

2026 New Executive Director Institute East Coast

June 23 – 24, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC – Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202



Draft Agenda

May 27, 2026	
Time	Topic
1:00pm – 2:30pm	<p>Virtual Pre-Session</p> <p><i>Attend this virtual session to connect with your peers who will be participating in the Institute, share what you hope to learn, and receive materials to review in advance of our time together in the Washington, D.C. area. You will also learn more about the peer advice session, where participants will have the opportunity to receive advice from peers on a challenge or issue related to their work.</i></p>

June 23, 2026	
Time	Topic
8:15am – 9:00am	Registration
9:00am – 9:15am	<p>Welcome, Introduction of Facilitators, Sponsors, and Attendees</p> <p><i>Denise Harlow, CCAP, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership</i></p> <p><i>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</i></p> <p>Recognize sponsors from Wipfli, Mutual of America</p>
9:15am – 10:15am	<p>Leading in the Community Action Context</p> <p><i>In this session, we will explore how the unique strengths and opportunities of Community Action connect to your role as an Executive Director. Together, we will discuss strategies and leadership priorities that can help your organization deliver meaningful results for individuals, families, and communities.</i></p> <p><i>Denise Harlow, CCAP, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership</i></p> <p><i>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</i></p>
10:15am – 10:30am	Break

2026 New Executive Director Institute East Coast

June 23 – 24, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC – Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202



June 23, 2026	
Time	Topic
10:30am – 11:15am	<p>Shaping Culture and Leading People</p> <p><i>Examine how culture shows up in your organization and how to lead it with intention. Learn how to address difficult dynamics, reinforce accountability, and create conditions for strong performance.</i></p> <p>Denise Harlow, CCAP, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership</p> <p>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</p>
11:15am – 12:00pm	<p>Community Action Advocacy</p> <p><i>Community Action leaders are engaged in advocacy and lobbying efforts at the local, state, and federal levels. This session will provide an opportunity to learn about the National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) and its role in representing the funding and policy interests of CAAs before Congress and the Executive Branch. Attendees will hear directly from David Bradley on the current and expected political landscape and legislative activities.</i></p> <p>David Bradley, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, National Community Action Foundation (NCAF)</p>
12:00pm – 1:00pm	<p>Lunch (Provided)</p> <p>Sponsor Remarks from Mutual of America</p>
1:15pm – 2:45pm	<p>Aligning Governance and Executive Leadership</p> <p><i>During this session, Allison Ma’Luf, CAPLAW Executive Director and General Counsel, will provide an overview of the unique aspects of Community Action board governance using common scenarios encountered by Community Action leaders.</i></p> <p>Allison Ma’Luf, Executive Director and General Counsel, CAPLAW</p>
2:45pm – 3:00pm	<p>Break</p>

2026 New Executive Director Institute East Coast

June 23 – 24, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC – Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202



June 23, 2026	
Time	Topic
3:00pm – 4:15pm	<p>Navigating and Leveraging the Community Action Network</p> <p><i>Community Action is supported by a network of local agencies, state associations, state offices, federal partners, and national organizations that each play a distinct role in advancing the work of the network. This conversation will help new Executive Directors better understand how these pieces fit together, where key decisions and resources originate, and how information, support, and influence flow across the network.</i></p> <p>Denise Harlow, CCAP, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)</p> <p>Allison Ma’Luf, Executive Director and General Counsel, Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. (CAPLAW)</p>
4:15pm – 5:30pm	<p>Peer Advice to Solve Sticky Issues or Maximize Great Opportunities</p> <p><i>We will devote a portion of our time together to provide each leader with advice on a question they are facing. Peers will provide advice using a structured framework that never fails to provide leaders with concrete, actionable steps they can take immediately when they return home.</i></p> <p>Denise Harlow, CCAP, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership</p> <p>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</p>
5:45pm – 7:00pm	Wipfli Reception

Sponsored By



2026 New Executive Director Institute East Coast

June 23 – 24, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC – Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202



Agenda

June 24, 2026	
Time	Topic
9:00am – 9:15am	Welcome Back and Temperature Check <i>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Consultant, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</i>
9:15am – 10:45am	Community Action Financial Leadership for Executives <i>This session will focus on the role and responsibilities of executive directors in financial administration and management. Financial considerations and suggested priorities related to governance and agency operations will be highlighted. This session will include opportunities for attendee questions.</i> Katherine Eilers, CPA, Senior Manager, Wipfli LLP
10:45am – 11:00am	Break
11:00am – 12:15pm	Special Topics Tabletop Discussion <i>Attendees will convene in small groups with a facilitator to discuss special topics. These topics may include the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreach, Marketing, Fundraising, and Community Engagement• Continuous Learning, Using Evidence, Research, and Data• Using Technology and AI with Purpose
12:15pm – 1:00pm	Lunch (Provided)
1:00pm – 2:30pm	Experienced Community Action Executive Journey <i>This session will provide an opportunity for attendees to hear from a seasoned Community Action leader and ask questions.</i> Bryan Duncan, CCAP, Executive Director, I-CARE, Inc., Statesville, NC
2:30pm – 2:45pm	Break

2026 New Executive Director Institute East Coast

June 23 – 24, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC – Crystal City

300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202



June 24, 2026	
Time	Topic
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<p>Leading Through Complexity and Pressure</p> <p><i>During this final session we will follow up on any final topics and discuss how leaders are taking care of themselves, their staff, and using scenario planning to prepare for the future.</i></p> <p>Denise Harlow, CCAP, Chief Executive Officer, National Community Action Partnership</p> <p>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</p>
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Final Reflections & Adjourn

Sponsored By

