

2026 New Executive Director Institute West Coast
October 8 – 9, 2026
 Holiday Inn San Antonio-Riverwalk
 217 North St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, Texas 78205



Virtual Session

September 14, 2026	
Time	Topic
3:30 – 5 pm ET / 2:30 – 4 pm CT / 1:30 – 3 pm MT / 12:30 – 2 pm PT	Virtual Pre-Session <i>Before the Institute begins, join this virtual session to connect with your cohort, share your goals, and review materials that will help you prepare for our time in San Antonio. You'll also learn how the peer advice session works and how to bring a work-related challenge or question for peer feedback and support.</i>

In Person Session Agenda

October 8, 2026	
Time	Topic
8:15am – 9:00am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:00am – 9:15am	Welcome, Introduction of Facilitators, Sponsors, and Attendees <i>Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, PMP, NCRT, Director, Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)</i> <i>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</i> Recognize sponsors from Wipfli/Sage, Mutual of America
9:15am – 10:15am	Leading in the Community Action Context <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> <i>Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, PMP, NCRT, Director Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership</i> <i>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC</i>
10:15am – 10:30am	Break

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Time	Topic
10:30am – 12:00am	Aligning Governance and Executive Leadership <i>During this session, Savanna Arral, CAPLAW Staff Attorney, will provide an overview of the unique aspects of Community Action board governance using common scenarios encountered by Community Action leaders.</i> Savanna Arral, Esq., CCAP, Staff Attorney, CAPLAW
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch (Provided) Sponsor Remarks from Mutual of America
1:00pm – 2:30pm	Experienced Community Action Executive Director Journey <i>This session will provide an opportunity for attendees to hear from a seasoned Community Action leader and ask questions.</i> Mike Burnett, CCAP, NCRI, MFA, Executive Director, Concho Valley Community Action Agency, San Angelo, TX Thelma French, CCAP, CEO, Total Community Action Inc., New Orleans, LA
2:30pm – 2:45pm	Break
2:45pm – 4:00pm	Navigating and Leveraging the Community Action Network to Achieve Service and Policy Objectives <i>Community Action's mission is advanced through a network of local agencies, state associations, state offices, federal partners, and national organizations working together to achieve greater results, influence policy, and drive change. In this session, participants will explore how the network functions, how resources and influence flow across it, and how Executive Directors can leverage relationships and partnerships to effectively advocate at the local, state, and federal levels.</i> Amanda Shelton, CCAP, MBA, Executive Director, Texas Association of Community Action Agencies Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, PMP, NCRT, Director Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC

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Time	Topic
4:00pm – 5:30pm	Peer Advice to Solve Sticky Issues or Maximize Great Opportunities <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> Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, PMP, NCRT, Director Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC
6:00pm – 8:00pm	Special Reception Sponsored by Wipfli/Sage

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Agenda

October 9, 2026	
Time	Topic
8:15am – 9:00am	Continental Breakfast <i>(Provided)</i>
9:00am – 9:15am	Welcome Back and Temperature Check <i>Jeannie Chaffin, CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, 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	Assessing and Shaping Agency Culture and Leading People <i>You have stepped in to lead an organization with a particular purpose, history, and culture. The organization's greatest asset is its people. New Executive Directors often report facing many culture- or people-related challenges. Leading people is one of the most rewarding and complex parts of the Executive Director role. Examine how culture shows up in your organization and gain practical approaches for managing conflict, supporting staff growth, and building a healthy, high-performing workplace.</i> Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev , CCAP, PMP, NCRT, Director Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership Jeannie Chaffin , CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC
12:15pm – 1:15pm	Lunch <i>(Provided)</i> and Special Topics Tabletop Discussions <i>Attendees will convene in small groups over lunch with a facilitator to discuss special topics. These topics may include the following:</i> • <i>Outreach, Marketing, Fundraising, Development, and Community Engagement</i> • <i>Continuous Learning, Using Evidence, Research, and Data</i> • <i>Using Technology and AI with Purpose</i> • <i>Emerging topic to be determined (e.g., proposed changes to Head Start, Uniform Guidance)</i>

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October 9, 2026	
Time	Topic
1:15pm – 2:00pm	Onward! Leading into What's Next <i>What's next for you, your team, and your organization? We'll close out our time together by tackling lingering questions, sharing strategies for staying strong as a leader, and using scenario planning and other tools to prepare for whatever comes next. Come ready to reflect, recharge, and leave with fresh energy for the road ahead.</i> Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev , CCAP, PMP, NCRT, Director Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership Jeannie Chaffin , CCAP, NCAP Senior Advisor and Principal, Jeannie Chaffin, LLC
2:00pm	Adjourn

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