CAA Management Series

CAA Board of Directors' Manual

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the National Association of Community Action Agencies to be a national forum for public policy on poverty and to strengthen, promote, represent and serve its network of member agencies to assure that the issues of the poor are effectively heard and addressed.

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FOREWORD

One aspect of the National Association of Community Action Agencies' mission is to strengthen its network of member agencies to assure that the issues of the poor are effectively addressed. To carry out this mission, NACAA has undertaken numerous training and technical assistance initiatives to assist Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to effectively plan and implement anti-poverty strategies and programs.

One of NACAA's technical assistance strategies is the development of manuals for use by Community Action Agency board members, executives, and staff. However, as with any field of endeavor, there are frequent new developments in the anti-poverty world as well as shifts in management and organizational theories. Thus, it is important that we not only publish and disseminate such technical assistance materials but that we also ensure they continue to reflect current realities in public policy, resources, program knowledge, management, and technology. NACAA, therefore, will revise, update, and add to this material as necessary to accomplish this.

The board of directors of a private, nonprofit Community Action Agency, or of a separate public agency, is wholly responsible for the actions of the agency. The agency is like a corporation and like any corporation its board has many decisions to make. For example, it hires the executive director; it decides how the budget will be divided; it oversees implementation by the executive director and his/her staff of its policies and programs; and it ensures the integrity of the personnel and fiscal systems. This manual has been developed to assist board members in operating at a higher performance level by providing insights into the world of community action and the day-to-day operations of a CAA board, and steps on how a board can become more effective.

This material has been designed to serve as an ongoing resource book - a book that we hope board members will return to on many occasions for assistance. Space has been provided on each page so they can highlight material of interest, add new information, make notes, or otherwise enhance its usefulness as a resource book.

It is our hope that this manual will assist board members in carrying out their policy development, decision-making, and oversight roles.

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CAA Board of Directors' Manual

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Introduction

The purposes of this manual are to provide Community Action Agency board members and staff with a theoretical framework of CAA board operations and specific steps they can take to apply that theory in practical ways that will improve their personal effectiveness and agency performance.

It is particularly important that board members understand the uniqueness of Community Action Agencies compared to other service agencies in the community. They are NOT unique because of the direct services they provide, albeit that those services might be very important to their constituents. They ARE unique because of the developmental role that they have played throughout the history of community action. They have been incubators and hothouses for such programs as Head Start, Legal Services, Foster Grandparents, Senior Opportunities and Services, and VISTA. They have played, and continue to play, an advocacy role on behalf of the poor. Due to their mandated structure, CAA governing boards represent all elements in the community and, therefore, bring a greater understanding to the table of what must be done to address the issues of poverty in the community, what can be done, and how it can be done. CAAs are flexible and responsive, and any CAA—with a strong and active board leading the way—is in a unique position to implement programs of the future.

This manual provides historical background to board members so that they know how CAAs have evolved and how their mandates were determined, as well as information on how they can be more effective in carrying out their policy development, decision-making, and oversight roles.

See Appendix A for a history of Community Action Agencies.

Chapter 1. Organization and Composition of CAA Boards

A. Background

The Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964 created the Community Action Program (CAP) and authorized funding of Community Action Agencies (CAAs). Subsequent amendments to the EOA imposed specific requirements regarding the composition of boards as does the Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) of 1981, as amended, which replaced the EOA, is the current federal funding authority. (See section D.)

B. Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

Articles of Incorporation, sometimes referred to as the *Charter*, are usually a barebones statement of the CAA's nonprofit purpose, official address, and original incorporators. The articles are filed with the secretary of state of the state in which the CAA has its legal address and in which it conducts its activities. If the CAA expands its purposes into an activity not already mentioned in the articles (for example, to provide transportation services or housing development) or changes its purposes completely, a lawyer should be consulted to help the board review the articles. If changes are needed, a revised filing must be submitted to the state. Generally, once articles have been filed and registered, they rarely need to be consulted again unless there occurs a significant change in the stated purpose and mission.

The key element of being a nonprofit corporation is that none of the net proceeds from operations or assets can benefit an individual member of the board or staff. If a net operating surplus occurs in any given time period, they cannot be distributed to the board members in the form of a dividend as might happen in a for-profit corporation. These revenues must be used to support the CAA's nonprofit purpose. If operations cease, the remaining assets must be given to another nonprofit organization. Nonprofit status is conferred by the state's corporation law.

Being a nonprofit corporation does not automatically make it tax exempt from federal income taxes. The CAA's tax exempt status is determined by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service using Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This requires a separate filing with the IRS. The basic benefits are that it makes the CAA eligible to receive grants from organizations (e.g., foundations) that give only to tax-exempt corporations; individuals who make contributions to the CAA may claim them as deductions on their income taxes; and the CAA's operating revenues and any surpluses are not taxed.

The bylaws are an everyday tool for governing the CAA's activity. They are adopted by the board and can be changed by the board through the process described in the bylaws. Bylaws govern the size and composition of the board, the method of selection and terms of board members, the duties of officers, types of committees, and procedures for board operations, including quorum requirements, meeting requirements, and other rules. Board members need to be very familiar with the bylaws, as they are the formal, official rules describing the decision-making processes and distributions of authority within the CAA.

C. Types of Boards

There are two basic types of CAA boards: governing boards (when a private, nonprofit corporation or a separate public agency serves as the CAA) and administering boards (when local government serves as the CAA).

1. Governing boards

A governing board is the CAA and is legally responsible for its actions. It alone has the power to make financial decisions and to set policy for the CAA. It is the final authority in that community on the CAA's affairs.

2. Administering boards

An administering board reports to another entity in that community that is the official CAA. Usually the official CAA is the local elected officials or a public agency designated by them. The amount of authority delegated to the administering board varies widely among public CAAs.

Board members need to know if their board is a governing board or an administering board; and, if it is an administering board how much authority they have been given by the local elected officials. States often apply a generic label to the boards established by a political subdivision and refer to all types of them as administering boards. Within this label, however, there are two distinct types of entities. Where the subdivision has reserved much of the authority over the program for itself, the administering board is often called an advisory board because its primary role is to advise the political subdivision or elected officials on how it should run the program.

The subdivision, however, may delegate substantial powers to the administering board, including authority over personnel, fiscal, and program policies. In California, for example, in communities where the subdivision has delegated substantial or almost all operating authority to the board, it is called an administering board. For all practical purposes the administering board is operating the program since the governing board of elected officials rarely overrides the actions of the administering board.

Thus what are called advisory boards and administering boards are two different types of administering board. They differ in terms of the amount of authority delegated to them by the political subdivision.

D. Board Composition

1. Legislative requirement

The Community Services Block Grant Act of 1981, as amended, requires that exactly one third of the board shall consist of elected public officials, or their representatives; at least one-third of the members must be democratically selected representatives of the poor residents of the area being served; and the remainder must be members or officials of the private groups and interests in the community (from business, industry, labor, religion, welfare, private education, or other major community groups and interests).

2. Reasons for the composition requirements

For Community Action to succeed, the entire community must be involved. The entire community also must be represented on the CAA board by the three sectors: public elected officials because they formally represent both the general public and the local government; the poor because they know the problems of poverty; the balance of the community because the CAA cannot succeed without support and participation of the other service agencies, private employers, churches, unions, etc.

3. The potential of the board

The term "potential" means possible achievements. CAAs were created to eliminate poverty by eliminating the root

causes of poverty. The board has been given responsibility to carry out this mission. The board's greatest single resource is people. This statement is especially true of the board's own composition. Each member of the board has vital talents, experience, contacts, and resources to offer.

Elected public officials usually bring expertise in public relations, meetings, administration, funding, and fiscal affairs. They can serve as ambassadors of good will to the public.

Representatives of the poor are a fundamental source of information on conditions and problems of poverty. Their participation and involvement on the board, on its committees and at neighborhood levels are critical to CAA efforts. Also important is their ability to help develop public and institutional understanding of, and support for, the programs -- and the positive effects those programs can have on the community.

Representatives of the private sector provide additional capabilities. They normally have business, management, and fiscal expertise. They are major sources of funds and other resources. Finally, they provide balance to the board by representing the remainder of the community.

E. Selection of Board Members

1. Tri-partite members

a. Public officials

The designating officials of the local government select the elected public officials to serve on the board. If there are not enough elected public officials reasonably available and willing to serve on the board, designating officials may select appointed public officials to serve on the board. Whether elected or appointed, these officials should currently hold office. They should have either general governmental responsibilities or other responsibilities that require them to deal with poverty-related issues.

Each public official selected to serve on the board may choose one permanent representative to serve in his or her place or whenever he or she will be unable to attend a meeting. These representatives need not be public officials themselves, but they must have full authority to act for the public officials at board meetings.

If the public officials, both elected and appointed, do not comprise one-third of the board, then seats allotted to them remain vacant. Designating officials may fill these seats whenever an official is willing to sit on the board.

b. Representatives of the poor

Representatives of the poor are chosen by any democratic selection method that ensures that they represent the poor in the area served by the CAA. They need not be poor themselves, but they must represent the poor. They may be selected:

(1) To represent a specific area or neighborhood.

(2) At large, to represent the entire area served by the CAA.

(3) To represent a particular organization whose membership is composed predominately of poor persons.

The selection method used also must ensure maximum feasible participation of the poor in the selection procedure and in assuring fair representation for all of the poor in the community. When the seat of a representative of the poor becomes vacant (and no alternate has been selected), the remaining representatives of the poor may select a person to serve for the remainder of the term. Or, the original selection process may be repeated.

c. Representatives of the private sector

Private organizations are selected to ensure that the board will benefit from broad community involvement. Once an organization is selected, it chooses its representative to the board.

2. Board membership recruitment

a. Boards have several distinct responsibilities for recruiting and selecting their members. Among these are:

- ✧ Approving criteria for board membership and selection processes.
- ✧ Identifying organizations that will select members.
- ✧ Promulgating the charter of the nominating committee.

F. Individual Board Member Legal Responsibilities

The legal obligations of board members are succinctly defined by the United Way of America: "To avoid individual liability you must operate in accordance with the principle that you act as a reasonably prudent person, and use the principle of good faith."

The reasonably prudent person avoids:

- ✧ **Mismanagement.** This is defined as failure to follow fundamental management principles, e.g., failure to ensure that planning occurs; failure to review reports to identify problems.
- ✧ **Nonmanagement.** This is defined as failure to use existing opportunities for good management, e.g., failure to use available control systems, such as periodically checking to make sure that existing fiscal, personnel, and other systems are being used.
- ✧ **Self-dealing.** This is defined as board members voting on decisions from which they may receive possible unfair personal gain. Let the record show that you abstained from voting on anything that might benefit you or a relative or a friend.

The principle of good faith states that board members should:

- ✧ Attend board and committee meetings regularly.
- ✧ Have a thorough knowledge of the organization's articles and bylaws.
- ✧ Heed corporate affairs and keep informed of general organizational activities.
- ✧ Ensure that minimum legal/technical requirements are met.
- ✧ Avoid any semblance of self-dealing.
- ✧ Make no financial profit except as provided for in the bylaws.

As long as board members follow these simple rules, they will be considered as acting in good faith. By exercising reasonable diligence and care—acting in good faith—board members will generally be held free from personal liability when their actions, poor judgment, or incompetence causes injury to the organization.

If a board member fails to show common sense or exercise reasonable precautions established in the bylaws, he/she may be found grossly negligent, which could lead to personal liability for injuries to the organization. Laws and other rules regarding liability of individual board members and the board as a whole vary from state to state. Every board should have its legal counsel review applicable standards with the board at least once a year.

When CAAs become large corporations, e.g., operating multi-million dollar housing or Head Start programs, developing large tracts of real estate, or forming subsidiary corporations, the organization greatly expands its personal and organizational relationships. This often results in vastly more complicated legal responsibilities. Board members cannot always be expected to understand every complex aspect of these activities, but they must exercise their duty as diligent managers of the corporation. This responsibility may require that the board retain legal counsel or consult other experts to ensure that the board is well informed. Only an informed board can make competent decisions.

Chapter 2. Board Functions and Operations

A. Basic Functions of a Private Nonprofit CAA Board

The board of directors of a private nonprofit CAA governs and directs the affairs of the agency consistent with the articles of incorporation and the bylaws. The basic functions of board members include fulfilling their roles in:

1. Defining the vision and the mission of the agency. For CAAs, this is a vision of an alternative future for the community as a whole and for low-income people in particular. This is the vision toward which board members will work. It is the "ends" the board will seek.

2. Setting the goals and selecting the strategies that will enable them to achieve the desired future. This involves selecting approaches that the CAA will use to accomplish its ends.

3. Mobilizing resources.

4. Managing the relationship of the board to several key constituencies, including: low-income people, elected officials, other human services organizations, other community and stakeholder groups, and funding agencies.

5. Monitoring and evaluating the executive director's performance, to insure that s/he establishes and manages systems in the CAA to help achieve agency goals. These systems include:

   a. Planning
   b. Community participation, organization, and develop ment
   c. Program implementation, information systems, and evaluation
   d. Personnel management
   e. Fiscal management
   f. Public relations
   g. Staff and board development

6. Monitoring the board's performance in meeting time schedules, accomplishing tasks, and achieving goals. It also must monitor its own performance in meeting its schedules for conducting periodic reviews of each project or program and assuring that the CAA submits timely reports to funding sources. The project review provides documentation and evaluation of past and present actions and conditions. It reports:

   - ✧ What has been accomplished toward achieving work program goals.
   - ✧ How effectively and efficiently the CAA is fulfilling its mission.
   - ✧ The extent to which the CAA meets state standards of effectiveness.
   - ✧ How effectively and efficiently planning and management address problems of poverty.
   - ✧ The evaluation methodology and the roles of all participants.
   - ✧ The means by which findings and recommendations from reviews will be used.

7. Assuring that the evaluations are conducted and that they are of high quality. Evaluations may be obtained from groups or from individuals. They may be in the form of letters, or as answers

to mail, telephone, or in-person surveys, or in the form of highly structured detailed analyses of credible data about activities, effects, and who was affected. Evaluations and studies are ongoing activities within an effective CAA.

The board must see that:

- The evaluations can be carried out by its own evaluation committee, if one exists, or other committee with CAA staff assistance as necessary.
- Evaluations are duly considered and remedial actions are taken as required.
- Future program operations take into account the most recent evaluations.
- Assessments are obtained from all sectors, especially from the poor for whom the program benefits are intended.
- Evaluations are utilized in all CAA activities, either as an indication of success or of need for change in direction of programs.

The roles listed above are carried out through a series of decisions that the board must make. These include:

1. Governance decisions

- How the board organizes itself, operates, and relates to staff.
- How the board plans and evaluates itself and agency operations.

2. Planning decisions (short- and long-range)

- Develop the vision and define the mission.
- Select the ends the organization will seek to achieve.
- Set goals and describe strategies to reach them.
- Establish short-term objectives to accomplish the goals.
- Outline an evaluation process.

(See Appendix B for a detailed description of CAA planning.)

3. Policy decisions

These decisions provide general guidelines that:

- Describe how the organization will serve low-income people.
- Set the framework for the organization's operations.
- Set priorities.

4. Resource acquisition and allocation decisions

These decisions govern the effective use of people, time, money, materials, and facilities, as they relate to:

- Staff operation.
- Program implementation.
- Budget considerations.

5. Advocacy decisions

- Select issues.
- Identify approaches to be used.
- Assign responsibility for carrying out activities.

(See Appendix C for further discussion of advocacy.)

B. Board Operations

1. Committees

Committees are often used to carry out the functions (work) of the board. The number and types of committees vary according to size and purposes of the

agency. There are two major categories of committees. *Standing committees* are those whose functions are necessary to the ongoing management and continuity of the agency. *Ad hoc committees* (or task forces) are appointed to carry out a specific, time-limited project. Both types of committees are arms of the board and should reflect the tri-partite composition of the board. They should have:

- ✧ Clearly stated goals.
- ✧ Definite terms for members.
- ✧ Identified channels of communication with board and staff.
- ✧ Defined reporting responsibilities for meetings.
- ✧ Scheduled meetings and work plans.

Boards should avoid having a committee become the mini-board for a specific function or program and developing independent connections with staff that by-pass the executive director.

One innovative idea is not to have a committee chair who runs a piece of organizational machinery, but instead to have a strategy manager who has a more proactive role over a function, e.g., membership strategy development.

The following are some suggestions for grouping the tasks that relate to the functions of the board. CAAs should not automatically follow this outline. Some may be added or dropped or combined differently to fit the needs of a particular CAA and the skills and interests of its board members.

Function: Governance

Addresses how the board will organize and operate internally.

Committee: Nominating or Bylaws

- ✧ Develops criteria for selection of officers and new board members.
- ✧ Develops criteria for board membership.
- ✧ Identifies specific potential members who might serve.
- ✧ Recruits potential members and meets with them in interviews and less formal arrangements.
- ✧ Presents the board with names and credentials of potential members.
- ✧ Provides for the orientation of potential and newly elected board members.
- ✧ Provides for training and continuing education/development of all board members.
- ✧ Presents slate of nominees in accordance with bylaws.
- ✧ Supervises election procedure.
- ✧ Arranges for orientation of board members including the use of written and other documentary materials.
- ✧ Monitors meeting attendance and recommends necessary action if any.
- ✧ Monitors for compliance with bylaws.
- ✧ Reviews and recommends improvements in board operations.

Function: Leadership

Committee: Executive

Membership includes all officers. It also may include chairpersons of standing committees, and a specified number of at-large members.

- ✧ Formulates general policy.
- ✧ Oversees legal compliance.

- ✧ Assures public accountability.
- ✧ Acts for the board when the board is not in session. It executes the policy of the board in routine affairs during intervals between board meetings.
- ✧ May make other decisions on matters that are not clearly assigned to other committees or to the executive director.

In addition to committees that focus primarily on their own internal operations, many boards also create committees that relate to one or more of the agency's other management functions. Note, however, that primary responsibility for developing the CAA's management systems and making sure they work rests with the executive director. The board's function is not to do the executive director's work, but to make sure the executive director is doing his/her job. There are usually additional functions unique to the responsibility of the board that the board must perform itself. For example:

Function: Planning
Committee: Planning

- ✧ Identifies community and agency-related needs.
- ✧ Describes the conditions of poverty.
- ✧ Identifies the causes of poverty.
- ✧ Develops methods for ranking problems.
- ✧ Suggests techniques for prioritizing CAA actions.
- ✧ Drafts short-and long-term goals.
- ✧ Identifies results and outcome measures.
- ✧ Evaluates programs and activities.
- ✧ Identifies basic issues that relate to agency planning.
- ✧ Obtains external and internal data pertaining to community, people served, and other agencies in related fields.
- ✧ Provides board with recommendations and information to guide decisions.

Function: Public policy
Committee: Social Issues or Public Policy

- ✧ Identifies social or public policy issues that affect the CAA and its clientele.
- ✧ Keeps informed on local, state, and national issues affecting agency.
- ✧ Presents information to other members of the board to formulate positions for internal use or public statement.
- ✧ Develops approaches for advocacy on social issues.

Function: Community organization, participation, and development

Committee: Community Development

- ✧ Suggests policies and identifies mechanisms to promote this throughout the CAA and the community. May include civic engagement, dialogues, and developing social capital.

Function: Program implementation
Committee: Program

- ✧ Develops broad program goals.
- ✧ Oversees implementation of the CAA's programs.

- ✧ Monitors and evaluates the agency's services as they relate to the mission and goals.
- ✧ Formulates policies on programs and activities for board decision.
- ✧ Ensures information collection systems are functioning.
- ✧ Evaluates programs for effectiveness.
- ✧ Suggests improvements on a regular basis.

Function: Personnel
Committee: Personnel

- ✧ Recruits and evaluates executive director.
- ✧ Reviews and monitors personnel policies.
- ✧ Monitors staff recruitment, development, and organization.
- ✧ Monitors volunteer recruitment, development, and organization.
- ✧ Maintains awareness of laws and regulations relating to employment.
- ✧ Recommends personnel practices and procedures to board.
- ✧ May develop programs relating to functions stated above.

Function: Finance
Committee: Finance

The committee membership must always include, at minimum, the treasurer and several other members.

- ✧ Develops plans.
- ✧ Oversees financial controls.
- ✧ Develops financial resources.
- ✧ Reports to the board.
- ✧ Considers details of budget.
- ✧ Monitors financial condition and makes reports.
- ✧ Arranges for and reviews annual audit.
- ✧ Approves major purchases or expenditures according to policies.

Committee: Fund Raising or Resource Development

- ✧ Recommends and implements methods for ongoing resource mobilization.
- ✧ Initiates special funding projects.

Function: Public/Community Relations
Committee: Public Relations

- ✧ Promotes public awareness of agency and its programs.
- ✧ Communicates with the community.
- ✧ Develops methods for presenting agency information to public.
- ✧ Interacts with other groups to promote the goals and programs of agency.
- ✧ Assists staff in maintenance of communications with constituents, media, members.

Function: Staff and board development
Committee: Personnel Development

- ✧ Assures that staff and board keep up with trends and new approaches.

- ✧ Assures that board member and staff personal growth are taking place.

2. Participation of low-income people

Inclusion of low-income persons on CAA boards and involving low-income persons in the election of board members is a vital element in constituting a successful board.

The general principles include an open process in which people are involved in identifying the individuals who will speak for their geographic, ethnic, or population group. Some approaches include:

a. Holding target area elections, complete with polling places.

b. Instituting caucuses. Invite people to attend a meeting where representatives are selected.

c. Identifying a community-based organization that appoints its representative.

d. Identifying a group of organizations that will conduct their own selection process.

e. Inviting interested parties to make their interests known and inviting groups of community-based organizations to identify one or more people as possible candidates for board membership.

The board also can support low-income participation by ensuring that:

- ✧ Committees fairly reflect the percentage of the poor people's representatives on the board.

- ✧ Meeting times and places (for board and committees) are such that it will be convenient for representatives of the poor to attend.

- ✧ Advance notice of meetings and an agenda are provided to each member, in writing, and that notice and an agenda are given to local public media and posted in public places.

- ✧ Written minutes, including records of all actions and votes on all motions, are distributed to each board member before the next meeting.

- ✧ If the language spoken locally is not English, area representatives are presented with notice, agenda, and minutes in their own language and that an interpreter is available during meetings.

- ✧ Expenses for attendance and an allowance are provided by the CAA to enable representatives of the poor to participate regularly.

- ✧ Representatives of the poor are given information and training so they can fully contribute at board meetings.

- ✧ Representatives of the poor are given guidelines for program effectiveness so their evaluations can reflect both adherence to guidelines and views of the total poor population.

- ✧ Low-income people can participate in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of all CAA programs.

(See Appendix D for further discussion of a CAA's responsibilities vis-à-vis participation of low-income people.)

C. Increasing Board Effectiveness

The increasing professionalization of some programs (e.g., Weatherization, Head Start), and the increasing bureaucratization by funders who specify all aspects of program operations, leave board members with fewer roles to play than was the case ten years ago. This section provides ideas for other types of roles for the board

to play in this kind of environment.

1. Board role

- ✧ Determine the ends the CAA is to accomplish in the community.
- ✧ Decide what the organization will do.
- ✧ Select no more than five or six major ends.

However, the board does not just decide ends and then delegate all work to the staff. There are some implementation functions that are far better performed by the board. Most of these are related to management of external relations, including public relations, institutional change, and resource mobilization. Board members have the connections, legitimacy as board members, and personal commitment and empowerment from their board to advocate for a better community. Board members have flexibility to act in all social and political arenas more so than staff members since staff may be covered by restrictions on the use of public funds.

Board members should set some goals and objectives that require their active involvement to achieve them. They should select projects in which they have a major role and participate in them.

Some funders like board members to act as their local volunteer compliance officers, doing detailed reviews to determine if staff members are carrying out all the rules in the rule book programs. The board cannot focus on the CAA's overall purposes if it gets bogged down in detail, and board members rarely have the time or training to become experts on all the technical aspects of the programs. Board members who can't keep up feel inadequate to the task and quit. The solution is to stop looking at everything the staff does. If a board member is able to keep up with everything that is going on at the staff level, then there is not enough going on.

The board should review all existing information that now flows to it. After analysis as to its "need to know," the board should decide what it will continue to receive, at what frequency, and at what degree of detail. The board may have to reprioritize some items.

2. Staff role

The executive director decides what the staff will do, individually and collectively, to achieve the ends selected by the board. Staff members generally select the means, methods, procedures, and activities of daily work.

Chapter 3. Board Meetings

A. Purposes of Board Meetings[1]

Board meetings should be held at regularly scheduled intervals. (Provisions for holding meetings are almost always provided in the bylaws.) The agenda should include some time segment allotted to hear the views of individuals and organizations from the community. Some of the principle purposes of board meetings are to:

- ✧ Make policy decisions.
- ✧ Hear about progress in the achievement of the various objectives of the organization.
- ✧ Hear reports of board committees and to make policy decisions, where required, based on committee reports.
- ✧ Provide a vehicle for board members to meet other board members and staff.
- ✧ Project general direction over the organization and to give guidance to committees.
- ✧ Communicate with the many sectors of the community involved in or affected by the board decisions and CAA activities.
- ✧ Coordinate its committee activities with CAA management.
- ✧ Organize its operations.
- ✧ Plan in order to address short- and long-term goals.

B. Points to Remember[2]

- ✧ Hold meetings on formal written notice.
- ✧ Make the time and place reasonable.
- ✧ Give adequate notice (ten days, ordinarily).
- ✧ State in the notice the purpose of the meeting.
- ✧ Do not rely on informal decisions reached over the telephone or at luncheons.
- ✧ Take minutes at every meeting. Record approvals and dissents.
- ✧ Remember that informal decision transactions may be binding — impossible to repudiate.
- ✧ Do not meet on Sundays or holidays.
- ✧ Specify in the bylaws who may call meetings.
- ✧ Avoid adjourned carry-over meetings.
- ✧ Get waivers (before the meeting begins) when inadequate notice or none is sent.

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1 Adapted from Conrad, William R., and William E. Glenn. *The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors: What It Is and How It Works.* Chicago: Swallow Press, 1983.

2 Olek, Howard L., *Nonprofit Corporations, Organizations, and Associations.* 4ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.

- ✧ Establish a form of notice for the organization.
- ✧ Hold meetings neither too often nor too seldom.
- ✧ Be aware of quorum rules. Make them clear. Follow them.
- ✧ Use an agenda for the meeting; and do not depart from it without good reason.

C. Developing an Agenda

Board meetings should have specific agendas set before the meeting takes place.

An agenda is a list of things to be accomplished -- it provides an order of business for the group. In a way, it's like having a map because it shows you where you must begin, what tasks you must complete, and where you intend to end up. Meetings that are run without agendas are likely to stray, consume inordinate amounts of time, and/or waste a lot of time.

A typical agenda format follows:

AGENDA

Regular Monthly Meeting of the Executive Board

(Name of Agency)

Date: Time:
Place:

Order of Business:
1. Call to order and opening ceremonies.
2. Roll call.
3. Announcement of quorum.
4. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting and call for approval.
5. Reports of officers.
6. Reports of standing committees.
7. Reports of ad hoc committees.
8. Old business.
9. New business.
10. Acknowledgment of visitors for remarks.
11. Set date for next meeting and adjournment.

If the group follows this type of agenda, business may be conducted out of order only when the group votes to suspend the rules. Four methods of building an agenda follow.

Method #1 -- Leader built

The first method sees the leader (perhaps the chairperson or the chairperson in cooperation with the executive director and staff) build the agenda. The leader identifies what topics will be covered and assigns these topics to an order or sequence. The leader also may assign time limits to the topics on the agenda.

Method #2 -- Group input - Leader built

The second method follows a similar format; however, it is developed somewhat differently. This process seeks input from some or all board members. Usually, a deadline is set, and topics must be submitted by that date.

The leader then creates an actual agenda listing the order of business and all topics to be discussed. The leader assigns priorities. And, if it's the board's custom, the leader assigns time limits (limits of debate or discussion) for each topic. Essentially, the format would be the same as or similar to the format described in method #1.

Method #3 -- Group built

A third method departs from tradition significantly in that it is the product of all the board members present. In this instance, the leader and group members build an agenda together just prior to the beginning of the board meeting. Naturally, some tasks (reading of the minutes, for example) are routine so only the main

part of the agenda is developed.

In this case, the leader lists all of the topics suggested by anyone in the group on a display. When everyone is satisfied that all pertinent topics have been identified, the group then ranks the topics in the order of their intended discussion and budgets the amount of time to be spent on each item. While this method maximizes inclusion, it risks being unfocused and taking valuable time at the expense of more important issues.

Method #4-- Public agencies

Most public CAAs follow rules that apply to public bodies regarding the conduct of public meetings. These rules often address agenda development.

(See Appendix E for a discussion on group decision making. Also, see Appendix F for a listing of selected readings.)

D. Checklist for Leading a Meeting

Many details go into making a board meeting productive, efficient, and satisfying to participants. The following checkpoints, if followed, can greatly increase the chances for having a successful meeting.

1. Planning

- ✧ Were members timely notified about the meeting time, place, and topic?
- ✧ Was an agenda prepared or planned and made available to participants/attendees?
- ✧ Are the physical arrangements adequate?
- ✧ Will seating arrangements encourage listening and discussion?
- ✧ Were staff members, experts, or community leaders invited as needed?
- ✧ Is there factual or background material available?
- ✧ Are visual aids available and in place?
- ✧ Is something planned to "break the ice" before the meeting starts, e.g., coffee or a group exercise?

2. Conducting the meeting

- ✧ Did the meeting chairperson announce the agenda topics?
- ✧ Was the opening statement by the chairperson succinct, relevant, to the point, and informative?
- ✧ Were attendees provided adequate (but not excessive) time for discussion?
- ✧ Was the order of the meeting well managed, i.e., did the chair:
  - ✪ Follow the agenda?
  - ✪ Recognize members who wished to speak?
  - ✪ Use parliamentary procedure?
  - ✪ Insist that members stick to the issue at hand?
  - ✪ Prevent a few people from dominating the meeting?
- ✧ Was the discussion kept moving by:
  - ✪ Allowing sufficient time for each topic?
  - ✪ Pointing out repetitions or digressions?
  - ✪ Clarifying confusing points?
  - ✪ Bridging ideas together?
  - ✪ Pointing out differences of opinion?

- Drawing out quiet members?
- Redirecting questions to other group members?
- Expressing appreciation for individual contributions?

✧ Was the leader's conduct of the meeting:

- Aimed at bringing out reasons, opinions, and causes?
- Designed to bring out and tolerate all shades of opinions?
- Objective and without bias?
- Fair and tactful with all members?

✧ When a motion was put to a vote or a summary was made of the discussion, did it:

- Cover all the points agreed upon?
- State the full motion?
- Point out both sides (benefits, issues, disadvantages) of the question?
- Point out the consequences?

3. Evaluating the meeting

✧ Was the meeting attended by all members?

✧ Did the members arrive on time?

✧ Did the individuals work as a group?

✧ Was the contribution of each member recognized and evaluated?

✧ Were the conflicts resolved into a common understanding?

✧ Were issues approached with an open mind?

✧ Were possible solutions checked?

✧ Were any important aspects overlooked?

✧ Was much time wasted? If, yes, why?

✧ Did everyone leave with a clear understanding of their assignments or other responsibilities?

✧ What conclusions did the group reach?

✧ What could have been done better to improve the meeting?

Chapter 4. Orientation and Retention of Board Members

Boards often perceive that they have a recruitment problem when in fact they have a retention problem. People quit before the end of their term. There are several reasons for this. One reason is because in some CAAs each board member is expected to be an expert on program content, and it takes months to learn the rules of the programs.

Staff members are supposed to be program content experts. Board members should focus their attention and spend their time on the purposes of programs, how they fit with other programs in the community, how to get support for the programs, and determining whether program goals are being achieved. Board members should not be "super staff."

Some board members join because they want to work in the community. If the only tasks they undertake are focused within the CAA, they may feel that they are just micro-monitoring staff activity. Some funders promote this, turning board members into their volunteer field monitors to check compliance with regulations. All board members should have specific assignments to enhance relationships to specific sectors of the community such as attending meetings of other organizations, or making presentations to other groups. Retention of board members begins with good orientation and continues with "real work" for which the volunteer receives recognition and positive reinforcement.

Board orientation should be a formalized process.

A. Contents of a Board Orientation Manual[1]

1. Board member job description.
2. List of board members: names and addresses.
3. Bylaws.
4. Committee list with assignments of all board and staff.
5. Committee job descriptions.
6. Operating policies of the board.
7. Organization chart.
8. History of the agency.
9. Program list with descriptive data.
10. Budget.
11. Sources of funding.
12. Friends of the organization.

(See Appendices G, H, and I which describe documents and list acronyms board members might find useful.)

B. Board Orientation and Training Program

1. Orientation in the recruitment stage

Prospective board members should be provided sufficient information in the re-

[1] Courtesy of the Los Angeles Free Clinic, 8405 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048.

cruitment stage for them to be able to make a determination of their interest in volunteering to be a board member. They could be provided with:

- A description of agency purposes, strategic plan, major programs, and funding sources (including some information, 1 or 2 pages, in writing).
- A list of current board members.
- A copy of the bylaws and the last annual audit of the agency to keep, if requested.

In addition, a visit to the agency could be arranged for prospective board members to see programs in action, or talk with the executive director. Also, attendance at a board meeting could be instructive.

Specific board and staff members should be assigned the tasks of orienting and training board members. Tasks should include the following:

2. Preliminary orientation of new board members

Arrange an informal meeting with key people and provide a detailed board orientation manual that includes bylaws, articles of incorporation, description of programs, current budget, last audited financial statements, list of board members with their addresses, lists of committee and staff assignments, copies of minutes from previous year, copy of corporate or long-range plan, and copy of agency objectives for coming year.

3. Orientation and introduction

Schedule and conduct an orientation session. This should include a thorough review of the board manual. (See 2., above.) This should occur prior to the new member's first board meeting or at a special orientation for new board members with the chair, the executive director, and others. Plan on at least half a day for this.

During the first three months on the board, the following should take place:

- Assign the new members to specific committee tasks. Put them to work!
- Orient them to the work of a specific committee.
- Put new board members with experienced board members for mentoring.

4. On-going training

The work with new board members should not stop with their assignments to a committee and/or to work with the community. Staff members and board members assigned to assist the new members should:

- Consult with the appropriate committee chairpersons and staff to obtain full involvement of new members.
- Assist the new members in carrying out their responsibilities.
- Have new members participate in special workshops related to the assignment.
- Provide recognition for the work of new members.
- Rotate new members to other committees as they become experienced so that they can continue to learn more about the agency and contribute to its achievements.

Chapter 5. Board Relationships

A. Shared Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the board and staff share two goals:

1. To reduce and eliminate causes and conditions of poverty.

2. To help individuals, families, and communities become strong and independent.

They share a commitment to their mission, to carry out the intent of the Community Services Block Grant Act within their state. However, the board and staff have different roles to play in pursuit of their common objectives.

B. Separate, but Complementary, Roles

The CAA board makes policy about the ends the CAA should seek to realize the two goals. However, the board does not simply adopt ends and completely turn them over to staff. In most cases the successful accomplishment of ends requires that many other elements of the community be involved. In most cases, board members will be more effective at lining up that support than will staff. Further, the organizational maintenance functions of staying in touch with elected officials and other key constituencies are best performed by board members. The means for accomplishing those ends are largely determined by the CAA executive director and staff.

In summary, for a CAA to operate effectively, the functions of the board and staff must fit together without leaving a gap or overlapping. The board as a whole, the individual board member, and the executive director (staff) are the three major elements needed to make this happen.

1. The board as a whole

The authority of the board lies in its group action. No single member, or few members, have authority over the CAA. Each board member has one vote in deciding what the board as a whole will do. It is through the collective action of all members that a binding decision is made. The board as a policy-making body is responsible for:

- ✧ Identifying the needs of the community.
- ✧ Establishing goals for the CAA.
- ✧ Formulating strategic plans for community action.
- ✧ Approving proposals for financial assistance.
- ✧ Making sure the executive director has established and is managing other supporting systems needed by the CAA such as personnel and fiscal. (Most funding agencies hold the board responsible for abiding by the terms of a grant. But the executive director is responsible for assuring that those systems are in place and operating properly.)
- ✧ Assessing the risk and benefits of profit-making activities and social enterprises.
- ✧ Other duties as adopted by the board.

2. The individual board member

Each board member shares equally in

the board's deliberations and actions. Each board member represents the interests of a constituency, or group, on the board. He or she also presents the views of that group to the board and reports the board's actions back to that group. He or she must:

- ✧ Have a definite group to represent.
- ✧ Know that group's interests and concerns.
- ✧ Communicate with that group regularly.
- ✧ Represent the group's interests at board meetings.
- ✧ Be authorized to represent that group.

In carrying out his/her role as the representative of the group he/she represents, each board member also has the right to:

- ✧ Bring any concern of his/her own or of the group he/she represents about CAA activities to the attention of the whole board.
- ✧ Initiate any relevant new business for the board's consideration at board or committee meetings.
- ✧ Express opinions about issues or proposed items of business before a vote is taken.
- ✧ Request additional information on any subject under consideration and question anyone testifying before the board before a vote is called.
- ✧ Organize support of constituents and/or other board members for or against any issue brought before the board for a vote, either before or during a meeting.
- ✧ Obtain a complete and current list of board members.
- ✧ Question or recommend any other matter necessary to effective organization of the board or conduct of its business.
- ✧ Ask the chairperson to clarify the way in which a meeting is being conducted at any time.
- ✧ Request that a vote be taken in a particular way.
- ✧ Request a summary of internal policies and procedures.
- ✧ Request changes in minutes before they are approved to make them more accurately reflect events.
- ✧ Request that his/her opposition to an item passed by majority be recorded.
- ✧ Discuss what has happened or is expected to happen with other board members, the executive director or other CAA staff, neighborhood residents, or any other interested party.
- ✧ Seek reconsideration for any measure previously passed.
- ✧ Ask for appointment to a committee.
- ✧ Bring relevant proposals and ideas to the board. (These should be developed in advance and presented in a straightforward manner to the board. They also should be followed up once the board has approved them.)

3. The executive director

A CAA executive director is the chief executive officer and top manager of the CAA. The executive director guides staff activity to accomplish the ends that have been adopted by the board. The director uses his/her management skills, staff, and programs as the means to accomplish the ends adopted by the board.

The executive director is an employee of the board of directors. He/she is hired, paid, and fired by the board. He/she is the chief administrator. It is his/her function to implement, or execute, policies established by the board. The performance of the executive director is evaluated by the board.

While it is his/her job to carry out policies of the board, the executive director cannot be in total agreement with the board at all times. Both parties, however, should be open and honest about their disagreements.

The executive director serves as a primary source of information for the board. He/she should continually provide the board with information concerning its policies, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, new directions that need to be considered, gaps in existing programs, old programs that need to be updated or discontinued, and similar subjects.

The executive director runs the programs and operations of the CAA and keeps the staff motivated.

The executive director receives his/her authority from the board. He/she:

- Is responsible to the board for proper administration of the CAA.
- Prepares and submits to the board, at least annually, a complete report on finances and administrative activities for the past year.
- Provides the board with information that is necessary or helpful to the board in making policy.
- Recommends that the board adopt policies and programs that the executive director feels are necessary to effectively conduct the anti-poverty program and improve administrative practices.
- Attends all board meetings, unless excused, and takes part in, but avoids dominating, the discussion of all matters coming before the board.
- Develops and supervises systems for managing personnel and for assuring the integrity of fiscal, purchasing, and other related functions.
- Administers programs in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.
- Monitors ongoing board projects and delegates agency programs, and reports findings to the board.
- Actively manages the CAA, including:
  - Hiring, firing, and supervising the staff.
  - Planning project operations.
  - Mobilizing resources to carry out the programs.
  - Scheduling activities.
  - Delineating staff responsibilities.
  - Evaluating staff performance.
  - Monitoring all projects.
  - Evaluating program effectiveness and outcomes.

The staff, under the direction of the executive director, is responsible for day-to-day implementation of policies established by the board. The staff members answer to the executive director. This does not mean, however, that there is no communication between the staff and the board. There should be ground rules for staff and board communication. The staff members *should not*:

- Respond to direct communication from the board unless it was approved by, or came through, the executive director.

- ✧ Follow instructions from the board concerning operations unless approved by the executive director.
- ✧ Report directly to a board member concerning project operations unless approval is given by the executive director.

In summary, an effective CAA is a partnership among the board, the executive director, and the staff. In the same spirit, the staff offers opinions and recommendations to guide the board. Also, the staff helps keep the board informed of problems, progress, and status of activities in the CAA and in the community. But "back door" channels of communication directly or indirectly between staff and board are to be avoided. By working together, the board and executive director can turn their CAA into a powerful engine for social change.

C. The Successful Board/Executive Director Relationship

Characteristic	Ways to achieve it
Clarity of roles	✧ Written job descriptions for board members, committees, chairs, and officers, as well as the executive director. ✧ Board development training that addresses roles. ✧ Written policies and procedures. ✧ Written annual goals and objectives for the CAA.
Good communication	✧ Regular meetings of executive director and board president. ✧ No surprises. ✧ Timely written reports from the executive director. ✧ Well-run board and committee meetings. ✧ Identification, discussion, and resolution of potential problems as soon as possible before they grow out of control.
Trust	✧ Follow-through on commitments. ✧ Regular and direct communications. ✧ Follow established lines of communication. ✧ Meeting procedures that promote thorough, respectful discussion and problem solving.
Mutual Support	✧ Back up each other's decisions. ✧ Pitch in on tasks. ✧ Recognize achievements. ✧ Share the glory and the problems.
Respect	✧ Recognize that people have different experiences and perspectives, and accept them. ✧ Recognize unique contributions and acknowledge them. ✧ Share honest opinions. ✧ Confront conflicts in a constructive fashion. ✧ Allow for human error!

D. What a Board Member Can and Should Expect[1]

A board member can and should expect that the board chair and/or the executive director will:

- ✧ Fully inform him/her about the responsibilities and time commitment before accepting the position of board member.
- ✧ Provide him/her with an orientation and continuing board training to assist the board member in functioning effectively.
- ✧ Keep the board member fully informed about the operations of the organization through accurate financial reports, management reports, regular and thorough briefings by staff and other means.
- ✧ Not waste his/her time due to lack of planning, coordination, and/or cooperation within the board.
- ✧ Assign him/her jobs that are worthwhile and challenging with freedom to use existing skills or develop new ones.
- ✧ Allow the board member to decline an assignment if he/she feels that the match of skills and interests is not appropriate.
- ✧ Entrust the board members with confidential information that will help him/her carry out assignments and responsibilities.
- ✧ Inform him/her whether the volunteer work is effective and what results have been achieved; and provide access to an evaluation process that measures performance based upon measurable, impartial standards.
- ✧ Recognize him/her at appropriate times for work and involvement as a board member.

E. Evaluating the Executive Director

1. Evaluation elements

Following are elements of the evaluation process:

- ✧ The evaluation should be made by people who know the various aspects of the executive director's work. Ideally, this would include the board president, board members, and key community contacts.
- ✧ The evaluation should include the executive director as a major presenter.
- ✧ The evaluation should focus on standard management skills as well as the agency's particular needs and situation.
- ✧ The evaluation should include—but distinguish between—regular, ongoing work, and handling of unusual circumstances.
- ✧ The evaluation should focus on measurable results and be related to the job description.

[1] Adapted from materials developed for the United Way of King County, Washington, by Margaret Ceis.

- ✧ The evaluation plan should be developed and documented at the beginning of the year or calendar period, and the contents should be known to all parties.

- ✧ Evaluation data and information systems should be in place and operative throughout the period to be evaluated.

- ✧ Data for the evaluation should be collected contemporaneously and not after the fact.

2. Standards of performance

The appraisal should be planned on a regular basis to review agreed-upon standards of performance. Standards of performance are described in:

- ✧ The job description that lists principal duties. These should be reviewed and updated annually.

- ✧ Day-to-day duties, expressed in measurable terms, both qualitative and quantitative.

- ✧ Duties beyond the routine and future responsibilities and expected achievements.

3. Evaluation process[2]

Evaluation of the executive director's performance should be based on the performance standards, determination of objectives accomplished, and assessment of results.

As the executive director's supervisor, the board president conducts a performance review with the executive director privately to discuss the board's views, discuss performance standards and objectives, and agree on an updated job description.

The board president and executive director agree on next year's measurement criteria based on the organization's annual plan.

All of the steps should be documented.

a. <u>Relationship to board and committees</u>

Does the executive director:

- ✧ Relate well to board members?

- ✧ Communicate his/her ideas clearly and show leadership?

- ✧ Listen and help discern the direction of the board?

- ✧ Propose directions, assist board and committee leadership develop agendas, and identify critical issues for decision-making?

- ✧ Show enthusiasm, vision, and encouragement in the development of the agency?

- ✧ See to it that enough material is provided for board and committee decision making?

- ✧ Assist the board in being a strong, independent, and accountable policy-making body?

b. <u>Relationship to members and community leaders</u>

Does the executive director work effectively with:

- ✧ The leadership of other agencies?

- ✧ Leaders in government, especially in those agencies that relate to human services?

- ✧ Leaders of voluntary organizations?

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2 Adapted from a Guide to Evaluation of the Executive Director. Source: Health and Community Services Council of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii.

- ✧ Leadership in the grassroots community?
- ✧ Leadership in foundations?
- ✧ Faith community leadership?
- ✧ Corporate leadership?

What image of the CAA does he/she project?

c. Relationship to staff

Does the executive director:

- ✧ Employ staff who can carry out the work of the CAA?
- ✧ Establish a good working relationship among staff?
- ✧ Communicate well with staff, individually and as a group?
- ✧ Contribute to staff development?
- ✧ Encourage creativity and enthusiasm among staff for the work of the CAA?
- ✧ Provide adequate supervision and evaluation for the staff?

d. Professional and personal competencies

Does the executive director:

- ✧ Keep up with changes in policies, practices, and personnel in the neighborhoods, communities, and institutions as well as on the national level?
- ✧ Show evidence of developing his/her knowledge of the local and national scene and his/her community planning and administrative skills?
- ✧ Show ability in carrying out the financial management of the CAA, including budgeting, financial reporting, and control?
- ✧ Show flexibility and creativity in relating to the CAA, including budgeting, financial reporting, and control?
- ✧ Show flexibility and creativity in relating the CAA to the current needs of the community?
- ✧ Show commitment to the goals of the CAA and to the betterment of the community?

F. Board and Funding Agency Relationships

The key concepts that bind funding agencies to CAA boards are:

- ✧ Results. Any funding source is "buying results" from you. It wants its goals and purposes to be accomplished.
- ✧ Accountability. The funding source wants to ensure that you are accountable to it, and to the other significant publics, for what you do and how you do it.
- ✧ Integrity. The funding source wants to be sure that you are honest in your dealings with it and in your handling of its assets. Every contract is a partnership where the actions of one reflect upon the reputation of the other.
- ✧ Communication. The amounts and types of communication—in addition to standard financial and performance reports—will vary depending on how well the funding source feels you are addressing the first three concepts and on how much it feels it needs to protect itself.

These four factors can be "mixed" very differently, depending on the kind of

funding source with which the CAA is dealing.

Foundations. Many CAAs submit proposals to foundations for grants to support various CAA projects. These foundations may be local, regional, or national foundations. Generally, the interest of the foundation is in providing funding to nonprofit organizations on issues that the foundation has already identified as critical. Foundation support tends to be relatively short term, such as for one to three years. Foundation funding support also tends to be for specific projects, such as affordable housing or establishing a Meals on Wheels program, as opposed to general financial support for a CAA. While the type of reporting may vary, foundations usually require a copy of the CAA's annual audit and reports similar to those required by governmental funding sources. Board members often make very effective representatives for a CAA that is seeking funding support from a foundation.

Private business sector. Community Action Agencies are increasing the level of involvement with the private business sector in the communities they serve. For some CAAs the only involvement is through asking for donations or sponsorship of specific events such as with an emergency food drive. In cases like these, the business or corporation that the CAA is working with is usually looking for positive public relations. This can take the form of an advertisement in a booklet or program the agency distributes in conjunction with the event. CAA board members are often asked to assist in these types of fund-raising drives on behalf of the agency. In examples such as this, the agency should develop a clear policy of providing both receipts and some type of report (such as a copy of a program or booklet) to the business that is making a donation.

Some CAAs have developed formal partnerships with the private business sector. These often are involved in the development of affordable housing and in community economic development projects. These partnerships often succeed in leveraging substantial amounts of money toward projects the board of directors has identified as important program areas for the CAA. These formal partnerships often are long term and include specific financial obligations on the part of the CAA as a partner. In addition to making sure that these partnerships are consistent with the program policies of the agency, the role of the board of directors is in ensuring that the agency is protected legally and treated fairly. Often this calls for contracting for specialized legal and financial assistance.

Public/government agencies. Public agencies tend to focus on accountability as their main concern. Bad publicity alleging misuse of funds is so damaging to the legislators who supported a program, to the public agency that administers it, and to the careers of the officials who administer them, that they are always extremely focused on accountability. To protect the program and themselves, legislators, funding agencies, and administering officials devise and require use of complex rules and management systems.

These rules and management systems are designed primarily to serve the needs of the funding agency. The systems may or may not be useful to the agency staff and board. There is often considerable confusion when one party does not understand the purpose of a system and tries to use it for something other than the purpose it was designed to accomplish.

The purpose and focus of these systems are on accountability for the use of public funds. These systems almost always impose numerous and complex reporting requirements. The funding agency is trying to determine that you are complying with procedures and trying to see if you have violated any regulations. They require you to re-verify monthly or quarterly that you are operating properly. The assumption on which most of these systems is based is that if you are in compliance with the approved methods of

operation, of inputting resources, then you are probably producing the desired results.

This is not necessarily the correct conclusion, of course, and the trend in the past few years has been toward performance-based contracting wherein CAAs are responsible primarily for results and are given more flexibility in terms of how to produce those results. There is often great difficulty is specifying exactly what results are to be produced and devising measures to determine if the agreed upon results were produced.

Public agencies may emphasize communication as a tool in the accountability process. Some public agencies deal almost entirely with the board or board chair, others with a committee of the board and the executive director. Still others relate primarily or entirely to the executive director or a program director. Some require both the board and the executive director to sign funding applications or contracts. Others require the board to sign. Some allow the board's designee to sign (e.g., the executive director). Some send only one letter to the agency. Other send copies to the board chair, or to all board members. These practices vary widely from agency to agency, and often change.

Virtually all public agencies require audits. Most specify the topics they want covered in the audits. Fortunately, they are also willing to pay for the cost of doing the audits.

G. Relationships with a Head Start Policy Council

Many Community Action Agencies serve as the administrator or grantee of the federally funded Head Start program. Head Start is a pre-school program for low income and disabled children. Head Start regulations are developed by the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington and govern the operations of Head Start grantees. Head Start regulations are very detailed and require the creation of a Head Start policy council to assist in the administration of the program at the local level.

CAAs that are also Head Start grantees often have to develop separate policies relating to personnel issues for Head Start employees. The CAA board of directors is required by Head Start regulations to provide a seat on its board to a member of the Head Start policy council. Generally a member of the CAA board of directors also is a member of the Head Start policy council.

The National Association of Community Action Agencies will be providing supplemental guidance on the relationship between a CAA board and the Head Start policy council in the future.

H. Relationships with Subsidiary Corporations

Today's Community Action Agencies are involved in many sophisticated developments that may not have been envisioned by the founders of the agency. Agencies that are involved in developing affordable housing and/or in economic development projects may be advised by their legal and financial counsels to establish separate nonprofit or even separate private for-profit corporations that operate under the umbrella of the Community Action Agency. In some cases these separate corporations are required by a federal or state funding source (such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development or a state Housing Finance Agency). In many of these situations, these separate corporations are subsidiary corporations with subsidiary boards of directors to the CAA board of directors.

The responsibility of members of the board of directors of the CAA is to clearly understand what the relationship of any

subsidiary corporations and their boards of directors is to the "parent" CAA board, which may have ultimate responsibility for the actions of any subsidiary corporations or boards. CAA boards are always encouraged to obtain appropriate legal counsel to protect the interests of the agency in these situations.

The National Association of Community Action Agencies will be issuing supplemental information on this subject at a later date.

Chapter 6. Board Oversight of Management Systems

This chapter lists management systems and policies that are found in most Community Action Agencies. Staff is responsible for developing these systems and policies. The board of directors should assure that the relevant systems have been established and should carry out those responsibilities for which it is directly responsible. (It should be noted that the lists are not meant to be prescriptive.)

A. Fiscal Policies and Procedures

These assure adequate internal controls to safeguard funds. They should:

- Be in writing, although not required to be by every funding source.
- Be reviewed and updated at least every two years.
- Cover the following subjects:
  - Authorization to obligate agency funds.
  - Assurance that funds are properly spent.
  - Handling of accounts payable.
  - Assuring proper cash flow.
  - Check writing procedures.
  - Handling of accounts receivable.
  - Bank accounts.
  - Budgeting.
  - Cost allocation system.
  - Financial reports.
  - Audit.
  - Payroll.
  - Bonding and insurance.
  - Fringe benefits.
  - Taxes.
  - Advances.
  - Petty cash.
- Include all forms used by the agency to request, approve, and report expenditures.
- Clarify which persons (e.g., executive director, comptroller, bookkeeper) have responsibility for what functions.
- Be reviewed by a certified public accountant annually to assure that, if implemented as written, the procedures are adequate to safeguard funds.

B. Procurement Policies and Procedures

- May be incorporated in fiscal policies and procedures (above) or may be separate documents.
- Must be in writing.
- Must include:
  - Procurement process.
  - Inventory monitoring system.
  - Identification of state-owned property.
  - Affirmative steps to assure small, minority and women-owned businesses are utilized as sources of procurement.
- Should include:
  - Who is responsible for procurement of what kind of goods and services.
  - What level of expenditure requires competitive bid proce-

dures and/or additional authorization.

- Who is responsible for assuring that goods/services were received as intended prior to payment.

C. Personnel Policies and Procedures

- Must be in writing.
- Should be reviewed and updated every few years.
- Should cover the following subjects:
  - Classifications of employees.
  - Hiring.
  - Probation.
  - Evaluation.
  - Termination.
  - Grievances.
  - Disciplinary procedures.
  - Personnel records.
  - Leave (what types, how accrued, how used, carry over provisions).
  - Compensatory time.
  - Insurance of other fringe benefits.
  - Assurance of non-discrimination.
- May include or reference wage comparability data used to establish labor costs.
- May include or reference affirmative action policies and/or plans.

D. Planning Policies and Procedures

- Must adhere to the state requirements.
- May include provision for multi-year planning.
- May include procedures for board input prior to filing proposals or waiver from board input if program proposed was already in annual or multi-year plan.
- May include provision for program evaluation and/or zero-based budgeting.

E. Audit Policies and Procedures

- Must include board selection of auditor.
- May be single agency audit or specific program audits.
- Should include process for review of audit findings and procedures for corrective action.

Appendix A. The History Of Community Action Agencies

Background

From the days of the earliest settlers, the spirit of helping others has been a key element of American society. As communities sprang up and populations grew, the church became an important social institution and helpmate to those less fortunate.

The Industrial Revolution in the mid-1800s witnessed the development of the settlement house, one of the early examples of a physical facility, other than a church, that served as a center of activity for community problem-solving.

In the early 1900s, schools began to offer formal training in the principles and methods of social work, which led to the birth of a new profession. The great depression of the 1930s overwhelmed the nation's communities, leaving churches and voluntary social welfare programs unable to cope with the magnitude of the existing social problems.

The federal government stepped in to provide additional retirement income through a new Social Security program and to assist those temporarily unemployed with the Unemployment Insurance system. It created new banking and labor laws to strengthen the economy. A program to provide temporary public assistance to widows and children of men killed in industrial accidents also was created. Social workers were hired to determine eligibility, advise recipients about how to use the money, and help them obtain services necessary to get them off welfare.

From the 1930s to the late 1950s, state and local governments had much of the responsibility for administering the programs created during the depression.

As the communications media expanded their scope across the United States, the American public became more aware of the problems of the aged, the effects of segregation, of poor education, of health problems caused by malnutrition and hunger, of the need to educate people so they might work, and of the growing difficulties of the low-income population.

The American public soon believed that everyone could live "the good life" and that society as a whole had a responsibility for helping people overcome barriers that prevented them from sharing in the benefits of American society.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education* declared that separate schools for blacks and whites in Topeka, Kansas, did not provide an equal education, i.e., that separate was not equal. This landmark decision led to an expansion of federal policy-making into what had previously been a local arena. The decision served as a catalyst in the area of publicly financed activity such as transportation and licensed public accommodations, including lunch counters, restaurants, and hotels. Citizens began to organize to guarantee their rights, and the civil rights movement expanded rapidly.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier" included support for programs to prevent juvenile delinquency, and the focal point was the President's Council on Juvenile Delinquency, chaired by U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy. In New York City, the President's Council funded Mobilization For Youth (MFY) with the Ford Foundation and the City of New York. MFY organized and coordinated neighborhood councils composed of local officials, service providers, and neighbors to develop plans to correct conditions that led to juvenile delinquency. It also enlisted the aid of school board and city council members to implement those plans.

It was called **COMMUNITY ACTION**, and it looked like an effective and inexpensive way to

solve problems.

The Ford Foundation was funding other projects, including one in New Haven, Connecticut, that recruited people from all sectors of the community to come together to plan and implement programs to help low-income people. MFY and New Haven are often cited as the "models" for a Community Action Agency.

Creation: 1964

After the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963, President Lyndon Baines Johnson expanded the policy ideas initiated during the Kennedy administration. In his message to Congress on January 8, 1964, President Johnson said:

Let us carry forward the plans and programs of John F. Kennedy, not because of our sorrow or sympathy, but because they are right....This administration today, here and now, declares an unconditional War on Poverty in America.... Our joint federal-local effort must pursue poverty, pursue it wherever it exists. In city slums, in small towns, in sharecroppers' shacks, or in migrant worker camps, on Indian reservations, among whites as well as Negroes, among the young as well as the aged, in the boom towns and in the depressed areas.

The War on Poverty was born. In February, Sargent Shriver was asked to head a task force to draft legislation. In August, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) was passed, creating a federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) placed in the Executive Office of the President. Sargent Shriver was named Director, serving until 1969.

Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, guaranteeing equal opportunity for all. The Economic Opportunity Act, designed to implement that guarantee in the economic sector, stated in part: "It is therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening, to everyone, the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

The EOA included new education, employment and training, and work-experience programs such as the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA). Congress bypassed the state and local governments and provided for direct funding of community groups.

Formative Years: 1964-1967

The federal OEO was to lead the efforts of the War on Poverty and coordinated related programs of all other federal agencies. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created at the local level to fight the War on Poverty at home.

The EOA also provided for the creation of economic opportunity offices at the state level in order to involve governors in the War on Poverty. While governors were not empowered to give prior approval on OEO grants, they did retain the right to veto any of those they thought inappropriate. Many, especially those in the South, exercised this right, only to be checked by another EOA provision for veto override by the Director of OEO. Indeed, Sargent Shriver overrode virtually all vetoes.

CAAs varied from grass-roots, community-controlled groups, to those with experienced board members and a highly visible professional staff. Most were incorporated as private nonprofit organizations. A few were city agencies.

Funds were provided by OEO. The local CAAs determined the use of the funds to meet the problems of low-income people as they defined them. These were called local initiative funds and were used for a variety of purposes.

One provision of the EOA called for the poor to have maximum feasible participation in identifying problems and in developing solutions. Across the nation, CAAs opened neighborhood centers in storefronts, housing projects, and other buildings in low-income areas to identify people who needed help and to determine eligibility.

A new group of community leaders developed out of these neighborhood organizations, voicing the concerns of the poor and insisting on change. The philosophy, the strength, and the personal commitments of community action were formed

during this period. It was also during this phase that OEO hired 3,000 new federal employees to manage and monitor all the new programs. Most of these people came from the CAAs, civil rights groups, churches, labor unions, and other activist organizations.

The community action program grew rapidly and poured large amounts of federal funds into communities, leaving some local elected officials concerned over the control of the CAA boards. Unhappy with the new power blocks outside their own political organizations, a few mayors of large cities communicated their concerns to Congress and President Johnson. As a result, Congress began to earmark new funds into congressionally-defined national emphasis programs that reduced the ability of the CAAs to use the funds for other purposes. The President's enthusiasm began to decline.

Restructuring Phase: 1967-1968

In late 1967, Congress passed the Green Amendment, which required that a CAA must be designated as the official CAA for that area by local elected officials in order to operate in that community. After designation, OEO could then recognize the CAA and provide funds. After months of negotiations, over 95 percent of the existing CAAs were designated. In several large cities, the CAA was taken over by the mayor and turned into a public agency.

Congress also passed the Quie Amendment, which required that CAA boards of directors be composed of one-third elected officials, at least one-third low-income representatives selected by a democratic process, and the balance from the private sector.

By 1968, there were 1,600 CAAs covering 2,300 of the nation's 3,300 counties. OEO also required many small, single-county CAAs to join together into multi-county units. By 1969, about 1,000 CAAs had been designated under the Green Amendment and recognized by OEO, reorganized to meet the Quie Amendment criteria, and consolidated according to OEO policy. Almost all of these CAAs are in existence today and operate the programs.

These amendments had a positive effect on most CAA boards, though the issue of increasing the influence of local elected officials on the boards of directors was a significant issue to the leaders of poverty groups that had been operating independently. The formal connection of the political, economic, and community power structures proved to be a tremendous strength. In many places, the CAA's board became the arena for local officials, the business sector, and low-income people to reach agreement on the policies, self-help activities, and programs to help the low-income in their community.

Transition Years: 1969-1974

By 1969, many successful self-help programs had been initiated by OEO and the Community Action Agencies, including Head Start, family planning, community health centers, Legal Services, VISTA, Foster Grandparents, economic development, neighborhood centers, summer youth programs, adult basic education, senior centers, and congregate meal preparation.

Picking up on the concept of using OEO and CAAs as innovators and the testing ground for new programs, and spinning off successful programs to be administered by other federal agencies, President Richard Nixon's administration saw the transfer of several large programs from OEO to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Department of Labor. Along with the program went administrative oversight responsibility for a substantial part of CAA funding.

At the start of his second term in 1973, President Nixon did not request any funds from Congress for OEO's Community Action Program. Congress nevertheless provided funds. Nixon appointed Howard Phillips as Director of OEO, told him to dismantle and close the agency, and told him not to spend the money Congress provided.

After a series of lawsuits, the Federal District Court in Washington, D.C., ruled that the president could not refuse to spend funds that had been

appropriated by Congress. Phillips resigned without having been confirmed by the Senate.

Program Management Years: 1974-1981

In 1974, under President Gerald Ford, the Community Services Amendments were passed. OEO was dismantled and was replaced by the Community Services Administration (CSA). The employees remained and continued to administer the programs. Community action had found a new home in the federal government.

From 1974 to 1981, CSA continued to fund CAAs, and CAAs continued to help communities and neighborhoods initiate self-help projects such as gardening, solar greenhouses, and housing rehabilitation. They additionally helped create and support federally-funded senior centers and congregate meal sites. Home weatherization and energy crisis programs were initiated in the 1970s.

In the late 1970s, under prodding from Congress, the administration of President Jimmy Carter initiated a large-scale effort to strengthen the role and management systems of both CSA and the CAAs. This resurgence of local spirit and leadership came to a quick end with passage of the Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act of 1981.

Block Grant Years: 1981- Present

President Ronald Reagan's administration began a strong movement to reduce substantially the federal government's support for domestic social programs. He proposed to consolidate most federally-funded human needs programs into several large, general purpose block grants, to reduce the total amount of funding by 25 percent, and to delegate the responsibility for administering these block grants to the states.

The proposal was partially successful. Congress created eight new block grants consolidating more than 200 federal programs, reduced the core funding, and turned administrative authority over to the states. However, it did not accept the elimination of federal funding for CAAs.

On September 30, 1981, the CSA was abolished and the Economic Opportunity Act was rescinded. However, the newly-created Community Services Block Grant ensured the continued funding of the *eligible entities*, i.e., the CAAs, migrant programs, and certain other organizations that had been financed through local initiative funds by CSA.

Currently, there are nearly 1,000 CAAs. And CAAs still provide a hand up, not a hand out. The philosophy of eliminating the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty remains the key concept that motivates CAAs today.

Appendix B. Planning

A. Doing Your Homework

Systematic planning involves not only the method by which programs are selected in relation to the needs of poor people, but also the process of communicating these needs to the CAA staff and the board of directors of the CAA.

The method of relating programs to problems assumes that there is adequate information with respect to who are the poor, where they live, what makes the poor people in one area different from those of another, and what categories or stages of poverty can be seen within a given area. In this connection, it is often said, "You may think that you understand poverty, but you don't understand poverty in my area." For board members to involve themselves in program selection of a CAA, they must inform themselves of the general and specific dimensions of poverty in their area.

This analysis of poverty begins with understanding the relevant studies that have already been made about the people and problems within the boundaries of the CAA.

Finally, general and specific knowledge of the dimensions of poverty are useless without "people contact." There is a major credibility gap between analyzing statistics and knowing what it means to be poor.

People contact, then, is an important phase in developing an awareness of what poverty means in your area. In addition to knowing that Ms. Smith makes less than $7,000 per year as head of household, it is also important to know she is reluctant to work because she knows she could lose medical care. It is relevant to you, as a board member, to know that she would like to develop a skill to improve her position in life. It is this people contact that provides the method of putting life into statistics. It is this process of developing awareness that transforms the role of a board member to one of active participation in the planning process.

The process of translating the needs of the poor into a program begins with the outreach efforts of the CAA staff. Neighborhood workers generally are frustrated because the results of their efforts appear small when compared with the number of hours devoted to their work. Board members can help the neighborhood workers by taking an interest in their work and by generating a concern for improving the lives of those with whom the workers come in contact. If this concern is sincere, a board member will attend not only board meetings, but neighborhood council meetings as well. Councils and neighborhood center staffs are encouraged by such participation. As CAAs are faced with the requirement of systematic planning, so should board members impose upon themselves a systematic approach leading to awareness, concern, and especially participation, in the affairs of the CAA and those affected by its activities.

B. The Planning Committee and the Planning Cycle

Members of the planning committee or the executive committee have the opportunity to be the board's liaison in the people contact process. Involvement at the neighborhood and people level is paramount to the planning committee's meaningful evaluation of the needs of the poor and the selection of effective strategies, objectives, and programs. Grassroots awareness is important in establishing priorities among program alternatives as they relate to urban-rural differences, and others as they generally exist within a CAA's jurisdiction. Planning reflects a continuing cycle of program implementation, evaluation, and refinement. In summary, planning consists of:

- ✧ Deciding which of the causes of poverty are most important and can be attacked by the CAA based on an assessment of the needs of the low-income community.

- ✧ Deciding which problems are most important and should receive greater emphasis by the CAA.

- ✧ Deciding on the way or strategy the CAA will attempt to eliminate both the symptoms and the causes of the poverty problems.

- ✧ Deciding on objectives for definite time periods, for example six months, one year, five years.

- ✧ Deciding the kinds and amounts of resources (money, volunteer time, cooperation from other agencies) that will be necessary, and how to obtain them from which sources.

- ✧ Deciding the ways that the progress toward achievement will be evaluated by the board.

- ✧ Communicating these decisions to the CAA executive director and giving the executive director sufficient authority to carry out the board's decisions.

C. Board Roles in Planning

The staff, neighborhood organizations, low-income people, and other community interests should participate in the planning process. However, the primary responsibility for planning rests with the CAA board. It is legally responsible for CAA operations; it is ultimately responsible for the effectiveness of the CAA.

Following are some of the benefits of planning to a CAA board of directors and to the agency:

- ✧ Clarifies purpose. With more specific goals, strategies, and objectives, the agency will be able to better see where it is--and where it wants to go.

- ✧ Produces more effective strategies. With a more careful selection of strategies, the CAA can be more effective in addressing the causes of problems in their communities.

- ✧ Focuses the board's attention. A plan focuses the energy and attention of both board and staff in a systematic way. The plan is results-oriented.

- ✧ Educates the community and builds support. When board members are out in the community asking questions and sharing ideas, they can make friends and develop allies for the future.

- ✧ Promotes better organization. Board and staff members will have a greater understanding of their respective responsibilities and a greater sense of unified purpose and direction.

- ✧ Involves low-income people. The CAA can involve people from the community in making plans that will affect their future.

- ✧ Provides a decision-making framework. A plan provides the criteria against which most day-to-day decisions can be made.

- ✧ Utilizes resources more effectively. The CAA will be able to identify the specific resources needed and to direct them toward long-range benefits.

- ✧ Helps solve accountability problems. Makes it easier to show the community and funding agencies where money has been spent and what it has accomplished.

- ✧ Simplifies assessment of staff. There are goals against which performance can be measured.

- ✧ Reduces crisis management. Planning can

help the CAA avoid crisis situations that take up so much time.

A complete planning cycle has four generic stages:

1. Plan for planning
2. The planning process
3. Implementation of the plan (i.e., program operations)
4. Evaluation for feedback to future planning

The executive director is the administrative leader and the staff liaison to the CAA board. The director assumes a vital role in the planning process. The CAA board makes requests to the executive director for gathering, analyzing and presenting information for their use in making decisions. The director is responsible for the accomplishment of these tasks in a timely manner. The director will delegate many of these tasks to staff and then report back to the board.

1. The plan for planning. This describes the planning process. It includes the steps to be taken, the assignments -- who will do what, how the community will be involved, and the dates during which the planning activities will occur and be completed and reviewed. The executive director drafts the plan for modification and approval by the board.

2. The planning process. There are many types of planning systems. A few are: zero-based budgeting; planning, programming, budgeting; strategic planning; management by objectives; market-oriented planning; and program budgeting.

No one of these systems is more advantageous for CAA purposes than another. The issues are *not* which of several planning systems to use. There are three core issues for CAAs: (1) Whether to use *any* formal, long-range planning system or to just run day-to-day; (2) whether to run a community-based planning process with lots of involvement or a pro-forma, staff-written plan that is rubber stamped by the board; (3) whether to adapt and modify the generic planning process to suit the mission of the CAA or just try to use it in a lockstep fashion.

Assuming that the CAA will use a long-range planning system and that it will involve a large number of people, how is a generic planning process adapted and modified to suit a specific CAA's purposes?

Regardless of which planning system is used, the CAA will want it to focus on the unique social planning responsibility of the CAA: To analyze poverty problems, to develop solutions to those problems, and to seize other opportunities that will benefit low-income people.

The remainder of this section is an "instant conversion kit" to adapt one of the generic planning systems so it will work in your CAA. This conversion kit is based on a simple but very powerful analytic concept that is used in many CAAs. That concept is to take each poverty problem identified during the planning process and to separate the elements of the problem into two components: (1) the problem [*condition*], and (2) the *causes* of the problem.

(1) The *condition* is the result of the causes. It is the statistical representation of the problem. It is a static snapshot of the problem we see in the census data and other social indicators. "X number of people with characteristics L and K live in a condition of N and O." It is the people who are "in" poverty.

The CAA sets a goal to change the condition. The goal is phrased in terms of a change in the condition. For example: "We will reduce the total number of substandard housing units in our community from 400 to 200." Or, "We will increase the number of units of one-bedroom housing in Z County that rent for less than X amount from the

present total supply of 100 units to a total of 150 units." A time frame for achieving the goal is included.

(2) The *causes* are the dynamic factors, the underlying social values, beliefs, and behavior of specific individuals or groups of people that produce the condition. These may be acts of omission or commission by somebody or some group at some *level of society*, e.g., nation, region, community, family or individual, in one or more *sectors of society*, e.g., economic, political, or social. There are both social and individual causes of poverty. The planning task is to sort it all out and develop a strategy to change the causes.

By adopting strategies that modify or eliminate the causes of the poverty condition, the CAA will achieve its goal. The strategy is phrased in terms of a change in the cause. "To finance the rehabilitation of the 200 units in our goal, we must overcome the unwillingness of the city to create a new bond issue to finance the costs of rehabilitation." Or, "To overcome the 'bad attitude' of individuals with these characteristics, we must...."

This approach is essential in order to sort out the individual, the family, and the group, as well as the social, political, economic, *causes of poverty*. This methodology helps clarify the concepts in a way that makes it possible to figure out what happened and, more importantly for future planning, why it did or did not happen.

Also, it is very easy to slide off into constantly repairing the condition, e.g., placing Band-Aids on new victims, but failing to address the causes. With this in mind, the following section presents a brief description of a poverty problem-solving planning process used in many CAAs.

D. Steps in a Typical Planning Process

1. Review the mission. The first step in implementing your plan for planning is to review the mission statement of your CAA. Why are we here? What is our purpose? Should the mission statement be modified or used as is? Clarify the values that will guide the organization.

2. Needs and opportunities assessment. Identify a wide range of poverty problems by looking around, through meetings with low-income residents, through evaluations of existing programs, and by talking with community leaders and government officials. There is no scarcity of problems and opportunities. The focus during a needs assessment is on using the concepts presented above to sort the poverty problems into their conditions and their causes. The CAA board may ask the executive director to help it:

   - ✧ Obtain data that describes the conditions.
   - ✧ Suggest the full range of causes of the problems. This presentation is not just a batch of copies of census charts. There are very powerful trends in American society. Board members must understand demographic, economic, political, and social trends, and how they may affect their community. These trends are the context within which the CAA plans. A trend may create a major problem in your community, or it may solve one without your help. Learning about these trends is a vital part of planning. (A review of these national trends and analysis by a "futurist" is an excellent topic for a one-day board retreat.)
   - ✧ Conduct special studies or surveys.
   - ✧ Report on staff opinions concerning community needs. Give them a place to put their ideas so you can tell the difference between what they think and what the other people that they have talked with think.

3. Problem ranking. After it has identified the problems, the board can rank the poverty problems in terms of their magnitude and severity.

Magnitude is the size of the problem, the total number and/or the percentage of the population who experience it. You can set up a scale of one to five, e.g. over 40% = 5; 30% to 40% = 4.

Severity addresses the urgency. Is it life threatening? Just inconvenient? You can develop a numerical scale and assign problems to it, e.g., very severe = 5; severe = 4.

Then multiply the magnitude factor times the severity factor for the final ranking. The executive director can be asked to draft criteria for ranking for modification and use by the board or the board can do it itself.

4. Resource analysis. After ranking the problems, determine what public and private moneys are already focused on solving the problem. Perhaps some problems are well covered. Others may be new or unpopular and have almost no resources devoted to them. Others may be beyond the scope of your organization's mission, interests, resources, or capacity.

The executive director can obtain data on public and private resources that already exist and are being spent on each problem. The board must determine the amount of existing public and private resources already focused on those problems to measure how much of the problem is already being met.

5. Priority setting. After the other resources that are devoted to the ranked problems and opportunities are known, priorities can be set. This is a subjective process that reflects the values of the people who make the decision. It is what the board members want the CAA board, staff, and volunteers to work on. Some of the factors that will affect this decision are the:

    - ✧ Ability of the agency to improve the situation.
    - ✧ Length of time and amount of funds required to achieve results.
    - ✧ Enthusiasm that board members have for personally working on a topic.
    - ✧ Interests of other stakeholders.

The executive director can help to organize and facilitate meetings of target area groups at which board members will be present to discuss community issues. This community meeting or hearing is required by many states or CAAs. It is an excellent way to determine the "fit" between board member perceptions and the opinions of people who may be affected by those decisions.

6. Goal setting. Once the board has selected some problems or opportunities as the priority areas it wants to work on, test out some goals that are phrased in terms of changing the conditions of that problem. Goals are typically multi-year because they usually take two to five years to make a significant change in a social problem.

7. Strategy selection. There are often a variety of ways to accomplish a goal. The strategy should modify the causes of the problem so that the goal can be achieved. The strategy should be sufficient to accomplish the goal but use the least amount of resources such as financial, energy, political clout, and staff time.

8. Objectives. After the board has selected the goals and the strategies, the executive director can work with the staff to convert them into specific objectives. The objectives are annualized, with quarterly measures to determine progress. The objectives, activities, and attendant budgets are typically what is included in a "program plan" or "grant application." These are generally written by the CAA staff and reviewed by the board of directors. The depth of the review performed by the board is affected by a variety of factors, such as funding source requirements and whether the CAA is public or a private agency.

At this point, again review possible private and public resources and then proceed to mobilize those resources. Those resources may take a variety of forms such as money, transportation, volunteer services, and space.

9. Activities. These are the working assignments to staff; the alignment and, if necessary, realignment of the organization and staff responsibilities to achieve the goals. The executive director is responsible for this.The difference between Planning and Strategic Planning

E. Planning Vis-a-Vis Strategic Planning

This chapter has discussed aspects of the CAA Planning process in some detail. At some board meetings there may be references to a type of planning called "Strategic Planning." Generally, Strategic Planning is referring to a different type of planning process than the one discussed in this manual. Many businesses in the private sector and institutions of all types including Community Action Agencies have developed what are referred to as Strategic Plans. A strategic plan involves a rigorous internal and external evaluation of an organization and development of a long term planning document. Often a strategic plan is best developed with the use of an outside consultant. Going through a strategic planning process may be a valuable investment of time and resources for a Community Action Agency. There are considerable resources and models of strategic plans available to CAAs considering the development of a strategic plan.

Appendix C. Advocacy

A. WHAT? WHERE? HOW? WHY?

Advocate is both a noun and a verb. A person who is an advocate is a friend, a helper. To advocate means to speak for. The CAA board advocates, or speaks, on behalf the poor -- in support of them, their needs, or their interests. The board can support and reflect the will of the poor where the poor are not likely to be heard. Low-income people must be allowed and encouraged to speak for themselves, and assisted to learn how to effectively advocate for their own interests. The CAA can provide that assistance.

Why advocate? In advocating, the board:

- ✧ Sets an example for the poor.
- ✧ Supports the efforts of the poor.
- ✧ Brings about institutional understanding and change.

Where to advocate? It may take place at:

- ✧ Meetings of civic, social, and church groups and local governments.
- ✧ In interviews with the media.
- ✧ At places of work and sessions of business and professional organizations.
- ✧ At nonpartisan rallies and other legal gatherings.

Advocacy principles. Advocacy must be carried out:

- ✧ In the best interests of the poor.
- ✧ In accordance with applicable statutes and regulations.

Advocacy techniques. Techniques include:

- ✧ Individual or group action.
- ✧ Negotiating.
- ✧ Publicizing a need for change.
- ✧ Publicizing successful efforts and programs.
- ✧ Stimulating and supporting legislative changes.

B. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Advocacy can be non-controversial, and it can be controversial.

Advocacy implies a desire or request for change. Other people may or may not agree with the need for the particular change, and some people simply do not want any change of any type, period.

Advocacy can be controversial if it involves techniques that some find undesirable, such as picketing, leafleting, or other forms of direct action, whether the purpose of the advocacy is seen as valid or not.

Advocacy can be accepted on behalf of an individual but become controversial if pursued to benefit a whole group or community. Some people simply do not like the personalities of people who are outspoken or who criticize existing institutions.

Advocacy can be controversial if it is perceived that it is being supported with public funds. Some people feel that their tax funds should not be used to pursue changes in society or to provide services to individuals unless they personally agree with those changes or purposes. Some CAAs make sure that only private funds are used to support advocacy efforts.

In most situations, the legal limits to what a CAA can do with public funds to promote advocacy are far wider than what the general public perceives. You can be completely legal in your

approach but still lose in the arena of public opinion. These are trade-offs that need to be weighed. Advocacy is an area where individual board members can often be more effective as advocates than paid staff. Board members have a constituency. They are leaders and can exercise leadership on an issue in ways that a staff person could be criticized for doing.

The fear of controversy alone should not in and of itself be the reason for avoiding advocacy. In fact, change often involves controversy. There are, however, practical limits on the number of issues on which change can be sought at any one point. It takes time to build the agreement needed to secure change. It takes resources. Most CAAs find that they can sustain only one or two major social change efforts involving controversial advocacy at any one point in time.

Nobody wins them all, but a nonprofit agency that takes on more issues than it can handle, or that loses most of them, may be perceived as just a troublemaker or as ineffectual.

On the other hand, a CAA that never advocates for social change, and that always plays it safe in terms of the boundaries of controversy, may not be as proactive on social issues as it could be.

Some examples of successful CAA actions

1. In a midwestern city, expensive high-rises replaced tenements. No arrangements were made for former tenants. To make things worse, there were discriminatory practices in housing sales and rentals in other parts of the city. In this case, the local CAA, the NAACP, the Council of Churches, League of Women Voters, two neighborhood organizations, and local university officials joined forces. They produced a strong turnout at city council meetings and requested (and got) a strong, fair housing ordinance.

2. CAAs have publicized public agency actions that worked against the poor, and those actions and policies were changed.

3. YMCAs and YWCAs have been persuaded to start programs for the poor.

4. The American Bar Association was persuaded to endorse the legal services program and to encourage its members to serve on a volunteer, or partly volunteer, basis.

5. Foundations have been persuaded to fund minority groups.

6. A CAA in Massachusetts identified a problem in civil service law. Under this law, even agencies that had trained non-professionals--and wanted to hire them--could not. With the help of the public welfare and mental health agencies, the CAA got the law changed.

7. One famous historical example is Louisville, Kentucky, where the CAA sought greater involvement of the poor. It allocated $300,000 for a community effort and $350,000 for use by the 10 neighborhood councils at their own discretion. In just one year they had the following accomplishments:

   * Recognition of the councils by the board of aldermen as official spokespersons for their areas.

   * Passage of a policy requiring that spokespersons for all city projects be cleared by the councils.

   * Hiring of a special assistant by the housing authority to deal specifically with residents' problems.

   * Reinstatement of kindergartens and establishment of evening high school equivalency courses in the public schools.

   * Adoption by the board of education of a committee report calling for teacher aides, volunteers, and parent advisory groups in the schools.

   * Establishment of a committee on teacher education at the University of Louisville to prepare teachers for positions in inner city schools.

* Establishment of an industry-based program called JOBS NOW for the unemployed.

* Volunteering of affluent groups to help residents of poor communities carry out neighborhood improvement projects.

Advocacy can be one of the board's most important and rewarding functions.

Appendix D. Participation of Low-Income People

The mission of the CAA is to enable and assist people to attain skills, knowledge, motivations, and opportunities needed for them to become more self-sufficient and independent. One way to do this is through their participation in various activities of the CAA and in the community--in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of programs affecting their lives. Low-income people have talents and resources necessary to help reduce problems of poverty. They can judge effects of programs on their lives. And their involvement is necessary to build understanding. Most states recognize the poor as a valuable resource, and require participation of the poor in all programs supported with CSBG funds.

State CSBG administering agencies provide support by:

- ✧ Funding agencies to carry out purposes of the CSBG.
- ✧ Ensuring that direct involvement of the poor is maintained and increased.
- ✧ Requiring that all funding applications clearly show a course of action that will improve involvement of the poor.
- ✧ Offering policy, guidance, training, and technical assistance to help grantees in efforts to involve the poor.
- ✧ Encouraging other agencies and organizations (national, state, and local) to adopt strong policies for participation of the poor.

CAAs can encourage, assist, and strengthen the ability of the poor to play major roles in:

- ✧ Organization (committees, staff).
- ✧ Program planning.
- ✧ Goal setting.
- ✧ Determination of priorities.
- ✧ Decisions about budgeting and financial management.
- ✧ Key decisions on personnel, policies, number and type of non-professional jobs, training, and career development programs.
- ✧ Evaluation of programs affecting their lives.

A CAA has a basic responsibility to:

- ✧ Seek and find ways to improve its effectiveness as a channel through which the public and private sectors and the poor can communicate, plan, and act together.
- ✧ Provide representatives of the poor with guidance, training, and staff assistance so they can participate fully in the CAA's affairs and programs.
- ✧ Encourage development of effective local organizations that are established and controlled by residents of target areas.
- ✧ Provide training, technical assistance, and staff resources to enable the poor to develop, administer, and participate effectively in local programs.
- ✧ Provide employment for low-income people and residents of areas served in all phases of the programs.
- ✧ Continually ensure that delegate agencies involve those individuals affected by their programs in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of their programs.

- ✧ Work for acceptance by other local agencies and organizations of the involvement of the poor in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of all of their activities affecting the poor and in hiring low-income individuals.

Participation varies in form in each community. Low-income people can be involved by serving on the boards of neighborhood or target area organizations. These groups may take part in:

- ✧ Planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating publicly-funded programs (supported by federal, state, or local funds) that are operating locally.
- ✧ Ensuring that existing and proposed services in their areas are responsive and relevant to local problems, needs, and conditions.
- ✧ Helping to establish new target area or neighborhood organizations.
- ✧ Providing adequate support, guidance, training, and technical assistance to help the poor speak effectively and attract added resources.

Each CAA should assist these geographic or interest-area organizations in efforts to improve existing service programs and bring new ones to the community.

Success of the CAA in these efforts will be judged by the ability of area organizations to deal effectively with public and private agencies, and to obtain and allocate additional resources to meet the needs of area residents.

In summary, resident participation can take place by creating new organizations or expanding existing ones. It can occur in relationship to the activities of the CAA itself or in relationship to other organizations and institutions. It can take place through activities such as:

- ✧ Representation on the CAA board and its committees.
- ✧ Representation on other community decision-making bodies.
- ✧ Advising the CAA and other decision-making bodies.
- ✧ Seeking direct redress of conditions of poverty.
- ✧ Involvement in the operation of anti-poverty programs.
- ✧ Participation in the community's social and political processes.
- ✧ Involvement in neighborhood groups that:
  - ▫ Improve communications between poor and non-poor.
  - ▫ Decrease isolation of the poor.
  - ▫ Engage residents in planning their own futures.
  - ▫ Protect the democratic process.
  - ▫ Guarantee grassroots impact on decision-making processes.
  - ▫ Provide a sense of community unity and identity.

Appendix E. Group Decision Making[1]

Groups make decisions in many ways. Some are better than others.

1. Decision by lack of response

The floors of many group meeting rooms are completely covered by ideas, statements, and motions that have gone nowhere. Someone has proposed something, and this has been followed by discussions, other proposals, more ideas, perhaps some argument, then more suggestions, until, finally, the group settles on one it will act on. All the others have simply been bypassed in a common decision not to support them. In this process, endurance and persistence can prevail!

2. Decision by authority rule

Many groups set up a power structure or start with a power structure in which one person (occasionally a small group) makes the decisions. The others in the body, board, committee, etc., can only contribute ideas, suggestions and/or recommendations, but stop short of making the actual decision (selection of one of the ideas) and look to the authority person or small group to determine the final step. This process is usually more rapid, and may actually be more efficient (in terms of the group's energy input versus the output). However, quite often the group discovers that none of its ideas is selected, and something quite different is opted for by the authority person. This usually causes problems when the group faces the implementation phase of the decision it did not help to choose. The group must be aware ahead of time of this potential consequence of the authority-rule decision-making method. This process is often seen at work when a larger group or board allows the executive committee to make final decisions in the interest of expediency, perhaps because of geography or some other obstacle.

3. Decision by a minority

Feeling railroaded into making a decision is one of the most common complaints of group/board members. One person can railroad a decision by preempting the buildup of opposition to his or her idea(s). A small group, no more than three individuals, can be very effective in controlling the discussion in a larger group. Quite often an individual's silence in a public gathering is construed as consent or acquiescence, even agreement. When questioned later in private, many individuals will state their opposition to the railroaded action, or at least express complaints about the tough, organized, sometimes strong-arm tactics, but the decision stands. When objection is actually voiced, you will hear: "Everyone had a chance to speak up. You did, too! You could have disagreed." The trap is the assumption that silence is consent.

4. Decision by majority rule: Voting and/or polling

This method is the most familiar primarily because it reflects our political system. In its simplest form, each individual opinion is sought after an agreed-to period of discussion, often on the pros and cons of an idea, either in an informal poll, or in a more formal process of asking for votes for, votes against, and abstentions. On the surface, this method, which we so often take for granted as the only way to proceed, does have consequences that the group should consider.

[1] Adapted from formulations by Robert Balke.

a. The process itself creates two groups--those for something and those against it. This has a tendency, when repeated often, to form coalitions--the winners and the losers. The winners are preoccupied with what they won. The losers become preoccupied with winning the next confrontation. A board meeting turns into an athletic contest.

b. The losers come to feel misunderstood, incapable, and resentful. Majority members (the winners) grow to feel increasingly capable of conducting the group's business without the losers. They also grow in power.

5. Decision by consensus

This is probably the most effective group decision-making method. It is also the most time-consuming. It is important to note that consensus is not the same thing as unanimity. Consensus does not demand that everyone in the group agree. It does require that everyone has a full opportunity to express his/her feelings about an issue, accept that each has had an effect on an ultimate decision, avoid formal protocols (vote taking, roll calls), and test the sense of the meeting.

When it appears that most favor a particular alternative, and those who oppose it accept that they have had a fair opportunity to influence the others, then a consensus exists. It is a psychological state that can be expressed as follows: "I know how most of you feel about the issue and what you would like to do about it. I personally would not do that, and I feel that you understand what my alternative would be. I have had sufficient opportunity to sway you to my point of view but clearly have not been able to do it. Therefore, in the interest of the group, I will go along with what most of you want to do."

This attitude is a commitment not to act negatively or attempt to sabotage the implementation phase of the decision. Again, it is the most time-consuming process, but a group that has learned to function this way is more effective than the group that employs majority rule.

6. Decision by unanimous consent

This method is the most perfect of all decision-making methods, and the most difficult to attain. Unanimous consent means everyone truly agrees on the course of action to be taken by the group. The group itself must decide when, and in what kinds of issues, matters, or situations it would require unanimous consent. Most often, it is not necessary to achieve unanimous consent in order to conduct a group's business effectively, and it would have a tendency to be highly inefficient. There are goals for which groups can obtain unanimous consent, but most often the problems arise over how the goals are to be achieved. Because a group can achieve unanimous consent for a specific goal, it must not assume that unanimity (or even consent) will last throughout the whole process of reaching that goal.

Appendix F. Selected Readings

Andringa, Robert C., and Theodore Wilhelm Engstrom. *Nonprofit Board Answer Book.* National Center for Nonprofit Boards. Washington, D.C. 1998. (202/452-6262 - call for a catalog.)

Barnet, Richard J., and John Cavanagh. *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Bradford, Leland P. *Making Meetings Work: A Guide For Leaders and Group Members.* LaJolla, CA: University Associates, 1976.

Burbidge, John. *Beyond Prince and Merchant: Citizen Participation and the Rise Of Civil Society.* New York: Pact Publications, 1997. (212/697-6222 - call for a catalog.)

Carver, John, and Marlan Mayhew Carver. *Reinventing Your Board: A Step-By-Step Guide To Implementing Policy Governance.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997. (800/956-7739 - call for a catalog.)

Chait, Richard P. *How To Help Your Board Govern More and Manage Less.* Washington, D. C.: National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1993. (202/452-6262)

Conrad, William R., and William E. Glenn. *The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors: What It Is and How It Works.* Chicago: Swallow Press, 1983.

Didsbury, Howard F. *Future: Opportunity Not Destiny.* Bethesda, MD: World Future Society, 1990.

Drucker, Peter F. *Managing the Non-profit Organization: Principles and Practices.* New York: Harper Collins, 1990.

Lawson, Leslie G., Franklyn Donant, and John Lawson. *Lead On! The Complete Handbook For Group Leaders.* San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1982.

Rifkin, Jeremy, and Robert L. Heilbroner. *The End of Work; The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era.* New York: G.P. Putnam, 1995.

Smucker, Bob. *The Nonprofit Lobbying Guide: Advocating Your Cause - and Getting Results.* Washington, D.C.: 1991. 800/575-2666.

Swanson, A. *The Determinative Team: A Handbook for Board Members of Volunteer Organizations.* Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1978.

Wilson, William Julius. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor.* New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996.

Appendix G. Documents Board Members May Find Useful

1. Organizational documents

- Articles of Incorporation
- Tax-exempt status from IRS

2. Board of directors

- Bylaws
- Membership list
- Committee structure, functions, and membership
- Board calendar

3. Agency management

- Mission statement
- Goals and objectives
- Strategic plan (two to five years)
- Program plans (usually one year)
- Program monitoring, assessment, and evaluation information
- Personnel policies
- Administrative and program policies
- Public relations policies
- Organizational chart
- Job descriptions
- Salary and compensation plan

5. Agency financial documents

- Fiscal policies
- Annual budget
- Funding sources and amounts
- Insurance coverage
- Financial reports
- Grant applications
- Annual audit

6. Agency staff

- Staff directory
- Annual personnel evaluations of executive director

Appendix H. Documents Related to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

A CAA should have a manual that includes all relevant CSBG information. Some of the materials that might be included in it are listed below. These are the federal and state frameworks and operating rules. Staff will spend far more time with these than board members, but board members should be aware that these are the documents that describe the basic requirements for CAAs.

CSBG contract. A copy of the CAA's CSBG contract with the state.

Request for local plan. The annual "Request for Local Plan" or whatever it is called by the state.

CSBG state plan. This is the plan the state office prepares and submits to the federal government each year in compliance with the requirements of the CSBG.

State law. This describes the requirements for the state funding agency and for CAA operations.

State regulations. These are the rules that the state department promulgates and uses to administer the CSBG. These are the state's requirements for planning, managing, and evaluating CSBG-funded programs.

Open meeting requirements. (Some states.)

Federal law. This is the Community Services Block Grant Act that is itself part of the Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended.

Federal regulations. [45CFR (Code of Federal Regulations), Part 96] These are the federal implementing regulations. They cover CSBG, LIHEAP, and other acts.

Poverty income guidelines. They list the family size and income guidelines for eligibility for CSBG and some other services.

Office of Management and Budget circulars.

OMB Circular A-102, Attachment C. Describes the uniform administrative requirements on handling cash, bonding, etc.

OMB Circular A-110, Attachment C. Describes record-keeping requirements and handling of program income.

OMB Circular A-110, Attachment F. Describes standards for financial management systems.

OMB Circular A-128. Discusses single audit requirements for certain types of agencies.

Appendix I. Acronyms

Following is a glossary for some of the acronyms frequently heard in CAAs.

AAA	Area Agency on Aging (now called Agency on Aging)
A/P	Accounts payable
A/R	Accounts receivable
AFDC	Aid to Families With Dependent Children
CAA	Community Action Agency
CAB	Community Action Board (required of a public CAA)
CAC	Community Action Council (can be either a CAA or the name for an advisory council)
CCCC	Child Care Coordinating Council (day care standards) (4Cs)
CSS	Catholic Social Services (now called Catholic Charities)
CAP	Community Action Program (also used synonymously with CAA)
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1972 (replaced by JTPA in 1982)
CFNP	Community Food and Nutrition Programs
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COA	Commission or Council on Aging
CPA	Certified Public Accountant
CSA	Community Services Administration (no longer in existence as of October, 1981)
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant Act Of 1981 (created as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981)
DOE	Department of Energy
DOL	Department of Labor
ECIP	Energy Crisis Intervention Program
EEO	Equal Employment Officer/Office
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EFMS	Emergency Food and Medical Services
EOA	Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (replaced October, 1981)
EOC	Economic Opportunity Commission
EOO	Equal Opportunity Officer/Office
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
ERISA	Employee Retirement Income Security Act
ES	Employment Security
FASB	Financial Accounting Standards Bureau

FEPC	Fair Employment Practices Commission
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FICA	Federal Insurance Contribution Act
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FY	Fiscal Year
GA	General Assistance
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
GAAS	Generally Accepted Auditing Standards
GAGAS	Generally Accepted Government Accounting Standards
HAP	Homeless Assistance Program
HCDA	Housing and Community Development Act
HEAP	Home Energy Assistance Program (also Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)
HEW	Department of Health, Education and Welfare
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services (formerly HEW)
HRD	Human Resources Development
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development (also DHUD)
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act of 1983 (replaced CETA)
LEAA	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
LIHEAP	Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
LULAC	League of United Latin American Citizens
MIS	Management information systems
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NACD	National Association for Community Development
NACAA	National Association of Community Action Agencies
NASCSP	National Association for State Community Services Programs
NCAF	National Community Action Foundation
NOFA	Notice of funding availability
OBRA	Omnibus Budget and Reconciliation Act of 1981 (established the CSBG and other block grants)
OCD	Office of Child Development
OEO	(Federal) Office of Economic Opportunity (became the Community Services Administration in 1975)
OIC	Opportunities Industrialization Center
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMBE	Office of Minority Business Enterprises
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PAC	Policy/Parent Advisory Committee
PAC	Political action committee
PIC	Private Industry Council (for JTPA)
RFP	Request for proposal

SBA Small Business Administration

SDA Service Delivery Area (local area served by JTPA)

SDI State disability insurance

SECTION 8, 202, 236. Various Housing Programs

SEOO State Economic Opportunity Office (new title in most states, State Department of Economic Opportunity)

SJTCC State Job Training Coordinating Council

SSA Social Security Administration

SSI Supplemental Security Income

SUA State Units on Aging

SUI State unemployment insurance

T&TA Training and technical assistance

USDA United States Department Of Agriculture

WIC Women, Infants and Children Program

WIN Work Incentive Program

WRO Welfare Rights Organization

WX Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program

YEP Youth Employment Program (formerly NYC or Neighborhood Youth Corps)

YDP Youth Development Program

YOP Youth Opportunity Program