



Category 1 Organizational Leadership

**Achieving Excellence in
Community Action**

**A Guide to Achieving the Community Action Standards
of Excellence**

January 2008

Inside Cover

This document is one of a series of seven guides focusing on the Community Action Standards of Excellence. Each guide addresses one of the seven Categories of Excellence, specifically the Standards of Excellence embedded within that category. This guide focuses on achieving the six Standards of Excellence that fall under Category 1 – Leadership.

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Background

In the summer of 2000, the Community Action Partnership issued a report titled *What is a Community Action Agency? A Review of Current and Past Legislation*. The report included a statement describing key features of a Community Action Agency that distinguish it from other community-based organizations. This statement has come to be known as the “*Promise of Community Action*”, with CAAs now displaying this statement prominently in all locations serving their communities.

Having addressed the question “*What is a Community Action Agency?*,” the Community Action Partnership Board of Directors took the next step to develop core standards that recognize an excellent Community Action Agency. The resultant Standards of Excellence Task Force held national focus groups and the CAA Standards of Excellence emerged. Subsequently the Award for Excellence Commission was established to develop and provide oversight of a rigorous and comprehensive recognition and improvement process based on these Standards. The structure and framework adopted by the Award Commission to deploy and utilize the standards is closely modeled after the prestigious *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award*, recognized worldwide for using high performance quality criteria for improving public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

The Community Action Partnership Board reviewed and approved a plan of action at its March 2001 meeting in Washington, D.C., and formally adopted the *Standards of Excellence in Community Action* at their March 2002 meeting. A nine member Award for Excellence Commission oversees an annual update to the Standards, as well as the Award for Excellence and Pathways to Excellence recognition and self-study processes.

What are the Standards of Excellence?

The CAA Standards of Excellence describe 34 of the very best practices of the very best Community Action Agencies. Developed and annually updated with broad input from the Community Action network and partners, these Standards help answer the question: *What does an excellent Community Action Agency look like?* The bar is set exceedingly high, as excellence represents the very highest operational benchmarks for Community Action agencies to strive for, seeking to stretch the limits of performance. Do not confuse these Standards with traditional compliance requirements, which generally represent operational minimums.

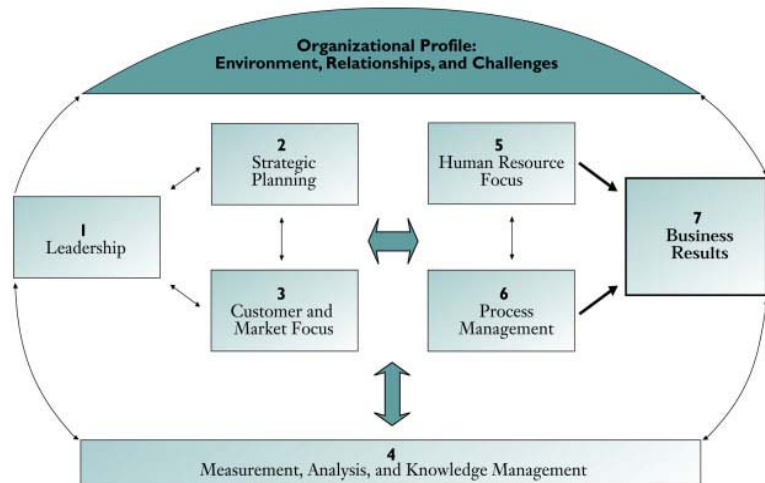
The Standards are distributed within a framework of seven categories of excellence, and represent attributes that distinguish all high-performance organizations, and set Community Action Agencies apart when it comes to performance, community service, and overall administrative excellence.

Why Bother?

Every organization can improve, and should continuously strive to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and exceed customer expectations -- especially in the highly competitive environment of the 21st century. It is a matter of survival. Using the powerful Award/Pathways diagnostic tools and a team based assessment process; each CAA compares its current practices against each of the thirty-four CAA Standards. The peer-review and feedback process then helps the agency benchmark its own unique starting point for next-step improvements, and moving along the path to world-class excellence. The Standards of Excellence represent the highest possible operational benchmarks for a Community Action Agency to strive for. By participating, every agency can help identify, define, and proliferate excellent practices that prepare the CAA network to face the future with confidence.

A comprehensive organizational self-study based on the seven categories and thirty-four CAA Standards of Excellence is a rigorous, comprehensive, factual and objective appraisal of how the organization is led and managed. Using the Award/Pathways to Excellence self-study process and the CAA *Standards of Excellence*, the following aspects are examined:

- How the organization is led, in order to provide vision and direction
- How appropriate information is gathered and used to plan for the future and track progress and results
- How people's talents are developed and harnessed to enhance the potential success of the agency
- How the organization determines exactly what its customers need -- and how it elects to meet these needs
- How the flow of work is organized, to eliminate inefficiency, and hence improve products and services
- How the organization is performing, from various perspectives including customer perspective, financial, human resources, and administrative processes.



Not many organizations have achieved world class excellence, but every organization whether educational, governmental, for-profit, or non-profit can strive to reach that level – so long as they know where that level of excellence is. The CAA Standards of Excellence seek to set a very high benchmark for every Community Action Agency to strive for. An agency of excellence will include most of the following:

- A clear vision and mission.
- A mission focused strategic plan with strategies, measures, and benchmarks that drive the organization forward – and set the framework for tracking progress over time.
- A focus on results, performance management, and data systems for continuously improving agency operations, processes, and outcomes.
- A close alliance with stakeholders, partners, and investors that support and sustain the agency's mission.
- A deep understanding of the customers, and a systematic process for listening and learning from them.
- A commitment to developing staff leadership, job skills, and knowledge.
- A focus on efficient systems for preventing mistakes rather than merely correcting them.
- A commitment to excellence that runs from the top of the organization to the bottom.

One of the most common failure modes in organization-wide improvement efforts is to work on the wrong things. This may happen for various reasons, for example when:

- Leaders feel instinctively that they know what needs to be fixed (although they may not have sufficient facts).

- When staff are blindsided by crisis-du-jour issues, and don't see the more serious, longer-term organization weaknesses.
- There are simply too many issues and no firm basis for selecting one over the other.
- The organization continually operates in the crisis mode and does not seem capable of breaking out of that pattern.

So it is common for the leaders to decide on a course of action – to tackle a certain set of problems or to adopt a certain methodology – without an adequate understanding of the current situation. This is the equivalent of a course of treatment without first diagnosing the disease.

A much better approach is to start with a comprehensive agency-wide assessment such as the Pathways to Excellence self study, peer-review, and feedback process. In medical terms this is like an objective, third-party full-body scan. It is a systematic, repeatable, fact-based process that provides a comprehensive picture of the organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Armed with this information, it becomes much easier to set priorities, make rational decisions and identify the most vital areas for improvement.

It Starts and Ends With Leadership

Decades of academic study have yet to yield a suitable and mutually agreed upon definition that fully captures the nature of leadership, much less articulate a definitive approach to developing it. Perhaps it is impossible to fully define leadership in words, but most agree that we know it when we see it. In addition, most agree that no organization can succeed with it. The Community Action Standards of Excellence are closely aligned with the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and the thirty-four standards represent the very best practices of the very best agencies. These Standards of Excellence (Attachment I) are divided into seven categories with the *Category I - Leadership* containing six CAA standards or practices of leadership that agencies should strive for to achieve excellence.

A traditional approach to leadership in many organizations is to pay homage to the past, manage the present, and anticipate the future – at least the next year. Few would argue that this approach is often practiced by an organization – especially one that has been around for any length of time and has established roots. After forty year of existence, Community Action Agencies can certainly qualify as having been around for a while. The question to be asked is whether this traditional approach to leadership will sustain a CAA for another forty years. The short answer is no.

Over the past forty years things have become more complicated for almost every organization – to the point where the following statement applies – *“If you are standing still, you are falling behind.”* Getting too comfortable with the status quo may have worked at some point, but beginning in the 1970’s and culminating in the 1980’s, American industry saw the folly of this approach to their own detriment. Many companies fell by the wayside or were marginalized as foreign competition increased and their once loyal customer base deserted them for products of higher quality and reliability. It is interesting to note that the purveyor of this competition were the Japanese, principally the car industry that had adopted and perfected the quality management principles articulated and promoted by Edward Deming, an American

Only more recently has the specter of “privatization” raised some of these same issues for public and non-profit organizations that operate in this country. The age of competition and ever-scarcer resources appears here to stay. While an organization may celebrate past success, living on past laurels is not what it once was. To put it more bluntly, resting on past success, doing the minimum to manage current programs, and hoping for the best in the future is a guaranteed formula for disaster.

Warren G. Bennis, esteemed scholar and author on leadership has noted that “*Failing organizations are usually over-managed and under-led.*” He sees vision as the essential ingredient for leadership, but also stresses that it is still up to each individual to find the vision and make it their own. He states, "The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely--all your skills, gifts, and energies--in order to make your vision manifest." He has also calls attention to many myths about leadership, especially those that imply that only a special few can be leaders. Such myths include the following:

- Leaders are always charismatic.
- Leaders are born, not made.
- Leaders exist only at the top of an organization.
- Leaders control, direct, manipulate, and prod.
- Leadership is a rare skill.

The truth is that there are leaders and leadership at every level of an organization. The high performance organization has found a way to organize, align, and focus its leadership resources, and equally important, develop and grow it to the greater good of the organization. This is the concept of a “leadership system” within an organization, and this aspect is a fundamental element of the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Criteria and CAA Standards of Excellence. This leadership system is structured, functional, and focused on sustaining and growing the organization, and dedicated to the principle that leadership can and must be developed and supported throughout the organization.

Most people agree that the leader(s) of an organization have the greatest influence on the development of the culture within the organization and its potential for long term success. Where a person has been the leader for any organization (or division or department) for more than a short time, it is highly likely that the existing culture reflects that leader’s values and characteristics – whether good or bad!

While there are many (some would say too many) theories of leadership, a practical approach and one that is generally well understood by staff at every level of an organization focuses on a leader’s characteristics, styles, and behaviors. Simply stated, leaders are identified (or labeled) by their every day actions and the impact those actions have on those they interact with. Such behaviors and actions have been frequently grouped into two distinct categories (1) transactional leaders, and (2) transformational leaders. This guide is not intended to recommend one style over another, but to frame a few general concepts that will help explain the leadership framework embedded with the Baldrige quality model and for the CAA Standards of Excellence.

Before discussing the specific CAA Standards on Leadership, a few background elements involving styles of leadership are in order – the first being transactional leadership, and the second transformational leadership. Transactional leadership represents those behaviors in which both the superior and the subordinate influence one another reciprocally so that each derives something of value. Simply stated, transactional leaders give followers something they want in exchange for something the leaders want. Transactional leaders engage their followers in a relationship of mutual dependence in which the contributions of both sides are acknowledged and rewarded.

On the other hand, transformational leadership operates out of a deeply held personal value system. By expressing their personal standards (and force of personality), transformational leaders are able to both unite followers and to change follower’s goals and beliefs. This form of leadership results in achievement of higher levels of performance among individual than previously thought possible.

Bernard M. Bass in his writings on leadership distinguishes these two concepts to say that transactional leadership focuses more on the short term and “mostly considers how to marginally improve and maintain the quantity and quality of performance.” The transformational leader, on the other hand, encourages followers by acting as a role model, motivating through inspiration, stimulating intellectually, and giving individualized consideration for needs and goals. The result is individual, group, and organizational achievement beyond expectations.

Transformational leadership starts with a clear vision, a view of the future that will excite and drive followers forward. This vision may be developed by the leader, by the senior team or ideally will emerge from a comprehensive and strategic process involving the agency and its stakeholders.

Regardless of its source, the most important factor is that the leaders of the organization buys into it, hook, line and sinker. They become the spokes person and advocate for it, carry the torch, and move relentlessly forward regardless of the barriers faced. Transformational leaders are highly visible, accessible, vocal, and their attitudes and actions demonstrate how everyone else should behave. They motivate and rally and stay on message to keeps people going, particularly through the darker times when some may question whether the vision can ever be achieved.

Transformational leaders often employ a highly charismatic style, but experienced leaders employ many styles to achieve an end result, especially in a high performance organization. A few leadership styles most are familiar with include:

- **Top-Down**

This authoritarian style is used when the leader tells staff exactly what to do, when, and how to do it, without getting the advice of others in the organization. Some of the appropriate conditions to use it are when the leaders have all the information to solve the problem, are short on time, or when employees are highly motivated. However, to gain more commitment and motivation from employees, this is not always the recommended option.

- **Collaborative**

This style of leadership is collaborative with leaders involved but where other employees or teams are involved in the decision making process for determining what to do and how to do it. In this style, the leader still maintains the final decision making authority. Using this style is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength that employees will respect. This is normally used when leaders have some of the information, and employees have some of the information. Inclusion allows them to become part of the team and make the most informed decision that benefits the organization as a whole.

- **Hands-Off**

In this style, leaders rarely participate, but delegate all decisions to others. This style allows employees to make the decision, but leaders are still responsible for the decisions that are ultimately made. This style may be used when employees have all the information/expertise, and are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it.

Inexperienced leaders may start with or use one of these styles over another. More experienced leaders often grow and learn over time to use all of these styles at one time or another, depending on the situation, constraints, and information available.

2008 Standards of Excellence – Category 1 – Organizational Leadership

See Attachment 1 for Text of Each Leadership Standard

Leadership Standards

1.1 Leadership Focus

1.2 Mission Statement, Code of Ethics, Community Action Promise

1.3 Board Structure/Function

1.4 Committee/Advisory Group Roles/Actions

1.5 Community Advocacy

1.6 Low-Income Involvement

Category 1 – Leadership contains six CAA Standards of Excellence as reference above. This category addresses how senior leader guide and sustain their organization, setting and communicating organizational vision, values, and performance expectations. It also contains standards addressing the CAA board governance, advisory groups, advocacy, ethics, performance review, and participation of the low income community in influencing the direction and focus of the agency. Each standard has its on focus, but all are linked both within the category and to other standards in other categories.

Linkages must be closely examined, as no standard operates in a vacuum. The CAA Standards of Excellence, as with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence represent a holistic, systematic, and integrated approach to excellence.

Creating a Leadership System

Under this category, the CAA Standards of Excellence calls for the presence of a leadership system in the agency – one capable of guiding the overall agency (See *Figure 1* below). The term “*leadership system*” refers to how *leadership* is exercised, formally and informally,

An Effective Leadership System:

- **Makes the vision and values “real” throughout the organization through effective communication;**
- **Ensures that personal actions serve as role models of behavior for all employees;**
- **Guides/tracks overall performance and success, and improves the effectiveness of the organization’s continuous improvement processes, as well as of its day-to-day operations;**
- **Members continually evaluates and improves their own management skills, seeking inputs from multiple sources i.e. 360 feedback;**
- **Recognizes the skills and knowledge of the staff and empowers them to share responsibility for agency operations, from planning to execution, even if it means shifting some responsibility from managers to staff;**
- **Makes it easy for employees to communicate with leadership, responding to their inputs and needs, and assists them in identifying and removing barriers;**
- **Willingly allows employees to learn by doing and encouraging innovation and risk taking, within acceptable limits;**
- **“Manages by fact,” using valid data and information in decision-making;**
- **Rewards and recognizes those who contribute to customer satisfaction and continuous improvement goals; and**
- **Strives to make the organization an exemplary citizen of the communities in which it operates.**

throughout the organization—the basis for and the way key decisions are made, communicated, and carried out. It includes structures and mechanisms for decision making; selection and development of leaders and managers; and reinforcement of values, ethical behavior, directions, and performance expectations.

An effective *leadership system* respects the capabilities and requirements of employees and other stakeholders, and it sets high expectations for performance and performance improvement. It builds loyalties and teamwork based on the organization’s vision and values and the pursuit of shared goals. It encourages and supports initiative and appropriate risk taking, subordinate’s organization structure to purpose and function, and avoids chains of command that require long decision paths. An effective *leadership system* includes mechanisms for the leaders to conduct self-examination, receive feedback, and improve.

A leadership system under the CAA Standards of Excellence may be viewed as a network of organizational leaders who communicate and lead by example. This system represents the culture and values of the organization and exists to communicate, promote, and reinforce those values agency-wide and externally as well. There is of course more to be done.

Top performing organizations usually have a visible and well defined “leadership system” in place – a system that is agency-wide, fully deployed, and actively engaged at every level of the organization. Leaders in these organizations have created a powerful vision and a clear mission that is evident through the organization, and it focuses and energizes the workforce. Everyone see the direction of “true north” and feel a part of a team that is pulling together toward the same goals. Frequently, an inspired vision and a clear mission is the catalyst that overcomes the organizational status quo.

The leadership system called for in the Standards is also a network of great communicators. They identify clear agency strategies and an operational game plan so the organization succeeds in its mission. Staff job descriptions, and accountability is clear, thus ensuring that employees know their roles and contributions to the mission. The leadership system ensures staff has the tools and skills required, and create a work climate where transfer of learning occurs. They reward teamwork and data-driven improvement, consensus building, fact-based decision-making, and push authority and accountability to the lowest possible levels.

The primary role of the effective senior leader working within a leadership system is not to bog down into managing internal operations, but rather to be visionary and focus the organization on overall performance and satisfying both internal and external

customers. For CAAs these customers typically include low income individuals and families, partners and stakeholders, investors (including funding sources) and the community as a whole. Leaders must

Excellence Indicators for Leadership

- **Strong Customer Focus**
- **Highly Visible Leaders**
- **Values Clearly Expresses and Reinforced**
- **People Empowered at All Levels**
- **Coaching Rather than Micro-Managing**
- **Substantial Personal Knowledge of Performance Management Systems and other Effective Tools to track and drive Performance Excellence**
- **Measures Linked to Strategic Goals and Action Plans across the agency**
- **Systematically Evaluates and Improves Personal and Organizational Leadership Effectiveness**
- **Champion for Ethics and Community Involvement**
- **Monitor/Audit Ethics Practices**
- **Zero Tolerance for Unethical Behavior within Organization and Among Partners**
- **Working within a leadership system**

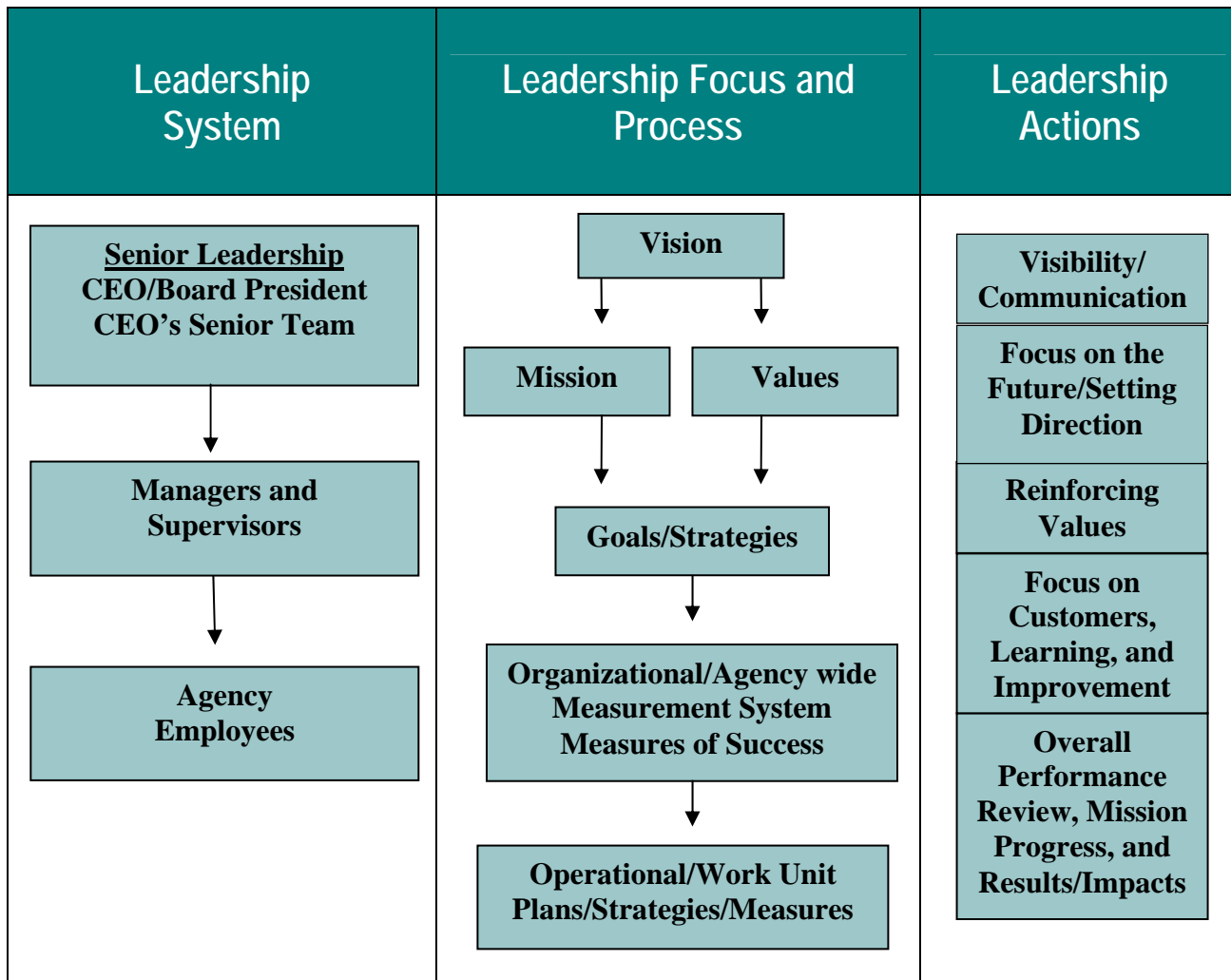
role model the tools of consensus building and decision making as the organization focuses on its vision, mission, and strategies to keep customers in focus and satisfied.

Successful leaders within a comprehensive leadership system know the importance of listening to and learning from agency personnel – those they rely on to achieve all agency goals and strategies. A key tool to accomplish this is employee feedback system and process called for in *Standard 3.3*. To understand where you stand, no matter where you sit in the organization, you only have to ask for feedback -- and then listen carefully.

Your leadership system cannot improve without a commitment to listening, and your willingness to hear and act on employee feedback. In fact, your agency goals, strategies, and action plans cannot be improved without it. The CAA Standards specifically examine the extent to which leaders use employee feedback in assessing and improving the agency leadership system. Leaders who hold the values of high performance will drive change forward to make all necessary agency improvements. Embracing the concepts of organizational learning (not just individual) will facilitate change in the organization.

Leaders will need organizational learning as an ally as they manage change and drive it through the organization.

Figure 1



Achieving the Category 1- Organizational Leadership Standards

Standard 1.1 – Leadership Focus

To achieve *Standard 1.1, Leadership Focus*, an agency must pay close attention to how senior leaders function within an agency-wide leadership system to communicate with employees, develop future leaders, sustain the organization, and create an environment that encourages ethical behavior and ultimately high performance. As mentioned previously in this guide, nothing else has more influence on the culture, focus, and direction of the agency than its leadership.

The category also addresses CAA Board governance and committee systems, ethical responsibilities, and the agency fulfills CAA responsibilities for advocacy and low income involvement.

An organization's senior leaders need to set directions and create a customer centric orientation, clear and visible values, and high expectations. Agency directions, values, and expectations need to address all stakeholders. Agency leaders need to ensure the creation of strategies, systems, and methods for achieving excellence, stimulating innovation, and building knowledge and capabilities. These strategies and values should help guide all activities and decisions of the organization. Senior leaders must also commit to developing of the entire work force and should encourage participation, learning, innovation, and creativity by all employees.

Through their ethical behavior and personal roles in planning, communications, review of organizational performance, and employee recognition, senior leaders serve as role models by reinforcing values and expectations and building leadership and initiative throughout the organization.

The term "senior leaders" refers to an organization's senior management group or team. In many organizations, this consists of the head of the Agency and Board, and senior level directors and key supervisors. The agency's leadership system may be structure in any way that can effectively carry out the function of leadership as defined by the CAA standards, and may include other management level staff throughout the organizations.

What Excellent Agencies Do to Achieve Leadership Standard 1.1

- Leaders are proactive in anticipating the future of the agency and the customers it serves, and are personally involved in setting the direction and focus of the agency in addressing the impacts of poverty and the needs of low income individuals and families in the community.
- The agency has formally deployed an agency-wide "leadership system" that engages, supports, and develops leaders at every level of the organization. For example, the agency has a career path approach to building and developing/training its own leaders, as well as having a clearly articulated succession policy for key leadership positions.
- The agency leadership actively communicates, deploys, and reinforces its vision of the future and organizational values to all levels and types of employees.
- Leaders use a variety of techniques to reinforce/reward employee behavior that is consistent with the organization values, vision, and strategy.
- Agency leadership makes improvements in its leadership system based on feedback from a variety of listening methodology and sources? For example 360 degree feedback methods to obtain unbiased feedback from staff, partners, and stakeholders.
- Agency leadership is focused on achieving excellence and continuous improvement at every level. Performance tracking and measuring overall success is a fundamental agency value and is systematic deployed across the organization at every level. Commitment to Excellence and a Culture of Excellence and Improvement are built into Board evaluations of agency leadership and employee evaluations as well.

- There is a focus (by leaders and the leadership system) on systematically tracking multiple levels of performance using an agency wide performance management system that consolidates all critical performance data of the agency. This system includes measuring progress versus goals and strategies across all areas of the organization – particularly focusing on success in meeting/exceeding strategic goals toward achieving the overall agency mission. Program and grant data necessary for management and reporting are subsets of aggregate goals and strategy data.

The Standards of Excellence call for six types of agency performance in Category 7 – Results: (1) Mission related Outcomes/Impacts, (2) Customer related Outcomes/Satisfaction, (3) Human Resources/Learning related Outcomes; (4) Partner/Stakeholder Impacts; (5) Financial/Accountability Outcomes; and (6) Innovations and Recognitions. It is essential for the leadership system to focus on, track, report and deliver on these results.

Standard 1.2 –Mission, Code, and Promise

While most organizations have a stated mission, too many organizations have not done a particularly good job of clearly articulating what they stand for - their mission statements notwithstanding. Why is that? First, some focus more on their programs, but have done a poor job defining why the agency exists. If you are known in the community only by a program or two, or by some vague notion about poor people, that is simply not good enough to sustain the agency for the long term. This is why Standard 6.4 – Communication Plan requires a formal and systematic approach to communication and objectively evaluating its effectiveness in conveying an agency message. Do not assume you have a positive (or any) image in the community as a whole. Remember, you can not improve it, if you don't objectively measure and benchmark it first.

There are five important characteristics of a good expression of organizational purpose:

1. It absolutely has to be inspiring or memorable to those inside and outside the organization
2. It has to be something just as valid 50 years from now as it is today
3. It should motivate you to think expansively about what you could do but aren't doing
4. It should help guide you about what not to do.
5. It has to be truly authentic to the organization involved. Lacking this you really don't stand for anything and never will.

Ethics are more than a policy – it calls for a proactive effort by staff and board leadership to institute and reinforce a strong ethics value across the agency, and a specific set of practices and protocols to implement that value.

What Excellent Agencies Do to Achieve this Standard!

- The agency mission is highly visible, reinforced and fully understood at all levels of the agency using multiple means of communication and promoting awareness.
- Leaders are proactive in promoting the overall agency mission and ethical behavior and ensuring the visibility of the Community Action Promise.
- Leadership guides and reinforces the mission/vision and ethical issues at the operational level within the agency, as well as among stakeholders, partners, and in the community.
- The agency board has formally adopted the CAA Code of Ethics and Promise and has implemented multiple means to ensure staff, customers, and stakeholders are knowledgeable and understand these documents.
- The Promise is recited prior to the start of all Board meeting and prominent agency and community functions.

- A formal agency-wide Ethic Policy detailing operational aspects of the code of ethics has been formally adopted by the agency board and is a prominent part of agency wide training including new Board member and staff orientation packages.
- Orientation and on-going training on ethics policies are systematically deployed across the agency and evaluated for effectiveness and understanding.

Standard 1.3 – Board Structure and Function

An effective and efficient governance structure must be demonstrated. There must be more than merely documenting the legal and regulatory requirements of the tri-partite board. It is essential to show a fully engaged board that is connected to the agency’s long-range vision and mission of addressing poverty. The role of the board should not appear perfunctory. Its must appear as an effective and engaged body that is actively demonstrating oversight, guidance, and setting direction.

The more formal board processes are the better informed members will be. Thus a strong set of by-laws is essential for defining roles and responsibilities. For example, the committee structure, advisory group’s roles should be clear. Defining the role of the executive committee, board oversight function, and details such as membership, appointments, terms, training, and orientations should be articulated in writing. Issues such an ethics, accountability, and conflict of interest should be clearly defined.

What Excellent Agencies Do to Achieve this Standard!

- The agency board has an active, fully engaged board adhering to the tripartite CAA membership criteria.
- The agency has in place a formal board training and development policy addressing both recruitment and orientation of new members as well as near and longer term development of current members. The policy calls for an annual training calendar tied to the agency’s key goals and strategies, as well as general non-profit board topics such as policy development, planning, fiduciary, ethics, and oversight roles.
- The agency has integrated board leadership into its overall agency-wide leadership system including developing new board leaders and clear succession guidance for long term continuity of the board.
- The board has a robust set of by-laws that govern all aspect of board operations including committee structure, functions, and roles. All committees have a written description and develop a work plan for the year with specific goals tied to the agency goals and strategies.
- Performance oversight is a highly structured and well documented role of the board and committee structure addressing both strategic (mission, goals, and strategies), and operations (programs, services, administration, and projects) roles. The agency CEO is evaluated at least annually by the board on both individual and agency success.
- The agency and board leadership demonstrate and practice a culture of inclusion and engagement of the board membership.
- The agency has established a “leadership institute” or other formal leadership capacity building functions to develop, track, and evaluated board and staff leadership. The institute has adopted a set of core leadership competencies and programmed a systematic approach to building agency and board leaders to sustain the long-term success of the agency’s mission.
- A governance committee (or nominating committee or board development committee) is utilized. This committee works year-round to identify and recruit new motivated members who are linked to new constituencies; and have the knowledge, skills and attributes the organization needs in its board.
- The Board had adopted and relies on a broad Strategic Scorecard of Success to track key aggregate measurement metrics of agency progress and success in achieving its stated mission and key strategies.

Standard 1.4 – Committee/Advisory Groups

The agency’s advisory groups and committees serve as a communication and engagement tool for the board – specifically as a key conduit for low income issues important to the community. This standard calls for a fully engaged advisory/committee structure that is a fully integrated and functioning arm of the board. Specific actions that can be documented as originating from the committee structure and forwarded to the board are called for. This standard is closely linked to Standard 1.6 below.

What Excellent Agencies Do to Achieve this Standard!

- The committee and advisory group is formally structured and is highly focused and integrated with the agency mission of addressing poverty. This ensures connectivity and responsiveness to the targeted low income community and their needs.
- Committee effectiveness and responsiveness to specific low income issues is formally assessed and documented. Minutes of advisory groups are maintained, board actions and impacts are tracked/reported over time as part of agency effectiveness in addressing community issues.
- Memberships on these community or low income advisory groups are formally coordinated through the board’s governance committee. Roles and responsibilities are defined.
- Orientation on the agency’s mission and strategies is provided to ensure work and resources are focused on the near and long term goals/mission of the agency.

Standard 1.5 – Advocacy

The key to achieving this standard is two-fold: (1) identifying and focusing on specific (not broad) advocacy issues that have substance and can impact poverty; and (2) adopting and implementing a dedicated, structured and formal approach to actively advocating on behalf of those issues, and tracking/evaluating impacts over time. Community Action has a long history of activism and advocacy on behalf of the poor. This standard’s requirements call for making that process formal, structured, highly visible, and with a dedicated purpose of achieving high impact results.

Being dedicated to advocacy is insufficient. What are you focusing on? What are your pre-planned strategies or actions? Who are the players? What are the impacts over time of those actions? Can you document and report substantive success?

What Excellent Agencies Do to Achieve this Standard!

- The agency has a formal and systematic approach to advocacy that is driven by the agency mission of addressing poverty and ensuring self-sufficiency among low income individuals and families.
- The agency has adopted formal advocacy issues that are tracked over time for progress and impact.
- The agency has incorporated an advocacy goal in its strategic plan with key strategies and measures to track success over time. The advocacy goal is tracked by the agency and board is a key measure of success as part of its overall performance management system.
- Progress and success in advocacy is reported annually as part of the agency’s strategic scorecard of success.
- Results and success are reported as part of the agency's overall performance management system.
- Board and agency leaders are proactive in identifying key advocacy issues affecting low income in the community and articulating strategies and actions that measurably impact these issues.
- Board and agency leaders are trained on advocacy principles and methods (vs. lobbying etc), and engage in a structured approach to advocacy to benefit the agency and those it serves.

Standard 1.6 – Low Income Involvement

This standard seeks to documents the degree of involvement of low-income constituents in originating issues of importance to that community, and subsequent action by the CAA Board on those issues. Documentation of where issues originated, actions taken, and final impacts is the key to achieving this standard. General references to low income involvement with out specifics issues, dates, and formal actions will limit achievement of this standard.

What Excellent Agencies Do to Achieve this Standard!

- Agency leaders are proactive in ensuring low-income representation is fully involved and active in identifying substantive issues and that measurable agency action occurs and is responsive to these needs.
- Low income issues are documented and tracked systematically over time for progress and impact.
- Low income involvements can be easily documented via minutes, committee recommendations, and formal board actions.

Responding to the Self-Study Questions for Category 1

Category 1 – Organizational Leadership

Use this section of the Leadership Guide to assist you agency develop appropriate responses to questions listed under each Standard of Excellence of the Organizational Self Study. The questions under each standard are in the left column and the tip is in the right column.

Standard - 1.1 Leadership Focus

Senior leadership actively engages board members, staff, partners, and community stakeholders; and clearly articulates the agency’s mission/vision, values, performance expectations and results. The agency cultivates a leadership system that is highly visible and focused on strategic direction, addressing poverty, continuous improvement, and actions that will sustain the agency for the long term, including ethics and succession strategies for board and staff members. Through a formal, agency-wide performance management system, senior leaders (including board members) systematically review agency performance and success in achieving agency goals, strategies, and operational benchmarks. *(Links to 4.3 and 7.1)*

Remember: Reviewers look for how you address the standard not how well you answer each individual question. The bottom line is understanding and addressing the requirements of each standard in your responses to each question. It is the collective responses to all questions (for each standard) that determine if you have achieved the requirements of the standard.

Self-Study Question	Tips/Key Points to Remember
<p>a. Describe your organization’s leadership system and how it effectively guides the agency’s approach to performance management, advocacy, customer responsiveness, continuous improvement, and achieving excellence. Include specific examples of how senior leaders <u>actively</u> engage board members, staff, partners and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard seeks to examine how leadership is exercised throughout the agency. • The standard is calling for a visible agency-wide system of leaders – both senior and mid-level; and how well they coordinate, integrate and consistently in communicate/reinforce the agency vision and mission, and engage staff, partners and stakeholders. • The response should address how leaders keep focused on poverty issues – i.e. using the mission and strategic plan as a cornerstone or living document – assuming it articulates the agency’s role in addressing poverty. • You response should describe what elements make up your leadership system. i.e. who is involved (directors, managers, supervisors, team leaders, board etc), how it is systematic rather than ad hoc in weekly, monthly, annual activities. • You should list or bullet out real-world examples of what is done – and be specific. Indicate if you meet monthly/quarterly/annually and if you do specific things that clearly address the standard. Use active words such as meets, reviews, discusses. • Avoid appearing ad hoc, occasional or random i.e. saying we meet as needed or at the call of the director. Simply saying we meet regularly imprecise. • Another key requirement is how leadership reinforces ethical behavior across the agency (and the board as well), and deploys a formal approach to reviewing and tracking agency progress toward achieving the vision, mission and goals. List steps, reports, and process, and how this links with Standard 4.3. and 7.1.
<p>b. Describe how senior leaders sustain the agency for the long term, and create an environment for employee empowerment, innovation, learning, and growth? Describe the agency’s leadership succession strategies for staff and board members, and how senior leaders participate in these strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce how the agency maintains a focus on the future for innovation, development, and growth. Give examples, such as if community meetings, focus groups, team based strategies etc are utilized. • Specifically address your agency’s formal approach to succession of leadership both in the agency and on the board. What formal policy or procedures is in place, if any, addressing how you will groom and replace leadership over the long term to assure continuity of the agency. • Avoid appearing random, ad hoc or in-formal. If you have no formal policy, say so, but list what you do. • For example, do by law of the board address replacing members, and training those in leadership positions. • Do you have a formal approach to <u>leadership development</u> such as a policy or

	<p>process in your HR Manual where new leadership is groomed for the long term? Do your board by-laws have provisions to develop long-term leadership, rather than just replace departing ones? What methods do you use?</p>
<p>c. Describe how senior leaders (including board members) systematically review organizational performance and success in achieving agency goals and strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your response should clearly list and discuss consistent steps of a formal process used to review progress toward achieving goals, strategies, and ultimately the agency mission for addressing poverty. A key for achieving this standard is describing a formal (written) systematic (regular, repetitive, and consistent) approach to performance review. Avoid appearing random, occasional, or ad hoc. Connect your response to Standard 4.3 Performance Mgmt System, which defines your agency’s agency-wide performance review process. How is it used and how well does it enable and assist leadership achieve the requirements of this standard. Be specific and list activities, reports, steps and process. Note the linkage to Standard 7.1 – Results. Your response should include some reference to what you are tracking and reporting (metrics) over time to gauge the agency’s progress toward achieving its mission of addressing poverty.
<p><u>Standard - 1.2 Mission Statement, Code of Ethics, Community Action Promise</u> <i>The CAA’s Mission focuses on addressing poverty. The agency Board has formally adopted the: (1) Agency Mission/Vision, (2) Community Action Code of Ethics, and (3) Promise of Community Action, and these are prominently displayed throughout the organization, and are integral to the agency’s message to the community and its day-to-day business operations. The agency is proactive in ensuring ethical behavior in all agency business practices, services, and transactions.</i></p>	
<p>a. Describe how your agency’s Mission Statement focuses on addressing poverty in the area you serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This standard calls for mission language directly related to addressing poverty and its related impact on individuals and families. The more specific the better. Restate it for the reader or refer the reader to the page it is located. If your mission is currently indirect or unrelated, you need to make the point of how it connects to the issue of addressing poverty and its impacts. However it will be more difficult to achieve this standard without a direct connection. If you are planning on amending or updating your vision or mission in the near future, indicate so, but give a date certain or timetable to accomplish this.
<p>b. Indicate how and when your agency formally adopted your Mission/Vision, the Community Action Code of Ethics, and the Promise of Community Action, and describe how they are visibly deployed in your agency and systematically integrated into everyday practices of the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard call for a “formally adopted” mission/vision, Code of Ethics, and Promise. To achieve this, the agency must clearly state if this has occurred, then list the method used (board adopted policy/action etc), and the date for <u>each</u> item. If this has not occurred, <u>just say so</u>, or list any plans for a specific future action. Describe the specific methods your agency uses to display and utilize these documents, i.e. where posted, how used by the agency. Give examples of how these elements are “integrated into the agency message” and “day to day business operations.” For example via training, in staff meeting, in board meeting etc. Reciting the CAA Promise before key meetings is one method widely used, as is incorporating the mission on agency letter head. Required orientation and training on ethics, or signatures for receiving a copy of the ethics policy are other examples.
<p>c. Describe what methods your agency uses to promote awareness and (more importantly) understanding of these documents and to ensure the content of their message is fully comprehended and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness and understanding of these documents can be achieved via training, orientation, as part of key documents used by staff, and by day to day practices that demonstrate full comprehensive. Integration into job descriptions and evaluations is a systematic method to <u>fully</u> deploy these elements agency-wide for all staff. Stakeholders may be better connected via retreats, strategic planning, or partnerships agreements.

<p>used by employees and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of agency publications including newsletters is also an option here to further awareness and understanding.
<p>d. Describe your agency's active steps in implementing the CAA Code of Ethics, and how your agency monitors and responds to breaches in ethical behavior?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific on how ethics and ethical behavior are communicated and reinforced in a systematic manner. Avoid appearing ad hoc or random on this issue. • Distinguish between staff and board approaches if they are different or integrated. For example what official agency policy/documents address ethics – Employee Handbook, Board By-Laws etc? How are staff made aware of and training on this? Are there ethics in job descriptions and evaluations? • Indicate if your written policy has procedures to address breaches in ethics – or is this process vague, open ended, ad hoc or not addressed.
<p><u>Standard - 1.3 Board Structure/Function</u> <i>The board membership is knowledgeable of and actively involved in reviewing agency progress, performance, and results. It meets all legal and regulatory membership requirements, understands its role, and is fully engaged in all aspects of the organization’s mission, strategic direction, and assessment of its success in combating poverty and increasing self-sufficiency.</i></p>	
<p>a. Describe how your board is actively involved in agency business, giving examples of its role in your agency’s human resources, financial management, administration, and in promoting innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard calls for knowledgeable, fully engaged (active rather than passive) board members who understand their role in guiding/supporting the agency in achieving its stated mission. Emphasis is assessing progress and success for addressing poverty and its impacts. • The response should give examples of how board members are active – on HR issues, financial mgmt etc rather than just attending meetings will strengthen the response. • Describing the board’s formal board committee structure with defined roles, timetables, and functions. • Language extracted from the board’s by-laws that define the board’s role and level of engagement can help here.
<p>b. Describe how your board is actively involved in reviewing agency progress, performance results, and how it tracks your agency’s success over time... Indicate if a broad, <u>agency-wide performance scorecard</u> tied to strategic goals, strategies and measures is in place to summarize overall agency success. (See Standard 2.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your response should describe the board’s formal approach to reviewing agency performance – focusing on how the staff, board, and committees are actively engaged and follow a systematic process. Passive statements such as “reports are presented to the board each month” lack substance. Be specific. • Connect your response to Standard 4.3 and Standard 2.4 to demonstrate that you have a structured, integrated agency-wide performance review <u>system</u> – and not a random set of financial reports. Demonstrated that your system effectively tracks your strategic goals and strategies over time and fully engages the board in doing so. • Use of an aggregated, agency-wide scorecard using clear metrics of agency success is a preferred practice. • The scorecard concept is derived from the “Balanced Scorecard” concept developed by Kaplan and Norton. It offers broader perspectives and dimensions of agency health – than just financial. These include those from Category 7 Results: Overall agency results, Customer results, HR/Staff Development Results, Efficiency, and Financial/Resource Development etc.
<p>c. Describe how your board meets all legal and regulatory requirements including size, composition, and meeting schedules, membership, meeting requirements, and vacancies. Describe your methodology for recruitment and election of low-income individuals, and give examples of the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the tri-partite aspects of your board membership and composition, and list your meeting schedules and how you address vacancies. • Describe the formal aspects of your board structure established via your by-laws. Avoid appearing ad hoc or informal. • You can strengthen this response if you have a clear and formal succession policy for board and committee membership, and for developing leadership roles on the board.

<p>leadership role your board plays in the success of the agency.</p>	
<p>d. List/chart the content of your agency’s board member orientation package and describe it purpose and how used. List/chart any recently completed board training/capacity building, including ROMA, and describe the formal assessment/feedback mechanism you use to allow board members an open/unrestricted method of feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a simple list of board orientation elements and materials that make up a “new member manual”. • A formal and systematic approach to board training will strengthen the response. Setting forth these details in by laws or other board policy makes this more formal and specific. • List and describe any “required training” for all members and how training is provided. • Avoid appearing ad hoc or random – such as “members attend training as needed or if requested”. • A systematic approach to board feedback such as a brief feedback form used at the end of each meeting is recommended. Other feedback means such as a web based form or board “member only” page on the agency web site will enhance this response.
<p><u>Standard - 1.4 Committee/Advisory Group Roles/Actions</u></p>	
<p>Participatory Board advisory committees and/or task forces are in place. They actively and systematically represent their constituencies through recommendations to, and specific actions by the CAA board on constituent issues that directly impact delivery of services, organizational operations, and/or advocacy.</p>	
<p>a. List/chart your current committee and advisory group structure, including special/ad hoc task groups or other innovative community advisory groups that support your agency. Specify in the chart specific recommendations and formal actions taken by each committee/group and how their action contributes to your vision/mission, goals or strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard calls for active and engaged groups (whether recurrent or ad hoc) that are fully utilized by the board in engaging the target customers about constituent issues – i.e. issues important to those low income individuals and families, or other groups targeted by the agency mission. • List or chart official advisory groups, task forces or other board related groups utilized to engage the community, and better inform board decision-making to address their mission related role. • This standard calls for specific issues that <u>originated</u> from these groups, and were formally acted upon by the board. Be specific i.e. group, issue, dates, and board action. • Avoid broad or vague statements about issues such as “all board actions come from the community.”
<p>b. Describe the roles these committees play and how they systematically represent their constituencies and impact delivery of services, organizational operations, and/or advocacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This question allows you to expand on the specific roles of committees or advisory groups, task forces etc listed in you chart or matrix. Be sure to be specific about impacts achieved. • For example, an advisory group may have focused on housing issues which generated advocacy activity, and corresponding board resolutions or action for new, expanded or redirected agency or partner programs.
<p>c. Describe how you recruit, identify and attract <u>active</u> representatives from throughout the community to serve on your advisory groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured approach to recruitment or an agency policy on serving on advisory or committees is recommended. By-laws or other agency policy might serve to formalize this process.
<p><u>Standard - 1.5 Community Advocacy</u></p>	
<p><i>The agency has identified and formally adopted specific low-income/poverty-related issues and demonstrates</i></p>	

proactive advocacy (including initiatives and funding) that address these issues. The board, executive director, and senior agency leadership actively engage legislative, regulatory, and/or community institutions focusing on these and other issues affecting the low-income community. The agency demonstrates measurable impacts addressing the targeted advocacy issues. (Links to Standard 4.3 and Standard 1.6)

<p>a. Describe how your agency has identified, targeted, and formally adopted low-income poverty related issues. Indicate how you demonstrate proactive advocacy addressing these issues on behalf of the low-income community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard calls for a formal, visible, and structured approach to advocacy as essential to agency success in addressing poverty related issues. • A generic “commitment to advocacy” or broad agency approaches that appear random, occasional, or “as needed” should be avoided. For example, engaging in advocacy as needed when issues arise is ad hoc, not part of a systematic, agency-wide approach to advocacy.
<p>b. List/chart your agency’s key advocacy issues, and indicate when and how your agency formally adopted these issues. Indicate how each issue contributes to accomplishing your agency’s stated mission/vision, goals, and strategies. (Link to 1.6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a simple list or matrix chart listing a pre-determined set of <u>key advocacy issues</u>, even if they are not yet formal. Relate each listed issue to your mission. You may find your agency had many advocacy areas but none formally adopted or yet deemed official. If they are not official, then they are ad hoc. • A best practice is to have an advocacy goal in the agency’s strategic plan, with issues systematically incorporated, updated, and tracked/reported for progress over time. • If advocacy in the strategic plan, it becomes formal, highly visible, measured and tracked over time – thus becoming integral to the mission of the agency. • This standard links to Standard 1.6 as key advocacy issues should generally be derived from the agency’s low-income constituency.
<p>c. From your advocacy list, describe activities your senior leaders (including board members, staff, constituents, and customers) have conducted over the <u>last three years</u>. Also indicate in your chart who were involved, and the <u>impact and results</u> achieved during this time period for <u>each</u> issue listed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if a formal approach is not yet in place, list specific advocacy issues and activities using a chart or matrix covering the last three years. • List who was involved, what methods they used, and what the net impact was. • Impacts and results of advocacy should be tracked via the agency’s performance management system i.e. related to Standard 4.3. • If you have an informal approach, but plan to make it more formal, give details and specific time tables.
<p>d. Discuss what percentage (and how you calculated it) of your agency’s overall budget is dedicated to addressing advocacy and broader community needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the percentage you list, give some information as to how you arrived at the number. • Broader community needs may include issues related to or indirectly related to your mission of addressing poverty and its impacts on individuals and families.

Standard - 1.6 Low-Income Involvement

The agency demonstrates maximum feasible participation of the low-income community. Over the past three years, the board has adopted, acted upon, or formally supported issues specifically identified by or recommended by low-income representatives of the board or other low-income community groups.

<p>a. Describe any specific issues or initiatives brought forward by low-income representatives of your community in the <u>last three years</u> that have been acted upon/adopted by your board that are not among the advocacy issues described in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard focuses on substantive participation of low income from the community served by the agency. • If a specific issue or initiative is listed, documentation for agency action would be minutes or recorded votes of the board with specific dates. • Your response should cover any issues not addressed in Standard 1.5 response. • Your response may augment, expand, or reference Standard 1.4 related to advisory groups.
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1.5 above.	
<p>b. Describe how these issues were brought forward as well as any documented actions, implementation steps, and results/successes that have occurred following the board's action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give some detail on how issues important to the low income community were identified and brought to the board, and subsequent results or positive actions that have occurred following board action.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – 2008 Standards of Excellence

Attachment 2 – Promising Practice – Organizational Leadership

Attachment 3 – Promising Practice: Organizational Leadership Development

Attachment 4 – Promising Practice: Leadership Competencies

Attachment 5 – Promising Practice: Board Governance Checklist

Attachment 6 – Promising Practice: Board Self-Evaluation

Attachment 7 – Promising Practice: Board Human Resources Checklist

Attachment 8 – Promising Practice: Establishing a Leadership Library

Attachment 9 – Promising Practice: Board Governance – The Basics

Attachment 10 – Promising Practice: Developing a Balanced Scorecard

Attachment 11 – Promising Practice: CAPLAW Conflict of Interest Policy

Attachment 12 – Promising Practice: CAPLAW By-Laws Toolkit

References/Resources

Attachment 1

2008 Standards of Excellence©

Category 1. Organizational Leadership Overview

This category examines the CAA’s leadership system, and how senior leaders guide the agency. It examines how your agency is governed, and how senior leaders support the achievement of the organization’s mission, values, direction, and overall performance. It examines how your leadership system sustains the agency, promotes community advocacy, focuses on addressing poverty, and achieves low-income involvement.

Leadership Standards

1.1 Leadership Focus

Senior leadership actively engages board members, staff, partners, and community stakeholders; and clearly articulates the agency’s mission/vision, values, performance expectations and results. The agency cultivates a leadership system that is highly visible and focused on strategic direction, addressing poverty, continuous improvement, and actions that will sustain the agency for the long term, including ethics and succession strategies for board and staff members. Through a formal, agency-wide performance management system, senior leaders (including board members) systematically review agency performance and success in achieving agency goals, strategies, and operational benchmarks. *(Links to 4.3 and 7.1)*

1.2 Mission Statement, Code of Ethics, Community Action Promise

The CAA’s Mission focuses on addressing poverty. The agency Board has formally adopted the: (1) Agency Mission/Vision, (2) Community Action Code of Ethics, and (3) Promise of Community Action, and these are prominently displayed throughout the organization, and are integral to the agency’s message to the community and its day-to-day business operations. The agency is proactive in ensuring ethical behavior in all agency business practices, services, and transactions.

1.3 Board Structure/Function

The board membership is knowledgeable of and actively involved in reviewing agency progress, performance, and results. It meets all legal and regulatory membership requirements, understands its role, and is fully engaged in all aspects of the organization’s mission, strategic direction, and assessment of its success in combating poverty and increasing self-sufficiency.

1.4 Committee/Advisory Group Roles/Actions

Participatory Board advisory committees and/or task forces are in place. They actively and systematically represent their constituencies through recommendations to, and specific actions by the CAA board on constituent issues that directly impact delivery of services, organizational operations, and/or advocacy.

1.5 Community Advocacy

The agency has identified and formally adopted specific low-income/poverty-related issues and demonstrates proactive advocacy (including initiatives and funding) that address these issues. The board, executive director, and senior agency leadership actively engage legislative, regulatory, and/or community institutions focusing on these and other issues affecting the low-income community. The agency demonstrates measurable impacts addressing the targeted advocacy issues. *(Links to Standard 4.3)*

1.6 Low-Income Involvement

The agency demonstrates maximum feasible participation of the low-income community. Over the past three years, the board has adopted, acted upon, or formally supported issues specifically identified by or recommended by low-income representatives of the board or other low-income community groups.

Category 2. Strategic Planning and Direction Overview

This category examines how your agency sets strategic direction, develops action plans and strategies, updates these plans, and utilizes them as an integrated living document that guides the agency. It stresses customer input and emphasizes the need for specific implementation strategies and performance measures that are used by the staff and board to track the plan's progress and success over time.

Strategic Planning Standards

2.1 Strategic Plan and Deployment

The agency has formally adopted and actively uses an agency-wide strategic plan to track its progress and overall success. It is systematically used throughout the agency as a guide to implementing and tracking goals and strategies. The plan incorporates the agency's mission/vision, its focus on poverty, and incorporates specific measurable strategies that drive all agency action. (*Links to 7.1 – Agency Outcomes and Program/Service Delivery Results.*)

2.2 Plan Development/Updates

The agency has systematically assessed poverty conditions and available resources to eliminate poverty using current published information, community surveys, and input from individual customers and stakeholders in low-income communities. The agency's strategic plan is current and is systematically updated using a structured process that ensures community and customer input in identifying critical needs.

2.3 Mobilizing New Resources/New Programs/New Partnership

The agency has mobilized substantial additional (non-CSBG public, and other private investment) dollars for every CSBG dollar it has received to support stated strategic goals/strategies, and it has regularly developed new programs, services, and partnerships in response to its community needs assessment and as identified in its strategic plan.

2.4 Strategic Measures of Success

The agency's strategic goals/strategies have specific performance measures that are systematically tracked over time by senior leadership and the Board to assess the agency's progress and success. All agency projects are linked to and support one or more of the agency's strategic plan goals/strategies, and corresponding measures/or one of the six national ROMA goals.

(*Links to 4.3 Performance Management and Improvement System; 5.2 Employee Performance Management; and 7.1 Agency Outcomes and Results*)

Category 3. Customer, Constituent, and Partner Focus Overview

This category examines how your agency seeks to understand the voices of customers, constituents, and stakeholders in the community. It stresses relationships as an integral part of an overall listening and learning strategy, and examines how your organization builds relationships with customers, partners, and other stakeholders.

Customer Focus Standards

3.1 Customer/Constituent/Community Knowledge

The agency has formally identified and targeted its key external customers and constituents/stakeholders in the community and deployed multiple listening strategies to systematically listen to, understand expectations, and learn from them. (*Links 3.2 Customer Feedback System; and 4.3 – Performance Management and Improvement System*)

3.2 Customer/Constituent Feedback System

The agency systematically collects, segments, assesses, and acts upon customer/constituent feedback from its targeted customers about the agency's programs and services. The agency systematically tracks and produces formal reports using trends and comparative customer/constituent feedback data that provide evidence of a high degree of satisfaction shown among low-income customers, community residents, and other stakeholders, including funding sources. (*Links to 3.1 Customer Knowledge; 4.3 Performance Management and Improvement System; and 7.2 Customer-Focused Results*)

3.3 Internal Improvement

The agency has articulated its internal customers and deploys a systematic internal approach to solicit feedback from each customer segment about the efficiency and effectiveness of internal operations, procedures, and work environments, and tracks such information as part of the agency performance management system. (*Links to 4.3 Performance Management and Improvement System and 7.3 – Human Resource Results*)

3.4 Partnership System

The agency has formally adopted or incorporated into its strategic plan a partnering goal with strategies and measures supporting the achievement of its vision/mission. This approach to partnering and partnerships interacts both with long-standing and new organizations in the community on behalf of low-income people. (*Links to 7.4 Partner/Stakeholder Results*)

Category 4. Measurement, Analysis, and Performance Management Overview

This category examines your agency's information and performance measurement systems and how you select, gather, and manage data, information, and knowledge assets. It examines how your agency uses data/information and technology to manage and improve performance, and align strategic and operational goals with day-to-day operations.

Measurement, Analysis and Performance Management Standards

4.1 Information System Technology

An integrated, highly effective, technically proficient management information system is in place linking agency programs and services. It responds quickly to the needs of the agency and stakeholders, and produces unduplicated counts of individuals served.

4.2 Information and Knowledge Management

The agency's information management system ensures that staff have ready, reliable, and accurate information for decision making and for improving their effectiveness, including the ability to monitor progress and results of the organization's overall goals/strategies as well as specific programs and services administered by the agency.

4.3 Performance Management and Improvement System

The agency has a formal, systematic approach to managing its performance and deploys interactive methods to manage, track, and improve agency performance. The system serves five roles: (1) monitor and analyze administrative and program processes; (2) track agency strategies and operational program performance measures; (3) ensure agency progress and improvements; (4) systematically track overall agency outcomes, results, and success over time, and (5) link financial and program data in measuring agency progress, success and integrity. (*Links to 7.1 – 7.6 Organizational Results; Customer Focus Standards 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3; and 6.1 Financial Management System.*)

Category 5. Human Resource Focus Overview

This category examines how your agency's staff learning and work systems enable all employees to develop and

utilize their full potential and align with your organization’s overall mission, strategies, and action plans. It also examines how your agency maintains a healthy and safe work environment and one supportive of personal/organizational growth.

5.1 Policies, Procedures, and Personnel Systems

A formal personnel policy/manual/handbook has been adopted by the board. All personnel procedures and employee records are up-to-date, aligned, and compliant with all employment-related federal and state laws. Affirmative action, grievance, family leave, and drug policy provisions are in place. Salary levels are appropriate for the area, and a plan is in place to offer a living wage to all employees, and fringe benefits address employee medical and retirement needs.

5.2 Employee Performance Management

The agency annually conducts formal and systematic staff evaluations and includes provisions for staff response. Job descriptions are current and clearly linked to and support the agency’s stated strategic goals, strategies, and performance measures. Staff evaluation criteria are directly linked to the implementation and success of the agency’s stated goals and strategies. (*Link to 2.4 Strategic Measures of Success*)

5.3 Employee Engagement/Participation/Well-Being

Employees at every level of the agency are fully engaged and actively participate in the operations of the agency. Staff have the equipment and supplies necessary to achieve excellence in their jobs, and the agency work environment is safe, secure, and supportive.

5.4 Staff Development and Learning System

The agency has deployed a formal and systematic approach for conducting staff skill and professional development, including provisions for assessing employee needs for future training and evaluating the sufficiency of offered training. New and current staff orientations cover agency mission and history; the mission/vision, values, and Promise of Community Action; and ROMA. Appropriate agency staff are offered the opportunity to become Certified Community Action Professionals (CCAP). (*Links to 7.3 Human Resource Results*)

5.5 Low-Income on Staff

The agency has adopted and systematically deployed a formal policy ensuring low-income community members are informed of and have opportunities to apply for employment with the agency. Agency practices under the policy promote hiring of low-income individuals, as well as documenting, tracking and reporting results over time to the Board of directors and management staff.

Category 6. Organizational Process Management Overview

This category examines the efficiency and effectiveness of your agency’s key administrative support and program/service delivery processes and how your organization manages them to achieve overall agency results and success.

Organizational Process Standards

Administrative Support Processes

6.1 Financial Systems

A formal Financial Management Policy/Manual has been adopted by the board and is systematically deployed by the agency. It includes provisions for an annual financial risk assessment, analysis, and report to the board on overall agency integrity. The financial management system is integrated into the agency’s performance management system, and effectively supports the goals of the agency by providing quick and easy access to financial information to all levels of the agency. It is user-driven and utilized in conjunction with program data as an effective tool for tracking performance and agency-wide improvement efforts. (*Links to 4.3 Performance Management and Improvement System; and 7.5 Financial Accountability and Health*)

6.2 Infrastructure Support

A formal building and equipment maintenance system with written procedures is in place supporting regular inspections/maintenance and upkeep services that follow a periodic, pre-set schedule.

6.3 Purchasing/Procurement

A formal procurement system with written procedures is in place. It incorporates a current and regularly updated list of goods and services suppliers, and specifies solicitation of bids from minority and disadvantaged business owners.

6.4 Communications/Public Relations

The agency has adopted and deployed a formal communication plan or policy incorporating multiple means of communicating with customers and community stakeholders, including periodic press releases, newsletters, media events, reports, and other means of conveying positive agency news about its programs, activities, and overall success. The effectiveness of the plan, its message, and public perception of the agency are assessed and measured periodically. (*Links to 4.3 Performance Management System; and 7.1 – Agency Outcomes and Results*)

Program/Service Delivery Processes

6.5 Intake, Eligibility, Assessment, Case Management, and Follow-up

The agency effectively and efficiently integrates these five components into a service delivery system, ensuring that customers are well-served, have expectations met, and end results support overall agency success and outcomes.

6.6 Project Management

The agency systematically manages all projects, programs, and initiatives using the following elements:

1. Project performance is systematically managed to meet/exceed project goals and objectives.
2. All projects include measurable (ROMA) objectives linked to broader agency strategies.
3. Project staff regularly review and improve projects based on customer feedback.
4. Project implementation/progress is systematically assessed, tracked, and reported to agency leadership.
5. Project budgets are systematically monitored and not exceeded.
6. Project staff attends appropriate and necessary training.
7. Project related facilities meet or exceed ADA and building codes.
8. A final status report is produced assessing a project's success and contribution to overall agency goals/strategies.

Category 7. Organizational Results Overview

This area examines your agency's performance trends, results, and improvements in areas. In addition, the agency's implementation of ROMA and its integration into everyday operations is stressed.

Results Standards*

7.1 Agency Outcomes and Program/Service Delivery Results

The agency systematically collects, tracks, and reports high overall agency results in achieving its stated mission/vision including provision demonstrating its progress in addressing poverty and moving families from poverty to self-sufficiency. It demonstrates excellent programmatic performance outcomes, results, and improvement trends over time specific to its mission/vision, goals, and strategies. The agency's board, staff, and the broader community are systematically informed about agency progress and results in addressing the causes, conditions and impacts of poverty for individuals, families, and the community. The six national ROMA goals are fully integrated into the agency's strategic and operational approach and are utilized as part of the organization's performance management and reporting system. (*Links to 2.4 Strategic Measures of Success; and 6.4 Communication Plan*)

7.2 Customer-Focused Results

The agency systematically collects, tracks, and reports high feedback/satisfaction results information from low-income customers, community residents, and other stakeholders, including funding sources, on programs and services it operates, and tracks it over time for trends. The agency tracks results over time for trends and uses this information as part of its performance management and improvement strategies to improve or modify its operations to better achieve overall agency success and outcomes. **(Links to 3.2 Customer/Constituent Feedback System)**

7.3 Human Resource Results

The agency systematically collects, tracks, and reports staff feedback over time, including staff turnover, and employee learning, development, well-being, and satisfaction; and regularly assesses and improves its internal administrative, operations, and work processes. **(Links to 3.3 Internal Improvements, and 5.4 Staff Development and Learning System)**

7.4 Partner/Stakeholder Results

The agency annually assesses, tracks, and reports current financial and non-financial partnerships' impact/benefits to identify strategies and opportunities to expand local relationships that support the organization's strategic and operational goals. Tangible results are evident from these partnerships. Data on partnerships is collected, analyzed, tracked, and used effectively to improve current relationships or establish new ones. **(Links to 3.4 Partnership System)**

7.5 Financial Accountability and Health

The agency's financial health is sound, resources are growing, and audit reports are exemplary. The agency has exceeded all regulatory requirements, is in good standing with current funding sources and required accreditation entities, and demonstrates high integrity in its annual risk assessment report. Financial trend data, including cost efficiency ratios, are systematically tracked and show improvement over time. For the past three annual audits, no unresolved questioned costs or material findings exist. External evaluations have been conducted recently and used as part of the agency's improvement strategies. **(Links to 6.1 Financial Systems)**

7.6 Definitive or Noteworthy Community Recognition and Innovation

The agency has an established track record of innovation and community recognition for its achievements and commitment to its mission, vision, and operations.

**** Standards 7.1-7.6 are closely linked to 4.3 Performance Management and Improvement System***

Attachment 2

Promising Practice

Category 1 – Organizational Leadership

Not all examples are appropriate for all agencies. Some practices may contribute to achieving the standards embedded in Category 1 – Organizational Leadership

Agencies should consider the following actions for addressing leadership standards in Category 1:

- Show examples of senior leader's involvement, especially in engaging both internal and external customer's i.e. Initiating and engaging internal and external customer and partner relationships.
- Organization performance review and tracking is a key function for all leadership. Linking leadership system to Standard 4.3 – Performance management system is critical. Give examples of how leaders track, review and report progress and performance.
- Focus on the senior leaders' roles in the review of overall organization performance, not just on the details or minutia of the review process.
- Explain how specifically senior leaders clearly define, communicate and reinforce the mission of the organization. Give real world examples.
- Describe how senior leaders develop, articulate and reinforce a clear and concise set of values for the agency.
- Show evidence as to the extent to which employees know what agency values are, not whether they can simply recite them word for word, but whether they understand the essence of the value. For example are they embedded in job descriptions and staff evaluations?
- Describe the amount of time senior leaders spend interacting with employees, particularly at the areas of the organization where services are delivered to customers.
- Show examples of the frequency senior leaders review customer and employee satisfaction, and performance results data.
- Show how regular review of performance maintains focus on output and progress toward meeting key objectives. This does not mean to "micromanage."
- Describe senior leader's involvement in recognizing employees for their accomplishment.
- Describe a systematic approach that evaluates the senior leadership system and its involvement.
- Show how the unit's structure, guidance, and work processes support its mission, customer, and performance objectives.
- Describe how the leadership system encourages flexibility and empowerment.
- Show how bureaucratic barriers that detract from customer focus are eliminated.

Category 1 – Organizational Leadership -- Example Organizational Practices:

- The Executive Director is the key driver of our leadership team. He actively and continuously monitors and reinforces organizational performance against our organizational mission and goals by reviewing department's performance benchmarks against those goals at weekly, monthly and quarterly settings. In addition, regular feedback from process improvement and performance teams and from customers ensures multiple review metrics are used.
- Our senior leaders at least annually spend a day observing the delivery of products at the services front line level, and by personally being involved in the direct delivery of services; i.e., answering customer phone calls, taking applications, enrolling participants, or delivering direct services.
- The organization's leadership system is evaluated through a culture survey administered every six months to agency staff. An example of the questions asked included: "I trust leadership to make the appropriate decisions," and "I think the department leadership would help me if I had a personal problem." Another survey evaluating the leadership traits is administered to all staff every six months. Both surveys provide numerical scores for baselines and trends.

- Our leadership system functions agency-wide. One practice is through employee improvement team spokespeople who brief the leadership team on a rotating basis at the weekly leadership team meeting and team members are empowered to provide the briefs as a means of improving the agency.
- The agency leadership system functions as a two tiered performance review system that ties overall agency-wide performance (strategic) goals and measures to individual programs, staff management and staff members' performance plans and personal evaluation reviews. This approach ensure full integration and connection between front line services and the agency's mission of address and impacting poverty in both the larger sense, but also in affecting the day to day lives of individuals and families.
- The agency leadership system is forward looking and serves as the key deriver of strategic direction, customer focus, overall agency impacts, partner results, service quality, as well as human resource and professional development measure.
- Our approaches for maintaining an effective leadership system and achieving our high performance includes: (1) extensive, ongoing management training at all levels, (2) comprehensive reviews of customer and operational performance each week, (3) comprehensive reviews of performance to plans in quarterly planning review meetings, (4) assignment of responsibility and accountability to all managers for performance in their areas of responsibility, (5) with personal performance reflected in individual job descriptions and performance reviews and reinforced through our compensation and bonus systems, (6) direct involvement of all levels of management in quality, operational, and customer improvement teams.

Attachment 3

Promising Practice

Organizational Leadership Development

These practices are among many possible options and organization may consider in developing a comprehensive agency-wide approach to leadership development.

Practice	Description
Formal Learning and Skill Development	Class Room Instruction/Learning
360 Feedback	Confidential/Multi-Source Ratings and feedback organized and presented to leaders/managers
Coaching	Practical, goal-focused form of one-on-one learning
Job Assignment	Provide Stretch assignments in terms of role, function, or geography.
Mentoring	Advising/developmental relationship, usually with a more experience or senior leader.
Networks	Connecting to others in different functions and areas
Reflection	Self-Understanding/Growth. In-depth thinking about personal experience.
Action Learning	Project/Strategy based learning directed at key business problems
Outdoor Challenge	Team-building experience in outdoor/wilderness settings

*Source: Leadership Development: A Review of Industry Best Practices
Day, David V. (Pennsylvania State University) and
Halpin, Stanley M. (U.S. Army Research Institute) 2001*

Attachment 4

Leadership Competencies

Vision Development and Implementation

- Set and work toward a vision for your unit, division, or department in line with the overall vision, missions, strategy, and values
- Establish and clearly communicate objectives
- Initiate action and provide support and systems to achieve goals
- Manage and champion organizational improvement

Customer Focus

- Focus on external requirements
- Actively seek feedback and suggestions and encourage others to do the same
- Ensure internal and external customers' needs are met

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

- Learn to identify and analyze problems under normal and extreme conditions
- Learn to consider and assess risks and alternatives
- Use facts, input from systems, input from others, and sound judgment to reach conclusions
- Learn to lead effectively in crisis, keeping focus on key information and decision points
- Commit to action; be as decisive as a situation demands
- Involve others in decisions that affect them
- Evaluate the impact of your decisions

Conflict Management

- Encourage open communication about controversial issues
- Promote collaboration to manage contention
- Confront conflict constructively to minimize impact to self, others, and the organization

Performance Appraisal

- Use goal-setting, delegation, and effective communications to manage performance effectively
- Articulate performance expectations to subordinates
- Coach and provide feedback to subordinates continuously
- Document performance
- Seek out performance expectations for yourself and your unit

Management and Process Improvement

- Use goals, milestones, and control mechanisms to measure and manage performance
- Evaluate progress and outcomes of current processes
- Seek continuous improvement through periodic assessments
- Improve products and services to meet changing customer needs

Workforce Management Systems

- Understand and support civilian and military promotion, advancement, training, assignment, and award systems
- Support personnel working on advancement, special programs, training, and future assignments
- Use formal reward systems to recognize positive performance and development

Source: U.S Coast Guard Leadership System

Attachment 5 Checklist on Board Governance

Source: Greater Twin Cities United Way.

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
E	1. The roles of the Board and the Executive Director are defined and respected, with the Executive Director delegated as the manager of the organization's operations and the board focused on policy and planning			
R	2. The Executive Director is recruited, selected, and employed by the Board of Directors. The board provide clearly written expectations and qualifications for the position, as well as reasonable compensation.			
R	3. The Board of Directors acts a governing trustees of the organization on behalf of the community at large and contributors while carrying out the organization's mission and goals. To fully meet this goal, the Board of Directors must actively participate in the planning process as outlined in planning sections of this checklist.			
R	4. The board's nominating process ensures that the board remains appropriately diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, culture, economic status, disabilities, and skills and/or expertise.			
E	5. The board members receive regular training and information about their responsibilities.			
E	6. New board members are oriented to the organization, including the organization's mission, bylaws, policies, and programs, as well as their roles and responsibilities as board members.			
A	7. Board organization is documented with a description of the board and board committee responsibilities.			
A	8. Each board has a board operations manual.			
E	9. If the organization has any related party transactions between board members or their family, they are disclosed to the board of directors, the Internal Revenue Service and the auditor.			
E	10. The organization has at least the minimum number of members on the Board of Directors as required by their bylaws or state statute.			
R	11. If the organization has adopted bylaws, they conform to state statute and have been reviewed by legal counsel.			
R	12. The bylaws should include: a) how and when notices for board meetings are made; b) how members are elected/appointed by the board; c) what the terms of office are for officers/members; d) how board members are rotated; e) how ineffective board members are removed from the board; f) a stated number of board members to make up a quorum which is required for all policy decisions.			
R	13. The board of directors reviews the bylaws.			
A	14. The board has a process for handling urgent matters between meetings.			
E	15. Board members serve without payment unless the agency has a policy identifying reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.			
R	16. The organization maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and all board members and executive staff review and/or sign to acknowledge and comply with the policy.			
R	17. The board has an annual calendar of meetings. The board also has an attendance policy such that a quorum of the organization's board meets at least quarterly.			
A	18. Meetings have written agendas and materials relating to significant decisions are given to the board in advance of the meeting.			
A	19. The board has a written policy prohibiting employees and members of employees' immediate families from serving as board chair or treasurer.			

Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities

**Attachment 6
Promising Practice**

Board Self-Evaluation Instrument

1. Our board has a clear understanding of our roles and responsibilities

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

2. Our board members understand the organization's mission, its products, programs and services.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

3. Our board structure (board, officers, committees, executive and staff) is clearly defined.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

4. Our board has a clear mission, goals and strategies resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

5. Our board focuses on policy-related decisions which effectively guide operational activities of staff.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

6. Our board receives relevant reports on finances/budgets, program performance and other important matters.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

7. Our board has an effective risk assessment process as part of our agency accountability role.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

8. Our board helps set fundraising goals and is actively involved in fundraising.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

9. Our Board has identified clear advocacy issues relevant to our mission and actively participates in advocacy activity.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

10. Our board effectively represents the organization to the community we serve.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

11. Our board meetings focus on our mission and other important organizational matters.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

12. Our board regularly effectively evaluates progress toward our mission, strategic goals and closely related program performance.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

13. Our board annually evaluates and develops our chief executive.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

14. Our board has approved and regularly reviews our agency's comprehensive personnel policies.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

15. I feels fully involved and in the work of the board.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

16. I received a good orientation to the work of the board when I became a member.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

17. I have access to the training I need to be a good board member.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

18. Our membership includes all relevant stakeholders for addressing our mission.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

19. Board vacancies are filled promptly using a formal appointment selection process.

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Somewhat Agree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree 6-NA

Source: Greater Twin Cities United Way.

Attachment 7
Promising Practice
Human Resources Review Instrument

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
E	1. The organization has a written personnel handbook/policy that is regularly reviewed and updated: a) to describe the recruitment, hiring, termination and standard work rules for all staff; b) to maintain compliance with government regulations including Fair Labor Standards Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Family Leave Act, Affirmative Action Plan (if required), etc.			
R	2. The organization follows nondiscriminatory hiring practices.			
R	3. The organization provides a copy of or access to the written personnel policy to all members of the board, the Executive Director and all staff members. All staff members acknowledge in writing that they have read and have access to the personnel handbook/policies.			
R	4. The organization has job descriptions including qualifications, duties, reporting relationships and key indicators.			
R	5. The organization's Board of Directors conducts an annual review/evaluation of its Executive Director in relationship to a previously determined set of expectations.			
R	6. The Executive Director's salary is set by the Board of Directors in a reasonable process and is in compliance with the organization's compensation plan.			
R	7. The organization requires employee performance appraisals to be conducted and documented at least annually.			
A	8. The organization has a compensation plan, and a periodic review of salary ranges and benefits is conducted.			
A	9. The organization has a timely process for filling vacant positions to prevent an interruption of program services or disruption to organization operations.			
A	10. The organization has a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments and perceptions from all staff members.			
A	11. The organization provides opportunities for employees' professional development and training with their job skill area and also in such areas as cultural sensitivity and personal development.			
A	12. The organization maintains contemporaneous records documenting staff time in program allocations.			

Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities

Source: Greater Twin Cities United Way.

Attachment 8

Promising Practices – Leadership

Establishing a Leadership Library for Your Organization

Leadership development is inherently a long-term process that requires each individual to work continually on improving the various facets of his/her leadership skills. People tend to learn most effectively by using a variety of learning methods, which may include:

- Formal training;
- Mentoring,
- Shadowing of senior executives;
- Executive coaching;
- Experiential learning; and
- Self-study

Several of these methods are either resource-intensive or have limited availability, however. For example, formal leadership training usually consists of a few days of training every few years. Mentors and senior executives typically have limited time to offer to assist new leaders, while executive coaches are simply quite rare in government.

The two learning methods with the greatest ease of implementation and the lowest cost are (1) experiential learning and (2) self-study. This approach should not, however, be ad hoc. It needs to be systematic as part of the agency's overall approach to leadership and staff development. It should be given some planning, structure, guidance, and evaluation.

Agencies that make it a priority to develop the leadership skills of their employees can do a lot to promote this objective by making a good selection of books and articles on leadership available to their employees. Many workers are sufficiently committed to their professional development to read about leadership and management in their spare time, but the high cost of the books can be a deterrent to even the most committed students of leadership. Thus, organizations that are willing to make a modest investment in books and articles on leadership can greatly leverage their employee's desire for professional development.

Marketing the leadership library to employees is crucial to its success, as employees will not use this resource if they do not know about it. In order to promote use of the leadership library, it would be helpful to do the following:

- Put the leadership books and articles together in a prominent place that makes it easy for employees to browse the collection.
- Establish simple procedures for reserving and checking out the materials.
- Post a complete list of the materials in the collection so employees will know to check back (or reserve the item) if something they want to read happens to be checked out.
- Publicize the fact that leadership books and articles are available for employees to borrow. Include a list of recent acquisitions and/or most popular titles to generate interest. To select a starting set of readings, check the Book Recommendations section at the Partnership web site (www.communityactionpartnership.com) – under Excellence.

Attachment 9

Promising Practice Board Governance – The Basics

- Formal Board By-Laws should be adopted, annually reviewed, and clearly define the Board membership, its leadership/policy role, and all aspects of its business operations including membership, role as a governing body, meeting schedule, governance structure, and attendance.
- The Board and all committees should have written committee descriptions and a basic board work plan (and formal calendar) for the year, with specific activities tied to the overall agency goals and strategies. A performance review/accountability committee should have a prominent, well-defined role.
- The Board annually adopts a simple business or work plan mapping out its own goals and benchmarks for the year, including an annual Board calendar.
- A formal board governance committee (a.k.a. a nominating committee or board development committee) should be established. This committee works year-round to identify and recruit new motivated members who are linked to new constituencies; and have the knowledge, skills and attributes the organization needs in its board. This committee oversees the agency/board succession policy and planning.
- A task of the governance committee should be to ensure that it is a significant community event to join the CAA board. It develops systematic recruiting process that includes receiving resumes, interviewing candidates, and getting references.
- The executive committee should meet only in rare circumstances when the full board cannot meet and a quick decision must be made. Having a powerful executive committee dilutes the role of the rest of the board and sets up two categories of board members (the decision-makers and everyone else).
- Board Members should upon joining the board sign a written agreement that defines roles and expectations for tenure, role, and obligations as a member of the board.
- Every new board member should receive a Board Handbook, and have a thorough orientation to the Board's role, responsibilities, and to key agency strategic and operational policies and procedures. In addition, all board members have opportunities to continuously improve, i.e., through attendance at community workshops, educational meetings for the board, inclusion in staff in-service training events, etc.
- The Board should conduct an annual review of the executive director.
- The Board should annually conduct its own formal self-assessment of its function and operations, as compared to its business/work plan, by-laws or other directives.

Attachment 10

Promising Practice Leadership Performance Tools

Developing A Balanced Scorecard: A Brief Overview

The balanced scorecard, a strategic management concept developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton, has shown successful results in many private-sector companies, and increasingly in government and non-profit organizations. In governmental and non-profit settings, outcomes and success are generally based on mission success rather than simply measuring revenue streams, resources, or profit. In the mission driven organization, the balanced scorecard is often referred to as a “strategic scorecard” as the importance of achieving strategic goals and strategies is paramount.

The idea behind the balanced or strategic scorecard is that the organization's vision needs to be translated into actions that have an impact on internal operations as well as external customers, partners, and stakeholders. What can be powerful about the scorecard is that it actually helps the organization articulate a clear business strategy and shift the focus beyond a simple (and sometimes fuzzy) vision or mission statement. Kaplan and Norton have labeled such organizations as “strategy driven organizations” as such tools bridge the gap between the broader mission and detail (and minutia) of bottom line results.

Perspectives

Perspectives are a way of identifying a point of view, or classifying a sub-set of performance metrics. Often they represent an operating area or class of measures. Essentially, they are a convenient way of identifying and grouping your performance targets and scorecard layout.

Kaplan and Norton, the pioneers of the Balanced Scorecard concept, identified *four perspectives* in their initial model:

- Financial
- Customer
- Internal Systems
- Learning and Growth

There are of course other perspectives that can be used. Another set of perspectives that can help an organization develop a balanced set of metrics might be called the "Family of Measures", represented by the following:

- Inputs
- Outputs
- Efficiencies
- Effectiveness
- Outcomes

You can choose either of these approaches or a combination, or develop your own set of perspectives that best fits your organization as long as they clearly links back to your strategic vision and mission. Measures are then added for each perspective, according to the objectives within your organization.

A "balanced" set of measures is one that includes metrics that represent several perspectives. An unbalanced set of measures might be one where all measures are cost related or only a narrow look at

programs or services overlooking internal development or customer service imperatives.

Another guideline to use when identifying what metrics to include in your balanced scorecards is practicality. Selecting too many measures, or measures for which performance cannot be reliably determined each period, can lead to incomplete results. You need to build a set of measures you can work with for the long run.

Measuring Success

An organization-wide Measurement System, by design, influences the behavior of people within the organization. Often, the mission and goals stated by the organization includes a set of strategically-determined or program driven objectives, and yet the commonly tracked and published metrics are limited to funding, expenditures, expenses and balances.

The Balanced Scorecard was created to broaden the scope of performance measurement to include areas like customer satisfaction, efficiency, effectiveness and desired outcomes. These areas of focus, which would also include financial metrics as well, might be called "measurement categories" or "perspectives".

The following are three guidelines to making any balanced scorecard and performance measurement initiative a success in any organization.

1. Choose a system or tool that is easy to use and is understood by all. The priorities established by Management can't reach their intended audience if the information gets lost in a complex, misunderstood delivery mechanism.
2. Select a modest set of metrics or measures. It's easy to overreach and decide you will collect performance information on thousands of measures across the enterprise every month. But as soon as data collection efforts fall behind, the credibility of the whole system suffers.
3. Keep it simple. Focus on key performance "leading indicators", financial and non-financial that represent the health of the organization over the long haul.

The key step for a powerful strategic scorecard is picking the measures that are truly the most meaningful, that translate to customer/stakeholder value, and that have metrics that the organization can capture - which is hard enough to do for financial measures. Defining data requirements are particularly challenging when you think about measuring customer service, organizational learning, or innovation.

The basic idea is to focus the organization on metrics that matter as seen initially from a strategic point of view. To avoid focusing only on short term financial measures as the primary measure of success, the scorecard concept requires the use of metrics from multiple perspectives beyond the financial, i.e. those mentioned above: customer, internal processes, and learning and growth respectively. For the non-profit, an added perspective for overall impact or "mission success" is usually needed. For the Community Action Agency, this would include metrics that track progress in addressing poverty and its effects on individuals, families, and the community.

The process of "translating strategy into action" involves turning the organization's strategic vision into clear and understandable objectives within each of the perspectives mentioned above.

In the Financial Perspective of the Strategic Scorecard, focus for non-profits is on how the organization succeeds as a good steward of funds and sound, effective financial accountability. For non-profit organizations, the program specific financial results are often the only focus (including spending all

program funds in a specific grant year), at the expense of other critical areas of the organization.

For examples, to achieve core customer objectives the organization will have to excel at certain internal processes valued by the customer. These customer driven expectations would be in the internal processes perspective.

Finally, in order to excel at these processes, the organization has to support an infrastructure and the necessary human resources to be successful and carry out its primary mission. These metrics would be addressed in the Learning and Growth (of human resources) Perspective.

Once an organization has decided on the objectives within each of these perspectives, the next step is to find suitable measures that can be used to track whether the organization is actually obtaining its objectives. These measures are monitored at a specific frequency, i.e. once a month or quarterly and may be used to “communicate” regularly with employees, board members, and external stakeholders about the organization’s overall health and how successful it is in deploying its strategies and achieving its mission/vision.

Conclusion

The Balanced Scorecard may be viewed as a key tool (but not the only one) of an agency-wide performance management system that focuses on strategy and the future. By implementing the Balanced or Strategic Scorecard, organizations are able to translate broad mission statements into strategies, actions and metrics that can be aggregated and tracked over time. Once adopted and communicated throughout the organization, the Agency-wide Scorecard becomes a powerful tool that allows management to exploit the organization’s information resources and ultimately produce real results. Thus assuring energy and focus on the most important strategies (those being measured, tracked, and reported) and directing the organization toward goal attainment and progress toward its vision and mission.

Attachment 11
CAPLAW Promising Practice
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY AND AGREEMENT
FOR DIRECTORS AND STAFF OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

It is important for Community Action Agency (“CAA”) Directors and Staff to be aware that both real and apparent conflicts of interest or dualities of interest sometimes occur in the course of conducting the affairs of CAA and that the appearance of conflict can be troublesome even if there is in fact no conflict whatsoever. Conflicts occur because the many persons associated with CAA should be expected to have, and do in fact generally have multiple interests and affiliations and various positions of responsibility within the community. In these situations a person will sometimes owe identical duties of loyalty to two or more organizations.

Conflicts are undesirable because they potentially or apparently place the interests of others ahead of CAA’s obligations to its charitable purposes and to the public interest. Conflicts are also undesirable because they often reflect adversely upon the person involved and upon the institutions with which they are affiliated, regardless of the actual facts or motivations of the parties. However, the long range best interests of CAA do not require the termination of all association with persons who may have real or apparent conflicts that are harmless to all individuals or entities involved.

Therefore, because CAA’s Directors and Staff may be involved with other organizations that may have business dealings or affiliations with or seek grants from CAA, the following general principles have been established:

1. Each member of the Board of Directors and the Staff of CAA has a duty of loyalty to CAA. The duty of loyalty generally requires a Director or staff member to prefer the interests of CAA over the director’s/staff’s interest or the interests of others. In addition, Directors and staff of CAA shall avoid acts of self-dealing which may adversely affect the tax-exempt status of CAA or cause there to arise any sanction or penalty by a governmental authority.
2. In the event any Director or a member of his or her family has a personal or business interest in, or is involved in any way with, an organization with which the Board is considering a grant request or business contract, such interest or involvement shall be disclosed to the Board. In such event, the interested Director shall neither vote nor participate in the discussion of the matter. The interested Director shall be excused from the actual discussion and presence at that portion of the meeting when the matter giving rise to the apparent conflict is discussed. However, any Director who is excluded from voting or presence pursuant to this policy may answer pertinent questions of other Directors and be present when the interested Director’s knowledge regarding the matter will assist the Board.
3. The minutes of the meeting shall indicate that the interested Director disclosed the interest or involvement in the matter being considered by the board, recused herself/himself from the discussion, and abstained from voting on the matter.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE FOREGOING CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY AND AGREEMENT, I AGREE TO ITS TERMS, AND MY ACTIONS HAVE BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED THEREBY.

_____ Community Action Agency, Inc. Date: _____

_____ Director’s Name

_____ Director’s Signature

*Provided to CAPLAW by Joel Kaleva, Esq., of Crowley, Haughey,
Hanson, Toole & Dietrich in Helena, Montana. 406-449-4165
www.capl原因.org*

Attachment 12

CAPLAW Promising Practice

Community Action – Board of Directors By-Laws Tool Kit

This tool kit was developed by CAPLAW to assist private-non-profit Community Action Agencies in revising existing by-laws. It may be obtained via www.capl原因.org or contacting (617) 357-6915.

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