be an easy-to-use reference tool. A clear and detailed table of contents or index is essential. There should be clear headers within each section, and plenty of white space on each page. Board members may sit down and read the toolkit all at one time, but they may just as likely refer to it only when looking for a particular piece of information. Therefore, some information may be included more than once in the toolkit (for example, a "key selling point" may also show up as a talking point about the need that the organization serves).

Finally, you may want to design and develop your toolkit so that it can be easily customized for particular board members. For example, you may have one board member who is interested in raising funds for a particular program. It would be helpful to have a fact sheet about that program in that particular board member's toolkit, but it would not be necessary to have the program fact sheet in every person's toolkit. You can decide which pieces from the "core" kit to include, and then have optional sections that can be added for particular board members as needed.

## TALKING POINTS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

### (e.g., The Case for Support Written for Conversation)

This section should include talking points about the organization, which will come directly from the case for support. A written case for support is often composed in language that does not feel natural when spoken and can often be quite lengthy. This toolkit should provide board members with a script that they can use to speak concisely and clearly with someone about your organization. Even though the essence of the talking points will come from the case support, it should not be the case for support verbatim.

Possible sections within this area include are listed below:

1. The "elevator" speech: How to describe your organization in 2 minutes.
2. Why should someone give to your organization? What is the need that you are addressing?
3. What does your organization do? Provide overview of programs and services.
4. Who does your organization work with? Who are its customers and clients?

BoardSource

TEXT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.  
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# CompassPoint: How Board Members Become Successful Fundraisers

## How Board Members Become Successful Fundraisers

Sample tools for board development



<https://www.compasspoint.org/file/983/download?token=H1GYkMUN>

Steve Lew, Senior Project Director  
CompassPoint Nonprofit Services



# Where Will Your Excellence Journey Begin?

With the National Community Action Partnership's Pathways to Excellence Program, you can start your journey toward Excellence in the place that's best for you and your Agency.

HERE?



## Bronze Tier

The place to explore the Standards of Excellence and start building excitement among your team. Enroll anytime. The Bronze Tier can usually be completed in 3 months.

## Silver Tier

The place to learn how to do a self-study, build knowledge, and explore the peer-feedback process. Enroll in February or July. The Silver Tier can usually be completed in 9 months.



OR HERE?



## Gold Tier

The place to do a full self-study, receive peer-feedback, and see how you perform in every Excellence Standard. Enroll in February or July. The Gold Tier can usually be completed in 14 months.

## Platinum Tier

The place to do a full self-study, on your own, and see if your peers judge your agency worthy of The Community Action Award for Excellence. The Platinum Tier usually requires 2 years to complete.



Start Here if You Know You're Exceeding All 35 Standards

Learn More

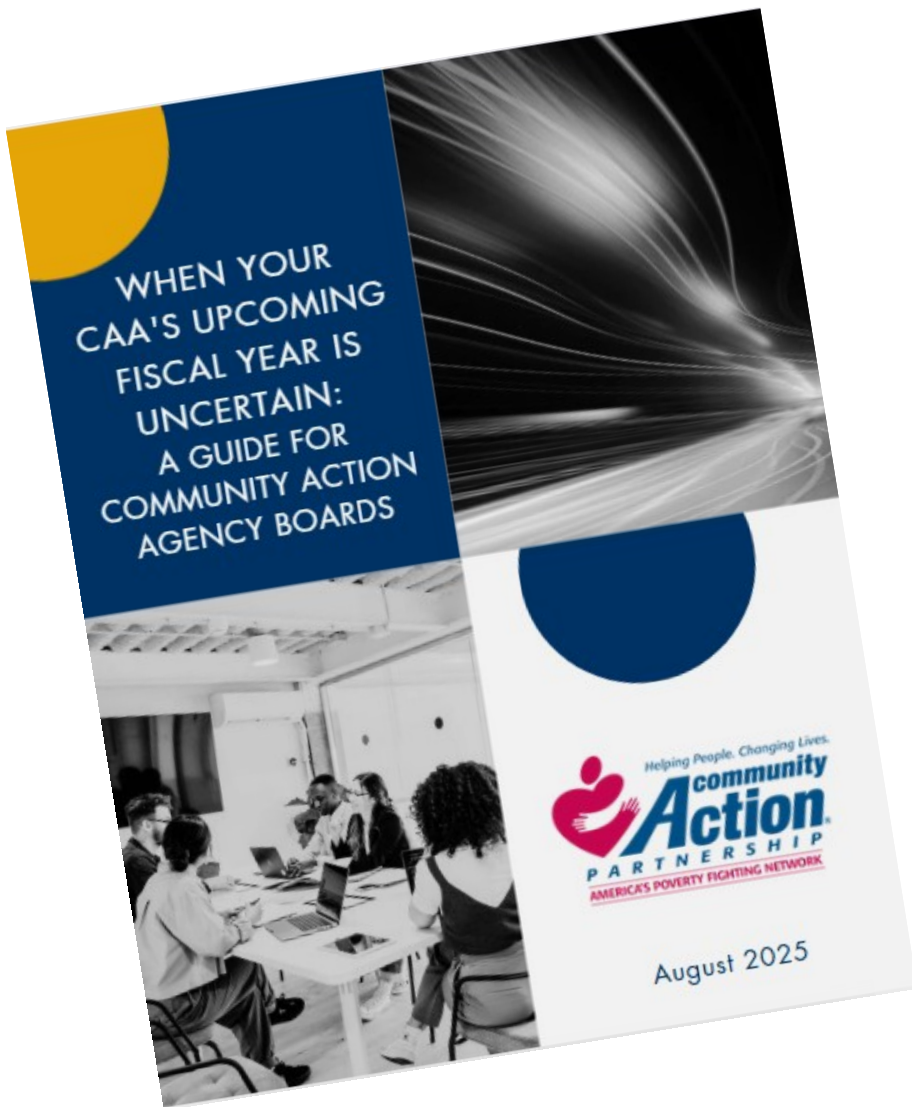
[communityactionpartnership.com/pathways-to-excellence/](https://communityactionpartnership.com/pathways-to-excellence/)



SCAN ME

# When Your CAA's New Fiscal Year is Uncertain: A Guide for Community Action Agency Boards

This guide helps CAA boards lead effectively through funding uncertainty at the start of a new federal fiscal year. It centers on four priorities: prepare for strategic action, understand the landscape, plan for multiple scenarios, and elevate Community Action.

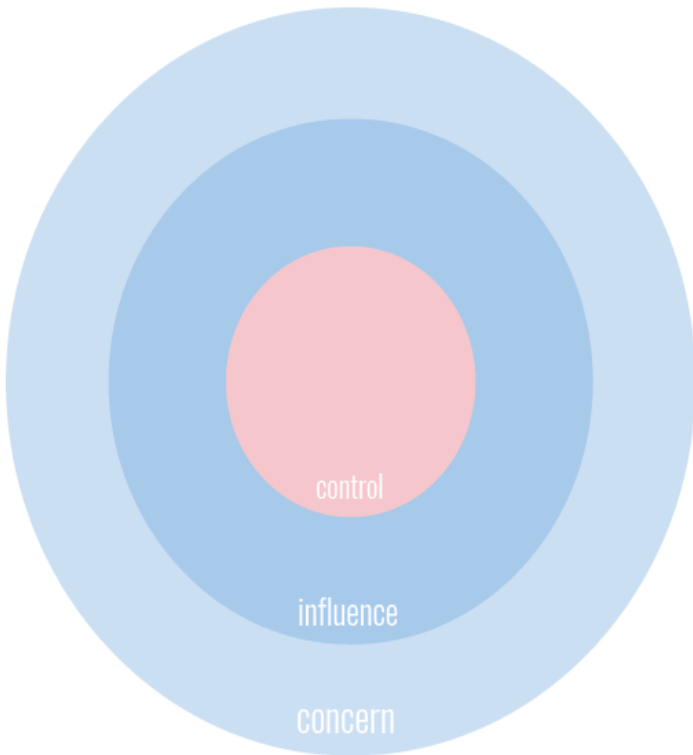


[Access the  
Guide Here](#)



# YES, You Can Manage Uncertain Times!

## Step 1. Clarifying What You Control and What You Can Influence



A. From an agency point of view, what are you worried about in these uncertain times? *Note these here.*

B. From an agency point of view, where does each worry sit—in **concern**, **influence**, or **control**? *Write it on the spheres.*

C. Can you imagine moving any items from **concern** to **influence**? *Note these on the spheres.*

D. What actions can you take to address worries in your sphere of **control**, and what actions can you take to impact worries in your sphere of **influence**? *Note these here.*

[Access the Workbook Here:](#)



### Sphere of Control

This area is where you have direct power and responsibility for making decisions and taking action. It includes your thoughts, actions, words, behaviors, and choices. From an agency point of view, these are the things the agency has control over changing or adjusting.

### Sphere of Influence

This is where you can affect outcomes and engage with others, but you don't have direct control. From an agency point of view, these are the things where the agency does not have direct control, but you can affect outcomes and engage with others to extend your impact.

### Sphere of Concern

This is the area that includes anything that interests or affects you, but it is outside your ability to influence or control. From an agency point of view, these are the things that are fully outside the agency's control or ability to influence.

# Boards are Ultimately Responsible For the Financial Wellbeing of the Organization



Boards need to understand the current financial landscape and financial risks the organization faces.

[Access the Board Discussion Guide Here:](#)



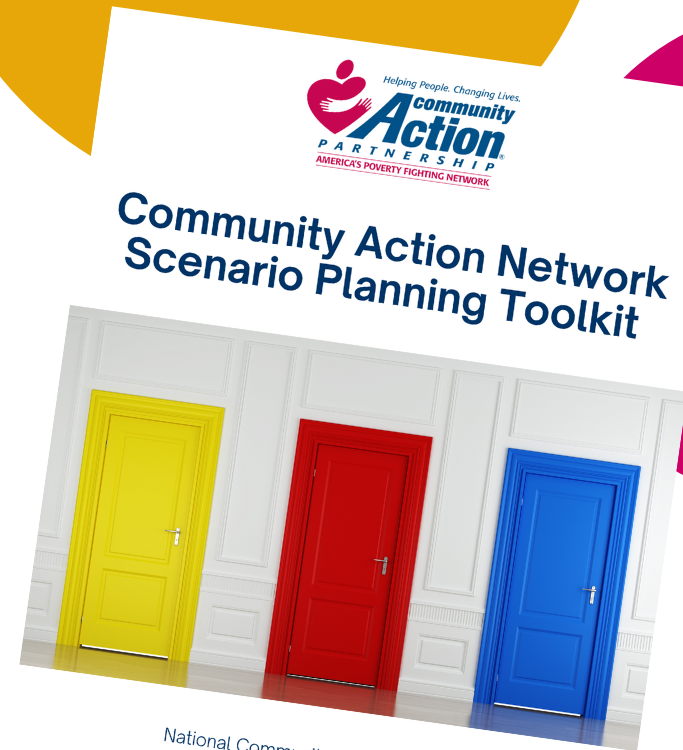
# New Resource:

## NEW RESOURCE: NCAP'S SCENARIO PLANNING TOOLKIT

The Scenario Planning Toolkit equips CAAs and State Associations with curated tools and resources to navigate uncertainty.

### Use the toolkit to:

- Assess and plan for key impact areas: financial, operations, programmatic, and community.
- Identify challenges, evaluate impacts, and develop strategies for changing conditions.
- Strengthen decision-making and organizational resilience by exploring multiple future scenarios.



National Community Action Partnership  
February 2025

[Access the  
Toolkit Here:](#)





# WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS FROM THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

CONSULTING

TRAINING

TOOLKITS

CONVENINGS

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



**We Know Community Action  
Because  
We Are Community Action**

- Community Action Agencies face a variety of complex challenges and opportunities.
- NCAP provides customized training and technical assistance, eCourses, cohort facilitation, and more,
- Trust NCAP to help your organization achieve maximum impact with customized solutions.

**Your success is our mission.**

Email us at

[csbg@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:csbg@communityactionpartnership.com)

