The National Association of COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT WORKBOOK

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT WORKBOOK

Prepared by

The Center for Community Futures

For

The National Association of Community Action Agencies

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A. OVERVIEW

This Workbook is designed for use by Community Action Agency personnel managers, i.e. those persons in CAAs who work with and through other people to get things done. There are no secret solutions to be found here, no "fairy dust" to sprinkle over the people you work with to make everything go smoothly. No personnel workbook, this one included, can change the fact that personnel management takes time, courage, and is often just plain hard work.

Although this Workbook contains no magic solutions, it will help you work smarter. The pages that follow contain a wide range of successful personnel management techniques that have been field tested and refined by your CAA colleagues throughout the country. You can, then, learn from their mistakes without having to repeat them.

You can read through this Workbook and take what you can from it without any other input on your part. You will benefit more, however, if you take the time to do the exercises that are included. Simply stated, adults learn best by doing. As appropriate, you may also want to have your colleagues, subordinates, and CAA Board and committee members do some of these exercises as well. You and they will learn a great deal through comparing and contrasting your respective answers.

B. WORKBOOK DEVELOPMENT

This Workbook was developed in large part by John Johnston, a former CAA and State Economic Opportunity Office director. He also served as the director of a non-profit training center for CAAs. Over the past 15 years he has worked with CAAs in more than 40 states. Jim Masters of the Center for Community Futures, Berkeley, California contributed valuable suggestions and editorial assistance as did the staff of the National Association of Community Action Agencies (NACAA).

If you have questions about any of the ideas in this workbook, call John Johnston at (913) 841-2599 for a free phone consultation.

II. THE CAA PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

A. CAA PERSONNEL POLICIES

In theory, personnel management in CAAs is merely a matter of implementing a set of personnel policies developed and adopted by the CAA's governing board. In practice, however, it is not that simple. Almost all CAA personnel policy documents have had a variety of authors, and these authors have not always had the same concerns and were not always pursuing the same ends. Most of these documents have been altered and amended over a long period of time without careful thought and editing and contain wording and policy components that are inconsistent or even contradictory. Finally, various CAA personnel policies have been adopted in response to the concerns and in some case the demands of very different constituencies; funding sources, agency staff, community based organizations, low income groups, and units of local government. It is not surprising, then, that these policies are not models of brevity, clarity, and consistency.

A logical starting point for improving personnel management in any CAA is a critical examination of the personnel policies the CAA has adopted. The following exercise in its present form or a form modified to suit a CAA's unique needs can be used for this purpose.

Exercise 1

Personnel Policy Review

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

To what extent do our CAA's personnel policies...	Rating Low Med High
1. Reflect and support the CAA's mission	— — —
2. Contain elements that are unclear or vaguely stated	— — —
3. Require the staff to make major policy decisions before they can be implemented	— — —
4. Take into account the capacity of the staff to implement them	— — —
5. Make efficient and effective use of staff time and talents	— — —
6. Make efficient and effective use of Board time and talents	— — —
7. Conform to applicable state and federal laws and regulations	— — —

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8.   Support the CAA's established chain of command

                                                                  — — —

9.   Address all components of matters to which they relate

                                                                  — — —

10.   Conform to previously adopted personnel policies

                                                                  — — —

11.   Insure that personnel decisions are made in an equitable, consistent manner

                                                                   — — —

Clearly, modifications are in order in a CAA's personnel policies and perhaps even in the CAA's policy making processes wherever the above exercise results in "low" or "medium" assessments of these policies. If the shortcomings identified through this analysis have not already led to problems they soon will. CAA personnel policies are only a "means" to an end, not an end in themselves. If these policies are not clear, coherent, and consistent they are not useful tools for CAA managers.

B. WORK PROGRAMS AND CONTRACTS

Further complicating the task of CAA personnel managers is the fact that CAA "ends" in the form of agency work programs and contracts are often even less clear than CAA personnel policies. This leads to a variety of problems as these documents are the primary "scorecards" that CAA managers use to judge how well they and their subordinates are doing.

Ideally, work programs and contracts should contain goals and objectives that are clear, measurable statements of what agency staff are to accomplish and equally clear, measurable statements relating to what difference these efforts are supposed to make in the lives of CAA target populations. In practice, this rarely occurs.

In some cases the language of CAA work programs and contracts is based on the provisions of state or federal legislation. In other cases these documents are based on views and opinions solicited from members of agency target populations. In either case this can leave CAA managers the task of making sense of what is often a bewildering mixture of descriptions of target populations, problems to be addressed, problem causes that are deemed significant, and strategies to be used.

To take but one of many possible examples, Section 675(c) of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act describes allowable uses of CSBG funds in the following terms.

      * To provide a range of services having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty.

      * To provide activities designed to assist low-income participants...

           -to secure and retain meaningful employment;

           -to attain an adequate education;

           -to make better use of available income;

           -to obtain and maintain adequate housing;

           -to obtain emergency assistance to meet urgent...needs;

-to remove obstacles and solve problems which block the achievement of self-sufficiency;

-to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;

-to make more effective use of programs related...to this subtitle;

-to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition;

-to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and other social service programs; and,

-to encourage the use of entities in the private sector...in efforts to ameliorate poverty.

When analyzed, the statements contained in Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act are neither mutually exclusive nor internally consistent. That is, this Section of the Act contains four different types of statements that range from the very general to statements that are quite specific. Exercise 2 can be used to sort these statements into four categories.

Exercise 2

Analysis of Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

1. What part of Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act is a statement of purpose? (A statement of purpose is very general in nature.)

2. What part of Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act is a mission statement? (A mission statement broadly describes how a statement of purpose will be pursued.)

3. What parts of Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act describe problems that CSBG funds can be used to address? (Problems are defined in terms of measurable conditions.)

4. What parts of Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act describe strategies that can be used to address problems listed in this Section of the Act? (Strategies describe what will be done to solve identified problems.)

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Using the definitions provided in parentheses Exercise 2 provides the following analysis of Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act.

Statement of Purpose

* To remove obstacles and solve problems which block the achievement of self-sufficiency.

Mission

* To provide a range of services having a measurable and potentially measurable impact on causes of poverty

Problem Areas

* Employment
* Education
* Use of available income
* Housing
* Emergency needs
* Starvation and malnutrition

Strategies to Address Problem Causes

* Make more effective use of programs
* Achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community
* Coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and other social service programs
* Encourage the use of entities in the private sector...in efforts to ameliorate poverty

Clearly, any CAA personnel manager assigned responsibility for implementing all or part of a work program or contract base on the statements in Section 675 (c) of the CSBG Act who assumes these statements to be co-equal is in for trouble. It is not possible to make coherent work assignments or to accurately track the progress subordinates are making without performing the sort of analysis done above.

CAA managers who are given responsibility for implementing work programs or contracts that are based directly on the views and opinions of members or representatives of agency target populations regarding the "needs" of these populations encounter a slightly different version of the dilemma outlined above. That is, they too face the task of making sense of a confusing mix of target populations, problems, problem causes, and program strategies.

Taking an example that focuses on housing, the following are typical of the comments received during community needs assessment meetings.

What are our housing needs? Well...

A. We don't have bond money for housing like they do in West Nowhere.
B. Interest rates are too high.
C. We need a housing counseling program.

D. Too many people in this area live in lousy houses.
E. Landlords won't rent to unmarried women, especially unmarried women with kids.
F. We don't have a Fair Housing Ordinance.
G. People don't know about available housing programs.

Exercise 3

Analysis of Needs Assessment Input

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

1. Which one of the seven statements listed above describes a problem expressed in terms of a measurable condition?

2. Which three of the seven statements listed above describe causes of the problem that is the answer to Question 1?

3. Which three of the seven statements listed above represent strategies to address the problem causes thatare the answers to Question 2?

When properly sorted, the seven needs assessment comments listed above relate as follows.

Problem
Too many people live in lousy houses.

Problem Causes
High interest rates
Discrimination by landlords
Lack of information

Strategies to Address Problem Causes
Issue bonds
Enact a fair housing ordinance
Provide housing counseling

Obviously, any manager given the task of organizing and tracking the efforts of persons implementing work programs or contracts based on unsorted needs assessment input is in the same untenable situation as a manager faced with implementing undifferentiated elements of the CSBG Act. If the seven needs assessment statements listed above are taken to be equivalent in nature, and if work assignments are made in the absence of a sorting process it is impossible for managers to meaningfully track the work of subordinates or to determine the impact their efforts are having on the lives of low income people.

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However, if they closely analyze the work programs and contracts for which they are responsible using the techniques outlined above managers can take a true leadership role. That is, they can describe and direct the work of their program or unit in terms such as the following:

After sorting out the conflicting elements in our agency's various work programs and contracts I have determined that we are charged with making low-income families "self-sufficient". To this end we are responsible for helping 40 persons find "meaningful employment", and to do this we are to help them "make more effective use" of available programs and services. Joe, in the next 12 months as part of your duties I want you to refer 20 persons to area employment programs and to follow up as necessary to insure that at least 5 of these people get and keep jobs that pay enough to get their families out of poverty. Mary, you will be responsible for...

III. Personnel Management Tools

A. MISSION

The logical basis for all decisions made in a CAA including all personnel management decisions is the agency's mission. Every decision made should both conform to and support this mission. When CAA missions are reduced to written form mission statements typically include four elements in any of a variety of combinations. These elements include...

Givens
Mission statements set out fundamental assumptions.

Whats
Mission statements indicate in a general way what will be done.

Hows
Mission statements describe in a general way how activities will be carried out.

Results
Mission statements describe expected end results.

The following is an actual CAA mission statement that is offered as an example, not a model. As is evident, references to the agency's name and service area have been deleted. Otherwise, the statement appears as it was adopted by the CAA's Board of Directors.

The mission of [the CAA] is to promote public understanding of the causes and conditions of poverty in [this area], and understanding of the attitudinal and institutional barriers to self-sufficiency low-income people face through advocacy of sound, humane public policies on the problems of poverty.

[The CAA] will encourage self-sufficiency through self-help through individual and community education and through encouraging opportunities for effective community participation by low-income people.

Finally, [the CAA] will improve the quality of life by mobilizing the necessary resources-public, private, financial, and human-to support the efficient, humane operations of a range of programs and services for low-income people which meet basic survival needs, and which offer the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary to achieve individual family and community self-sufficiency.

As is the case in this example, most CAA mission statements are not useful management tools in the form they are adopted. Managers, then, need to sort out the givens, whats, hows, and results of their respective agency mission statements before they be used as the basis for everyday CAA decision making.

Exercise 4

Mission Statement Analysis

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

1. List the "givens" in the mission statement provided above.

2. List the "whats" in the mission statement provided above.

3. List the "hows" in the mission statement provided above.

4. List the end "results" in the mission statement provided above.

Sorting out givens, whats, hows, and results in any mission statement is both an art and a science in the best of circumstances, and sometimes mission statements are so vague that it also partly a matter of conjecture. Nonetheless, the effort is worth the trouble because it yields a logical basis for making day to day personnel management decisions.

One way to sort out elements of the mission statement provided above is as follows.

Mission Statement Analysis

1. List the "givens" in the mission statement provided above.

    A) The public does not understand the causes and conditions of poverty in [the area].

    B) The public does not understand the attitudinal and institutional barriers to self-sufficiency low-income people in [the area] face.

2. List the "whats" in the mission statement provided above.

    A) [The agency] will advocate sound, human public policies on the problems of poverty.

    B) [The agency] will encourage self-sufficiency through self-help.

    C) [The agency] will improve the quality of life.

3. List the "hows" in the mission statement provided above.

    A) Provide individual and community education.

    B) Encourage community participation by low-income people.

    C) Mobilize necessary recources.

    D) Operate a range of programs and services that meet basic survival needs and that offer knowledge, skills and opportunities

4. List the end "results" in the mission statement provided above.

    A) Public understanding of poverty

    B) Self-sufficiency for low-income people

    In the following exercise, sort out the givens, whats, hows, and results in your CAA's mission statement.

Exercise 5

Individual CAA Mission Statement Analysis

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

1. List the "givens" in your CAA's mission statement.

2. List the "whats" in your CAA's mission statement.

3. List the "hows" in your CAA's mission statement.

4. List the end "results" in your CAA's mission statement.

Having analyzed your CAA's mission statement in this way you may want to incorporate any new understandings reached in future personnel management decisions, or you may want to amend your CAA's mission statement so that it more closely reflects the nature and purpose of your agency.

B. PROGRAM/PROJECT DESIGN

Section II B, above, discusses two aspects of the CAA personnel management environment that make the jobs of managers more difficult, and offers a general solution in the form of a clear way of conceptualizing poverty related program operations efforts. This is a necessary beginning, but it is not sufficient by itself to simplify the tasks of CAA managers. Every CAA program has two other components, and similar efforts need to be made to lend clarity to them as well.

Specifically, in addition to program operations elements, every CAA program also has administrative and program development components. These two components and their respective sub-components are listed below.

Administration

    Fiscal Management

    Personnel Management

    Property Management

Board Operations

Program Development

Coordination and Linkages

Public Information

Resource Mobilization

Board/Staff Development

On rare occasions funding sources contract directly for all three of the program components described above. More often, however, they provide funding only for program operations or for program operations and program administration. (How often do funding sources allow grantees to indicate in a budget and work program that they will use part of this year's funds to develop a proposal for funds for next year? It obviously happens, though. Refunding packages come from somewhere, and they cost something to produce.)

No matter what the form or format of the work programs or contracts involved, the easiest way to succeed as a CAA manager is to do three things with these documents. First, split them into the three components described above adding components and sub-elements as necessary. Second, identify both what will be done and what difference it will make. That is, identify both outputs and outcomes for each component. Third, quantify every element of each of the components and sub-elements. These three steps provide a complete, measurable set of objectives that can then be broken down into fully quantified work assignments for persons acting individually or in any combination.

It is not mandatory, but it makes work assignments easier to make and carry out if different sets of quantification labels are chosen for each of the three components. Administrative tasks, for example, can be characterized as being either "activities" or "products"; program operations tasks as "performance" or "impact"; and, program development tasks as "efforts" or "results".

An example of a quantified fiscal operations *activity* would be twelve bank statement reconciliations. Four quarterly reports, twelve monthly financial statements, etc. would be fiscal operations products. Program operations *performance* examples would be ten hours of counseling, the provision of direct assistance on three occasions, eight hours of instruction, or similar staff outputs. Impact examples would focus on what actually happened in the lives of program participants; one job found, five families moving into quality housing, six meals eaten, etc. Finally, a program development resource mobilization effort might be the drafting and submission of two funding proposals. The *result* might be the acquisition of at least $50,000.

Use Exercise 6 to practice sorting, labeling, and quantifying work program and contract elements.

Exercise 6

Sorting and Quantifying Work Program and Contract Elements

Instructions: Sort the following work program/contract statements into administration, program operations, and program development elements. Then, quantify each statement. (Just make up the numbers. The format is important, here, not the numbers used.)

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Under the terms of this work program/contract this Agency will...

1. Provide quality housing counseling

2. Maintain necessary fiscal records

3. Work effectively with area housing groups and organizations

4. Hold regular advisory board meetings

5. Sponsor home repair workshops

6. Inform the public about area housing problems and issues

7. Increase access to available housing loan programs

8. Assign work to program staff as appropriate

9. Mobilize additional housing resources

I. Administration

i. Fiscal Management

ii. Personnel Management

iii. Property Management

iv. Board Operations

II. Program Operations

III. Program Development

i. Coordination and Linkages

ii. Public Information

iii. Resource Mobilization

iv. Board/Staff Development

In the absence of information about the magnitude of the housing problem in an area, specific funding source reporting requirements, the resources available, etc. the numbers used below are obviously made up and unimportant. Again, it is the format that is significant. Quality personnel management is impossible if people do not know exactly what they are supposed to do.

Sorting and quantifying the nine work program/contract statements provided above can be done as follows.

I. Administration

i. Fiscal Management

(2) Fiscal records

Activities: Do 12 bank statement reconciliations.

Products: Develop 12 monthly fiscal and 4 quarterly reports.

ii. Personnel Management

(8) Assign work

Activities: Attend 12 monthly staff meetings.

Products: Complete 36 staff assignment and tracking worksheets (one per month for each of three staff).

iii. Property Management

(none)

iv. Board Operations

(4) Advisory board meetings

Activities: Hold 6 bi-monthly meetings.

Products: Prepare 6 sets of meeting minutes.

II. Program Operations

(1) Housing Counseling

Performance: Provide a total of 100 hours of housing counseling to 15 families.

Impact: Have 4 families move from substandard to quality housing as a result of counseling.

(5) Home repair workshops

Performance: Provide 4 two-hour home repair workshops with an average attendance of 10 persons per workshop.

Impact: Have 6 persons make home repairs that save a total of $700.

(7) Loan Programs

Performance: Package and submit 8 applications for housing loans.

Impact: Have 2 families receive subsidized housing loans that save them $25,000 compared to market rate loans.

III. Program Development

i. Coordination and Linkages

(3) Work with area housing groups/organizations.

Efforts: Attend 14 interagency housing meetings.

Results: At least 3 area groups/organizations will make available five new units of affordable housing.

ii. Public Information

(6) Inform the public.

Efforts: Make 10 presentations to civic organizations.

Results: At least 3 civic organizations will become actively involved in Agency activities.

iii. Resource Mobilization

(9) Mobilize resources

Efforts: Prepare 4 funding proposals.

Results: Acquire at least 1 new grant totaling $40,000.

iv. Board/Staff Development

C. SUBORDINATE MOTIVATION AND CONTROL

This section deals with topics that typically come to mind when the subject of personnel management is raised; (1) personnel manuals, (2) job descriptions, (3) work assignment and tracking systems, and (4) performance appraisal systems.

1. Personnel Manuals

The title on the front cover of a CAA personnel manual can be misleading, at best because there is often little relationship between what is described there and what is found inside. Many "Personnel Policy" or "Personnel Policy and Procedure" Manuals contain no policies, and most "Personnel Procedures" manuals contain both procedures and policies. In fact, most CAA personnel manuals have mixed together personnel policies and personnel procedures in a bewildering variety of combinations. Sound personnel management, then, is possible only if managers make an effort to distinguish their agency's policies from its procedures before applying either.

CAA policies in regard to any personnel subject can be stated in a sentence or two or, at most, a short paragraph, and an entire body of CAA personnel policies can be set out in a page or two. In contrast, personnel procedures can be as detailed as a CAA wants to make them. Pages can be used to address a single subject.

Twenty-five years ago CAAs typically had Personnel Manuals that consisted mostly of policy statements, and these documents were a half dozen or so pages long. As the years have passed, CAA personnel manuals have gotten longer and more detailed as agencies have reacted to requests and mandates by funding sources and dealt with the aftermath of grievances, complaints, personnel disasters of all types, and lawsuits.

In the past few years many businesses have concluded that their personnel management efforts are more consistent, less time consuming, and more equitable if they rely more on clearly stated personnel policies and substantially less on detailed personnel procedures. Accordingly, they have greatly strengthened the policy side of their personnel materials and significantly reduced the number and type of personnel procedures they require their managers to follow. Many CAAs would benefit from a similar clarification and streamlining effort. Your CAA may be one such agency.

Whatever choices are made in regard to a CAA's mix of personnel policies and procedures, personnel manuals should address the topics listed in Exercise 7, below.

Exercise 7

Personnel Manual Assessment

Instructions: Use the following format to assess the quality of your CAA's personnel policies and procedures.

Quality of our CAA's Personnel...

Topics	Policies			Procedures		
	Low	Med	Hi	Low	Med	Hi
Introduction	—	—	—	—	—	—
Authority for Administration	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employment Practices (EEO/AA)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employment Eligibility	—	—	—	—	—	—
Types of Employees	—	—	—	—	—	—
Recruitment/Selection/Orientation	—	—	—	—	—	—
Personnel Officials/Files	—	—	—	—	—	—
Conditions of Work	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wage and Salary Administration	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employee Benefits	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employee Reimbursement	—	—	—	—	—	—
Reductions in Force	—	—	—	—	—	—
Performance/Standards of Conduct	—	—	—	—	—	—
Complaints/Grievances	—	—	—	—	—	—
Separation	—	—	—	—	—	—

To the extent that this Exercise identifies weaknesses in a CAA's personnel manual appropriate changes should be made.

2. Job Descriptions

Were it not for the phrase "other duties as assigned" there would be almost no correlation between what employees in some CAA's do and their formal job descriptions. Clearly, this is not an optimum personnel management environment.

Quality job descriptions contain information about six different aspects of a job. These include its title, reporting and supervisory relationships, duties and responsibilities, qualifications and requirements, and remuneration.

Assuming a situation other than the worst case scenario described above in which there is a very limited correlation between employee activities and written job descriptions, the issue in any use of a job

description is typically what is important, not what the related shopping list of job duties are or what qualifications apply.

Exercise 8 explores the perceptions of both supervisors and the people they supervise in this regard. If major differences surface they should be discussed and agreement should be reached as to agency priorities so that everyone is working from the same basic assumptions about what is required of any particular employee. (It is worth noting that studies in a variety of work settings have consistently shown that there is a fifty percent difference between what supervisors think a subordinate's job is and what the subordinate thinks he or she is there to do.)

Exercise 8

Instructions: Supervisors and subordinates can use the following format to provide their assessment of the relative priority and rank order of both the duties and responsibilities and the qualifications and requirements included in a job description.

	Assessment of...	
Job Description Elements	Job Holder	Supervisor
Duties and Responsibilities	Priority Rank Lo/Md/Hi Order	Priority Rank Lo/Md/Hi Order
A.	— — — —	— — — —
B.	— — — —	— — — —
C.	— — — —	— — — —
D.	— — — —	— — — —
E.	— — — —	— — — —
F.	— — — —	— — — —
G.	— — — —	— — — —
H.	— — — —	— — — —
Qualifications and Requirements	Priority Rank Lo/Md/Hi Order	Priority Rank Lo/Md/Hi Order
A.	— — — —	— — — —
B.	— — — —	— — — —
C.	— — — —	— — — —

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D.   — — — —   — — — —

E.   — — — —   — — — —

F.   — — — —   — — — —

G.   — — — —   — — — —

H.   — — — —   — — — —

3. Work Assignment and Tracking Systems

Some CAA supervisors provide their subordinates a written, quantified set of work assignments every month and at the same time review the subordinate's accomplishments for the previous month making adjustments as necessary. Most, however, do not.

Often subordinates are expected to simply react to whatever crosses their desk. Once again, this is not an optimum personnel management environment. Making formal work assignments need not be a complicated or time consuming task, but it should take place routinely. Done properly it only takes ten minutes or so per subordinate per month if the overall work program is clear and fully quantified. Assignments can be made and tracked in the three categories used in Exercise 6, and need be no more complicated than the statements contained in the Exercise's completed example.

Mary, next month I want you to...

* Meet 2 times with the Advisory Board to provide whatever staff support they need (Administration).

* Provide 20 hours of housing counseling to a total of 6 families (Program Operations).

* Have at least 1 family move from inadequate to quality housing (Program Operations).

* Prepare and make a funding presentation at the United Way Board meeting (Program Development).

* Secure $2,000 in United Way funding (Program Development).

In reviewing your efforts last month, you were to...

* Prepare a quarterly progress report for the City by the 15th...which you did (Administration).

* Provide 40 hours of housing counseling to a total of 8 families...you provided 42 hours of counseling to 7 families and year to date we are in good shape (Program Operations).

* Have at least 2 families move from inadequate to quality housing...only 1 did, but year to date you are still ahead of your goals (Program Operations).

* In addition, you spent 2 days helping with the food distribution and one day helping with Head Start enrollment. We did not anticipate this last month. My thanks on both counts. The Agency would have been in a jam if you had not stepped in to help (Program Operations).

* Participate in a 3 day training workshop provided by the State...which you did (Program Development).

Exercise 9

Work Assignments

Instructions: Complete the following work assignments sheet for a subordinate. (Note: This will be much easier to do if you have completed the work program or contract conceptual sorting and quantification process described in Exercise 6 for the components for which you are responsible.)

Administration

A.

B.

C.

D.

Program Operations

A.

B.

C.

D.

Program Development

A.

B.

C.

D.

4. Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals can usefully address three elements: fidelity to the agency's mission; accomplishments in terms of work assigned; and relationships to co-workers, board members, and persons outside the agency. In many CAA's appraisals tend to deal largely if not exclusively with relationships at the expense of attention to the agency's mission and an assessment of work done.

In more direct terms, these systems represent the Boy Scout/Girl Scout approach to performance appraisal. (Joe, in checking the boxes on this form I find that you have been trustworthy, loyal, prompt, well groomed, friendly, courteous, etc. I don't know if you have furthered the mission of the agency or in what respects you have helped it meet its goals, but what the heck. Well done. That stuff is not on this form anyway.)

Performance appraisal systems can address mission issues as well as make informed assessments in regard to work accomplished compared to work assigned under the following conditions.

An agency's mission must be made clear and mission related elements must be included in job description duty and responsibility sections and in qualifications and requirements sections. Mission related issues must also be raised and tracked during the work assignment process. Similarly, the quality and quantity of work accomplished in comparison to work assigned can be meaningfully assessed if expectations in this regard have been made clear and have been accurately tracked. (Consider the results of the work assignments and work assignment tracking done with "Mary" that precede Exercise 9.)

If CAA managers are not clear about their agency's mission, do not clarify what they expect of individual employees, are not using job descriptions tht include mission elements and explicit work responsibilities, and have not made and tracked fully quantified work assignments they cannot expect to be able to appraise more than the personalities and grooming habits of subordinates. Put another way, organizations are perfectly designed to get the results that they get. Any performance appraisal system that focuses on personality traits rather than changes brought about in the lives of poor people does so because it was designed to yield this result.

IV. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

A. RELATIONSHIPS

The National Association of Community Action Agencies' *CAA Executive Directors' Manual, 1989* describes relationships that agency directors and to a lesser extent other CAA senior staff have with five groups and constituencies. These include; agency boards and committees, low-income people, community leaders, agency staff, and funding source officials. The discussions and exercises that follow are designed to help CAA senior staff better understand what is involved in the elements of these relationships that relate to personnel management.

1. Agency Boards and Committees

If they do not function properly Boards and committees can make a wide variety of decisions that make personnel management more difficult in a CAA. One of the best ways to insure a quality personnel management environment in an agency, then, is to improve the policy making of agency boards and committees. Boards are the appropriate source of all major CAA policies including personnel policies, and board policy making can be dramatically improved with a bit of effort. The assessment that is incorporated in Exercise 10 coupled with appropriate follow-up can be an important step in this process. The exercise can be used in a variety of ways but is probably most effective when both individual board members and senior CAA staff complete it anonymously. Staff and board responses can then be tallied separately and compared to identify perceptual differences and problems on both sides of the board/staff relationship. Identified problems can then be prioritized and addressed.

Exercise 10

Improving Board Policy Making

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

---

1. Does the board meet frequently enough to fully transact its business? Yes__ No__

2. Does the board provide its members adequate orientation? Yes__ No__

3. Does the board meet at days and times convenient to its membership? Yes__ No__

4. Does the board have and use a procedure for examining complex questions in detail? Yes__ No__

5. Does the board fill empty seats promptly? Yes__ No__

6. Does the board have and use a procedure for replacing inactive members? Yes__ No__

7. Is the board provided clear, useful material concerning pending policy decisions? Yes__ No__

8. Is the material (Question 7) provided in sufficient time before board meetings? Yes__ No__

9. Do board members devote adequate time to their duties? Yes__ No__

10. Does the board have and use a means of providing members advance notice of topics that will be discussed at meetings? Yes__ No__

11. Is time specifically set aside at board meetings for the board to receive information? Yes__ No__

12. Is time specifically set aside at board meetings for the board to engage in policy making? Yes__ No__

13. Are all members of the board encouraged to participate in discussions? Yes__ No__

14. Does the board president or any other member dominate board discussions? Yes__ No__

15. Does anyone outside the board dominate board discussions? Yes__ No__

16. Does the board have and use a procedure in regard to staff attendance and participation in board discussions? Yes__ No__

17. Does the board meet in a comfortable setting? Yes__ No__

18. Is the seating of board members arranged so that the members are easily identifiable to each other and easily distinguished from non-members? Yes__ No__

19. Does the board engage in informal activities that allow its members to get to know each other? Yes__ No__

20. Does the board attempt to move beyond policy making by majority vote to the building of broad consensus on policies? Yes__ No__

No matter how much care is taken to develop and preserve a constructive partnership all board/staff relationships are subject to the four problems described below. Fortunately, these problems do get resolved rather quickly if staffs and boards simply talk to each other about them.

In no order of importance...

* Staffs tend to assume the policy making role of boards.

* Boards tend to assume the administrative role of staffs.

* Staffs do not provide boards information in an optimum manner...in various combinations they bury boards in information, do not provide enough information, do not reduce information provided to comprehensible form, and, do not provide adequate information to all board members.

* Boards do not observe established chains of command in dealing with individual staff members.

2. Low-Income People

Personnel management and low-income people typically relate directly at two points in CAA operations. First, low-income people are the overall focus of CAA activities as expressed in CAA mission statements and in day-to-day agency decision making. Second, CAA line staff and the people who supervise them often have sustained contact with low-income people, and it is in these relationships and activities that an agency's mission and the decisions of its board and staff relating to low-income people become real.

Decisions of all types made in CAAs including formal and informal assumptions regarding the CAA's mission are grounded in what agency staff and board members think causes poverty and what they think ought to be done about it. In some CAAs, for example, agency officials talk consistently of program "clients" and the general orientation of these agencies is to do things "for" poor people in an effort to change them. In other CAAs the talk is of program "participants" and of doing things "with" poor people to change the environment in which poor people live.

There is nothing inherently "right" or "wrong" with either of these positions, but they are clearly different. At the least, then, CAA boards and staffs need to consciously examine their fundamental assumptions about poverty and its causes to insure that their decisions and actions reflect their assumptions in regard to the nature and causes of poverty.

In approximately three hours a CAA can use the five exercises that follow to examine the assumptions that underlie all agency decision making.

Exercise 11

CAA Target Populations

Instructions: The following grid can be used to identify priority CAA target populations.

Low-Income Target Populations	For Our CAA This Low-Income Target Population is...			Current CAA priority
	a. Somewhat Important	b. Important	c. Very Important	
				Rank Order
Youth				
0-5	_____	_____	_____	_____
5-12	_____	_____	_____	_____
12-18	_____	_____	_____	_____
18-22	_____	_____	_____	_____
				Rank Order
Adults				
22-30	_____	_____	_____	_____
30-55	_____	_____	_____	_____
55+	_____	_____	_____	_____
				Rank Order
Family Income				
0-50% Pov Level	_____	_____	_____	_____
50-75% Pov Level	_____	_____	_____	_____
75-100% Pov Level	_____	_____	_____	_____
100-125% Pov Level	_____	_____	_____	_____

				Rank Order
Household Type				
1 Adult/No Kids	___	___	___	___
1 Adult/Kids	___	___	___	___
2 Adults/No Kids	___	___	___	___
2 Adults/Kids	___	___	___	___
3+ Adults	___	___	___	___

				Rank Order
1 Adult/No Kids				
Adult <30	___	___	___	___
Adult 30-55	___	___	___	___
Adult 55+	___	___	___	___

				Rank Order
1 Adult/Kids				
Adult <30	___	___	___	___
Adult 30-55	___	___	___	___
Adult 55+	___	___	___	___

				Rank Order
2 Adults/No Kids				
Adults 22-30	___	___	___	___
Adults 30-55	___	___	___	___
Adults 55+	___	___	___	___

				Rank Order
2 Adults/Kids				
Adults 22-30	___	___	___	___
Adults 30-55	___	___	___	___
Adults 55+	___	___	___	___

				Rank Order
3+ Adults				
Head Adult 22-30	___	___	___	___
Head Adult 30-55	___	___	___	___
Head Adult 55+	___	___	___	___

When combined with the three exercises that follow, Exercise 12 can be used to show CAA board and staff members that they hold pre-conceived notions about the relative merits of basic human service program strategies, and that these notions serve as the basis for their mission related decisions.

The exercise itself consists of having people select broad program design approaches given three options. So long as each of the questions provide a direct service/income transfer option, an option that

involves engaging the community in a problem solving effort, and an option that involves changing institutions in some way it makes little difference how many questions are used or what their subject matter is.

The questions provided next are but four of many possible examples.

Exercise 12

Basic CAA Program Strategies

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

A. Assume that this agency has decided to address the problem of hunger. Should it...

1. Purchase and distribute food?

2. Promote the establishment of community sponsored pantries?

3. Expand existing public commodities distribution programs?

B. Assume that this agency has decided to address the problem of unemployment. Should it...

1. Provide transportation to job sites?

2. Help community residents start and manage small businesses?

3. Combat race and sex discrimination in employment?

C. Assume that this agency has decided to address the problem of inadequate housing. Should it...

1. Provide housing related information and make referrals?

2. Help a neighborhood group promote housing renovation and improvements?

3. Help establish a local housing development authority with bonding power?

D. Assume that this agency has decided to address problems relating to an inability to meet emergency needs. Should it...

1. Provide cash assistance directly?

2. Help people in the community establish and operate a thrift store?

3.Seek to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing emergency needs programs?

After participants have responded to questions of this type their responses can be totaled to determine their preferences in terms of direct service/income transfer approaches (the #1 answers), community problem solving (the #2 answers), and efforts to bring about systemic change (the #3 answers). These percentages can then be used in discussions that follow Exercises 14 and 15 below.

Exercise 13 probes impressions about fundamental causes of poverty related problems.

Exercise 13

Causes of Poverty

Instructions: Hand out 3x5 index cards to participants and ask them to write down what they think are the three major reasons why poverty exists. Collect the responses and record them on a blackboard or easel pad and discuss them with participants.

This Exercise will yield a wide range of responses of which the following are typical.

Causes of Poverty

Relating to Individuals	Relating to the Environment In Which Individuals live
* Lack of motivation	* Discrimination
* Unwillingness to work	* Plant closings
* Laziness	* Inflation
* Unwillingness to seek job training	* Low prevailing wages
* Unwillingness to stay in school	* High housing/utility costs
	* Workings of the global economy

Responses of this type can be used to make the following points:

* Reasonable people can hold different views about the basic causes of poverty.
* The causes of poverty are complex and interrelated.
* Some causes of poverty can be attributed to individual low-income persons and some can be attributed to the environment in which these persons live.
* An individual's poverty program preferences depend greatly on assumptions about the causes of poverty problems.
* No CAA is likely to have a unified sense of mision if its officials have not examined and discussed what they take to be basic causes of the problems poor people face.

The questions used in Exercise 12, above, or any similar questions can be used in Exercise 14.

Exercise 14

Instructions: Ask participants to describe both positive and negative aspects of the three basic problem solving approaches embodied in the questions used in Exercise 12. Record their answers on a blackboard or easel pad and discuss them with participants.

In the course of this Exercise participants may note, for example, that income transfer strategies can be implemented quickly or that they address immediate needs. On the negative side, it may be suggested that

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they do not represent a long-term solution to problems. Conversely, community problem solving and attempts to bring about institutional changes may be viewed as being longer term solutions, but participants may recognize that they are not as easy to implement.

If done thoroughly this exercise will lead participants to conclude that:

* All CAA program approaches have positive and negative features.
* An individual's program design preferences depend to a large extent on perceptions regarding the positive and negative features of three basic program approaches
* No CAA is likely to have a unified sense of mission if its officials have not examined and discussed positive and negative aspects of basic CAA problem solving approaches and come to a collective agreement in this regard.

If thought has been given to the causes of human service problems and to the positive and negative aspects of approaches that can be used to address these problems, participants can use Exercise 15 to make fundamental mission related policy choices.

Exercise 15

Instructions: First, fill in the percentages for the three problem solving approaches below taken from the "pre-test" done as Exercise 12. Second, have participants complete the next two columns of the grid individually taking into account their discussion regarding causes of the problems low-income people face (Exercise 13) and their discussion regarding the positive and negative aspects of various problem solving approaches (Exercise 14).

	Pre-Test %'s (Exercise 12)	% Mix Used Now in Agency	Preferred % Mix in Agency
Approach 1.	_____%	_____%	_____%
Approach 2.	_____%	_____%	_____%
Approach 3.	_____%	_____%	_____%
	100%	100%	100%

Obviously, changes are in order if there are significant differences between the basic anti-poverty problem solving approaches currently in use in a CAA and the mix that is preferred by a consensus of the board after the analysis of poverty and its causes incorporated in the above exercises. To reach a new mix of agency problem solving efforts CAAs need only reallocate existing resources over time and gradually acquire new ones until their problem solving efforts more closely match the desired combination.

Depending on the nature of the results obtained in this mission analysis a wide variety of other changes may be necessary as well. These may include refinements in the way the CAA is structured, the type of staff recruiting it does, the people it hires, the way it rewards staff, the location and operation of program delivery sites, the alliances it has with community groups and organizations, and other aspects of the CAA's overall anti-poverty effort.

3. Community Leadership, Coordination and Negotiation

Effective participation in community activities depends on four factors.

CAA senior managers must know what is going on in the community and must play an active role in community affairs. No one can lead, coordinate or negotiate effectively with people they have never met and know nothing about.

Mission clarity and congruence are essential. CAA senior staff and the CAA's board must be committed to and share similar views about what their agency is attempting to do about poverty related problems and why they think these problems exist.

Coordination, leadership, and negotiation activities must center on and serve the interests of CAA target populations, not the CAA. If the CAA and its senior staff benefit indirectly, fine. However, this should never be the starting point or basis for interaction. (More directly, CAAs should seek new resources because poor people are hungry, live in lousy houses, and do not have jobs. They should not do it because it will perpetuate the Agency's existence or provide money for raises for staff.)

Finally, every CAA related decision and activity in the community should promote and enhance the dignity of low-income people both individually and collectively.

These precepts are easy to articulate but difficult to implement. There is, however, no other choice. To do less leads to suspicion, hostility, personality clashes, and turf battles. Conversely, any CAA senior manager that follows these precepts will play a leadership role in the community, will promote effective agency and program coordination, and will negotiate effectively with community officials.

4. Staff Management

CAA personnel managers have staff relationships with superiors, subordinates, and peers.

Subordinates can develop a comfortable working relationship with superiors through attention to three matters.

They need to understand their boss and the context in which he or she is working. Specifically, a subordinate needs to have a clear sense of the boss's goals, the pressures he or she is under, his or her strengths and weaknesses, and his or her preferred work style.

Subordinates also need to have thought critically about themselves. They need to have analyzed their strengths and weaknesses, their preferred work style, and their predisposition in relation to authority figures.

This knowledge of both sides of the relationship can then be used to develop and maintain a relationship that fits the needs and work styles of both parties, is characterized by clear mutual expectations, involves effective communication, is honest, and makes effective use of the time and skills of both the boss and the subordinate.

The relationship between managers and subordinates is a matter of delegation. More simply, supervisors get at least some work done by asking or telling other people to do it.

The key to successful delegation is for both parties to understand that when a supervisor has delegated a task to a subordinate it is the subordinate who owns it--for better or for worse--until the task is complete, abandoned by mutual consent, or until the supervisor formally rescinds the delegation. The

supervisor in the following example clearly understands this principle:

> At no time while I am helping you with this or any other problem associated with an assignment I have given you will your problem become my problem. The instant your problem becomes my problem you no longer have a problem. And, I can not help someone who does not have a problem.

Supervisors can use the following exercise to assess their capacity to delegate. It can also be given to subordinates and they can use it to assess the delegation skills of their supervisor. In this latter case it is easier on everyone involved if assessments are done anonymously by two or more subordinates and the supervisor is provided only aggregated responses.

Exercise 16

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

1. Do you routinely take work home? Yes___ No___

2. Do you do things that others should be doing for themselves? Yes___ No___

3. Do things stack up when you are away from the job/office? Yes___ No___

4. Are you doing tasks that were assigned to you before you were promoted? Yes___ No___

5. Do subordinates frequently interrupt you to discuss work assignments? Yes___ No___

6. Do you feel like you have "too many irons in the fire"? Yes___ No___

7. Are you always rushing to meet dealines? Yes___ No___

8. If you left your job for a long period of time,
    is there someone who could take over for you? Yes___ No___

9. Can you consistently plan ahead? Yes___ No___

10. Do you often miss deadlines? Yes___ No___

11. Do you have time for personal development? Yes___ No___

12. Do you have confidence in your subordinates? Yes___ No___

13. Do you do tasks because it is easier than explaining them to someone else? Yes___ No___

14. Do you do the "dirty" jobs yourself rather than risk unpopularity by assigning them to someone else? Yes___ No___

15. Do you do tasks because you feel that you can do them better than
    any of your subordinates? Yes___ No___

Obviously, to the extent that Exercise 16 identifies problems with delegation an effort should be made to design and implement solutions.

Finally, CAA managers must relate effectively to other agency managers. Most often this is done informally and successful peer relationships involving CAA managers are largely a matter of personality and commonality of interest in terms of CAA target populations or poverty related problems. It should be noted however, that the CAAs that thrive in the next ten years are likely to make extensive use of both horizontal and vertical teams, and in these agencies tight departmental segmentation will not be present. (Section V of this Workbook deals extensively with the topic of teams and team building.)

B. FUNCTIONS

As described in NACAA's *CAA Executive Directors' Manual, 1989* there are seven principle management functions in a CAA including personnel management. The other six are a) planning; b) community participation, organization and development; c) program implementation; d) fiscal management; e) public relations; and f) staff and board development, training and technical assistance. Each of these functions is the logical subject of a Workbook such as this one. The information and exercises that follow, then, address only those aspects of these other functions that relate most directly to personnel management.

1. Planning

Section II B of this Workbook contains a general discussion of the difficulties CAA managers meet when programs and projects for which they are given responsibility are poorly planned. As Section II B indicates, one task facing CAA managers is to determine what, in fact, the "problem" is that they are supposed to address. Specifically, problems defined in terms of conditions, problem causes, and strategies to address problem causes are typically defined interchangeably as "problems" requiring the CAA manager's attention by persons inside and outside the agency. And, this leads to major difficulties in regard to agency personnel management.

The following story is an actual example of what happened in a CAA when a "problem" the CAA set out to address was not, in fact, a "problem". The CAA supervisor in this case never had a chance in terms of providing an effective and efficient anti-poverty service for the two persons that are the subject of the story.

The Transportation "Problem"

In responding to a survey inquiring about their "problems" initiated by a human service agency two elderly residents of a small town indicated that the major "problem" they faced was transportation. A van was subsequently purchased but these two persons only rode it in the summer and then only to the next town where they spent the day at the senior center before taking the van back home.

On investigation it turned out that these persons only rode the van on hot days, that their homes and the local senior center were not air conditioned, and that the van and the senior center in the next town did have air conditioning.

For these two persons, then, transportation was not a problem but was, rather, a strategy they were using to deal with the problem of uncomfortably warm homes. And, obviously, there would have been a better way to deal with their real problem than the purchase and operation of an expensive van.

There is a second aspect of planning that directly affects CAA personnel management that is not addressed in Section II B. This relates to the difference between ranking and priority setting, The labels

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used here, "ranking" and "priority setting" are not important, but the concepts behind them are.

Briefly, everyone associated with a CAA including board members, staff, community residents, and low-income people would like to have the agency address what they take to be the most pressing problems low-income people face. This is natural, logical, and desirable, but it leaves the CAA in a position in which it can not please all of its constituencies all of the time.

However, no matter what course of action a CAA takes, it should be possible for CAA managers to clearly define and logically defend whatever it is that the CAA has chosen to do. This will be possible as a matter of course if the CAA uses a three step planning process that includes ranking problems, analyzing available resources, and selecting agency priorities. Alternatively, if this is not done by the CAA an agency's program managers can use this same process at their level to make sense of the design choices for which they have been given responsibility. Managers, then, can articulate the logic behind program choices to subordinates and to program participants.

Ranking looks only at problems target populations face and at strategies that can be used to address these problems. It ignores completely a CAA's interest in and capacity to do anything about poverty related problems as well as the agency's capacity to implement any program strategies. Typically the two major criteria used in ranking problems are number and severity: how many people have the problem and how bad is it. The most common ranking criterion for strategies is bang-for-the-buck: what strategy gets the most done about a problem for the lowest price.

Unfortunately, ranking results can not and are not always reflected in CAA program priority choices for both good and bad reasons. There is a necessary step between ranking and priority setting called resource analysis that takes into account a broad range of matters. There may be restrictions placed on the resources available to the CAA that do not allow the agency to address highly ranked problems, someone else may already be engaged in the task, the CAA may not have the capacity to address the problem in question or to implement a highly ranked strategy, etc.

There is nothing wrong, then, with the CAA having program priorities that differ from a ranking of problems and problem solving strategies provided that the agency can logically and persuasively defend the priorities it has chosen through reference to a thorough resource analysis. If personnel managers understand and have applied this three part process they will be able to defend CAA planning choices made formally or informally in any forum.

This process works as follows: "Yes, Mrs. Green and Senator Jones. We have not chosen to do what either of you think most needs to be done in regard to addressing poverty related problems in this community. Here's why..."

> We had three different groups tell us what they thought were the most significant problems facing poor people in this area. These three groups were local elected officials, the staffs of other human service agencies, and low-income people. The three sets of suggestions we received included many of the same problems, but they were not listed (ranked) in the same order. Nonetheless, this gave us a good idea of what these people collectively thought were the most significant problems facing poor people, and the CAA Board used this input to arrive at its own ranking of the problems identified. Three criteria were used in this effort: the ranking input received; the number of people who had a problem; and, the problem's severity.

> This general process was repeated in regard to program strategies. Specifically, we asked the same three groups what program strategies represented the best ways to address the problems they had identified. Again, the CAA Board used the input received, some of which was the same and some of which was different, to identify programs that the Board judged would best address the

top ranked problems. In this case the two criteria used were the input received and bang-for-the-buck considerations. The program strategies deemed to be closest to the suggestions received, and to represent the most complete solutions to problems for each dollar spent was ranked in order.

Having ranked poverty related problems in the community and strategies to address these problems the CAA then conducted a resource analysis. That is, we examined the resources that are being and could be mobilized to address highly ranked problems and to implement highly ranked program strategies. This included a look at financial, staff, and board resources both inside and outside the CAA.

The Board then took the results of this resource analysis into account in setting priorities for the CAA in terms of problems that the agency will address and in terms of program strategies that will be used. Admittedly, these priorities differ in some respects from the ranking done by all three of the groups mentioned above. However, our priorities are as close to the community's collective ranking effort as we can possibly make them given the financial and other resources available to us.

2. Community Participation, Organization, and Development

The involvement of community residents, especially low- income community residents, is a desirable element in any anti- poverty program. However, this involvement does not come free. It takes both both effort and commitment to make it happen, and it does not occur if it is not made a prominent part of an agency's mission. Further, effective community involvement requires that CAAs seeking such involvement serve and pursue the ends of community residents, not the needs of CAAs as institutions.

In regard to the latter, it is worth considering that the CAA, rather than community residents, is the primary beneficiary of much of the time that low-income board members devote to CAA activities. The bulk of the agenda of many boards is consumed with funding source requirements that the boards ratify, policy documents, grant applications, etc. This is useful activity, but little time is left for boards to directly pursue the primary concerns of their members and their members' constituencies. In short, board members are serving the needs and interests of the CAA much of the time rather than the other way around.

This reversal of roles occurs in other aspects of a CAA's operations as well. Great care must be taken, then, to insure that a CAA's community involvement efforts do in fact serve the ends of community residents rather than the needs and interests of the CAA.

3. Program Implementation

The major program implementation element associated with personnel management is a CAA's management information system. In theory, these systems are most useful to managers if they track all six of the elements described in Section II B, above: administrative activities and products; program performance and impact; and, program development efforts and results. In practice, this does not happen.

Fortunately, to generate this information managers need not get their CAA to create and implement an entirely new management information system. They need only collect and aggregate the data recorded on sets of work assignments and tracking sheets such as those described in Exercise 6. That is, all of the administrative, program oprations, and program development efforts of an entire unit can be added together to reflect the overall accomplishments of the unit. Any information not needed for the overall CAA management information system can simply be held at this level by the manager responsible rather than being pushed up the ladder.

4. Personnel Management

The logical beginning point for resolving a significant number of personnel management problems is to consider what it is about their jobs that gives people satisfaction. Unfortunately, as the next Exercise makes clear, the perspectives of supervisors and subordinates in this regard are disturbingly different.

The Labor Relations Institute recently asked a group of randomly selected employees from 24 different businesses and organizations to rearrange the following list in what they considered to be its order of importance.

The Institute then asked a randomly selected group of supervisors from these same businesses and organizations to rearrange the alphabetically arranged list in the order that they thought their subordinates would list them:

A. Feeling "in" on things
B. Full appreciation of work done
C. Good pay
D. Good working conditions
E. Interesting work
F. Job security
G. Personal loyalty to workers
H. Promotion and growth in company/organization
I. Sympathetic help with personal problems
J. Tactful discipline

Exercise 17

Job Satisfaction

Instructions: Respond, as appropriate, to the questions provided.

How do you think employees
ranked the items listed above?

How do you think supervisors
thought their employees would
rank the items listed above?

1. _____   1. _____

2. _____   2. _____

3. _____   3. _____

4. _____   4. _____

5. _____   5. _____

6. _____   6. _____

7. _____   7. _____

8. _____   8. _____

9. _____   9. _____

10. _____   10. _____

The actual rankings for employees and for supervisors' impressions of what employees consider important are provided below. It is interesting to note that the top three items on the employees' list are the bottom three items on the supervisors' list. It is even more interesting to consider that most supervisors are supervised themselves and at some point in time were line level staff. The results of this Exercise clearly suggest that supervisors tend to forget rather quickly where they came from and that they tend to view subordinates as having significantly different motivations than they do.

As reported by the Institute, employees and their supervisors responded as follows...

<u>Employees' List</u>

1. Full appreciation of work

2. Feeling "in" on things

3. Help on personal problems

4. Job security

5. Good wages

6. Interesting work

7. Promotion and growth

8. Personal loyalty to workers

9. Good working conditions

10. Tactful discipline

<u>Supervisors' List</u>

1. Good wages

2. Job security

3. Promotion and growth

4. Good working conditions

5. Interesting work

6. Personal loyalty to workers

7. Tactful discipline

8. Full appreciation of work

9. Help on personal problems

10. Feeling "in" on things

Before considering specific solutions to personnel management problems it is also useful to examine the characteristics of high performance organizations. In a general way at least some CAAs with problems have them simply because agency officials have never considered the alternative, that of a high performance organization, in detail.

Exercise 18

High Performance Organizations

Whenever anything is being accomplished, it is being done, I have learned, by a monomaniac with a mission. -Peter Drucker

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Instructions: List below some of the characteristics of any high performance group or organization with which you are familiar. This might be a sports team, a choir at church, a business, or whatever comes to mind. You do not have to use your CAA or CAA program as an example.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Once again, labels are not important, but the concepts behind them are. There are ten characteristics of high performance organizations listed below as well as a brief description of each. Labeling differences aside, how many of these did you give as answers to Exercise 18, above?

VISION:
    There is a shared understanding of why the organization is operating. Key persons are committed to bringing about an agreed on outcome.

VALUES:
    There is shared agreement about how the organization should operate and about how the people in it should interrelate.

AWARENESS:
    The people involved know what is going on inside and outside the organization.

TECHNIQUE:
    The knowledge/skills/attitudes exist to do what needs to be done.

IMAGE:
    The organization is perceived as being dependable, predictable, and capable.

LEVERAGE:
    The organization is positioned to make the best possible use of its assets.

CONNECTIONS:
    The organization has firm links to the people it serves, to sources of funding/support, and to key community decision makers.

MYTHS AND STORIES:
    The organization has a shared history of "heroic sacrifices".

ELECTRICITY:
    A "can-do" attitude exists, i.e. those involved "know" that the organization will be successful.

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POTENCY:

The organization has adequate financial and other resources.

Once shortcomings in this regard are identified systematic efforts can be made to develop and use features of high performance organizations in any CAA. All it takes is the will to do so.

C. LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

Selection and hiring in every CAA having 15 or more employees is governed by Title VII, as amended, of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964. This Title forbids employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and against women affected by pregnancy or related conditions. As an alternative, employers are expected to make decisions relating to the recruitment, selection, hiring, and termination of employees solely on the basis of an individual's ability to do the job in question.

Other federal laws and Executive Orders prohibit discrimination based on age, require equal pay for equal work for members of both sexes, mandate that federal contractors take affirmative action to employ and promote qualified handicapped persons, and require employers with government contracts of $10,000 or more to take affirmative action to employ and advance disabled veterans and qualified veterans of the Vietnam era.

Many state and local laws are even more restrictive in prohibiting discrimination and requiring affirmative action. The District of Columbia, for example, prohibits thirteen kinds of discrimination including physical appearance, sexual preference, political affiliation, and school matriculation. In addition to complying with federal laws, then, CAAs should take care to insure that they are in compliance with all applicable state and local civil rights laws.

In general, civil rights laws do not require that employers hire a designated quota of members of minority and other protected groups. They do require, however, that employers recruit, select and hire people on a non-discriminatory basis. The burden is on the employer to correct all significant disparities (commonly taken to be a differential hiring rate of more than 20%) that arise through the application of whatever hiring procedures the employer uses no matter how neutral in appearance and intent these procedures appear to be.

The *Civil Rights Act* and other federal statutes do not list specific questions that can not be asked during job interviews under the theory that it is what employers do with the answers that is questionable, rather than the questions themselves. (The EEOC has, however, provided guidance in this regard.) To avoid being in possession of answers that might lead to discriminatory acts prudent CAAs are careful to ask only those questions that are directly job related and that generate answers that have a clear, demonstrable relationship to prospective performance of the job duties in question.

Under Executive Orders 11246 and 11375 employers with 50 or more employees and federal contracts worth more than $50,000 are required to establish an affirmative action program to recruit women, handicapped persons, and members of minority groups. This affirmative action plan should include a detailed program for increasing the recruitment of members of protected groups.

The *Immigration Act* of 1986 requires employers to assure themselves that newly hired employees are United States citizens or, if not, that they are legally authorized to work in this country. INS Form I-9 is used to verify compliance in this regard for new hires, and these forms are to be kept on file for three years. Under the terms of this Act employers are strictly prohibited from refusing to hire recent immigrants who have a legal right to work in the U.S. or to otherwise discriminate on the basis of country of origin or ancestry.

Although no specific statutes apply, employers can be held liable in the common law for what is known as "negligent hiring" if in hiring, training, or supervising an employee the employer's negligence results in injury or damage to someone who could reasonably have been seen to be at potential risk. For example, a day care center could be liable for any harm resulting from hiring someone with a history of violence toward young children. It should be noted, however, that employers must balance the need to determine qualifications against compliance with anti-discrimination laws and a prospective employee's right to privacy.

The *Fair Labor Standards Act*, as amended, (FLSA) requires employers to pay employees at or above the federal minimum wage and requires overtime pay for all hours over 40 worked in any given period of seven 24 hour days for all non-exempt employees. (In general, exempt employees as opposed to non-exempt employees spend more than 80% of their actual work time performing the following: "executive" tasks involving the supervision of two or more people and/or decision making; "administrative" duties defined as discretionary office based functions that involve implementing management policies; and, "professional" work that requires special training and knowledge.)

FLSA regulations require that non-exempt employees working more than 40 hours in a seven day work week be paid for these overtime hours at a rate not less than one and a half times their regular pay rate. These employees can, however, be compensated with time off on an hour for hour basis within the same work week or time off on a one and one half hour per hour basis within the same pay period.

In recent years many CAAS have adopted retirement plans. Voluntary plans that fall under Section 403 (b) of the Internal Revenue Code are relatively straightforward and easy to administer. However, other types of retirement plans are likely to be covered by the *Employee Retirement Income Security Act* (ERISA), an extremely complex piece of federal legislation that imposes extensive reporting requirements on employers. Any CAA that has doubts as to the nature of the plan it has in effect or is considering putting into effect should seek competent accounting and legal advice to determine if ERISA applies and if it does what the agency needs to do to be in full compliance with its provisions.

Another common development in recent years in the CAA world has been the use of a variety of types of independent and, on occasion, not so independent contractors. In order to distinguish between an agency/independent contractor relationship which does not require payment of FICA, workers compensation, and unemployment insurance benefits and an employer/employee that does the following three factors are taken into account.

Contractors must be free from control and direction in the manner of performance of a service. If the CAA provides day-to-day supervision, uses detailed performance requirements, engages in disciplinary actions, or controls the time of performance the relationship is probably not a contract. Contractors normally perform services either outside the place of business or outside the usual course of business. Anyone paid to carry out a normal activity in a CAA or to work on a regular basis in a CAA's central office or any satellite office is probably an employee.

Contractors customarily are engaged in an independent trade, profession, or business. Factors such as contractors supplying their own tools and supplies, the number of other clients served, the level of business or trade advertising done, etc. bear on this determination.

It is important to note that employers that have entered into contractual relationships that are found to be fraudulent must pay the full amount of FICA, workers compensation, UI contributions, and any other benefit payments due, and may be have to pay substantial penalties and interest as well.

As is indicated above, Title VII as well as many state and local laws prohibit discrimination based on sex. More specifically, this extends to a ban on discrimination in the "terms, conditions, and privileges of

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employment". This, then, clearly constitutes a prohibition of all forms of sexual harassment in the workplace. This includes coercing sexual favors of any type in exchange for tangible job benefits such as raises or promotions. And, courts have consistently held that it extends as well to what has been characterized as the creation of a "hostile work environment" whether or not an exchange of any type of benefits for sexual favors takes place.

Almost all CAAS have components of their personnel policies and procedures that relate to the use of drugs and alcohol. And, a few have encountered problems relating to the issues of employee privacy when searching for drugs or stolen equipment. Still more CAAs have encountered problems relating to the use of alcohol and drugs during agency business hours.

Taking the matter of searches first, efforts to stop the use of drugs or alcohol or theft that involve searching employees, their personal effects, or requiring that employees submit to drug and alcohol testing puts the CAA on expensive and possibly shaky legal ground. Simply stated, this can be an arena in which you lose even if you win should you end up in court. And, the law is sufficiently new and unsettled in this regard that it is difficult to predict what decision a court will render.

Four things can be said in this regard, however. Random drug testing in any non-hazardous aspect of CAA operations is not likely to withstand legal challenge. Any decision to require an employee to submit to drug or alcohol testing should be based on a reasonable presumption that the person's work is affected. The primary purpose of any testing should be to assist the employee in dealing with chemical dependence. And, all CAA policies in regard to searches and testing should be communicated clearly and consistently "up-front" to all employees and should be enforced uniformly. In no case should they be instituted after the fact or enforced on anything other than an agency-wide basis.

From a legal standpoint the matter of on the job use of drugs and alcohol is easier for employers to deal with than searches, but here again clarity and consistency is important. A CAA that fires an employee for having a beer in a weatherization warehouse at noon better have policies that address the agency director having a drink with the board president and officers during an executive committee meeting over lunch in a local restaurant.

In Section III C, above, mention is made of the fact that many businesses are significantly streamlining their written personnel materials, and the suggestion is made that CAAs may want to do this as well. By way of explanation, businesses that are reducing the complexity and volume of their written personnel management materials are seeking to limit their legal liability and to increase their personnel management flexibility.

Stated more bluntly, it is both less painful and time consuming and much cheaper to do personnel management with fewer rules to follow. Increasingly, failure to follow self-imposed personnel policies and procedures begets expensive legal and regulatory problems and even more expensive court settlements and judgments. The simpler personnel management materials are the more likely it is that they will be followed without fail in every personnel management situation.

This is the case largely because of the changing nature of the employer-employee relationship in the United States. Until recently, employment in this country was considered to be "at- will" in the absence of specific employment contracts. That is, employers were presumed to be able to both hire and fire people "at-will". The various anti-discrimination laws, Executive Orders, and regulations described above have made discriminatory hiring and firing illegal, and in the past several years courts have found reason to limit U.S. employer's "at-will" prerogatives in other respects.

For example, some courts have found that to the extent that personnel manuals describe supervision and performance appraisal arrangements and contain provisions relating to benefits, vacations, and salary

policies they constitute an employment contract that cannot be unilaterally abrogated by an employer without cause. Even an explicit statement in a manual that it and its contents do not constitute an employment contract may not be adequate to convince a court to treat it otherwise.

In cases in which courts have held that personnel manuals are, in fact, enforceable employment contracts employers have been held liable for uniformly and fairly following in all material respects the policies and procedures they have adopted that apply to any personnel management dispute in question. And, even in the absence of written personnel management materials, some courts have held that employers have an implied obligation to act in "good faith" in regard to personnel matters. That is, they have an obligation to rely on prior performance appraisals, to warn employees about poor performance before taking punitive action, and to conform to the organization's past personnel practices when dealing with individual employees.

In cases in which an employee relocates, quits a job, stays in a job as result of having been offered a promotion, raise or other benefit at some future date, or assumes other sorts of obligations and expenses in response to an employer's promise of employment or job enhancement courts have frequently held that the employer's actions have had the effect of creating a contract between the two parties and thus obligations on both sides.

Employers can terminate employees and can fail to live up to promises made in these circumstances, but to do so many courts have held that their actions must be based on "good faith" principles. (If a CAA had not foreseen, nor could have foreseen, that the Agency's only office would burn to the ground and all funding sources would cancel their contracts with the CAA the day after an employee moved in from out of state to start work the Agency probably could terminate this person in "good faith". In less extreme circumstances the CAA may have incurred obligations to the employee.)

In summary, CAAs can reduce their legal liabilities and improve their personnel management efforts in three ways. They can make a concerted effort to inform their employees of all written personnel policies and procedures and of any amendments made in this regard. They can implement whatever policies and procedures they have fairly and uniformly. And they can remove components and details from their written personnel materials that do not further the purposes of efficient, equitable personnel management. In this latter regard the acid test is practicality. When CAA managers find their agency's written personnel policies and procedures to be too complex or too combersome to adhere to without fail, immediate steps should be taken to simplify and streamline these materials.

V. PROBLEM SOLVING

CAAs encounter personnel management problems at every point from recruiting to the termination of employees. In the pages below a broad range of CAA personnel management problems are described. These problems are followed by suggested solutions to these problems that have been used successfully in one or more CAAs across the country, by exercises that serve to develop problem solutions, or by both exercises and solutions.

Not every one of these solutions will work in every CAA, of course. However, any CAA manager using this Workbook should find something of use, in whole or in part, to help address almost any type of personnel management problem.

A. RECRUITMENT

CAA managers typically encounter problems in one or more of five areas in recruiting staff. These include...

* Job analysis
* Internal promotion
* Soliciting applications
* References
* Equal Employment Opportunity
* Screening applications
* Interviewing

Job Analysis

As indicated in Section III C, above, studies in a wide variety of workplaces have shown there to be an average 50% difference between what supervisors think an employee's duties are and what the employee thinks her or she does on the job. Conceding that employees may be wrong in some respects about what they are doing, it is reasonable to assume that they are more correct in this regard than are their supervisors. Typically then, employers seeking to fill job vacancies are recruiting people for positions that, in part, do not exist.

Solution 1

At the least, every time a job vacancy occurs supervisors can carefully think through what it is that was being done and what it is the CAA needs to have done relative to the vacancy in question. This would involve considering six factors. How, if at all, the job has changed over time. What parts of the job, if any, are still necessary. What parts of the job, if any, were not being done by the person who just vacated the position. Why duties judged to be essential were not being done. What unauthorized duties, if any, were being done. And, why unauthorized duties were being done.

Solution 2

CAA managers can formally and completely rethink and redraft job descriptions every time a vacancy occurs using the format included in Exercise 19. If the person vacating the position is available to do so, they can be asked to complete a second version of the worksheet independently. This version can then be

compared with that of the supervisor as a check on both perspectives.

Exercise 19

Rethinking Job Descriptions

Instructions: Respond as indicated.

Title of Position:

Purpose of Position:

Importance of Position to CAA's Objectives:

Principle Duties	% Time Tasks	Specific Scale 1-10	Importance of Work	Examples

Level of Authority:

Working Relationships (Subordinates and Peers):

Methods Required/Equipment Used:

Conditions of Employment:

Qualifications/Skills for Each Principle Duty:

Internal Promotion

No organization, a CAA included, is immune to the "Peter Principle", the phenomenon of people rising in an organization to their level of incompetence. In any work setting it is all too true that people who stay long enough and who perform at a good or at least acceptable level keep getting promoted until they hit a level at which they do not perform well. They are then left to work at this level rather than being demoted to the last job in which their performance was satisfactory.

Solution 1

CAAs must adopt policies that make it clear that internal promotion is neither guaranteed nor automatic. Further, they need to adopt recruiting procedures that serve to reinforce these policies. For example, those CAAs that have and use a procedure to fill vacancies that requires a period of time in which applications are solicited and screened only in-house may want to reconsider this approach. It clearly serves the career development interests of CAA employees, but does it serve CAA program participants equally well? If forced to consider in-house candidates exclusively for a period of time can the persons making hiring decisions set aside friendships and familiarity to objectively assess applicant qualifications, or are they likely to take the easy way out and select someone from this pool no matter what?

Solution 2

Having adopted "no-guarantee" internal promotion policies and corresponding procedures CAAs need to insure that these policies are implemented consistently, fairly, and honestly.

To some extent this can be done through broadening the number of people involved in recruitment decisions with particular emphasis given to adding people to the process who have had limited contact with in-house candidates.

Supervisors must be responsible for hiring the people who will work for them, but input can be solicited from persons outside the Agency and from the people who will be the co-workers of the person to be hired. Colleagues of Board members are excellent choices in terms of persons outside the agency. If a Loan Officer from a local bank is on the Board, for example, he or she may be able to enlist the aid of the bank's Personnel Officer in ranking applicants. Internally, the persons who will be co-workers have a major stake in a hiring decision and it can be beneficial to solicit their views in regard to the candidate or candidates with whom they would prefer to work.

Soliciting Applications

Simply stated, if the pool of prospective applicants for a job is both small and shallow a CAA manager can select the best available candidate and still get a loser.

Solution 1

The simplest and cheapest solution to a small applicant pool is to advertise more widely. In practice this means placing advertisements in both local and large city newspapers with a rule of thumb being that it is worth the money to run classified advertisements in any large city newspaper sold on Sundays in a CAA's service area.

Solution 2

A great deal can be done to solicit job applications. Although businesses routinely advertise in newspapers, they frankly assume that they are unlikely to find quality candidates for mid and senior level management positions this way. This prompts them to engage in a wide range of other recruiting efforts including visits to college campuses, posting job vacancy notices in places where qualified candidates will see them, talking to suppliers and colleagues, placing notices in trade journals, having recruiting tables at job

fairs and trade shows, etc. Similar recruiting channels are available to CAAs if CAA managers will make use of them.

References

It is increasingly difficult to elicit information regarding prospective employees from current or former employers due to litigation in recent years associated with the provision of references as well as new laws in a number of states restricting what employers can reveal about current and former employees. Nonetheless, a careful, diplomatic, but persistent effort should be made to solicit opinions regarding the circumstances and quality of a prospective employee's previous work experience.

Solution 1

In most cases references provided orally are more revealing than those involving a written response, particularly a written response to what is obviously a form letter. At a minimum, then, telephone calls are in order. In the case of efforts to fill key senior staff positions it may be worthwhile to go beyond telephone calls to arrange face-to-face meetings whenever possible.

Solution 2

Go fishing. In addition to calling the references provided by the applicant simply cold call anyone available who has worked with or around the applicant. This can include funding source officials, people active in professional organizations, staff and board members of related human service agencies, etc. If an application indicates that an applicant has worked in a program that received United Way funding, for example, get the United Way number from information and call them. Explain the purpose of your call and ask to talk to whomever was assigned to that grant. The person who answers the phone will usually be able to identify the right person or persons to talk to regarding the candidate. And, since these people are not formal references they are often more forthright in responding to questions than are the references named in applications. The more people asked about a candidate the broader and more complete will be the picture that emerges of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Despite efforts on their part and on the part of their many federal funding sources many CAAs do not have truly diverse staffs.

Solution 1

Have someone experienced in EEO problems and issues from outside the CAA review all Agency recruitment materials, processes and procedures and talk to staff and recent hires. The object here is to assess results, not intentions or paper-work compliance. The issue is not whether the paper is there. The issue is whether the people are there. If they are not, an analysis of this type should identify at least some reasons why. Then, steps can be taken based on this assessment to improve the CAA's overall EEO efforts.

Solution 2

Affirm the worth, value, and desirability of the EEO/Affirmative Action process whenever and wherever possible in large ways and small ways every day of the year.

Solution 3

Name, train, and support a fair minded, committed EEO/Affirmative Action Officer and give the person a budget to use to promote EEO/Affirmative Action activities.

Solution 4

With a little support and training someone good at one thing will be good at another. Seek out competent typists, laborers, bookkeepers and similar entry level Agency staff of all types. Without promising them anything encourage them to apply for job openings, then strongly consider them for advancement.

Solution 5

Sheepskins are for sheep. Take the necessary steps to insure that applicants can freely substitute training and experience for formal education when applying for jobs. This will require far more than just making note of this in advertisements and job decriptions. It will require a formal effort to rid people of bias and misperceptions regarding the relationship between formal education and competance on the job.

Solution 6

Take great care in filling entry level positions. Many entry level people are going to get promoted sooner or later. Insure, then, that the people feeding into the Agency at the bottom are a talented, diverse group.

Solution 7

Make a conscious effort to rid the Agency of stereotyped thinking in recruitment and at all other times. Make the Agency a place where a diverse, talented group of people seek out opportunities to work.

Screening Applications

A good application screening process should begin with an explicit effort to identify the application response elements that are of most concern. Exercise 20 explores this matter in detail.

Exercise 20

Screening Job Descriptions

Part 1

Instructions: Respond to the questions provided using your job as the basis for your answers.

If you were charged with the task of recruiting someone to assume your current position...

A. What would you be looking for in terms of formal education and how important would this be to you?

Looking For?   Importance? *(Scale 1/low to 10/high)*

_____

B. What would you be looking for in terms of direct experience and how important would it be to you?

Looking For?   Importance? *(Scale 1/low to 10/high)*

_____

C. What would you be looking for in terms of other considerations and how important would they be to you?

Looking For?   Importance? *(Scale 1/low to 10/high)*

_____

Exercise 20

Screening Job Descriptions

Part 2

Instructions: Take your job description, your resume, and your answers in Part 1, above. Respond to the following questions as appropriate.

A. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being remote and 10 being very close) circle the number that most accurately describes the match between your formal education when you were hired for your current position and your answers to Part 1/Question A?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

B. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being remote and 10 being very close) circle the number that most accurately describes the match between your job experience when you were hired for your current position and your answers to Part 1/Question B?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

C. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being remote and 10 being very close) circle the number that most accurately describes the match between the other considerations you listed when you were hired for your current position and your answers to Part 1/Question C?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Does your total score for Exercise 20/Part 2 suggest anything to you? If so, what?

Interviewing

A good interview should provide an interviewer information of seven types.

A. Elements of the applicant's background and work record that are not clear from the application.

B. How the applicant feels about current or recent positions.

C. The appliant's past and prospective relations with co-workers.

D. The applicant's professional objectives.

E. The applicant's vision/values/self-image.

F. The applicant's concepts of poverty and poverty causes.

G. Mechanical matters...when the person could begin work, salary requirements, relocation considerations, etc.

It is important to remember that interviewing is a two way street, particularly for highly qualified applicants. These persons will be as interested in what a employer has to offer them as the employer is in what the applicant has to offer. Accordingly, interviewers should be prepared to discuss a) the responsibility and authority the person will have, b) the quality of co-workers the person will have, c) the growth potential for the position, and, d) the Agency's overall anti-poverty vision and mission.

All too often interviewers make one or more of six common interviewing errors. They talk too much and listen too little. They ask Yes/No questions. They ask questions for which the applicant has a stock answer. They lead the applicant by supplying answers they want to hear when asking questions. They ask questions answered on the application form. They ask questions that have answers that can be used for discriminatory purposes.

Solution 1

Develop and follow an outline for interviews. Systematically explore a candidate's a) perspectives regarding the causes of poverty and effective anti-poverty approaches, b) past relationships with co-workers, and, c) job related knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Solution 2

Ask follow-up questions to get past canned responses. Candidates tend to have stock answers to "what" questions. After you get the "whats" out ask "why" and "what was the significance" type questions. Why did that program you worked in meet participant needs?...Why did it take that long to implement?...What did it accomplish?...What would have improved the program?

B. ORIENTATION

Some CAAs take great care in orienting new employees and as a consequence their new hires are able to make significant contributions to the work of the Agency from the beginning. Other CAAs launch

new employees in a modern day version of trial by fire letting them figure out for themselves what their job is and how to do it. This wastes time and money and results in employees doing what they find most appealing rather than engaging in activities that reflect the Agency's overall concerns and priorities.

Solution 1

Adopt a policy of formally orienting all new employees, even ones who attain their job through promotions or transfers.

Solution 2

Design and use a formal orientation checklist (see Exercise 21).

Solution 3

Formally assign orientation responsibilities and assign every new employee a "sponsor" for as long as necessary. In most cases these sponsors should be peers rather than an employee's supervisor. The sponsor will be responsible for insuring that all orientation tasks are completed and will remain available to the new employee as long as the new employee desires to respond to questions of any type regarding the work, policies, and "culture" of the agency. Sponsors will also act to insure that new employees are smoothly and comfortably integrated into the informal aspects of Agency work at the Agency such as breaks, meals, finding parking spaces, etc.

Solution 4

Review orientation materials and procedures every time a first performance appraisal is done. Specifically identify any shortcomings in the employee's orientation. Both solicit and develop solutions to any problems identified.

Exercise 21

Employee Orientation Checklist

Instructions: Use the checklist that follows in orienting a new employee. It it works satisfactorily adopt it. If not, amend it and adopt the amended version.

Name: Job Title:

Date Started Work: Supervisor:

Unit/Program: Sponsor:

Instructions: Check each item when completed. This Checklist will become a permanent part of the personnel file of both the new employee and the sponsor.

Tasks	Date Completed	By Whom
1. Before Start Date:		
Review employee's experience, training, education	_____	_____
Collect current version of job description, list of duties, performance standards, etc.	_____	_____
Prepare workplace, have all needed equipment in order and have supplies available	_____	_____
2. Welcome:		
Introduce to, and describe role of, sponsor	_____	_____
Indicate relationship to new worker	_____	_____
Assign workplace and equipment and provide supplies	_____	_____
3. Explain Agency and Work:		
Provide brief organizational history	_____	_____

Describe organizational struture
and new employee's place in it   _____   _____

Describe other programs providing
written materials as available   _____   _____

4. Explain work of the unit/program

Describe the unit/program's
function and organization   _____   _____

Indicate the new employee's
place in the unit/program   _____   _____

Explain relation of new employee's
to that of others in unit/program   _____   _____

Describe all relevant reporting
and supervisory relationships   _____   _____

Review any written work forms
and procedures   _____   _____

5. Introductions

Introduce to supervisor and
confirm duties   _____   _____

Introduce to co-workers and
discuss duties   _____   _____

Confirm luncheon/break plans
for first two days, as appropriate   _____   _____

6. Tour Facilities

Explain layout of office/facility   _____   _____

Walk through bathrooms, break
rooms, etc. Point out water coolers,   _____   _____
soft drink and food machines, etc.

7. Explain Policies and Procedures

Review Personnel Manual in detail   _____   _____

Review Affirmative Action Plan in   _____   _____

detail

Introduce to Equal Opportunity   _____   _____
Officer

Explain payroll schedule and
procedure   _____   _____

Explain benefits package or arrange   _____   _____
to have package explained

Review and explain other procedures
including travel reimbursement,   _____   _____
telephone and copier use, etc.

8. Provide or Arrange For Job Instruction

Give or monitor throrough,   _____   _____
step-by-step instruction

Explain quality/quantity standards   _____   _____

Arrange for follow-up instruction   _____   _____
as necessary

Provide learning aids...samples
of work, manuals, instructions,   _____   _____
glossaries of terms, etc.

Explain care and use of equipment   _____   _____

Explain safety policies and   _____   _____
procedures

Explain security policies and   _____   _____
procedures

9. Follow-Up

Agree on and record dates of   _____   _____
next three checks on progress

Encourage questions   _____   _____

C. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

A general discussion of performance appraisals is included in Section III C of this Workbook. Briefly, this discussion suggests that these appraisals cannot be done effectively in the absence of clear, quantified program objectives and in the absence of regular, detailed work assignments.

In addition to giving attention to these two broad requirements, CAAs can improve their performance appraisal efforts by addressing six specific problems. These include...

* Inadequate or non-existent performance standards.

* Unrealistic performance expectations.

* Appraisals are seen as a compliance chore.

* Improper focus for appraisals.

* Grade congruence and grade inflation.

* Inadequate preparation for, and conduct of, appraisals.

Inadequate or Non-Existent Performance Standards

Typically, individual employees know "what" their duties are, but there is not clear agreement between supervisor and subordinate on "how much" and "how well" aspects of the subordinate's job performance.

Solution 1

Incorporate or attach Performance Standards to all Agency job descriptions. That is, write out each duty using a verb and a noun...prepare reports. Add quantitative information...prepare 4 quarterly reports. Add qualitative information...prepare 4 quarterly reports that meet all funding source requirements. Finally, add other relevant information...prepare 4 quarterly reports that meet all funding source requirements in a timely manner (by 4/10, 7/10, 10/10, and 1/10). At this level of specificity there can be no doubt as to performance expectations.

Unrealistic Performance Expectations

In some cases too much is expected of CAA employees. In other cases not enough is expected of them.

Solution 1

To develop reasonable expectations in terms of employee output, create cost centers throughout the Agency. Then, allocate and track costs for these centers. (Basically, this involves adding cost data to Exercise 9 in the Work Assignments and Tracking Systems portion of Section III C of this Workbook.) Businesses do this routinely. They know how much every component of a business costs to operate and they know how much profit these components generate. The objective of CAAs, of course, is to address problems low-income people face, not to generate profits. Nonetheless, this cost-benefits focused approach is useful.

How much did last year's garden project really cost...not just the seeds and fertilizer but the staff time and staff support costs devoted to getting the grant money, lining up space for garden plots, distributing seeds, filling in reports, etc.? How much produce was actually grown? More significantly, what benefits did poor people get from the money invested? How did this compare with the expectations placed on garden project staff?

The same cost-benefits focused analysis can be repeated for any aspect of a CAA's operations. And, obviously, appropriate adjustments need to be made whenever costs are significantly disproportionate to the results expected and obtained.

Appraisals Are Seen As a Compliance Chore

All too often performance appraisals are done outside rather than as an integral part of a CAA management system. They are, then, an internally mandated compliance activity, nothing more.

Solution 1

The simplest way to address this problem is to fully quantify and integrate performance appraisals, work programs and contracts, job descriptions, performance standards, and work assignments. The conceptual framework for doing this is outlined in Section III C, above. In the absence of such an integrated system performance appraisal will remain outside the scope of every day personnel management decision making.

Improper Focus For Appraisals

CAA performance appraisal systems tend to focus on personality traits and staff "busyness" rather than on changes staff members bring about in the lives of poor people...the ultimate objective of CAA operations.

Solution 1

The solution to this problem is essentially the same solution described immediately above. Without a complete, fully quantified and broadly integrated program design and program management system, it is not likely that CAA managers will be able to do more than focus on personality traits and staff "busy-ness" when doing performance appraisals.

Grade Congruence and Grade Inflation

In any performance appraisal system that incorporates a numerical or comparative rating system supervisors tend to rate people the same and to do so at an artificially high level. A compilation of appraisal scores in every CAA using these type of systems will indicate that all Agency employees are "above average". This makes sense in the case of children in Garrison Keillor's mythical town of Lake Woebegone, but it does not make sense in a CAA.

Solution 1

Simply stated, link the core of performance appraisals to individual staff work assignments, and treat the appraisal process as a developmental as opposed to punitive effort. Every set of work assignments will have been different over the course of the appraisal period, as will have every set of employee accomplishments. And, every plan for improving employee performance will be different. Under such a system, then, there cannot be either grade congruence or grade inflation.

Mary you were assigned the following...Here, in the aggregate, is what you accomplished...Your performance was acceptable in the following respects...It was unacceptable in the following respects...As we have jointly determined, the reasons for these shortcomings are as follows. Accordingly, here is what we are going to do to improve your performance...

Inadequate Preparation For and Conduct of Appraisals

Simply put, many CAA supervisors are not good at doing performance appraisals.

Solution 1

Have an Agency task force develop specific tools, techniques, and precedures for doing performance appraisals. Train all staff to use these materials and approaches. Have subordinates and supervisors routinely rate the performance of supervisors in preparing for, scheduling, and conducting appraisals. Include these ratings in the personnel files of supervisors.

D. DISCIPLINE

There are four common problems relating to employee discipline in CAAs.

* Rules are unclear.
* Rules are not applied consistently.
* Paper trails are inadequate.
* Supervisors are reluctant to address problems.

Rules Are Unclear

As is indicated in Section III C, above, CAA policy and procudure documents and materials are not models of clarity and consistency.

Solution 1

Have some literate people outside the CAA review and critique all written personnel management materials. (It is important to review all of these materials at one time as they can contain elements that make sense in themselves, but are contradictory in the aggregate.) Pay these people if necessary, then take what they suggest seriously. Whatever does not make sense to them probably does not make sense, period. A reader should not have to have a detailed knowledge of the inner workings of a CAA to fathom what its operating rules are.

Rules Are Not Applied Consistently

Consistency is the key to fair, quality supervision. Supervisors need to know what the rules are and they need to follow these rules without fail. If the line between what is acceptable and what is not is ever changed there is no line. Supervisors simply cannot play favorites or cave in to hard luck stories.

Solution 1

Announce at a general staff meeting that as a training exercise supervisors will be required for the next month to answer questions regarding Agency rules by handing a copy of the relevant policy document to the person asking the question and by reading out loud the relevant section or sections of the document that contains the answer. After the laughter dies down, tell people that you are serious.

At the end of the month collectively discuss the results of this exercise. If rules have been identified that cannot be or are not being followed, change the rules.

Paper Trails Are Inadequate

Much but not all of the paper trail problem in CAAs can be solved with a better work assignments and work assignments tracking system.

Solution 1

Require supervisors to make, sign, and date notes regarding any agreements made in regard to the performance or behavior of subordinates when these agreements are made. Include a place on monthly work assignments to reference and follow-up on these agreements.

Supervisors Are Reluctant to Address Discipline Problems

As is indicated immediately above, a general solution to this problem is to make addressing discipline problems a routine part of the regular work assignment process.

Solution 1

Supervisors can be provided and can be expected to follow a simple discipline checklist such as the one below.

_____ Date potential discipline problem identified.

_____ Date checked what the relevant management document has to say about this matter.

_____ Date(s) talked to the employee informally (coached).

_____ Date provided non-threatening written notice of inadequacy.

_____ Date provided specific notice of inadequacy and notice that improvement is necessary.

_____ Date rechecked policy document and supervisor's documentation of inadequacy.

_____ Date "drew a line in the dirt" in written form.

_____ Date acted if the employee crossed the line.

_____ Date(s) took steps to defend action taken.

Exercise 22

Discipline

Instructions: A variety of situations are described below. In each case assume that you are the supervisor of the people involved and that you have the following options. You can 1) Do nothing, 2) Coach, 3) Give an oral reprimand, 4)Give a written reprimand, 5)Suspend, or, 6) Dismiss the employee.

For each situation you review describe briefly...

A) The course of action you would pursue as a supervisor.

B) The message that would be communicated to the employee (orally, in writing, or both).

C) The provisions of your CAA's Personnel Manual you are relying on to support/justify your action.

Note: It might be useful to ask other supervisors in your Agency to do this Exercise as well. Given that you and they are relying on the same written materials your responses to the situations provided will presumably be similar. If they are not, perhaps you and they should discuss your respective reasons for suggesting the actions you did.

Situation #_____   A)

                        B)

                        C)

Situation #_____   A)

                        B)

                        C)

Situation #_____   A)

                        B)

                        C)

Situation 1

You walk in on a shouting match involving Joe and Mary, your Program's secretary, over a sloppy typing job. She claims that she wasn't given enough time to do the job right. He claims she never types his material first, and that she always does a bad job when she gets to it. Other staff people and some community folks are witnessing this exchange.

Situation 2

You find out that Sally took last Friday afternoon off without taking any sort of leave. When you ask her about this she says that she "spent 5 1/2 hours" at night meetings last week and that "all the other staff" do the same thing when this happens.

Situation 3

Jane comes to you and says that her supervisor, a male whom you also supervise, has told her in so many words that if she wants to get along she had better go along.

Situation 4

At the Agency's monthly Board meeting staff member Fred twice interrupts a Board discussion to complain about leave policies.

Situation 5

The local Housing Agency Loan Program Supervisor calls to say that they are having to redo "all" of the loan packages one of your employees is sending them.

Situation 6

After Bob attends a Senior Citizen's group meeting to explain your program's services you run into the group's President who complains about the way Bob conducted himself at the meeting. Specifically, she objects to his pony tail, irreverent T-Shirt, and "language".

Situation 7

Lucy walks into the office after lunch one day carrying a beer. Just last week you, she, and others attended a party in the office (after hours) at which beer was served.

Situation 8

Ted, your employee, and Connie, the Agency's Outreach Supervisor have tangled in the past because she feels that Ted asks her people to do things for your program without consulting her. So far as you can tell, staff of two other Agency programs also ask the outreach workers for help under similar circumstances, but this has never been a cause of friction. Connie confronts you and demands that you do something about Ted's interference in her program.

Situation 9

Alice lives in Pukwana, 47 miles from your main office and you find out very indirectly that she has been or may have been lobbying Board members from that area (one of whom is her Uncle) to get the

Situation 10

You are walking up to your office and overhear two of your subordinates exchange racial/sexist/ethnic/ (pick one...or more) slurs about a program participant who is just driving away from the Agency.

Situation 11

A portion of the Agency's warehouse is being remodeled and you walk in on two of your male employees who have been at odds for some time. One has apparently been knocked to the ground and is screaming up at the other using words your Mom would have fed you a soap sandwich for using. They are apparently arguing over possession of a Penthouse Postermate Poster which has been on display in the warehouse.

Situation 12

You get a call from the CDBG Program Director (a known buffoon and incompetent) at City Hall who tells you that you had better not send Chris over there again or your Agency will "never get another dime of City money."

Situation 13

You are in the Agency Director's office along with the Board President, the Director's wife, the local Chief of Police, and the Presiding Judge of the local Court trying out some new video equipment when one of your employees walks in upset over a bad performance appraisal you did. This employee pulls out a gun and shoots the Director dead, and this is captured on videotape.

E. TIME MANAGEMENT

CAA supervisors encounter five common time management problems. these include...

* Not knowing where time goes.
* Time spent unproductively.
* Unproductive meetings.
* Fragmented work periods
* Paper shuffling

Not Knowing Where Time Goes.

Solution 1

Find out. Estimate in detail where your time goes then seal this estimate in an envelope and put the envelope away. Keep a time log for 1-3 weeks then compare your log and your estimate. Adjust your schedule and priorities as necessary.

Time Spent Unproductively

Solution 1

Prioritize the duties and responsibilities listed in your job description with the help of your supervisor, and make corresponding priority decisions in terms of your work tasks. Do those things first that are high priority. Simply do not do low priority things unless someone in a position of authority makes them a high priority.

Unproductive Meetings

Solution 1

Refuse to attend meetings for which there is no agenda and no scheduled adjournment time.

Solution 2

Schedule meetings for the last thirty minute period Friday afternoon.

Solution 3

Remove the chairs from the meeting room.

Solution 4

Reduce the number of people who have to attend meetings and inform those excluded of the results by memo.

Fragmented Work Periods

Solution 1

Consolidate available time into the largest possible continuing units. Techniques to use in this regard include a) schedule meetings, conferences, contacts outside the office etc. for only two days per week, b) set aside mornings of other days (or afternoons if you prefer) for uninterrupted work on major projects, c) schedule a work period per week at a quiet place outside the office, and, d) have telehone calls held and return them in the half hour before lunch or the last half hour of the day.

Paper Shuffling

Solution 1

Don't let unwanted paper get into your office in the first place.

Solution 2

Only handle paper once...no matter what. Never pick up a piece of paper only to put it back down. Either, toss it, file it, or respond to it.

Exercise 23

Managing Your Time

Instructions: Select the three most significant time wasters for you from the list below. Feel free to add to the list if necessary.

_____ A. People dropping in your office.

_____ B. Agency paperwork.

_____ C. Reading.

_____ D. Meetings.

_____ E. Poor delegation.

_____ F. Disorganized desk, files, office.

_____ G. Socializing.

_____ H. Crises.

_____ I. Poor communications.

_____ J. Confusion about priorities.

_____ K. Telephone.

_____ L. Procrastination.

_____ M.

_____ N.

_____ O.

_____ P.

Having identified your major timewasters devise solutions and enlist the aid of whomever is necessary to put your solutions into effect.

VI. Personnel Management in the 90's

A. QUALITY BASED SYSTEMS

In the past ten years approximately 500 major U.S. companies have adopted and are now using "quality" enhancement systems and techniques. Twenty years ago less than a handful were. Forty years ago the American business world paid no attention whatever to a principal originator of the quality movement, W. Edwards Deming, and he had to go elsewhere to find an audience for his ideas. He did. He went to Japan where the business community enthusiastically adopted his suggestions, put them to broad use, and continues to use and refine them.

Here, in Deming's words, is what the American business community rejected in the years immediately after World War II, and, implicitly, what it has come to accept in the past decade.

Improve quality and you automatically improve productivity.

You capture the market with lower price and better quality. You stay in business, and you provide jobs. So simple.

The current quality movement in the U.S. has a variety of streams that have been given an assortment of labels; socio- technical systems, open systems, high commitment work systems, "Z" systems, quality circles, TQ (Total Quality) systems, JIT (Just In Time) systems, PI (People Involvement) systems, etc. And, the movement is being driven and supported by the thinking of a number of quality "gurus" including Deming, David Hanna, Tom Peters, Phillip Crosby, Joseph Juran, Marvin Weisbord, and William Conway.

The labels listed above and the details of any of the various approaches to quality management that have been and are being developed are less important than the results. Simply put, these approaches increase the output of companies, plants, departments, and divisions 30-40% wherever they are used no matter what type of business is involved. And, they will do at least as much for any CAA that choses to adopt one.

In general, these systems have six common elements. Organizations using them move from a) control to commitment, b) individual jobs to teams, c) participation to involvement, d) single skilled people to multi-skilled people, e) directed work to ownership of roles and responsibilities, and, f) supervision and monitoring to coaching and facilitating.

In organizations that get serious about quality the entire corporate culture changes. Basic assumptions about what is possible and what is desirable shift dramatically. Every job changes because every job is seen as being interconnected. Organizations flatten. They get down to only the people who add quality. They move from external control to self-control. People let go. They systematically let go of anything and everything that does not add quality. People work in teams, and their teamwork opens new doors in terms of a recognition and concern for what is of critical importance. Information flowing through the organization becomes more real and more relevant to the tasks at hand. Pieces of information are not seen as being equally important. Finally, problems get solved because the people who have the knowledge and skill to solve them are empowered to act together to do so no matter where it is that they find themselves in the organizational structure.

B. TRANSITION OPTIONS

Organizations have four transition choices. More accurately, they have three transition choices and

one non-choice. (In this latter case they can chose to stay the same accepting whatever outside forces wash against and possibly over them.)

Of the three transition choices, organizations can be solution oriented, problem oriented, or vision and mission oriented. Solution oriented organizations seek to copy what someone else has done successfully. Problem oriented organizations fix whatever they find is broken whenever broken components come to their attention. Vision and mission driven organizations develop and then work systematically to embody a new vision and sense of mission in every aspect of their operations.

Approaches to organizational quality centered on copying the efforts of others have not done well as they lack the ownership and commitment necessary for success. Put another way, people do not adopt and pursue someone else's agenda as readily and completely as they do their own. (Exposure to other quality systems has proved important and useful in the context of "success stories". People benefit from seeing that there are others who are making quality a reality as an impetus to developing their own unique approach to quality improvements.)

Similarly, problem oriented approaches to quality have not fared will. Problems get fixed in the short term, but little attention is given to the context in which they occur and they reappear sooner or later. (This process is like "fixing" something with duct tape. The question is not if but when you will have to "fix" it again.)

Vision and mission driven quality transitions take the longest but are far more likely to bring significant, lasting results. Successful efforts to adopt quality systems that begin with an effort to develop and share a new vision and mission produce people who have fully internalized a new frame of reference. These people are both excited about and committed to their new orientation and new tasks and they understand why they have chosen the path they are on.

C. GETTING STARTED

When getting started on the road to a new, quality based organization it is useful to accept the reality of the following concepts.

* Things are the way they are because they got that way.
* Unless things change, they will remain the same.
* Change would be easy if it were not for people.
* People do not resist change. They resist being changed.

More directly, in Marvin Weisbord's words, "The quickest way to increase dignity, meaning, and community in a workplace is to involve people in redesigning their own work." (*Productive Workplaces*)

Successful transitions to quality based organizations are a journey, not a destination. Mechanically, this journey typically involves four components. There is a sponsor at the top, someone in a position of power deeply committed to the transition to quality systems and willing to pay whatever price is necessary to make it happen. There is an oversight group, a limited number of high level people who get together regularly to provide broad management oversight and to consider and adopt policies relating to the transition process. There is a design team that looks comprehensively and objectively at the organization's current operations, analyzes what it finds, and makes recommendations regarding quality based improvements. Finally, there is an outside consultant who provides training, recommends methodology, and develops internal resources.

The structure described above does not guarantee success, but it is a necessary starting point. Then,

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if people organized in this way are willing to learn, have patience and durability, are flexible, take a hands-on approach, and communicate continuously, there is an excellent chance that they will be able to make significant improvements in the overall quality of their organization.