

# Aligning Community Assessments with Your Mission and Goals



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# The Promise Of Community Action

*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*



# Agenda

Community Assessment Overview

From Requirement to Strategy

Community Assessment as a Strategy Practices

Resources



**What are the top needs in your community?**

# Community Assessment



A **systematic process** for creating a profile of the **LOCAL** needs & resources of the community



A process that produces a clear **description of the specific causes & conditions of poverty** in a given community



The community assessment process **takes into consideration the existing resources** available in the community to meet the needs of its residents with low income, and the gaps in existing resources that are preventing economic mobility

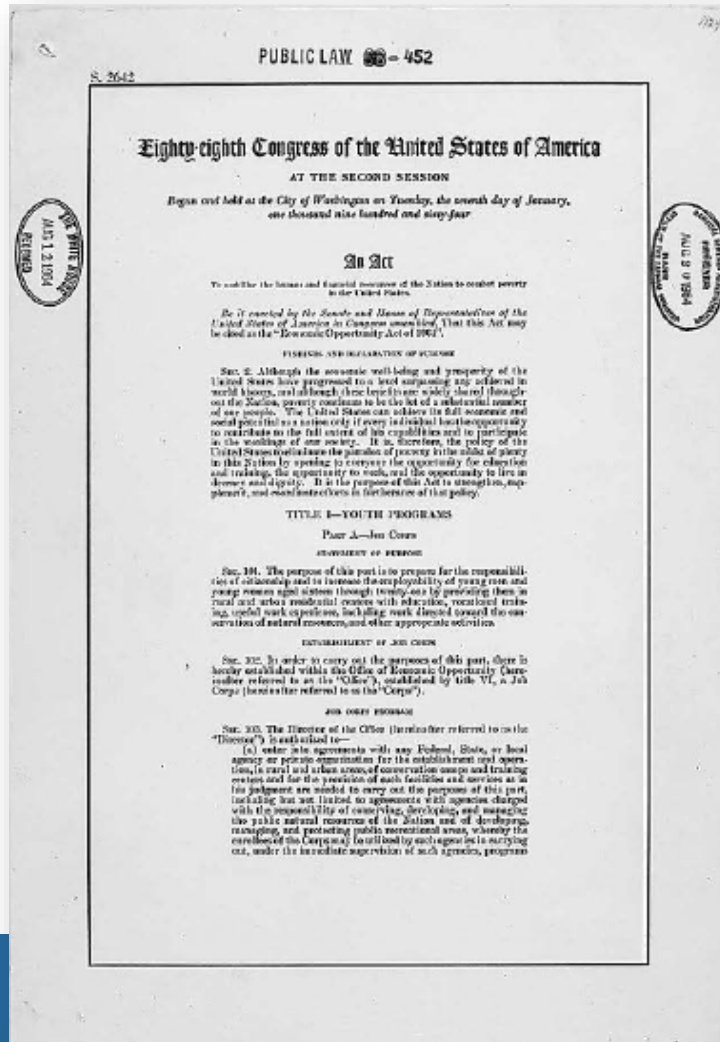


Requires broad input from the community, including people with low incomes & with lived experience



Informs Agency planning, including how the agency allocates CSBG Resources

# August 1964-Signing of the Economic Opportunity Act



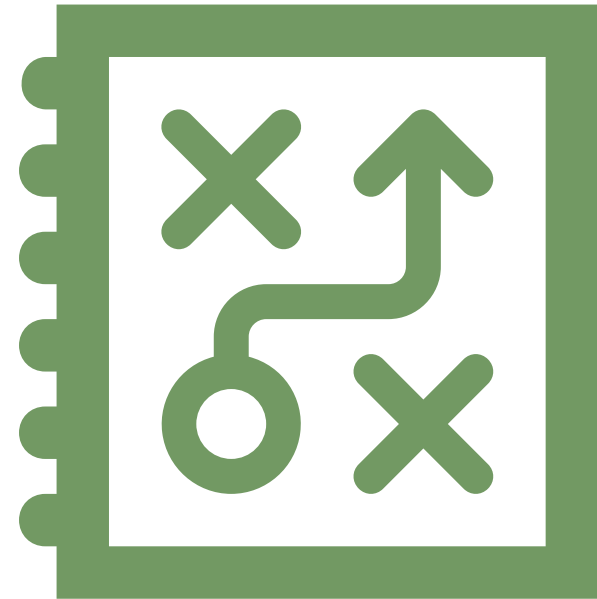
# Poverty, its causes, and effects, are different coast to coast



We must understand our local community needs,  
opportunities, assets, and barriers to effectively  
address our mission.

# The CSBG Act Requires Community Assessments

- Specifically, the CSBG Act requires community assessments to inform the **Community Action Plan**
  - CSBG Organizational Standards require the Community Assessment be completed at least once every 3 years



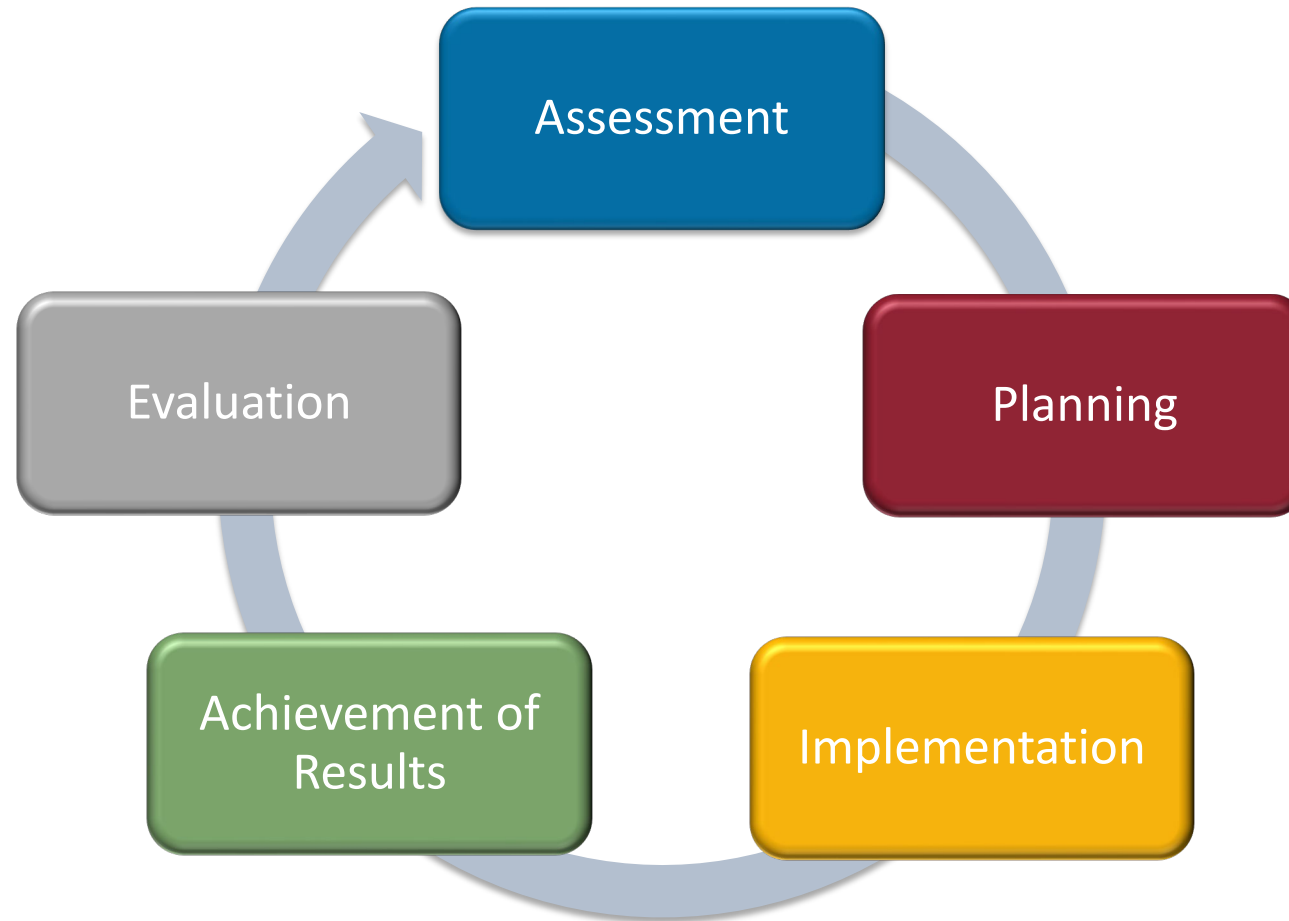
# CSBG Organizational Standards

- Standard 3.1 • The organization conducted a Community Assessment and issued a report **within the past 3 years**.
- Standard 3.2 • As part of the Community Assessment, the organization **collects and includes current data specific to poverty** and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).
- Standard 3.3 • The organization collects and analyzes both **qualitative and quantitative data** on its **geographic service area(s)** in the Community Assessment.
- Standard 3.4 • The community assessment includes **key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty** and the needs of the communities assessed.
- Standard 3.5 • The governing **board formally accepts** the completed Community Assessment.

# (more) CSBG Organizational Standards

- Standard 1.2 • The organization analyzes information collected **directly from low-income individuals** as part of the community assessment.
- Standard 2.2 • The organization utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources, during the community assessment process or other times. These sectors would include at minimum: **community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions.**
- Standard 4.2 • The organization's Community Action plan is **outcome-based, anti-poverty focused, and ties directly to the community assessment.**
- Standard 6.4 • **Customer satisfaction data and customer input**, collected as part of the **community assessment**, is included in the strategic planning process.

# Results Oriented Management & Accountability



# A Community Assessment Gives you Data for Decision Making

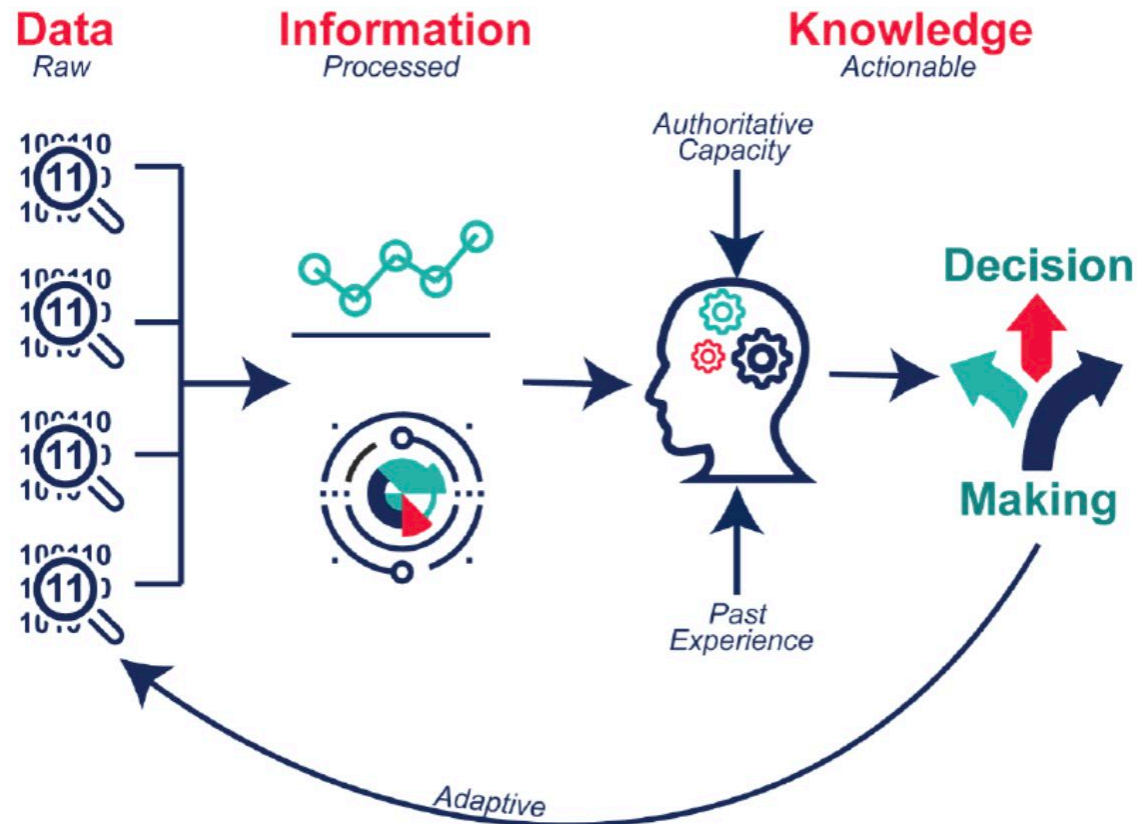


Figure 1: The flow from data to information to knowledge.



# Integration: Needs and Assets Determine Long- and Short-Term Plans

# More than Compliance

To address poverty and support economic mobility, we must understand the barriers and opportunities in our communities.



# More than Compliance



Community Assessments help us plan effectively to address the unique needs of our communities



Community Assessments help provide needed information to make good decisions to meet our mission, and inform the development of our strategic plans



Community Assessments can build and increase engagement and trust with the community



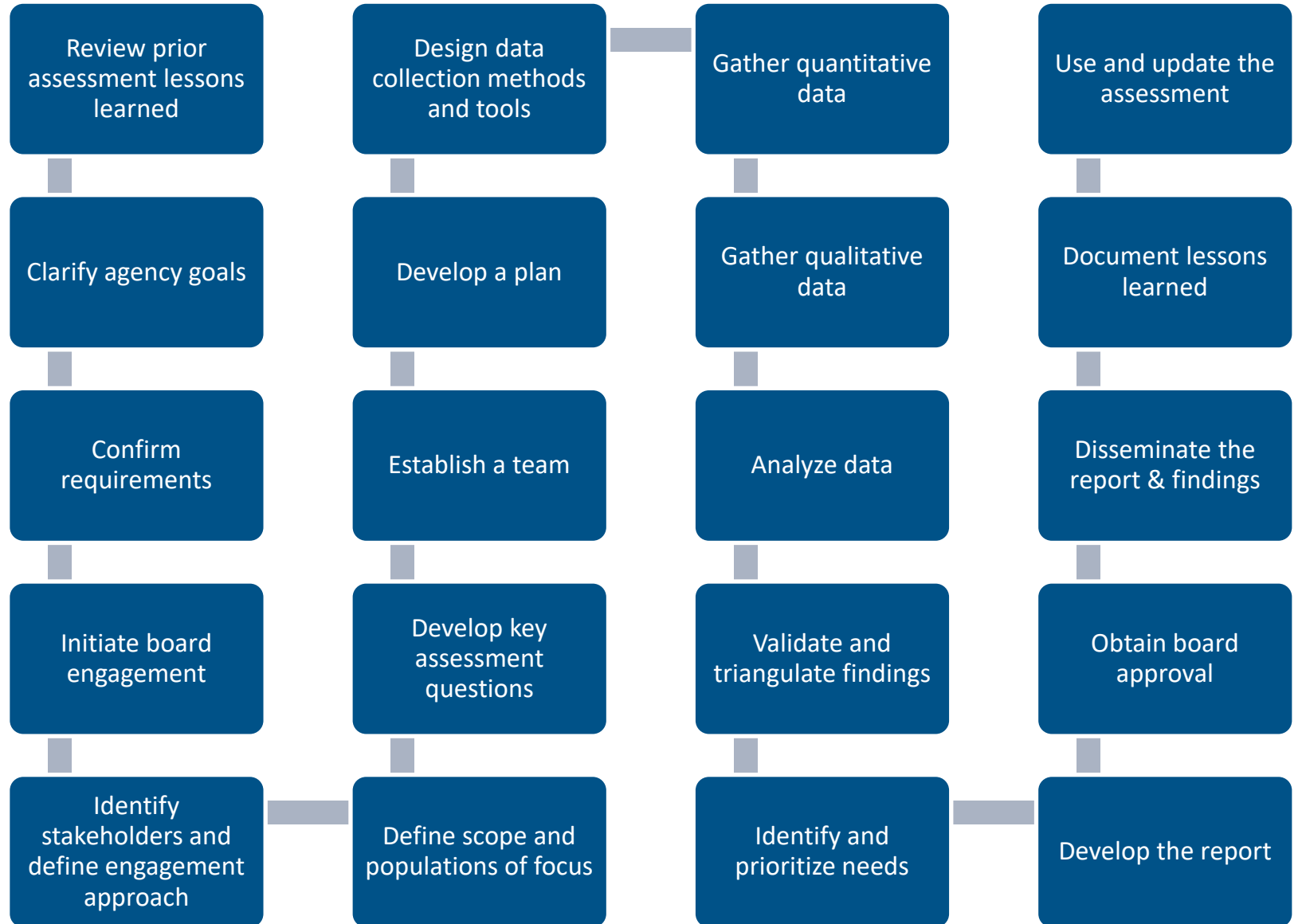
Strengthen the reputation of the Community Action Agency



Aligns our practice with our values



# A Comprehensive Community Action Community Assessment Process



# The Golden Circle

## What

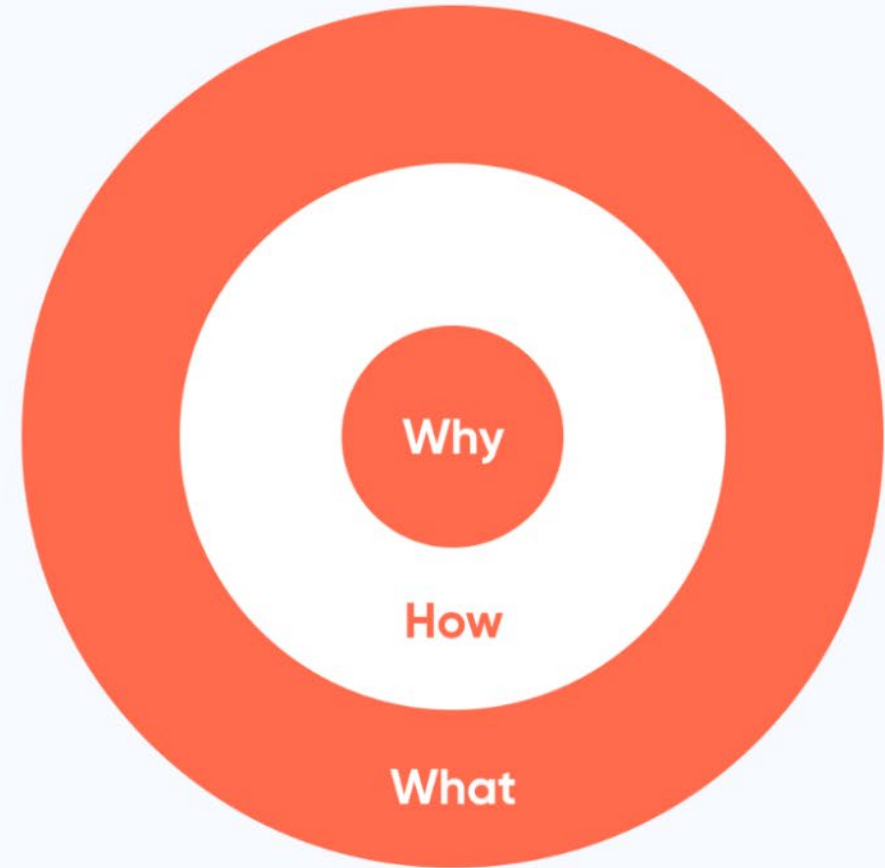
Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services.

## How

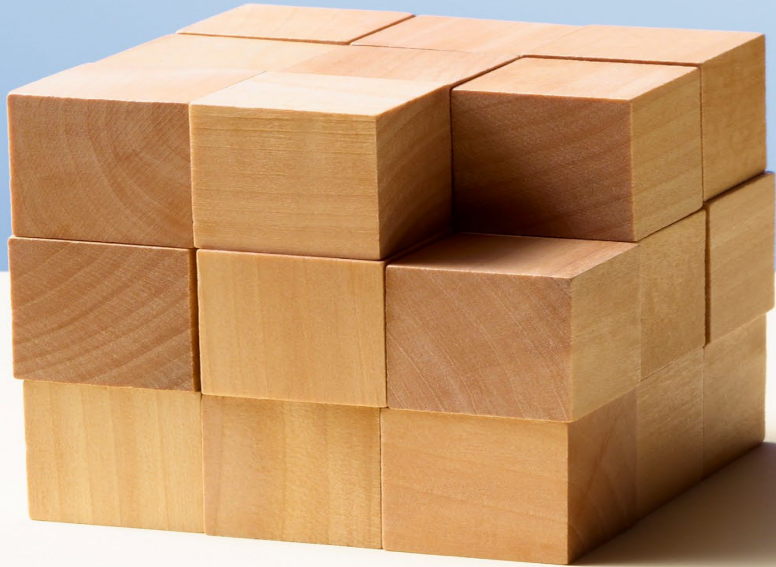
Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

## Why

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. WHY is a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.



# How Do You Approach Your Community Assessment?



**As a requirement**

**As an opportunity**



# (a few) Ways the Community Assessment Can be Used as a Strategy to Further Your Mission & Goals



# Engagement: Compliance vs Opportunity

Collect input to  
meet assessment  
requirements

Use engagement to  
build deeper connection  
to the agency's mission  
and work

# Engagement

Board	Staff	Community	Partners
Information Collection Community Connection Sense-Making	Information Collection Content & Context experts Validating & contextualizing data	Information Collection Context experts Validating & contextualizing data	Information Collection Content & context experts Providing data Validating & contextualizing data

# Maximum Feasible Participation

## Compliance vs Opportunity

Include participation from people with low incomes as required input

Design participation in ways that can be transformative for how people experience being heard, valued, and involved in shaping priorities

# Maximum Feasible Participation



- *More than surveys*
- Create space for dialogue, not just feedback
- Early, intentional engagement
- Transactional vs Transformational
- Ensure the loop is closed

# Coalition and Partnership Building

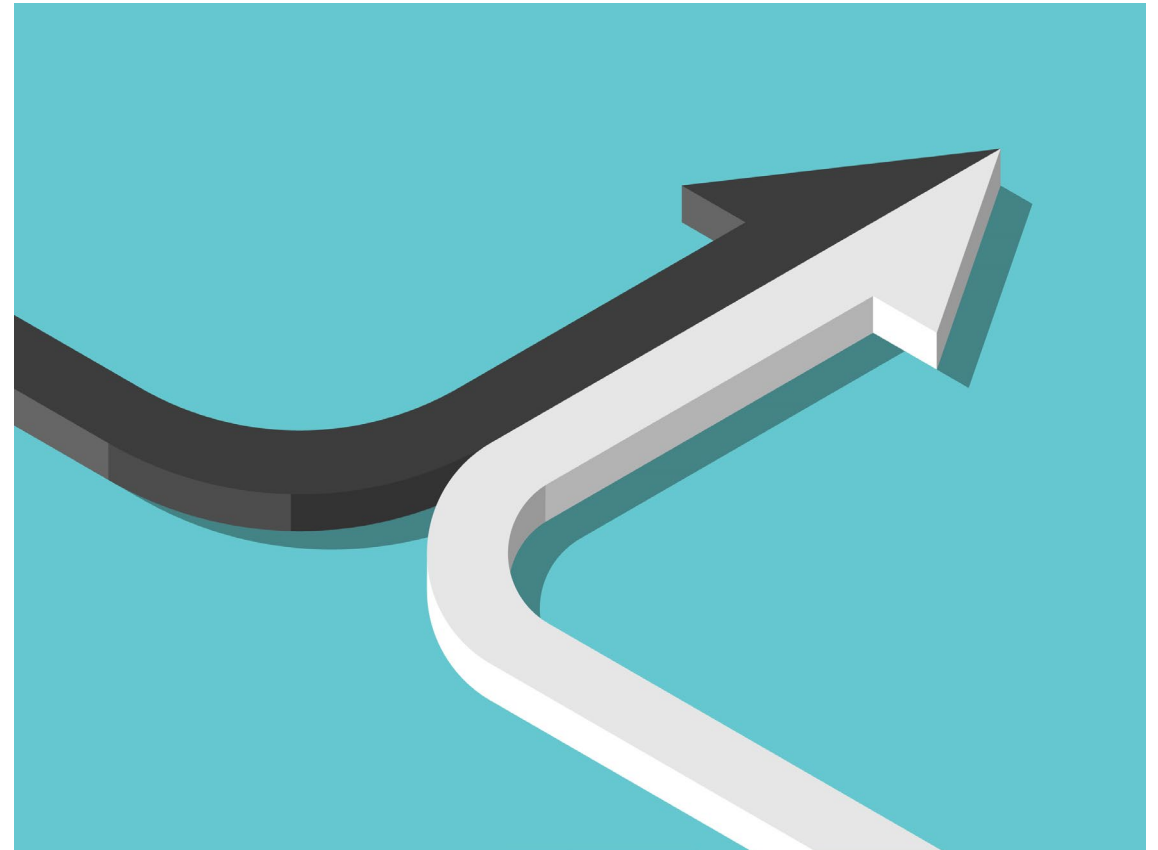
## Compliance vs Opportunity

Consult partners for data and input during the assessment

Use the assessment process to strengthen alignment and coordination across partners

# Coalition and Partnership Building

- Community assessment is a low-risk, high-reward opportunity to grow partnerships
- Bring intention to partner engagement
  - Consider partners you are intentionally seeking to build stronger relationships with
  - WIIFM
- Involve partners in interpreting data, not just providing it
- Use shared data to identify overlapping priorities and gaps



# Reputation & Visibility

## Compliance vs Opportunity

Share the assessment report as a required deliverable

Use the assessment process to elevate visibility of both the community conditions and needs and agency role

# Reputation & Visibility



- Community presence can bolster awareness, visibility, trust
- The report is more than an internal planning document – it can be a community asset!
- Multimodal distribution
- Intention in dissemination
  - Interested parties, public officials, partners, etc.
- Closing the loop

# Wrapping Up...

What is one change to your community assessment process that would immediately increase its value to your mission and goals?



# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SKILL BUILDER TRAINING

## Community Assessment Skill Builder

*Two-Part Training:*

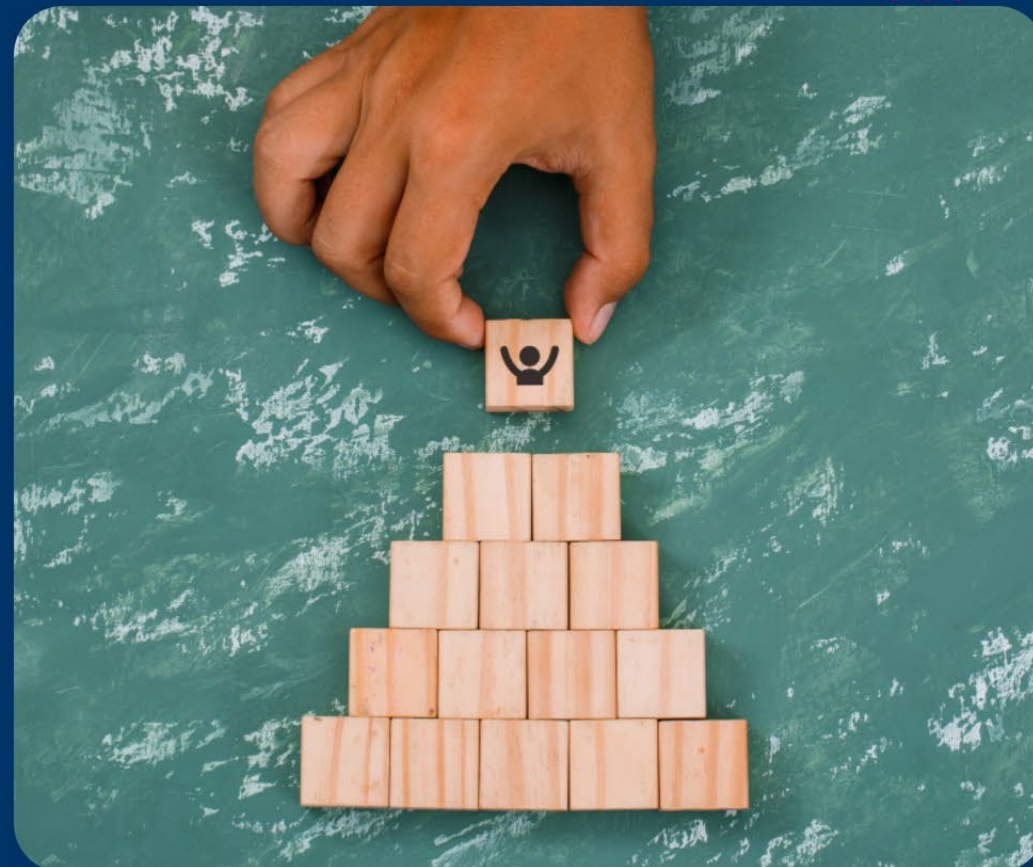
April 8th & 15th

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM ET

### From Requirement to Real Insight

- Inform Planning & Decisions
- Make Better Use of Data
- Custom Reports and Maps

Registration Fee:  
\$399 Members  
\$499 Non-members  
per person



# Resources



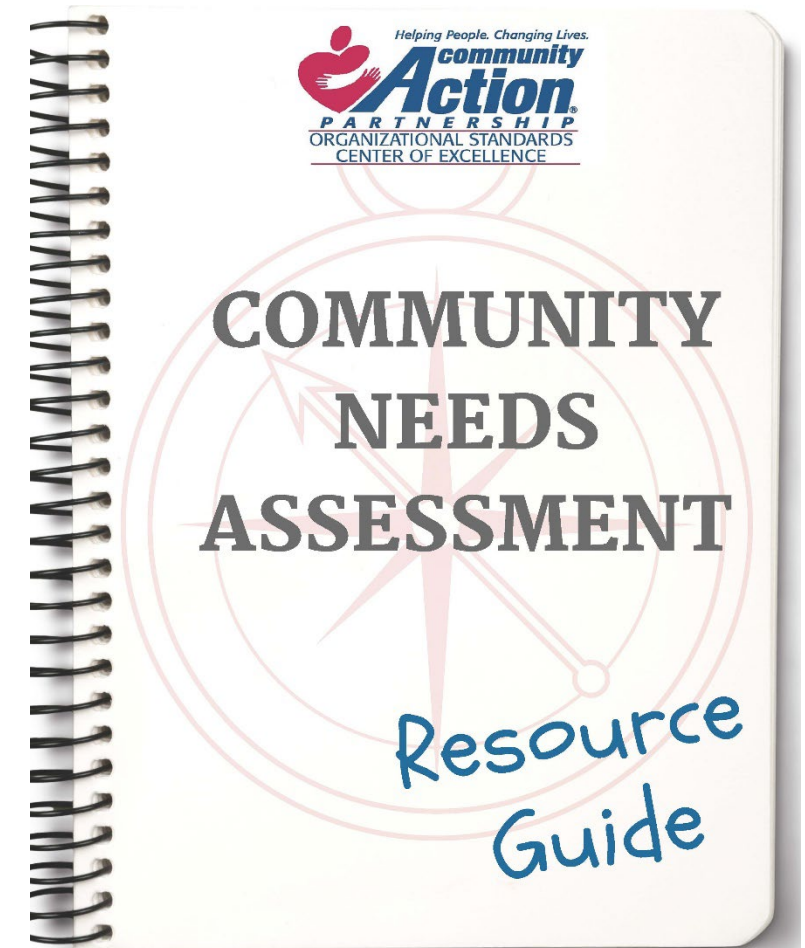
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# Community Needs Assessment Resource Guide

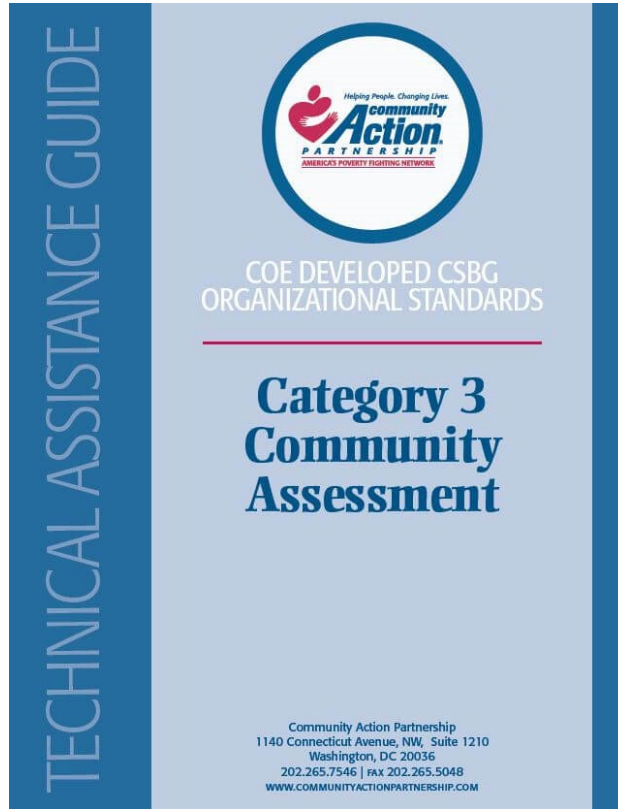
## Resource Guide

Contains a variety of links, videos, sample documents, tools, etc. for assistance planning and completing a Community Assessment

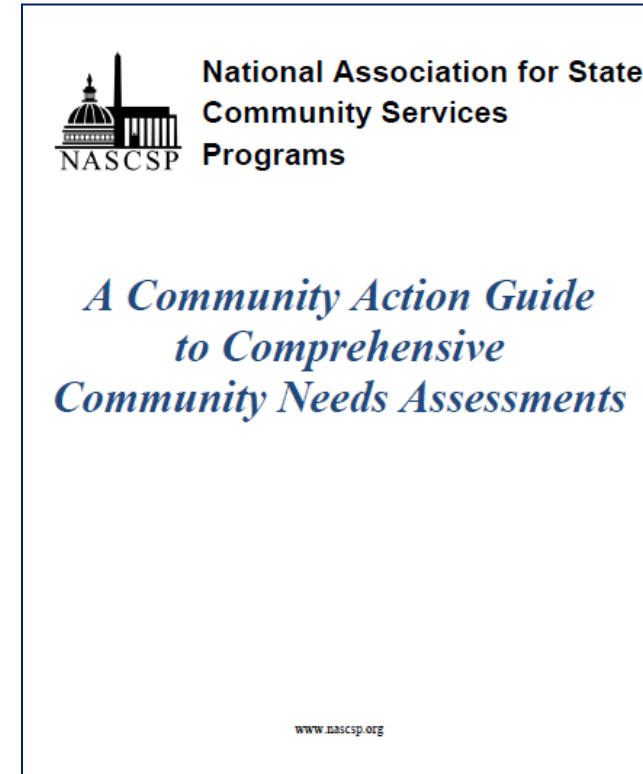
<https://communityactionpartnership.com/publication-toolkit/community-needs-assessment-resource-guide/>



# Technical Assistance Guides



[https://communityactionpartnership.com/publication\\_toolkit/organizational-standards-technical-assistance-guide-category-3-community-assessment/](https://communityactionpartnership.com/publication_toolkit/organizational-standards-technical-assistance-guide-category-3-community-assessment/)



<https://nascsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/needs-assessment-final-8.22-print-to-pdf.pdf>

**THE DATA YOU NEED WHEN YOU NEED IT!**

# NCAP Data Hub

**Community Assessment? Grant application?  
Communications?**

The NCAP Data Hub helps you find relevant and trusted data to create easy, custom reports and maps about your community.



**SCAN TO VISIT THE NCAP DATA HUB**



# Make 2026 Your Year of Excellence!

*Check out the new opportunities to move beyond compliance!*



- **Enroll anytime in 2026 at the Bronze Tier.**
- **Fall 2026 Silver & Gold Tier cohort info coming soon!**
- **Not Ready to Enroll? Learn about Excellence through the new Pathways to Excellence eCourse**

**Learn More -  
Scan Here:**





CCAP@CommunityActionpartnership.com

## The Premier Professional Certification for Leaders

*in America's anti-poverty movement*

- Verified, professional recognition of your knowledge & ability to apply that knowledge effectively
- Attractive to Community Action and other Employers nationwide
- Valid for 4 years and can be renewed with continued Community Action engagement

Learn More: <https://communityactionpartnership.com/ccap/>

# Tell Us How We Did!

Please take a couple of minutes to complete our webinar survey!



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AligningCommAssessment0326>



# Thank You!

**The National Community Action Partnership is YOUR partnership and is always ready to support your organization in any way.**

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