The National Association of COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

COMMUNITY ACTION
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

PROGRAM EVALUATION

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

PROGRAM EVALUATION

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

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Outline of Evaluation for Demonstration Partnership Program in Phoenix AZ,
Dr. Robert Maroney, Evaluator

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is coming around again. It was required of many public programs in the 1960s. In the early 1970s there was another flurry of interest. The major shift came in the 1980s, when the Department of Health and Human Services financed impact evaluations on the WIN Demonstration Programs. These were conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Council of New York City.

These are the most important evaluations of results produced by human development programs. These evaluations are important for two reasons. The first is methodological; they used a true experimental design, with control groups that had participants randomly assigned to the program and to the control group.

Prior to the WIN program many human service providers resisted this approach to evaluation, claiming that it was inhumane to refuse people treatment even though this is routinely done in testing pharmaceuticals and in other medical testing. Since in human services there have always been several times as many eligible participants as there are program slots, the assignment of some nonparticipants to control groups is really just a more systematic way of determining the differences between those enrolled and those not enrolled. The policy breakthrough to use this methodology produced evaluation results that have a much higher degree of certainty about them.

The second reason the WIN Demonstration evaluations are important is because of what they found out about the operation of the employment and training programs that were evaluated. To the amazement of the opponents of publicly financed human services, the evaluations showed there was a real benefit for program enrollees. To the amazement of the supporters of human services, the strength of the local economy proved to be far more significant than the effect of any program -- and the effects of the programs were modest. The programs produced enough of an increase in family income to more than offest the cost of the program, but those gains were rarely enough to move a family out of poverty. Furthermore, they found that programs with a comprehensive range of services, provided over a long period of time, that were coordinated through case-management produced the best results. The findings from these evaluations were the basis for welfare reform -- and the creation of the JOBS program as it is included in the Family Support Act of 1988.

The WIN Demonstration evaluations triggered a wave of new impact evaluations. As this workbook is being prepared there are major impact evaluations underway in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs and in Community Mental Health Programs. The new JOBS program will also undergo an impact evaluation. The WIC and Head Start programs have based their claims to program effectiveness, in part, on a small number of highly publicized program evaluations.

So evaluation is coming back. This writer contends that by the mid 1990s most of the publicly funded human services programs will have either evaluations that demonstrate their benefits, or they will be frozen in place or be shrinking in size. The growth is going to go only to programs of proven worth.

This Evaluation Workbook provides an overview of the different purposes and approaches to evaluation. It is not designed as a "cookbook" with plug-in recipes that can be adopted whole cloth. Instead, it provides principles and methods which can be adapted to suit a specific program or purpose.

Unlike accounting, law, or some other disciplines, the field of evaluation does not have a precise vocabulary. To the contrary, words like "monitoring" and "evaluation" are used in many different ways. Each author develops his own intellectual construct.

We make no claim to universal wisdom here. We have adopted the conceptual framework and nomenclature that were developed by John Wandless, John Johnston, Wayne Thomas, Larry Lillis and the

editor of this volume, Jim Masters. Most of this workbook was originally drafted by John Wandless, specifically for use by CAAs. It has lain quietly in the file of the Center for Community Futures, waiting for a resurgence of interest in evaluation. That resurgence is happening. It is driven by:

* a desire to better measure our effectiveness,
* a recognition that funders are taking an increasing interest in the topic,
* a shift in the debates on public policy wherein discussion is based on evaluation findings,
* requirements of the Demonstration Partnership Program that an evaluation be conducted on any DPP.

We invite your comments. If you are doing an evaluation, please send a copy of your methodology to the Center for Community Futures, PO Box 5309, Berkeley, CA. They will give you a free phone consultation. If you have questions about the content of this manual, please call Jim Masters on 510/540-1928.

OVERVIEW OF THIS WORKBOOK

We measure progress in several ways:

* against ideal standards,
* against last year's performance,
* against stated goals,
* against peers.

Most evaluation methods compare actual progress with stated goals. They enable you to answer the questions "How are we doing" or "Did we do the thing right?" Evaluation also enables you to answer the question "Did we do the right thing?" It gives you a way to assess the actual impact of what you did. This is because evaluation gives you the tools you need to compare what you did do with what would have happened if you had done nothing.

The workbook focuses on these kinds of questions. However, recognizing there is considerable interest in other types of evaluation and in other approaches, such as comparing your agency with others, we have included materials on them as well.

These materials are in five pieces. The first is the workbook itself, which gives a framework for different types of evaluations, discusses their implcations for CAAs, and explores some methodological issues. The methods described in the workbook focus primarily on evaluation of individual service programs.

To facilitate review of the CAA as an entity, we have included a set of perceptions of what a CAA should be and should be able to do. These were developed by the Florida and California CAA Directors as part of the NACAA project on New Partnerships, in which CAAs clarified their expectations of each other. Since there is no universal set of expecations about what a CAA is or should be, these would need to be adapted for your individual CAA or for a group of CAAs. Nevertheless it is easier to begin with something than with a blank piece of peper, so these materials are included in Appendix A. They follow the same format as the CAA Executive Directors Manual.

You can do a self-evaluation of your agency. A methodology for doing that is included as Appendix B.

Some additional tools, in the form of questions, for conducting a self-evaluation are included in Appendix C.

You can get together with several other CAAs, refine your expectations about the standards you want to use to measure each other, and then visit each other's CAAs. The Missouri State CAA Association and the Missouri State CSBG Office developed a methodology for this "peer review" approach. A summary version of that methodology is included in Appendix D. For more information on this approach, we suggest you contact Charles McCann at the Missouri CSBG Office, PO Box 88, Jefferson City, MO 65103, 314/751-6789.

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER I: <u>Frame of Reference</u>

CHAPTER I: Frame of Reference

A. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT CONCEPTS

The definitions of "assessment" and evaluation" used in this workbook are given below.

1. Monitoring

* Compares a project's plans with what actually is happening or has happened.
* Collects specific information on events associated with the operation of a project.

In general, a monitoring system obtains data on both the project and its activities. It is the basis for the analysis necessary to determine whether activities are acceptable, and provides for feedback of this information to management.

2. Evaluation

* Reaching a conclusion about the merit of something, by comparing it against some yardstick.

Evaluation studies are done to measure the effects of a program or project. This aids subsequent decisions about the project's future or structure.

In the strictest sense, evaluation studies are designed to verify whether a certain effect occurred and to suggest conclusions about the extent to which this effect can be directly attributed to the project rather than to outside forces.

2a. Five areas of project input or output where evaluation is applied:

- Effort
- Efficiency
- Operation
- Effectiveness of performance
- Adequacy of performance

2b. These five areas of a project combine to form two basic types of evaluative research:

- Measures of the inputs or processes in the project.
- Measures of the outcome or impact of the project.

Each provides a distinct type of information; used together they provide a balanced analysis of the project.

B. TYPES OF EVALUATION

1. Process Evaluation

Process evaluation is a study of the various parts of the project and how they are linked. It focuses on activities, recipients, relationships, units, milestones and covers effort, efficiency and operations.

2. Impact Evaluation

The concern here is with the relationship of project out comes to stated goals.

Assumes:

* A problem has been identified.

* A theory about what will alleviate it (cause-strategy).

* A project goal.

* Program activities will have a specific impact on the causes of the problem, target group, neighborhood, organization/institution.

    At a minimum, an impact evaluation is a study of change in some target group (individuals, a section of a community, a jurisdiction, etc.).

    It is designed to reach conclusions about the extent to which the project activities themselves created the change, e.g., to say that a job program for youth reduced their delinquent behavior, what are some kinds of "proof" you would have to offer?

Below are some reasons that impact evaluation is not always appropriate or possible.

* Limited resources.
* Limited expertise.
* Inadequate project design.
* Impact data not obtainable.

3. Process and Impact Evaluations are Related

Knowing why an effect did or did not occur is very important. Knowing if a project was implemented as planned is a variation of this. If it was not implemented at all, it could not have caused the effect even if the effect still occurred. Also, the project may have been "differentially" effective:

* In a job program, certain types of jobs may have different impacts on reducing delinquency.

    The evaluator, therefore, may want to see if the delinquency rates are lower for youths in different types of jobs, e.g., private sector vs. public sector; commercial vs. not-for-profit. Information gained from "monitoring" project activities is frequently all that is required.

* Because this type of project has been proved effective time after time (inoculation of children, prenatal care, etc.). However, monitoring can show room for improvement in the way activities are carried out, efficiency, etc.

4. Preliminary Steps to Evaluation

When an evaluation of a project's impact is what is wanted, there are three crucial questions to consider carefully before commitment to an evaluation effort.

Step 1: Will the Findings Be Used?

* Even if the project is a highly effective project, will proving it has impact get any extra funds for the project in the years ahead?

2

* Will the impact of the strategies used in the project be compared to other possible project strategies which can have a greater impact?

* Will having its impact demonstrated gain public support?

Step 2: <u>Can the Project be Evaluated</u>?

* Can you identify the project's goals and objectives?

* Can you identify the criteria for data that will be needed?

* Will the data be available when needed (in one or two years from now)?

* Can you actually measure the changes the project is supposed to produce?

* Can you describe and measure other factors that may have produced or shaped the outcome?

Step 3: <u>Who Can Do This Work</u>?

* Staff with a commitment to being rigorous, systematic and objective.

* Staff that also have the time.

* Staff or consultant with the expertise and experience to direct the technical aspects of evaluation and to design the study and the measurement instruments to be used.

Attempting a sophisticated and complete design without proper understanding of the techniques or skills to do the necessary statistical analysis and data interpretation would waste staff time and project resources.

5. <u>Technical Steps to Evaluation</u>

Task 1: Formulating the question.

Task 2: Designing instruments or techniques for measurement.

Task 3: Designing the study - common models for evaluation studies.

Task 4: Collection of data

Task 5: Utilization of results.

6. <u>Final Comment About Evaluation and Assessment Concepts</u>

Performance assessment has elements of <u>process</u> evaluation (effort, efficiency and operation) and <u>monitoring</u>. <u>Impact</u> evaluation focuses on the areas of effectiveness of performance and adequacy of performance. Impact evaluation also attempts to determine if the performance of the project was the "cause" of the impact.

DESIGN 1

Before vs. After
Program Comparison
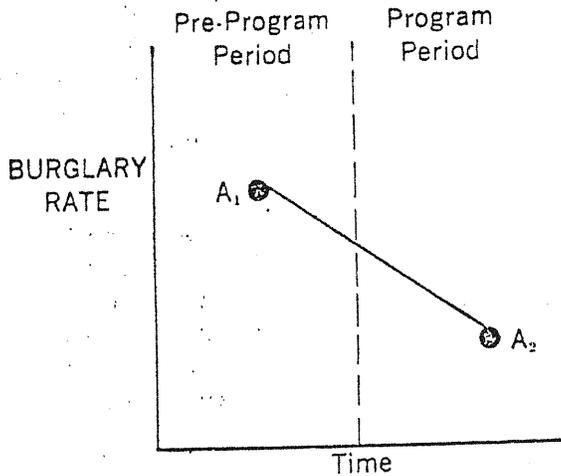
Estimated Program Effect =
After Program Rate (A_2) --
Before Program Rate (A_1)

DESIGN 2

Time Trend Projection
of Pre-Program vs. Actual Program Data
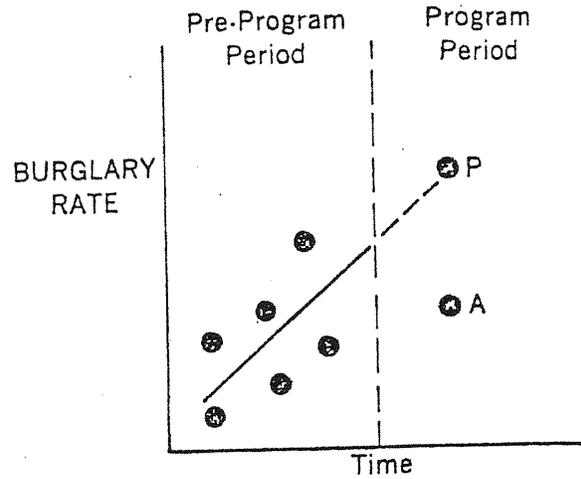
Estimated Program Effect =
Actual Rate (A) — Projected Rate (P)

DESIGN 3

One Time Comparison Between Those
Served and Not Served by Program
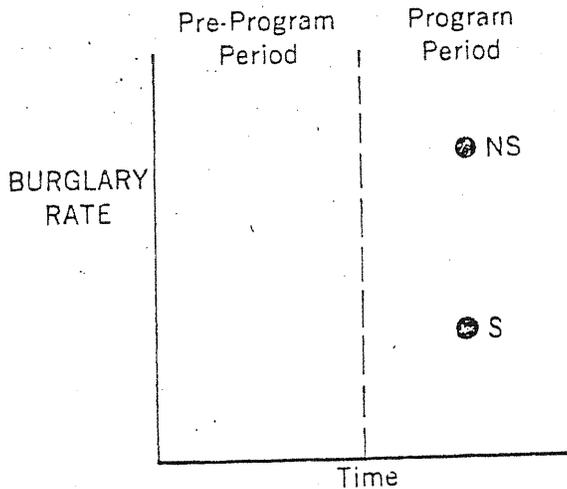
Program Effect = Rate of Those Served (S) —
Rate of Those Not Served (NS)

DESIGN 4

Time Series Comparisons Between
Those Served and Not Served
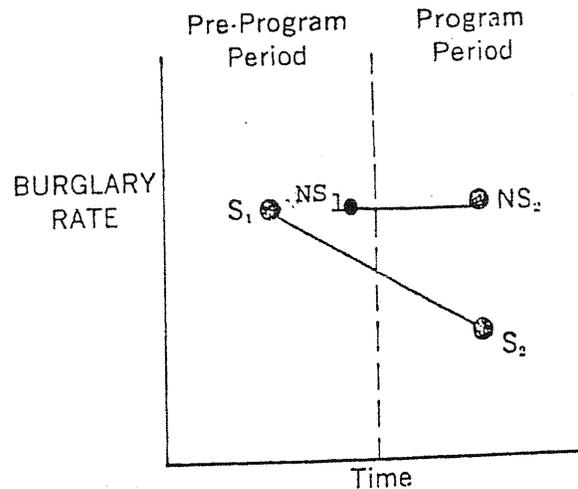
Program Effect = Difference in Before and
After Burglary Rates of Population Served
by the Program (S_2-S_1) – Similar
Difference for Those Not Served (NS_2-NS_1)

Evaluation Design Methodologies
Adapted from: <u>Intensive Evaluation for Criminal Justice Planning Agencies</u>
(Weidman, et al., 1975)

3a

C. An Administrative Checklist for Reviewing Evaluation Plans

Conceptualization of Evaluation

___	Definition:	How is evaluation defined in this effort?
___	Purpose:	What purpose(s) will it serve?
___	Questions:	What questions will it address?
___	Audiences:	Who will it serve?
___	Agents:	Who will do it?
___	Process:	How will they do it?
___	Standards:	By what standards will their work be judged?

Sociopolitical Factors

___	Involvement:	Whose sanction and support is required, and how will it be secured?
___	Internal Communication:	How will communication be maintained between the evaluators, the sponsors, and the systempersonnel?
___	Internal Credibility:	Will the evaluation be fair to persons inside the system?
___	External Credibility:	Will the evaluation be free of bias?
___	Security:	What provisions will be made to maintain security of the evaluative data?
___	Protocol:	What communication channels will be used by the evaluators and system personnel?
___	Public Relations:	How will the public be kept informed about the intents and results of the evaluation?

Contractual/Legal Arrangements

___	Client/Evaluator Relationship:	Who is the sponsor; who is the evaluator, and how are they related to the program to be evaluated?
___	Evaluation Products:	What evaluation outcomes are to be achieved?
___	Delivery Schedule:	What is the schedule of evaluation services and products?
___	Editing:	Who has authority for editing evaluation reports?
___	Access to Data:	What existing data may the evaluator use, and what new data may he obtain?
___	Release of Reports:	Who will release the reports and what audiences may receive them?
___	Responsibility and Authority:	Have the system personnel and evaluators agreed on who is to do what in the evaluation?
___	Finances:	What is the schedule of payments for the evaluation, and who will provide the funds?

The Technical Design

___ Objectives and Variables: What is the program designed to achieve; in what terms should it be evaluated?

___ Investigatory Framework: Under what conditions will the data be gathered, e.g., experimental design, case study, survey site, review, etc?

___ Instrumentation: What data-gathering instruments and techniques will be used?

___ Sampling: What samples will be drawn; how will they be drawn?

___ Data-Gathering: How will the data-gathering plan be implemented; who will gather the data?

___ Data Storage and Retrieval: What format, procedures, and facilities will be used to store and retrieve the data?

___ Data Analysis: How will the data be analyzed?

___ Reporting: What reports and techniques will be used to disseminate the evaluation findings?

___ Technical Adequacy: Will the evaluative data be reliable, valid and objective?

The Management Plan

___ Organizational Mechanism: What organizational unit will be employed, such as an in-house office of evaluation, a self-evaluation system, a contract with an external agency, or a consortium-supported evaluation center?

___ Organizational Location: Through what channels can the evaluation influence policy formulation and administrative decision-making?

___ Policies and Procedures: What established and/or ad hoc policies and procedures will govern this evaluation?

___ Staff: How will the evaluation be staffed?

___ Facilities: What space, equipment, and materials will be available to support the evaluation?

___ Data Gathering Schedule: What instruments will be administered, to what groups, according to what schedule?

___ Reporting Schedule: What reports will be provided, to what audiences, according to what schedule?

___ Training: What evaluation training will be provided to what groups and who will provide it?

___ Installation of Evaluation: Will this evaluation be used to aid the system to improve and extend its internal evaluation capability?

___ Budget: What is the internal structure of the budget; how will it be monitored?

Moral/Ethical/Utility Questions

___	Philosophical Stance:	Will the evaluation be value free, value based, or value plural?
___	Service Orientation:	What social good, if any, will be served by this evaluation; whose values will be served?
___	Evaluator's Values:	Will the evaluator's technical standards and his values conflict with the client system's and/or sponsor's values; will the evaluator face any conflict of interest problems; and what will be done about possible conflicts?
___	Judgments:	Will the evaluator judge the program, leave that up to the client, or obtain, analyze, and report the judgments of various reference groups?
___	Objectivity:	How will the evaluator avoid being co-opted and maintain his objectivity?
___	Prospects for Utility:	Will the evaluation meet utility criteria of relevance, scope, importance, credibility, timeliness and pervasiveness?
___	Cost Effectiveness:	Compared to its potential payoff, will the evaluation be carried out at a reasonable cost?

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER II: Assessment of CAA Management Functions

CHAPTER II: Assessment of CAA Management Functions

A. PREPARATION

1. **Develop an Outline for Conduct of Assessment**

   Develop a detailed work program for each function to be assessed:

   a. Persons who are to be interviewed and key questions to be asked.

   b. Records or documents which are to be reviewed, e.g., personnel policies manual, and/or specific data and information to be requested from units of the CAA or delegate agencies.

   c. Information you will attempt to verify during the assessment, e.g., pulling of personnel folders to verify presence of position descriptions.

   d. Activities, meetings, etc., which the assessment team or individual members wish to observe as part of the assessment.

2. **Development of Schedule for the Assessment**

   * Permits the units to be assessed to prepare for visit.

3. **Conduct the Assessment**

   * Interviews.
   * Personal observations.
   * Records reviews.
   * Reporting findings.

4. Activities which could be included in a management assessment:

   a. **Administration**

   * Personnel administration.
   * Financial administration and control.
   * Property management and procurement.
   * Information/reporting systems.

   b. **Management Assessment**

   * CAA Board composition/operations.
   * Mobilization/coordination of resources.
   * Affirmative action.
   * Adequacy of performance assessment process.
   * Advocacy.
   * Training and technical assistance.
   * General program oversight and leadership.

5. <u>Assessment Strategy</u>

    a. Do a general survey, first, to identify problem area.

    b. Address administrative/management problem areas first. Areas with no apparent problems put off to other years.

    c. In prioritizing problem areas, use two criteria:

        * Which problems will have a serious impact on the implementation of projects and achievement of project goals?

        * Which problems could get the CAA in legal troubles, including financial loss from fines, etc.?

B.   SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES

A general checklist of questions and issues should be developed for each of the administrative and management assessments to be made. Two such checklists are in the appendixes of this workbook -- the Assessment Checklist and the Assessment Review Form.

C.   PRODUCTS

Reports in any given area should cover the following topics:

* Description of the function assessed.
* Personnel/Board committees responsible for the function.
* Dates the function was assessed.
* Description of the assessment group/team and the names and titles of the persons in the group/team.
* Description of the assessment process used.
* Listing of the documents (manuals, etc.) and record types reviewed.
* Listing of the persons interviewed and the topics of the interview.
* General summary of status of policies and procedures:

    - Itemization of policies and/or procedures which are missing and should be developed.
    - Discussion of defective policies and/or procedures.
    - Identification of existing policies and/or procedures which are not adhered to (e.g., no performance evaluations are given).

* CAA strengths in the functional area.
* CAA weaknesses in the functional area.
* Recommendations and who should carry them out.

    - Cover sheet indicating signature of the assessment group/team and showing the official acceptance of the report, including Board acceptance.

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER III: Assessment of CAA Planning

CHAPTER III: Assessment of CAA Planning

The planning process should include:

* Needs assessment.
* Resources analysis.
* Establishing goals.
* Establishing priorities.
* Developing alternative strategies (and selecting the optimum one).
* Evaluating results.

A. OVERVIEW

Formulate the questions to be answered by the assessment:

* Was the planning structure (roles and responsibilities of Board, committees, low-income groups and program participants, other agencies/organizations and CAA staff) created and implemented as outlined by the CAA?

* Were the steps in the planning process (Needs Analysis, Goal Setting, etc.) carried out as outlined?

* Were the steps in the planning process carried out in reasonable accordance with the timetable?

* Do the products of the planning process serve their purpose?

* What corrective actions need to be taken in the current or the next planning cycle?

B. SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES

Develop a checklist of tools to be used in the evaluation -- much like the checklist suggested for the assessment of management functions.

Consider whether or not the assessment should be done for the CAA as a whole, or by County or neighborhood.

Identify the documentation which will be needed to verify to CAA (on field visits) or the public agencies that the proposed process has indeed been followed. The documentation could include minutes of meetings, public notices, survey documents, etc.

C. APPROACH TO DEVELOPING CHECKLISTS

Review the planning process for each activity to be assessed, and when it will be assessed.

Example: The CAAs Mission Statement
Structure: Who was involved in its development?

Planned:
Actual:

Is the Mission Statement known to the staff, Board and community? Is their Board/staff consensus on the Mission Statement?

Questions can be posed in each of the areas above in terms of planned vs. actual:

* Structure -- actual participation, quality of participation.

* Steps implemented.

* According to timetable.

* Quality of products.

* Corrective actions recommended.

The following are a series of questions which could be included in a checklist. They are organized by major steps in the CAA planning process as listed at the beginning of this chapter.

1. The CAA Mission Statement

   The review may focus on the inclusion of aspects of the purpose of community action as included in the Community Services Block Grant, Economic Opportunity Act, or State Statutes or locally developed purposes.

2. In the case of Needs Assessment, the review should focus on:

   a. How low-income people were involved in assessing needs.

   b. What identified needs were rejected by the CAA.

   c. The types of data used, the currency and completeness of data used and the sources of the data.

   d. The use of results of previous years' evaluations and analyses in assessing needs.

   e. The quality and completeness of the problem statements that have been developed. The statements must include, at a minimum, 1) the causes of the problem, 2) the number and characteristics of those affected by the problem, and 3) where those affected live.

   f. The appropriate assignment of the problem to a standard program area.

      "It is more important to do the right thing than to do things right." P. Drucker

3. In the case of Resource Analysis, the review should focus on:

   a. Were private and public sector agencies and resources researched and identified for each poverty problem area?

b. In identifying resources of other agencies, did the material include funding levels, staff, location, services available, services being considered, etc.?

c. Is performance information about the agencies included -- levels of service in general -- service levels for low-income persons, service levels for a particular target population?

d. Were CAA referral records used in determining services available?

e. Were problems of the various community services identified, and what criteria were used in making the identification?

f. Are the most severe poverty problems receiving the largest share of community resources?

g. Are CAA referrals being made to agencies with adequate resources to handle those referrals?

4. When the CAA establishes priorities, it:

* Identifies community poverty problems which have not been adequately addressed.

* Assesses capability and resources available to address problem.

* Assesses probable impact on the poverty conditions.

* Ranks the problem.

5. In the case of establishing priorities, the review should focus on:

a. What method(s) was used by the CAA Board to rank or set priorities among poverty problem statements? Did the method(s) take into account magnitude of the problems (number of persons affected), intensity of the problem (degree of suffering or affliction caused), severity of the problem (a combination of magnitude and intensity), available resources to address the problem, capability of the CAA to address the problem?

b. Was the ranking system a formal, numerical system, or an informal one?

c. If it was formal and numerical, what factors and weighing were used?

d. Do the priorities established exclude the priority needs of certain target populations?

e. Are the priorities established by the CAA Board different than those established during the Needs Assessment step? If so, what were the reasons for the change?

6. In the case of establishing goals, the review should focus on:

a. Are there one or more goals for each priority problem statement?

b. Are the goals realistic and specific enough to be quantified or measured in some way?

c. Do the goals relate directly to the needs identified?

d. Are the goals consistent with past accomplishments or achievements of the CAA or Community Services Agencies?

e. What method did the CAA Board use in establishing the goals?

7. Developing Strategies:

You can have a high impact on the problem by changing the causes of the problem. Use strategies that lead to self-sufficiency and prevention.

In the case of Strategy Development, the review should focus on:

a. Were alternatives related to the basic approaches of institutional change, advocacy, coordination, and resource provision considered for each priority poverty problem area?

b. How were alternative strategies identified, and were all applicable community resources considered in the analysis of the alternative strategies?

c. What method does the CAA Board use in evaluating the alternate strategies?

d. What was the quality of the analysis of alternatives presented by the CAA staff and to the CAA Board?

e. Do the strategies selected deal directly with the goals, priorities and needs previously identified?

f. Does the analysis of alternatives take into account previous evaluations of CAA activities and performance?

g. Will the strategy selected -- if all goes well -- have significant impact on the goal/problem?

D. REVIEW OF APPROVAL PROCESS: Sample Checklist

The following is an example of a checklist which could be used to assess the extent to which the CAA complied -- or is complying -- with its own formal approval process.

1. The action plan was reviewed and approved at a public meeting of the CAA Board.

   Yes _____ No _____ Other _____

   Date of Meeting:
   Copy of Board resolution:
   What was the vote?

2. The Board's public meeting was appropriately publicized and sufficient notice was provided to the target population and low-income residents of the community.

   Yes _____ No _____ Other _____

   Date of publication; how many days in advance?
   Was notice clear from perspective of low-income?
   Method used:

3. The approved action plan was appropriately publicized, in particular with low-income residents and relevant community organizations.

   Yes _____ No _____ Other _____

   Date of publication: Were summary pamphlets used?
   Method used: Media coverage:
   List of organizations receiving copies:

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4. Suggestions for problem priorities or strategies which received substantial community support which were <u>rejected by the Board</u> are noted in the action plan and are accompanied by a summary of community comments and the Board's reasons for rejecting the suggestions.

Yes _____ No _____ Other _____

Were the comments made by an organization operating a project seeking CSA funds?

When were the suggestions rejected? At what time and in the planning process?

E. PRODUCTS

No official format for Planning Assessment reports is required by most States. Reports could cover the following topics:

1. Brief description of the CAA's Planning Function and the dates of implementation.

2. Personnel and Board members responsible for the planning function.

3. Dates the assessment was performed.

4. Identification and description of the assessment group/team.

5. Brief description of the assessment methods/process used.

6. Divide by each major step in the process, and for each step discuss and assess:

   - Documents and records reviewed.
   - Listing of persons interviewed and the topics of the interview.

7. Comparison of actual to planned on:

   - Structure.
   - Steps implemented.
   - According to timetable.
   - Quality of products.
   - Strengths in this area.
   - Weaknesses in this area.
   - Recommendations for improvements in structure, steps, or product quality.

8. Cover sheet indicating signature of the assessment group/team leader and showing the official acceptance of the report, including Board acceptance.

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER IV: <u>Performance Assessment</u>

CHAPTER IV: Performance Assessment

A.   WHAT IS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT?

After a CAA is funded, it enters the implementation or performance phase. Performance assessment is a process by which the CAA Board and top management periodically determine whether or not its strategies or activities are being implemented and operated as planned.

Performance Measure

A key indicator used to tell if a project is being implemented according to plan (start-up) and is progressing (operating) as planned.

Performance measure may relate to objectives, activities or the quality of certain processes.

They are indicators. The formal ones should be kept to the minimum necessary for a manager or Board to assess a project from the position of a general overview.

When performance measures indicate that something may be wrong in the project, a more detailed assessment can be made and corrective action recommended.

The performance measures for each project are developed during the program development phase. They are usually placed on the application form and submitted with the grant application.

The measures should be carefully selected and limited in number since too many measures per project may be worse than no measures at all.

Where possible, key measures should be developed for:

Input Objectives:
The number of participants planned for.

Process Objectives:
The number of community education ads to be run in the media.

Output Objectives:
The number of homes successfully weatherized by month.

Also, the beginning event or the ending event of key activities in each project can be used as performance indicators. For projects using nonservice strategies, the ending events of key activities will be crucial performance measures.

Performance measures are very important for evaluators trying to explain why a project did or did not achieve its goals and have the expected impacts.

B.   EXAMPLE: Developing Performance Measures for Youth

Instructions

1.   Assume you are planning a youth project which diverts youths from the formal juvenile justice project and offers them GED training and job training.

2.   Use the worksheet on the following page and develop a list of activities and objectives for this project. Then identify some illustrations of inputs, process activities, and outputs for this project. (In this example, "inter- mediate" outputs refer to changes in the clients, while "ultimate" refer to goals of the project.)

3.   When this has been completed, study the worksheet and mark the most critical elements of the project. For each of these, develop a performance measure. In the start-up activities, certain agreements may have to be reached before the project can begin. For example, a youth project needs a certain volume of clients at any given time; a performance measure might be developed for the number of clients who should have been served by the project by the end of the target dates vs. the number of youths actually served. A variation on this might be the number of qualified (target) youths currently enrolled as of the end of the target dates.

4.   When you have finished, summarized your inputs, processes, and outputs on the worksheet.

C.   **SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES**

Ways to Organize for Performance Assessment

Establish a performance assessment committee of the Board, and/or establish performance assessment teams -- one for each project or for clusters of projects in the field, (youth programs, energy, etc.).

The teams could be subcommittees of the overall performance assessment committee and could include "experts" as well as suggested below:

	Committee Member	Team Member
Composition of Team	X	X
Board Member(s)	X	X
Project Participant(s)		X
Low-Income Rep.(s)	X	X
Community Agency	X	X
Volunteer or paid experts in the relevant field.		X
State Agencies -- SEOO, Manpower, Youth Services		X

1.   Identify liaison person within the project for working with the team leader.

2.   Establish schedule for data collection and analysis.

3.   Establish linkages with impact evaluators on selected projects.

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P R O J E C T

ON-GOING PROCESS

Outputs:
Ultimate

Inter-med.

Process

Inputs:

START UP ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Activities:

Objectives:

15a

SYSTEMS VIEW OF
A YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAM

NO PROGRAMS

OTHER
PROGRAMS

IMPACT

INPUTS

CLIENTS

PROCESS

OUTCOME

OPERATIONS

. Functions
. Activities
. Methods
. Procedures

Prior
Offenders

STAFF

EQUIPMENT

SPACE

ETC.

SECONDARY
DELINQUENCY

ARREST

CRIME

FIRST
OFFENDERS

15b
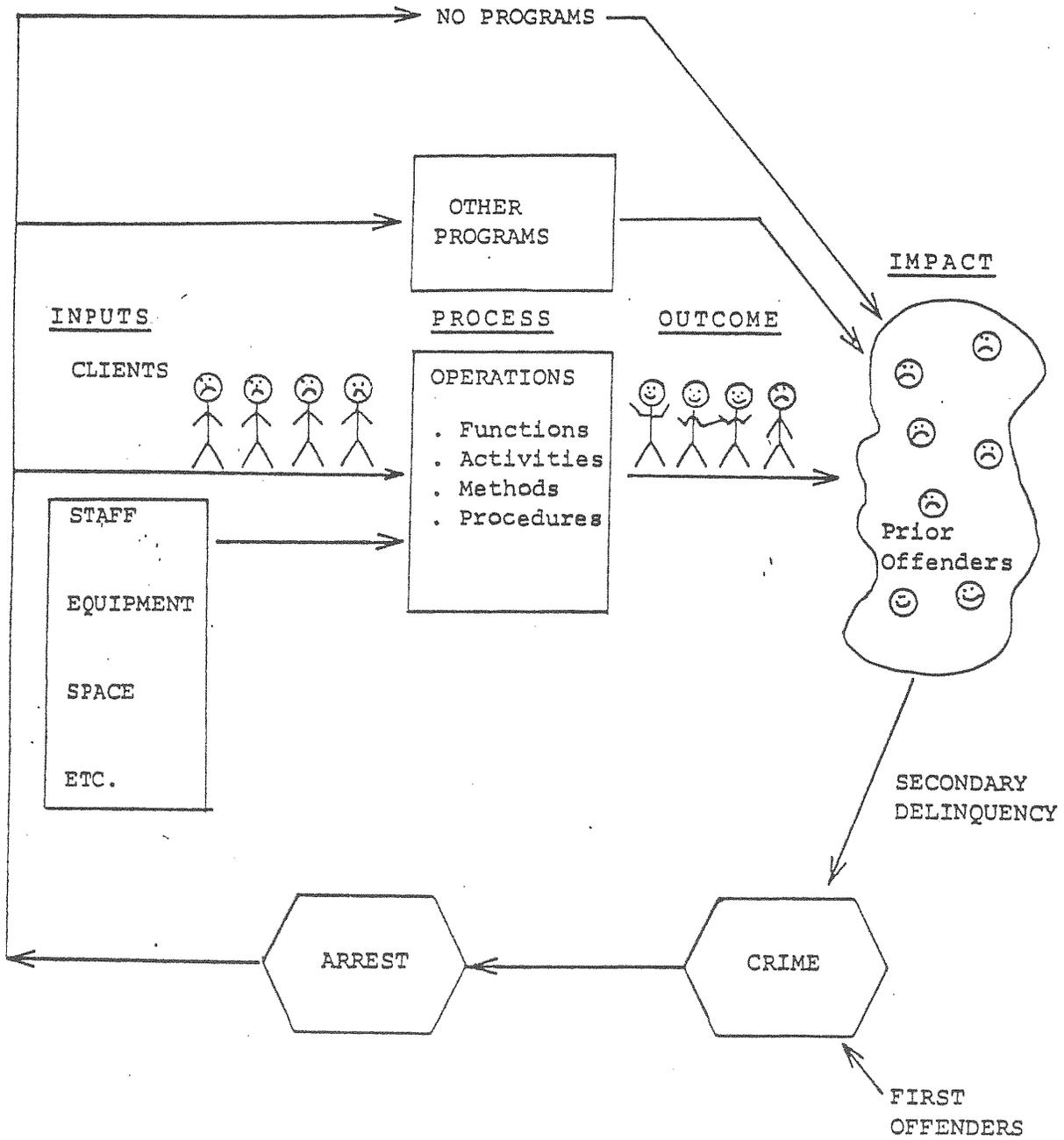
4.   Make recommendations for projects which are showing poor performance.

5.   Plan on exit interview with project manager regarding your findings.

6.   Usually, if a project's performance measures show progress as planned, the team need do only a general assessment. If the performance measures indicate progress less than planned, do a more in-depth assessment, including looking for ways to improve progress and performance.

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER V: <u>Impact Evaluation</u>

CHAPTER V: Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation analyzes whether change has occurred in the community because of the CAA's project or because of other factors.

1. CAA defines the conditions of poverty it intends to change and sets a goal to achieve so much of that change each year over the life of the project.

2. Impact evaluation measures:

   a. Whether or not, or how much of the project's goal has been achieved.

   b. Whether or not, or how much of a change in the condition of poverty in the community has occurred.

   c. Whether or not the CAA's project was responsible for changing the causes and conditions of poverty in the community as opposed to factors other than the project causing the change.

A. PURPOSE

How will the evaluation findings be used by the CAA?

1. Internally:

   Management staff, project staff, Board of Directors, advisory committees?

2. Externally:

   Participants, citizens, other agencies in the same field and funding sources, legislative committees and bodies, etc?

   Other CAAs?

   Funding Agencies?

B. POSSIBLE USES OF RESULTS

1. Expand effective projects.

2. Rethink project:

   -- Change or drop; or use different strategy.
   -- Focus on different cause of the problem.

3. Address a different problem, one which can be better impacted by the CAA.

4. For effective projects, appeal for support to external audience.

5. Evaluate important projects which merit your energy and which could attract funds.

6. Keep good cost/cost effectiveness data because most funding agencies will want to know this information (unit cost information on weatherization, per trainee, etc.).

7. Present two evaluation reports:

   -- A comprehensive for Board and technical persons.

   -- A summary for presentations, newspapers and newsletters.

C. IMPACT EVALUATION

Contrast With Performance Assessment

Performance Assessment: whether project activities are being implemented as planned, and whether project objectives (outputs) are being accomplished.

Impact Evaluation: whether project goals have been achieved. If so, there should be changes in the conditions of poverty within the community in the problem area defined. Changes in the conditions of poverty in the community are measured with impact measures.

Questions for Assessment

1. Did the CAA weatherize 2,000 homes up to standard?

2. Did they persuade the State Public Service Commission to reduce rates for low-income families?

3. Was the cooperative created?

Questions for Evaluation

1. Was the condition of high fuel bills for the participants changed due to the achievement of the objectives by the CAA?

2. Was the goal of reducing the percentage of income spent on fuel (during the winter months) from 30% to 15% for 4,000 achieved?

Types of Proof

Assessment demonstrates that certain activities of the work program have been performed and certain outcomes achieved.

Impact Evaluation seeks to demonstrate that it was the activities of the CAA that were primarily responsible for changes in the conditions of poverty. (In the energy example, rule out that other forces caused the decrease in percentage of income devoted to fuel bills by low-income persons.) Demonstrate that these other forces were not operating.

Performance assessment is a necessary precondition of impact evaluation because it demonstrates that the CAA conducted certain activities and achieved certain objectives which could be expected to produce certain results.

The example on the following page illustrates the difference between assessment and impact evaluation:

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D.   EXAMPLE: __High Fuel Costs for the Low-Income__

PROBLEM HAS:

1.   Baseline Condition

   a.   People pay 30% of income for fuel during the winter months.
   b.   20% of the population - 8,000 people - are affected.

2.   Causes

   a.   Fuel wasted.
   b.   Fuel cost too high.
   c.   Delivery costs too high.

GOAL:

1.   Change Condition

   a.   Reduce fuel cost from 30% to 15% for 50% of affected population -- 4,000 people.

STRATEGY:

1.   Change Cause

   a.   Weatherize to conserve fuel.
   b.   Reduce cost through rate change.
   c.   Seek alternative delivery system.

OBJECTIVE:

1.   Operational Strategy

   a.   Weatherize 2,000 homes to State standards within 24 months.
   b.   Persuade State Public Service Commission to reduce rates for low-income families.
   c.   Create delivery co-op -- purchase one delivery truck and reduce delivery cost from $30 per month to $10 per month per family.

E.   __SELECTING THE PROJECT TO BE EVALUATED__

When you select a project, you are also selecting a problem area, poverty condition, goal and strategy. The selection criteria could include the following:

1.   Rank of the poverty problem.

2.   Priority of the project.

3.   Size of the impact expected (size of change).

4.   Need to prove to public or potential funding sources that this type of project is effective.

5.   Likelihood that favorable evaluation findings would attract funding or continue funding.

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F. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROBLEM

*   Centrality

*   Age of strategy
    -- brand new or tried and true?

*   Evaluable
    -- are comparisons and controls available?
    -- is the needed data available?

*   Resources of the agency.

G. CONDUCTING AN IMPACT EVALUATION

1. Impact Measure

An indicator whose change represents a corresponding change (or at least some change in the same direction) in a condition of poverty, e.g., the unemployment rate reported by State Agencies. Or a cluster of indicators representing an improvement in a poverty condition such as:

*   The health of the poor.
*   Reduction in infant mortality rate.
*   Reduction in the maternal mortality rate.
*   Increase in the percentage of school age children inoculated.

Try to specify when (in what months or how long after the start-up of a project) the desired changes should begin occurring. Document the trends associated with the impact measure(s) selected:

*   Sometimes the change in the impact measure can be one of direction: instead of increasing from year-to-year, the infant mortality rate could start to decrease.

*   Sometimes the change could be a reduction in the rate of change even though the change is an undesirable increase each year. Example: reducing increases in energy rates from 10% a year to only .05% a year.

2. The Four Dimensions of Impact

a. Form of impact.
b. Intensity of change.
c. Magnitude of change.
d. Focus of change -- individual, institution, community.

Example: Will you measure the infant mortality rate for the community or for the difference between the infant mortality rate of the low-income community and the remainder of the community?

Infant mortality rate for the community is 9/1,000, and -- if the project is successful -- it should be reduced to 6/1,000 in four years.

Current Mortality Rate		Planned Mortality Rate	
Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor
4/1,000	12/1,000	4/1,000	8/1,000

Poor Mortality Rate is three times that of the Non-poor.

Poor Mortality Rate will be two times that of the Non-poor.

3. Validity of Impact Measure

It measures what it is supposed to measure.

Problem Area -- Substandard Housing:

Impact Measures

Percentage of housing units rated as substandard (valid) but may not be if the reduction results from demolition without creation of any new units.

Changes in rental prices (not relevant). This is why "clusters" of measures are often useful -- they look at several dimensions of the change at once.

EXAMPLE: What Is an Impact Measure In Housing?

Problem Area: Substandard Housing

Performance Measure -- Individual

Number of individuals previously living in substandard housing rated up to city code, within the time frame of the program.

Impact Measure -- Community

Percentage reduction in substandard housing in the target area from before to after implementation of the program.

Form: Quality of Housing

Intensity

Bringing houses up to local code. Alternative definitions of intensity of needed change standards defined by HUD, Bureau of the Census.

Magnitude

Number of houses to be affected within the target area. Alternative definitions: Neighborhood; Census tract; all affected individuals.

Possible Problems With Measure

Community definition: City could tear down all substandard houses and not provide replacements, which would lower the percentage of substandard housing in the community. This would not be an accurate resolution of the problem of quality housing in the community since it would raise a new problem in the quantity of the housing available to low-income.

4. Impact Evaluation Demonstrates:

   a. That expected changes have occurred.

   b. That changes were due primarily to the strategies pursued (projects operated) by the CAA.

   c. That changes were not due primarily to factors operating independently of the CAA.

5. Research Design

   a. This is the approach a CAA uses to conduct its impact evaluation.

   b. Sets Out:

      - What questions are to be answered.
      - What data need to be collected.
      - When the data are to be collected.
      - How the data will be analyzed.

6. Three Major Types of Research Design:

   a. Non-Experimental

      - Has project achieved its goal?

      - Have targeted poverty conditions changed?

   b. Quasi-Experimental

   Some comparison is made to determine if the same goal or condition change was achieved among comparison group (in a target area or County in which a CAA's project did not operate).

   In quasi-experimental designs, however, there are variables for which there are no controls.

      - Did residents from the non-target neighborhood come to the target neighborhood for services?

      - Maybe a similar program, unknown to the CAA, operated in the non-target neighborhoods.

      - Maybe the people were different.

   c. Experimental

   Randomly selected participants to control for all variables.

   Difficult to accomplish in community-wide projects.

   Difficult to sustain over an extended period of time, certainly past one year.

7. The differences in the three general types of design relate to:

   a. The energy required to maintain the comparison groups, such as making sure they are continually random, countering pressures to serve the "controls," etc.

b. The cost required to maintain the comparison groups, such as collecting follow-up information on persons not clients, etc.

c. The degrees of certainty needed about the outcomes and consequences.

8. <u>Why There are Three Types of Designs for Conducting an Impact Evaluation</u>

If each of the three types of designs is adequate, why are the three types of designs needed? Each type of design will vary in the level of effort that the CAA must expend to conduct the analysis, and in the degree of certainty that the CAA has about the conclusions which it can draw from the results of its analysis.

Why, then, even bother to do an experimental design? To increase your degree of certainty that the CAA can have about the conclusions that it draws from the results. This is important if the CAA finds itself in a highly "skeptical" community. It will also produce the highest level of proof.

A). <u>NON-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN</u>

* Data collected on the performance and impact measures which are indicators of the degree to which changes have been made in the conditions of poverty or the project's goals have been reached.

* Data on performance and impact measures are collected from participants (whether project participants are individual or an entire community) which is to benefit from the CAA's project.

-- "Community level" data are appropriate when the impact measure is a social indicator, e.g., percent reduction in unemployment.

* Data collection points vary according to design:

-- In the pre-test/post-test, design data on the condition of poverty which the CAA intends to change are collected from project participants prior to the start of the project (using the selected measures).

-- A second round of data on the measures are collected from participants after the results of the project are expected.

-- The <u>initial</u> data (pre-test) for a "baseline" against which the degree of change in the condition of poverty can be measured for project participants.

-- In the <u>post-test</u> design, data are collected on impact measures only at the point (or points) at which change would be expected or the project goal has been achieved.

* These two variations on non-experimental designs serve different types of evaluation needs.

-- <u>Use pre/post</u> if the CAA wants to demonstrate a specific level of change in the condition of poverty.

* The difference in the impact measure between the pre-test and the post-test can be used to calculate the specific levels of change in the conditions of poverty.

-- <u>Use post only</u> if the CAA wants to demonstrate that a goal has been achieved but the exact degree of change is less important to demonstrate.

<u>Analysis of the Data Collected Varies</u>:

Pre/Post: The degree of change in the condition of poverty is calculated.

When the change is expected in the conditions of individuals, the data on the impact measure for each project participant, collected before the project begins, is subtracted from the final data on the impact measure for <u>each project participant</u>. An average of the "change" score for each participant equals the project's overall degree of success.

With a community-level measure, the degree of change for the community as a whole is calculated. Example: unemployment was at 5% before the project; it was at 3% after the project. The project's degree of success was the reduction of unemployment by 2%.

The average of the project participants' final scores on the impact measure (or the community's score on the impact measure) is compared with the final score <u>anticipated</u> by the CAA in its Goal Statement, i.e., reduce unemployment to 3% by the end of the project. By the end of the project, the unemployment rate was 3%. Therefore, the CAA had met its goal.

* When should data be collected?

-- AFTER change in the condition of poverty is expected.

* How much of a change in the condition of poverty is acceptable?

-- Is the change "statistically significant?" Is it due to more than a simple chance? Is the change socially significant?

<u>The Final Choice</u>:

If a CAA wants to demonstrate a <u>degree</u> of change in the impact measure for project participants, then it should employ pre-test/post-test design. To use this design, it must have "baseline" data on the impact measure before the project begins.

Baseline data may be relatively easy to acquire because it was collected as part of needs assessment, but how will <u>post data</u> be collected? If a CAA wants to demonstrate primarily that a goal has been achieved, then the post-test design is both adequate and efficient. It simply compares an average of the project participants' final scores on the impact measures (or the community's scores) with the <u>Final Score Anticipated</u> by the CAA in its Goal Statement.

Two major strengths of non-experimental designs are that it is easy to administer and uses relatively few of the resources of the CAA.

B). <u>NON-EXPERIMENTAL MODEL EXAMPLES</u>

To understand the weaknesses of the non-experimental research designs, read each of the three examples which follow. Answer the questions asked at the end of each example and develop a rationale for your answer.

A critical drawback to non-experimental design is that it is impossible to prove <u>conclusively</u> that the change in the conditions of poverty was caused by the activities of the CAA and not by other factors. Three examples illustrate the importance of this point.

Example #1: The goal of a CAA is to reduce the percentage of income spent on fuel oil by the low-income from 30% to 15%. Its strategy is to weatherize homes. It institutes its project in November and finishes it in April. It decides to do an impact evaluation of the effect of its strategy of weatherization on reducing the fuel oil bills of project participants using a pre-test/post-test

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design. It collects information on fuel oil bills (the impact measure) before the project's inception (in October) and after the project's completion (in May). It finds that the percentage of income that has been spent on fuel has been reduced from 30% to 15%. But is that because of the activities of the CAA?

Not necessarily! An alternative explanation exists. Fuel oil bills would go down from October to May because of the weather. Thus, using a pre-test/post-test design only, the CAA cannot draw any conclusion about the success of its project in reducing the fuel bills of low-income project participants. In books on research design, this problem is called the effect of <u>maturation</u>.

Example #2: The CAA realizes that the appropriate points at which to collect data on the percentage of income spent on fuel oil (the impact measure) are from October before the project's inception to the October after the project's completion. In this way, the effects of weather are neutralized (provided that one October is not unusually warmer than the other). It collects the data and finds that the percentage of income spent on fuel is unchanged from before to after the project. It is still 30% of the income of the project participants. From this information alone, should the CAA conclude that its project has had no effect on the fuel bills of the low-income?

Not necessarily! Fuel oil costs may have risen so dramatically over the course of the project year that even with weatherization activities, bills were at 30% of income. Without the project, the bills might have been at 60% of income. However, without additional information (i.e., on increases in the price of fuel), the CAA could not judge whether its project had been a failure. In books on research design, this problem is called the effect of <u>history</u>.

Example #3: In an employment project, the CAA seeks to train and place 100 "unemployable" individuals. The project is to run for one year. At the end of one year, 40 of the original participants remain in the project. The CAA is able to place all 40 in full-time jobs. Is its project a success?

Possibly not! It is possible that the 40 participants who stayed with the project and who were placed were placed because they were highly motivated. Their high motivation caused them to both stay with the project and to be hired. That motivation would have gotten them jobs -- even <u>without the efforts of the CAA</u>. The 60 individuals who dropped out of the project might be the true "unemployables" -- and the type of individuals for whom the project was intended and on whom the results of the project should be measured. Yet those 60 individuals were not available for measurement because they had dropped out of the project. Thus, the CAA is unable to measure the true effect of its project activities. In books on research design, this problem is called the effect of <u>mortality</u>.

There are two methods by which the CAA can rule out or judge the effects of other factors in changing the conditions of poverty in the impacted community. The first method is to consider which other factors could <u>plausibly</u> be having an effect on the goal of the CAA, to measure the potential effects of those other factors explicitly, and to judge their potential effects on the condition that the CAA wished to change. In Example #1, the CAA would explicitly consider that the weather would naturally be warmer in May than in October and so not conduct the post-test measure of fuel oil bills until the October after completion of the project (and then not draw any conclusions until after checking if the October weather was in any way unusual). In Example #2, it would keep records of the price of fuel oil and calculate the percentage of income that would have gone to fuel oil if the CAA's project had not been in existence. In Example #3, the CAA could administer a test in motivation (or test for any other factors that would cause individuals both to drop out of their project and prevent their employment) to all 100 original project participants. If the participants and the drop-outs did not differ significantly on motivation (or on any major factor), then the CAA could conclude, with a degree of certainty, that its project was responsible for ultimate job placement.

The success of this approach to ruling out the potential effects of other factors on the change in the impact measure is dependent upon the CAA being able to recognize, to measure, and to rule out all potential factors that might have an effect on the condition which the CAA's project is to affect. These factors might also include external agencies which have launched projects in the CAA's impacted community. The CAA might be able to identify the efforts of these external agencies during the course of the resource analysis which is part of the planning phase. The important point in ruling out the potential effects of external agency actions is to know what efforts were mounted and what changes could be expected from those agency efforts. At the points at which those changes should be felt, the CAA could collect additional data to demonstrate whether changes had, in fact, come after the efforts of the external agency had been completed.

An alternative method to demonstrate that the activities of the CAA were responsible for changes in the condition of poverty (as manifested in the impact measure) is to employ a quasi- experimental design. In quasi-experimental designs, additional data are collected in order to rule out specifically the potential effects of other factors on the condition of poverty which the CAA wishes to change.

C). QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

In quasi-experimental designs, additional data are collected in order to demonstrate that the project undertaken by the CAA is responsible for changes found in the impact measure after project completion. The additionally needed data can take two forms: it can be collected from additional individuals or groups or collected from additional time points.

Control Groups

Control groups are individuals or groups not participating in the CAA project. A control group can help to rule out the possibility that factors other than its project are causing changes in the conditions of its project participants. Control groups should closely resemble project participants (if the project participant group is composed of low-income rural families, then the control group is composed of low-income rural families). Ideally, the control group is similar in all respects but one: they do not receive the benefits of the CAA project.

The similarities between the project participants and the control group imply that all of the other factors which could be causing changes in the condition of the project participants (after project participation) would be present for the control group as well. The only difference is project participation.

Thus, if differences appeared between project participants and the control group on the condition of poverty (as indicated by differences in the impact measure), then the only thing which could be causing those differences would be the participation of the CAA group in the CAA project. The potential effects of all other factors would be "controlled," hence the term "Control Group."

Using a control group, the CAA could strengthen its conclusion that its project was responsible for changes in the conditions of poverty as demonstrated by changes in the impact measure over time.

D). QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN WITH CONTROL GROUPS

Example: CAA Weatherization Project with a goal of reducing fuel bills of project participants from 30% to 15% of income after completion of its weatherization project.

1. Prior to project start-up and any data collection, a control group would be located similar in all respects that might touch on their use of fuel oil:

   * Age
   * Similarity in type and condition of houses.
   * Similarity in sources and costs of fuel oil.

2. Data on fuel bills (the impact measure) of the control group would be collected at the same time as for the project participants.

   * The pre-test or baseline information for both groups.

   * The percentage of income initially going to pay for fuel should be roughly equivalent for those two groups at that point (approximately 30% of income).

3. The houses of the participants would be weatherized. The houses of the controls would not. The groups would differ in that respect alone.

4. At a suitable point in the future (i.e., the same time, the next year after project results could be expected), the fuel bills of both project participants and the control group would be collected and compared.

   Expected Results: The fuel bills of project participants would have been reduced to 15% of income (the CAA goal is met), while the fuel bills of the control group would have remained the same at 30% because nothing in their situation would have changed to alleviate that condition. Thus, the CAA could conclude that only its project could have been responsible for the reduction in the fuel bills of project participants.

5. However, what if the CAA found that the fuel bills of project participants remained at 30% of income. How could it use the control group to demonstrate that the project had an impact on the fuel bills of project participants, even if the goal was not met? If the goal was not met because the price of fuel had increased so that it continued to take 30% of the income of project participants, then it should have increased to the point that it was consuming 60% of the income of the control group (effect of no weatherization plus effect of higher fuel bills). Thus, the CAA can use the bills of the control group to prove that its weatherization project had an important effect on the fuel bills of low-income project participants.

   In this case, the CAA may still view the need to reduce fuel bills to 15% of income as a critical goal to be achieved among the low-income. However, the results of the impact evaluation should demonstrate that the strategy of weatherization is, by itself, inadequate and must be supplemented.

6. The use of control groups implies that the CAA will have to take several additional steps over and above the steps needed to conduct a non-experimental design.

   It will have to:

   * Locate an appropriate control group.

   * Collect data from the control group on the impact measure at the same time-points that it collects data on the impact measure from project participants.

   * Analyze the data twice -- first to affirm that the project participants have changed in the condition of poverty or have met the CAA's goal and -- second, to affirm that differences exist in the post-test impact measure between project participants and the control group.

E). LOCATING AN APPROPRIATE CONTROL GROUP

Appropriate comparison groups can take many forms. As was discussed in the section on developing the standard for impact measures, an appropriate comparison group may be defined by other individuals in the impacted community who have not received project benefits (either directly or indirectly), or by comparable communities in which CAA (or other) projects are not operative, or by nationally defined standards.

The important point about comparison (or control) groups is that they not be unusual in respects that may affect the impact measure. In other words, they must not be beneficiaries of a service or other "treatment" related to the impact measure over which the CAA has no control. If they are, then it will not be possible to compare the control group to project participants in order to measure the effect of CAA projects. Two examples will illustrate this point.

Example #1: A CAA sets up an employment project to reduce the area's unemployment rate by 2% -- from 10% to 8%. It decides to use an adjoining county as the control group for its project. Economic conditions are the same in both the project and adjoining counties. The unemployment rate for both is 10%. The CAA operates its project and compares the unemployment rate in its area with the rate in the adjoining county. Both have been reduced by 2% -- from 10% to 8%. Is the CAA's project a failure? Would the unemployment rate have been reduced regardless of the CAA project, just as the rate in the adjoining county, in which the CAA had no project, was reduced?

Not necessarily! A new industry may have opened. Factors such as these could be responsible for the reduction in the unemployment rate. No projects that would have an effect on the impact measure employed by the CAA should be operating in the control group. If the control group is to be employed to demonstrate what would have happened if the CAA had not instituted its project, then the control group should not be the recipient of either CAA or a comparable agency's benefits.

However, in the case in which a new employer opened and hired from both counties, then the county adjoining the CAA could still be used as a control group to measure the impact of the CAA's employment project on the impacted community. This would be the case because the community in which the CAA operated its project would receive the benefits of both the CAA project and the new employer, while the adjoining county would receive the benefit of the new employer alone. Thus, the distinction between the two communities would still be that the impacted community was receiving more benefits (via the CAA project) than was the control community. The effect of this additional benefit on the unemployment rate of the CAA community might be to decrease the unemployment rate from 10% to 6% in the project community as compared with 10% to 8% in the control community.

Knowledge of the CAA's area and of the projects of relevant external agencies is critical to the successful conduct of an impact evaluation.

Example #2: A Head Start project is instituted in order to improve the reading scores of low-income children. A comparison group of middle-income children living in the same area is chosen. They do not receive the project benefits. Using a post- test design, reading scores are compared for the two groups. No differences are found. Was the project a failure because the Head Start children did not perform better than the comparison group?

Not necessarily! The control group had so many advantages that would affect reading scores over the Head Start children to begin with, that increases in reading ability over time and high reading scores would have been expected from the control group in any case. Thus, middle-class children are not a good control group against which to demonstrate the impact of a Head Start reading project.

There are two ways that an appropriate control group for Head Start participants could be located. The first way would be to choose a control group which "matched" the Head Start children in every respect that could have an effect on reading scores. Since the two groups would be equivalent in reading and the circumstances which promote reading ability before the project began, any differences in reading scores which emerged after the project was completed could be attributable only to the Head Start project.

Middle-class children could become an appropriate control group for Head Start participants under certain circumstances. If the Head Start project director wanted to demonstrate that her project enabled lower-class children to "catch-up" to the reading scores of middle-class children, then middle-class children would become the control group using a pre-test/post-test design.

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In the pre-test/post-test design, the reading scores of both groups of children would be measured prior to the start of the project. A clear difference in those scores should emerge, reflective of the advantages of the middle class children. At the end of the project, the reading scores of the two groups would again be collected and compared. If the CAA project was successful, the post-test scores of the two groups should be roughly equivalent. If they are, then the CAA could plausibly argue that its project had enabled lower-class children to catch-up (or, at least reduce the gap in reading between the two groups). Under those circumstances, middle-class children are both a plausible and useful control group for participants in a Head Start project.

F). <u>DATA ANALYSIS FOR QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS USING CONTROL GROUPS</u>

The primary purpose of an impact evaluation is to demonstrate that changes have occurred in the condition of poverty for project participants from <u>before</u> to <u>after</u> completion of the project.

* In a <u>non-experimental</u> design using pre/post format, calculate differences in the impact measures for project participants.

* In the <u>post-test only</u> format, compare the results on the impact measure to the CAA's goal for the project.

This component of the data analysis procedure for impact evaluation is unchanged with quasi-experimental designs.

The secondary purpose of an impact evaluation is to demonstrate that the change that occurred was due to the CAA's project. A control group is employed to do this. The CAA compares differences on the impact measure for the two groups. There should be a greater degree of change among project participants than among the control group if the CAA's project was successful.

Data analysis in quasi-experimental designs has several stages:

1. Scores must be compared on the impact measure for the project participants and the control group, before the project begins(on pre/post test designs) in order to get a baseline difference in the two groups. E.g., an average of pre-test scores for project participants to an average of pre-test scores for the controls (the rates for two communities).

2. Scores must be compared for project participants before and after completion of the project in order to demonstrate that change has occurred (pre/post format).

3. Scores for project participants after project completion must be compared to CAA goals to establish whether goals have been reached (post-test only format).

4. Techniques used to demonstrate differences between project participants and the control group will be based on the criteria of statistical significance and social significance. E.g., the difference in the change between the project participants' scores and the controls' scores may be statistically significant -- due to more than just chance. But the difference may be so small that the difference is not worth the cost and effort of the project.

Time Series Data

Cases in which an appropriate comparison group cannot be located or would not be appropriate:

* Project participants can become their own control group with the proper use of the dimension of time.

* This second type of quasi-experimental design requires data from project participants be collected at several points in time.

* The additional data from the other time points is used to establish a trend in the behavior of project participants.

If a project affects the behavior of project participants, then there should be a change in the trend of behavior demonstrated by project participants from before to after completion of the project.

That change in the trend exhibited by project participants could be used to demonstrate that the CAA's project had the intended impact. This is called "interrupted time series." An example of this is weatherization projects. Data is collected on percentages of income spent on fuel for a series of Octobers extending before and after project completion. Factor in the effects of inflation on fuel costs and plot (see illustration below).

Illustration of Possible Relationships
Between the Weather and the Project's Impact

Project Year	Impact	Percentage of income spent on fuel oil
1978	Difference due to the project	
1979	Weather was unusually mild in 1979. Project did have an effect, although not as dramatic as if only the weather in 1979 was examined.	
1980	Weather was unusually cold in 1980. Project did have an effect, although not as dramatic as if only the weather in 1980 was examined.	

Major advantages of quasi-experimental designs is that they are relatively easy to administer and that they provide a far higher degree of certainty that the projects of the CAA are responsible for (at least some) of the changes in the impact measure for project participants.

* They do require that data be collected from appropriate comparison groups.

* If they cannot be located, then the data must be collected from other points in time.

E.   EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

Experimental designs use the same approach as quasi- experimental designs employing control groups, and are the same in all major respects but one:

Individuals who receive the benefits of the CAA project are selected at random, meaning that individuals are placed into the project group or the control group on the basis of chance.

The decision as to who is to receive the benefits of the CAA's project is made by the CAA, not by the potential project participants. Thus, the individuals who are highly motivated and who would have resolved the condition of poverty on their own without the assistance of the CAA (had such assistance not been forthcoming) are not clustered among project participants to an unusual extent.

Individuals with both low and high motivation are included among both project participants and controls. The factor of "self selection" is not a problem with experimental designs because no "self selection" takes place.

Neither the experimental nor any other research design will tell you why a project has not worked. It will tell you only that changes either have been made or have not been made -- and that if changes have been made, they are due to the project of the CAA. However, with experimental design, the CAA can be as sure as it is possible to be that its project is responsible for the changes found in the conditions of poverty for project members. In all other aspects -- other than the random assignment of potential participants to project or control groups -- experimental designs are equivalent to quasi-experimental designs.

For example, a CAA plans an employment project. Its goal is to reduce unemployment from 5% to 3% within six months. To reach that goal, 60 people must be placed in full-time jobs. One- hundred individuals apply for the project. The CAA has resources to handle only 60 in the project. It decides to do an experiment to test the effectiveness of its project in employing individuals. It takes the 100 applicants and chooses 60 of them at random for inclusion in the project. (The selection of one individual had no bearing on the selection of others. The specific method used for random selection was included in a standard book on statistical inference.) The other 40 individuals become the control group.

Baseline data on employment status is collected from both project participants and control group (pre-test). All 100 individuals are unemployed.

The sixty project participants enter the project. At the end of six months, the employment status of both project participants and the control group is noted and compared. Thirty project participants are employed. Ten control group members are employed.

Two aspects of the data are analyzed. First, has the goal been reached?

Not completely. Since only 30 of the project participants have found employment instead of 60, unemployment has been reduced to only 4% instead of 3%.

Second, has the project had an impact on the employment of the previously unemployed?

Yes. Since 30 of the 60 participants were placed (50%) as compared with 10 of 40 control group members (25%), participation in the CAA's project is apparently better than finding a job without CAA assistance.

Two points should be noted. First, some of the control group members did find employment. That is to be expected since some highly motivated individuals would have been placed in the control group because of the random selection process, even if they had wanted to be included in the CAA project. Second, if the CAA

wants to find out why only 50% of its goal had been reached, it would have to research both project implementation and community conditions. That information would not be provided by the experimental design in the impact evaluation.

In Summary, Experimental Designs Demonstrate That:

1.   Changes have occurred in the conditions of poverty. Non-experimental and quasi-experimental designs can do this, too.

2.   Changes were due primarily to the efforts of the CAA. Quasi-experimental designs can do this, too.

3.   Change was not due to the participation in the CAA project of individuals who would have resolved their condition of poverty irrespective of the efforts of the CAA. The problem of the effect of self-selection by the most motivated is resolved by experimental-designs only.

In other words, you can determine the percent of people who would have solved the problem anyhow, without the assistance of the CAA.

A more detailed description of Impact Evaluation is provided in the companion workbook, Impact Evaluation, written by Dr. Elaine Ader, the former Evaluator for Region III.

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER VI: Issues in Research

CHAPTER VI: Issues in Research

1. ### Excessive Data Collection

There is a tendency to collect more data than can be used in the evaluation. To prevent this, each type of data collected should be associated with a particular evaluation question, proposition or hypothesis. To some extent, this problem is prevented by the specification of impact measures.

2. ### Sample Design and Size

This requires the application of expert knowledge and experience. The sizes of samples are related to certain levels of accuracy that you want in the findings of the evaluation. There are many other difficulties related to sampling (e.g., response error, missing data, etc.). All of these must be treated by competent statistical specialists in order to provide assurance of valid data from the project.

3. ### Data Processing Needs May be Underestimated

* How will data be coded and processed?
* What analytical treatments of the data will be performed?

4. ### Availability of Information

Who has it; can you get it? Remember, that while "baseline" data may be available from census data (especially for projects beginning in 1991), how will it be updated for 1995? If you are using official agency reports (e.g., police, employment service, state school agencies, etc.) will they have updates? What if you need to go back in time for a time-series analysis, are data available for 1989, 1988, etc.?

5. ### Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is one of the most common data gathering tools. It is also a source of error, reliability and validity of instrument. Test it before you make the final commitment to it.

* Use a standardized instrument, if possible.

* Check alternative sources to corroborate the responses you get.

* Who is the best type of person to administer the questionnaire?

PROGRAM HYPOTHESIS: From Problem Analysis to Hypothesis

* Educated hunch.

* Series of if-then statements.

* Hierarchy of statements that include proposed relationship between services and desired outcomes.

* Leads to development of goals and objectives.

PROGRAM HYPOTHESIS: Purposes

* Helps make explicit assumptions about program expectations.

* Establishes a framework that can be used to bring internal consistency to the program.

* Examines inputs, throughput, outputs and outcomes for their internal consistency.

EVALUATION WORKBOOK

CHAPTER VII:

YOUNG FAMILIES CAN PROJECT

CHAPTER VII: Young Families Can Project

Hypothesis:

* Adolescent mothers are an extremely high risk population.

* These risks include a statistically higher probability of dropping out of school, experiencing difficulties with parenting including the higher probability of abusing and/ or neglecting their children and becoming dependent on the Welfare system.

* If we can identify on a case-by-case basis the major problems/barriers to a mother's becoming self-sufficient and

* If we can develop a meaningful case plan that relates to these identified problems and barriers and

* If we can successfully eliminate systemic barriers to self-sufficiency, then

* We should achieve positive changes in problem areas which in turn should ultimately be observed in higher rates of self-sufficiency

* In that a number of barriers will be identified as structural and imbedded in the human service system, we assume that a caseworker will not only be able to deal with these on a case-by-case basis, but that they will eventually be dealt with at the system's level through changes in policies and procedures.

Evaluation Questions

* What types of clients?
* With what types of problems?
* Receiving what types of services?
* Achieve what results?
* At what cost?

Goals and Objectives: Criteria

* Clarity.
* Time frame.
* Target of change.
* Results to be achieved.
* Criteria for documentation.
* Responsibility.

Goals and Objectives: Levels

* Outcome Objectives: Statements of what you hope to achieve. Usually multiple levels -- ultimate and intermediate -- directly tied to problems you are targeting.

* Process Objectives: Statements of how you will achieve the outcomes -- Major program elements.

* Activities.

Designing the Intervention: A Systems Approach

* INPUTS:
  Clients
  Staff
  Resources
  Equipment
  Facilities

* THROUGHPUTS:
  The service delivery process -- the coming together of clients and all resources.

* OUTPUTS:
  The completion of a service by a client.

* OUTCOMES:
  The change in the client after treatment.

Process Outcomes: Throughputs

* Case Management
* Individual Counseling
* Group Counseling
* Financial Assistance
* Parent Training
* Job Training
* Housing Assistance

Intermediate Outcomes: Client Outcomes

* INDIVIDUAL BARRIERS:
  Self Esteem
  Mental Health
  Substance Abuse
  Physical Health

* Relational Barriers:
  Parenting Skills
  Family Harmony/Discord
  Degree of Family Support

Intermediate Outcomes: Client Outcomes

* ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS:
  Finances
  School Stress
  Housing

* RESOURCES, LACK OF
  Day Care
  Transportation
  Family Planning

Ultimate Outcomes: Client Outcomes

* Welfare Dependency
* Education
* Employment
* Child Abuse
* Repeated Pregnancies

APPENDIX   A

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Relationship 1. Purpose, Mission.

Introduction. A Community Action Agency (CAA) is an anti-poverty agency that was either historically designated under federal statutes prior to October 1, 1981, or has been created under state statutes since 1981. Most CAAs are MULTIPURPOSE agencies. Which provide a comprehensive range of activities. They have several sources of public and private funding. Examples of the public sources are the CSBG, JTPA, OAA, HUD Section 8, WX, LIHEAP and others.

Some other types of agencies may be funded from the Community Services Block Grant Act. They may not have a tri-partite board, e.g. energy programs or programs serving migrants or Indians. Provisions regarding their structure may be found in California statutes such as AB 161, or in other federal or state statutes.

CAAs are locally responsive. They "mix and match" roles like those described below to arrive at the best set of approaches to identify problems and causes of problems, and to help move families and individuals out of poverty.

Standard I. The CAA has a written MISSION STATEMENT with roles specified in it that make the agency a CAA as opposed to a generic nonprofit. Some examples of traditional roles are given in "a" through "o" below. CAAs should be reviewed in terms of the extent to which their mission is generally consistent with the statements below.

a. CAAs are ADVOCATES for the poor. A CAA voices the needs of the poor community. CAAs bolster other state and local agencies that have a role to help low-income people, e.g. CAAs provide support for them.

b. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION. The CAA will seek to expand the types and amounts of funds to assist low-income people.

c. CATALYST. CAAs help people help themselves. CAAs help to empower individuals, families and communities, and to assist them in enhancing their dignity and self-respect.

d. CAAs provide LINKAGE between low-income people, government, private service providers, and the business community.

e. CHANGE AGENTS. CAAs promote institutional and personal change. CAAs should PROMOTE their values to both existing and new stakeholders. CAAs must market the CAA and its mission.

f. PLANNER of services. CAAs identify needs within the community. CAAs EDUCATE the public, and dispel myths about low-income people and ethnic groups.

g. COORDINATOR of services. CAAs fill gaps left between other service providers. CAAs have a BROKER role.

h. PROVIDE some services. CAAs deliver some services, especially Demonstration programs that have a special risk. CAAs are often the INCUBATOR for new programs. They are a PROVING GROUND for new programs. CAAs are INNOVATORS. CAAs maintain FLEXIBILITY to respond to changing circumstances.

i. OUTREACH. CAAs get information out to low income people. CAAs RECRUIT participants for CAA-operated programs and for other programs.

j. CAAs engage in a WIDE SCOPE of activity. CAAs seek to create and provide comprehensive services versus a single service. If the CAA performs CASE MANAGEMENT the goal is to provide or obtain comprehensive services for individuals and families.

k. TRAINING GROUND. CAAs provide experience, training and opportunity for upward mobility for people who are:

    -   Board (policy making, governance)
    -   Staff (skills training and work experience)
    -   Volunteers (how agencies operate, how jobs are done)

l. Promote EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. CAAs must promote equal opportunity not just within the CAA, but also within the public and private sectors of the community. CAAs seek to empower individuals and to create a "level playing field" in American society.

m. CAAs maintain FLEXIBILITY and seek a high rate of SPEED of RESPONSE in an emergency, either at the individual, family or community level. This is due to: LOCAL CONTROL, relatively few bureaucratic constraints on use of resources, the authority to mobilize resources from the community, an ability to create a variable scope of response depending on community needs.

n. CAAS should constantly seek out OPPORTUNITY AREAS. CAAs analyze and understand the trends in society. CAAs make decisions as to whether the CAA should support the trend, ignore it, or work against it.

o. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. CAAs should promote growth of the number and types of economic opportunities, expanding the economic pie to produce revenue for the CAA and new opportunities for individuals. This may be activity on behalf of the CAA, or in support of an individual or family who seek to engage in entrepreneurial activity or to develop the social and physical structure of the community.

Relationship 2. Board and Governance

This section includes three standards, one each on CAA Structure, Board Roles, and Board Operations.

Standard II.   CAA STRUCTURE. There is a tri-partite Board, consisting of 1/3 elected officials or their representatives, at least 1/3 low-income or their representatives, and the balance from the private sector.

CAAs should be assessed in terms of the extent to which their Board STRUCTURE is consistent with the statements a through d, below.

a. The Board should be a cross section of entire community, not of just one group.

b. If the CAA is a Governing Board and is a Private Nonprofit Corporation:

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) shall have a Board of Directors, as provided by the bylaws of each corporation, that is consistent with applicable statutes and regulations.

If the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the membership of the board, membership on the board by appointive public officials may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement.

At least one-third of the members shall be persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representative of the poor in the area served.

The remainder of the members shall be officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education, or other major groups and interests in the community.

c. If the CAA is a public CAA and has an Administering Board, generally known as a Community Action Board:

The tri-partite composition requirements are the same.

The division of responsibility between the CAB and the elected officials should be specified in a written document.

d. All Board members should speak for their constituencies and actively participate in planning, conducting and evaluating agency programs.

Standard III. **CAA BOARD ROLES. CAA Boards should have clear roles that enable them to function effectively as CAAs.** CAAs should be reviewed in terms of the extent to which their Board and functions are generally consistent with the statements used below.

a. POLICY. The Board sets CAA POLICY if it is a governing Board, or recommends policy if it is an advisory board. The Board identifies the ends or goals the CAA will seek to accomplish. It decides what the ORGANIZATION should do, but the board does not get involved in day-to-day operations. The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR decides what the individual staff members will do. The Executive Director decides how the staff will carry out their activity.

b. PLANNING. Plays the key role in identifying community needs and in forecasting trends. The Board knows the community's needs and problems and understands the role of the Agency in combating them. It is visionary. It is a key source of an ongoing creative flow of ideas for the entire organization.

c. ADVOCACY ROLE. The Board should be bridge builders to other parts of the community, but the Board should be the champions of the poor.

d. COMMUNITY LIAISON ROLE. Members should make feedback reports to the people "whom you represent." Tell your constituency what the CAA is doing, and seek their involvement and support. Take a position on issue and make presentations of that position to others.

e. RESOURCE GENERATION. The Board takes the lead. The Board has a knowledge and understanding of resource mobilization, including fundraising from individuals, businesses and other organizations. The Board has a general knowledge of public funding source policies. The Board has been successful in mobilizing and channeling local resources in support of the Agency's efforts.

f. EVALUATION. The Board makes sure that systems are in place for evaluation. The Board should (a) evaluate themselves, (b) visit programs in the community to make sure they are meeting the needs in the community, (c) get evaluative reports from staff, and (d) evaluate the Executive Director.

g. BOARD DEVELOPMENT. The Board must have a plan for its own development. It should identify their own needs, and seek training both collectively and individually.

Standard IV.   CAA BOARD OPERATIONS. CAAs should operate effectively and efficiently. CAA Boards should be reviewed in terms of the extent to which their Board operations are generally consistent with the statements used below.

a. SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE. Board members should bring expertise or leverage to the board.

b. BOARD TRAINING. Members should attend and participate in training programs and conferences. They should be involved in a learning process, not just attend Board meetings.

c. PARTICIPATION. If there is a committee structure, then each member must work on at least one committee. Members should be active board members, not passive.

d. ROSTER. The CAA maintains an up-to-date board roster with name address, sector, terms of office, and committee assignments.

e. REFERENCE MANUAL. The CAA provides a Manual for each Board member, with: by-laws, articles, roster, assignments, organization charts, fiscal policies, Board's responsibilities, agency personnel manual, etc.

f. BY-LAWS. Abide by the by-laws! Some of the issues to be addressed in the By-Laws include:

   - Number of seats is no less than ___ nor more than ___ .
   - Procedures for selecting board members (and alternates if they are provided for).
   - Performance Standards for board members and alternates (i.e., attendance, etc.).
   - Process for removal of board members is stated.
   - Quorum for meetings.
   - Regular Meeting schedule.
   - Board meetings are open as required by the Brown Act.
   - Minutes. (A public record which reflect dates, times attendance and all actions taken.)
   - Committees, if used in that agency.
   - Operating Procedures for the conduct of board meetings are described (i.e., convening board meetings, board officers' election and duties, rules of order, notice of meetings, etc.)
   - Interim or emergency action between regular meetings.
   - Details of compensation of board members, if applicable (e.g., travel to meetings, day care.)

Relationship 3. Community Leadership

Standard V.   CAAs should be leaders in the community. CAAs should be reviewed in terms of the extent to which their community leadership is generally consistent with the statements used below.

a. A CAA must be involved in local issues that affect low-income people. The CAA should have long-term strategic directions that attack the causes of poverty and modify the conditions of poverty. These directions are focused three to five years in the future.

b. CAA set up LINKAGES with public and private organizations. These are relationships, either informal or written/formal agreements, that produce some benefit for low-income people.

c. CAA Board members or staff participate as REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CAA on other boards, e.g. planning boards, school advisory boards, boards of community groups or service providers.

d. CAAs are COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS to bring people together. They start with one person on one issue and bring in other people and help them organize to be effective on that issue.

e. INNOVATE. Look at and try new ways to do things. Do model or demonstration projects that involve community groups. This may involve taking a position on a matter of local controversy.

f. Establish and maintain relationship with all the local political people. Be aware of the costs of being perceived as politically partisan, as being identified as being "mono-party."

Relationship 4. **Board and Executive Director**

Standard VI. CAAs should have a strong, positive, mutually supportive working relationship between the Board and Executive Director, with clear divisions of labor between them. This is a key element in the success of a CAA. CAAs should be reviewed in terms of the extent to which their relationship is generally consistent with the statements below.

a. The Board functions as an entity. The Executive Director reports to the Board as an entity.

b. Board recognizes the differences between making policy and implementation of policy, e.g. administering programs. The Board identifies the ends or goals the CAA will seek to accomplish. It decides what the ORGANIZATION should do, but the board does not get involved in day-to-day operations. The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR decides what the individual staff members will do.

c. The Board holds the Executive Director accountable for the RESULTS or ENDS produced by staff actions. The Executive Director is usually responsible for selecting the METHODS or MEANS that staff will use.

d. There is a clear chain of command. Board - Exec - Staff. If Board is calling staff directly, this is ignoring the established chain of command. It should call the Executive Director with requests for information, etc.

e. The Board hires/fires the Executive Director. The Executive Director hires/fires the managers for whose performance the Executive Director is accountable.

f. STAFF SUPPORT. Executive/staff must provide support to board/committees in a timely manner. Staff prepare reports that are part of information that goes to Board before meetings.

g. Communication issues, openness, styles?

Relationship 5. FUNDING AGENCY RELATIONS

Standard VII. CAAs should have effective working relationships with a variety of funding sources, both public and private. CAAs should be reviewed in terms of the extent to which their funding agency relationships are generally consistent with the statements below.

    a. CAAs should have a scope of vision that is bigger than the sum of its funding agencies.

    b. Staff should know that they work for the CAA, not just a program that happens to be located in the CAA.

    c. There should be clear agreement about roles and lines of communication between the CAA Executive Director and all other program directors (including the Head Start Director and Head Start Policy Council) about who each funding agency works with on which specific issues.

    d. Each CAA should be sufficiently in compliance with the basic requirements of funding agencies that they remain eligible to continue to receive funds if the Board desires to do so.

    e. A cost allocation system should exist for program and administrative costs.

    f. Monitors from funding agencies often get involved in HOW things are being done, versus WHAT should be done. CAAs should work with funders to focus their attention on the results that are desired, leaving some discretion to professional staff about how those results will be achieved. This also provide flexibility for testing and adoption of new techniques.

    g. Some funders may believe their requirements are the only ones that exist for the agency and may seek to have the CAA adopt a specific management systems that meets their precise needs. The CAA may seek to create an approach that is designed to satisfy the minimum needs of several funders, rather than create several unique approaches to meet the precise needs of every funder.

    h. CAAs may want to suggest that all their state "field reps" meet together, or that all state policy people on an issue meet together.

    i. Funders should be encouraged to work individually and together to increase the size of the whole pie, not just to manage the decline of their piece of the pie.

    j. A key role for the CAA Director is to balance and reconcile what are often conflicting sets of requirements. Funders may focus on one program or contract versus an across-the board review of all agency functions. For example, a CAA may have a Management Information System designed to meet agency needs across a variety of programs. Funder may desire a specific change in a form or data element that produces problems for the CAA in terms of collection and use of the data.

    k. CAA Executive Director must understand the implications and requirements of the single audit act.

Relationship 6. STAFFING and the Community.

Standard VIII. The CAAS should be staffed in such a way that they maintain a continuous capacity to function. CAAs should be assessed in terms of the extent to which their staffing is consistent with the statements below.

a. The community perceives that staff are on-board, capable and ready to perform.

b. The external implications of the composition of staffing have to do both with the perceived capability of the organization and the "fit" of the organization with the community. The community perceives that there is a positive fit.

c. The staff perceive that they have the composition, skill level, training, commitment and morale to function.

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SELF-EVALUATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The people responsible for administering publicly funded, nonprofit organizations have an obligation to plan ahead and to make certain that their programs continue to be relevant to the needs of their communities. They have a special obligation to assess what their agencies have accomplished. This manual has been prepared to help Florida CAAs both to assess their strengths and to improve their operations.

There are many ways to measure progress. This workbook describes a process that is called self-evaluation. The goal of this self-evaluation is for CAAs to maintain and increase their relevance to community needs, their managerial effectiveness and their financial vitality. The self-evaluation will develop information about the agency -- its history, its present capabilities, how it reaches and serves its clients, what it is doing well and what it could do better.

There are several ways that the results can be used. They give immediate feedback to the Board and the Executive Director about how the agency is performing. Changes can be made immediately.

Each CAA has a stake in the success and direction of every other CAA. To maintain support from the public, all CAAs must be able to demonstrate that CAAs statewide now produce and will continue to produce desired results in a cost-effective way. The self-assessment may be reviewed by the State CAA Association and State Division of Housing and Community Development. They can use it to shape training and technical assistance both for the agency in question and for all agencies.

The problems in a community and the resources to address them are changing rapidly. Unless an agency consciously and systematically looks at what it has been and what it is today, it is not in a position to determine what it can be tomorrow. Yet looking at the past and present is not enough. To assure its continued relevance to community life, an agency should look into the future, should analyze the problems and opportunities on the horizon and beyond it, and think about how its abilities can be guided and shaped for new and different times.

Some agencies may use the feedback as an input into strategic planning. Agencies will look ahead two to five years, and begin to position themselves accordingly. They will give organized thought to emerging issues, the changes in the needs and problems of people and the political and economic environments. All these must be considered to develop effective strategies to eliminate the causes of poverty.

The standards used for self-evaluation should be viewed as a point of departure. Each section does not attempt to include all the questions that may arise in every agency. Accordingly, its usefulness depends on the people who conduct the review, i.e. the agency Board members, volunteers and staff and their willingness to adapt this tool to meet their needs.

The first step in the self-evaluation is to test and adapt the Performance Standards to the local needs. This may require dropping or adding questions. It may require collection of information. It may require that different people review different topics.

As in all fields of human endeavor, good judgment and common sense should be used to fill in the gaps and turn these pieces of paper into useful tools.

II. SELF-EVALUATION

The Florida State Department of Housing and Community Development and the Florida Association for Community Action are developing self-evaluation tools for use by all Florida CAAs.

1. Overview

   Each agency should complete a self-evaluation at least once every XX years. The self-evaluation process will include examination of the following:

   a. Organizational structure, governance and administrative systems to result in accountable, efficient and effective agency management and delivery of program services.

   b. Mission, policies, program strategies, planning processes and information systems used by the agency to serve the needs of its community.

   c. Financial planning and controls to assure that resources obtained are efficiently and properly deployed in support of agency policies and programs.

2. Agencies to be Evaluated

   All Florida CAAs are subject to evaluation once every five years. An evaluation conducted by national organizations with which an agency may be affiliated or functionally related, including governmental agencies, may be used as a partial basis for the self-evaluation requirement and will be reviewed by FACA and by the State Department.

   Each agency will be scheduled for a self-evaluation through discussions with FACA and the State Department.

3. Briefing of Agencies

   Agencies undergoing self-evaluation will be briefed by the State Department and FACA, either in groups or individually, on the general standards and processes for conducting self-evaluations.

   a. Current evaluation policies, procedures, and timetables are discussed.

   b. The Self-Evaluation Manual and related materials are provided.

   c. Particular attention is given to formation by the agency of a self-evaluation committee.

B. Agency Self-Evaluation Committee:

The self-evaluation follows the general outline provided here. It includes a review of the minimum standards against which the agency will determine the quality of its operations. These standards derive from several sources, including the State Department of Housing and Community Development, the standards developed by FACA during the course of the NACAA New Partnerships Project, and the CAA itself. Involvement of agency board members and staff is essential in this self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation process will be carried out by an ad hoc Self-Evaluation Committee of the agency's Board of Directors. The quality and usefulness of the self-evaluation report and action plan depend greatly on the variety of talents and perspectives within this volunteer committee. Staff support is also critical. In most agencies, it will probably work best to name a lead volunteer and one or more others to take responsibility for each section. Staff then would be assigned to assist each group.

Appendix B. Self Evaluation.

1. Composition of Self-Evaluation Committee

   The typical committee would reflect the following representation:

   a. Several members should be from the agency's Board.
   b. Others should be from the agency's community-at-large and consumers.
   c. Members should include some individuals with knowledge and experience in each of these areas: policy development, program services, administrative management, and financial management.

   It will take about two months to do the self-evaluation. Members should be prepared to spend at least two half-days at the agency interviewing and reviewing materials. An extra meeting each month is also likely.

2. Chair

   The self-evaluation committee chair, appointed by the agency's Board President, helps select the committee's members, calls meetings of the committee and steers its work.

3. Staff Support

   The Self-Evaluation Committee and any subcommittees should be assigned appropriate staff to support their efforts.

   Support for this process typically can be expected to take a some of the Executive Director's time, and depending upon the size and complexity of the agency, the time of other staff.

C.   **Preparation of Background Information:**

   Before the Self-Evaluation Committee begins its work, the agency should prepare a background paper for review and for later inclusion in the Agency Self-Evaluation Report. The background paper should include two major sections and detailed information, as follows:

   1. Agency Information:

      * Date the agency officially incorporated.

      * Addresses and phone numbers of the agency's central and branch offices.

      * Description of the agency's purpose, programs or services provided, geographic area, target population, need for service or program activity.

      * Any local, state or federal mandates under which the agency operates and the terms of the mandate.

      * Licensing or other accreditation process through which any specific programs operated by the agency must pass. Identification of the reviewing body, purpose, and frequency of such processes.

      * Evaluations by other funders. Describe the purpose, scope and findings of other evaluations. (NOTE: These may cover portions of the review proposed in this self-evaluation, and can be substituted for these requirements.

2. Historical Information:

* Groups or individuals which played major roles in the creation of this agency.

* In chronological order, the major events, changes in goals, facilities or programs which took place in the last five or ten years.

In addition to preparing the background paper, agency staff should make the documents listed in Section D available for study by the Self-Evaluation Committee. Note, however, that these are generic document titles -- not every agency has a document that corresponds to every one of these names. Also, not every item in this mass of paper needs to be reviewed. Be selective.

D.   Documents Used in Self-Evaluation

These should be available to the Self-Evaluation Committee.

Program Development and Effectiveness

     Strategic Plan, Annual Plan
     Needs Assessment
     Agency Program Purposes, Goals, Objectives
     Agency Referral System
     Agency Work Programs
     Annual Budgets
     Board Minutes
     Client Data/Statistical Reports
     Client Records (confidentiality observed)
     Demographic Data
     Evaluation Plan/Procedures
     Evaluation Reports
     Financial Reports
     Management Studies
     Organization Chart
     Position Descriptions
     Reports to the Board of Directors
     Service Statistics
     Staff Table
     Written Agreements With Other Agencies
     Management Information System

Agency Organization and Administrative Systems

Board Minutes
Affirmative Action Plan
Agency By-Laws
Agency Personnel Policies
Annual Report
Articles of Incorporation
Client Fee Scales
Committee Descriptions and Responsibilities
Disaster Plans (Fire, Earthquake, etc)
Fundraising Plan and Budget
Licenses to Operate and Accreditation
Organization Charts of Volunteer Committees and Staffing
Personnel Procedures
Position Descriptions
Procedure for Evaluation of the Board
Procedure for Evaluation of Executive Director
Public Relations Plan
Performance Evaluations
Staff Recruitment Process and Procedures
Staff and Board Development and Training Plan
Volunteer Recruitment Plan and Process
Volunteer Orientation and Training Documents
Wage Survey, Fringe Benefit Comparisons

Financial Management

Annual Audit
Auditor's Management Letter
Audit Follow-up Reports to Board
Board Minutes
Budget Procedures
Chart of Accounts
Financial Policies and Procedures
Financial Statements and Reports
Fundraising Evaluation Process
Fundraising Policies and Procedures

E.   Orientation of Self-Evaluation Committee:

State Department staff or FACA will work with the agency director to plan and conduct an orientation for the Self- Evaluation Committee. The orientation will cover:

* Expectations for the self-evaluation.

* The purposes of self-evaluation, including the relationship between self-evaluation and agency planning.

* Roles and responsibilities of participants: Agency Board, Self-Evaluation Committee, agency staff, and others.

* The timetable for completion of each step in the process, adjusted to recognize the circumstances of the agency.

* The self-evaluation tool that is to be used by the Self-Evaluation Committee.

* Other assistance available in carrying out the self-evaluation.

* Actions after completing the self-evaluation.

F. Self-Evaluation Committee Inquiry:

Information-gathering by the agency's Self-Evaluation Committee follows the outline provided as Attachment 2 of this Manual, "Standards for Agency Self-Evaluation." The outline assists the Committee through providing standards and indicators by which the quality of the agency's operations are assessed.

Each Standard is written so that it can be marked as "met," "met with qualifications" as noted, or "not met." The documentary evidence should be cited, and significant strengths or shortfalls described.

G. Self-Evaluation Committee Report to Agency Board:

The format for the Self-Evaluation Committee's report to the Agency Board should follow the general outline of the Standards for Agency Self-Evaluation. Narrative may be added. The report should focus on the strengths of the agency and areas where action is needed. Recommendations should be made.

H. Agency Action Plan:

Upon adopting the report of the Self-Evaluation Committee, the Board should direct the Committee to prepare or oversee preparation of an Action Plan which addresses each significant need for improvement.

A simple format to develop the action plan is Attachment 3. For each need, the agency may take one of two choices:

1. Set forth an improvement plan and the date by which it should be accomplished. For some items -- for instance, if the need to set long-range goals were identified -- the action plan may simply contain a notation that the agency intends to undertake long-range planning and will address the issue during that process.

2. Demonstrate that action is unnecessary or would be impractical.

I. Agency Self-Evaluation Report:

When the Board has adopted the Action Plan, the plan should become part of a narrative Agency Self-Evaluation Report following the outline presented as Attachment 1.

The Report should begin with an executive summary of no more than a page or two highlighting its most significant features.

The main body of the report should start with a section containing agency identification and historical information, based on the earlier background paper, that are particularly relevant to the findings of the self-evaluation. Put the background paper in an appendix.

The next section should set forth the major findings and recommendations of the Self-Evaluation Committee. Try to focus on a few big issues; do not get lost in the trees.

Then, there could be a narrative description of the proposed Action Plan to address the issues or, this could be done later.

The Standards for Agency Self-Evaluation should be appended.

After review by the Board, the draft report should be forwarded to FACA and the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

J.   Joint Meeting:

One or more members of FACA and the HCD will meet with agency representatives to discuss the draft report. Documents may be examined and interviews conducted. The agency may or may not make changes based on this meeting. The agency will prepare its final report and transmit it to the agency Board, FACA and HCD.

If the process goes on to include peer-review, the FACA/HCD Team will conduct a site visit. They may review, validate the agency self-evaluation findings, or they may reach other conclusions. The process for this is described in a separate paper, titled **CAA Peer Evaluation Review System**. The peer-review team will prepare their own report, agreeing with the agency findings or offering other points of view. The agency Board will weigh the Peer-review Report along with its own Self-Evaluation Report when deciding upon future actions.

K.   Adoption by the Agency, Acceptance by FACA and the State Department of HCD:

Adoption by the agency completes the process. The agency is ready to proceed with future operations, self-improvement and long-range planning. A copy of the final report and the Action Plan is forwarded to FACA and the Department of HCD. The information becomes an input into shaping future T&TA.

L.   Follow-Up:

The State HCD contact person will have overall responsibility for monitoring. During site visits the agency will report on progress on implementation of the Action Plan.

ATTACHMENT 1: Format for Agency Self-Evaluation Report

     I.   Executive Summary
     II.   Agency Identification Information
     III.   Historical Information
     IV.   Self-Evaluation Findings: Performance Standards and narrative, as needed.

          A. Relationships
          B. Administrative Functions

     V.   Agency Action Plan (narrative)
     VI.   Comments on the Process

APPENDICES

1. Performance Standards Used for Agency Self-Evaluation (completed checklist)
2. Draft Agency Action Plan

ATTACHMENT 2: Standards for Agency Self-Evaluation

The Performance Standards for Agency Self- Evaluation were developed by FACA during the NACAA New Partnerships Project. Each section contains statements describing a desired state of affairs and some indicators to use to determine the standard is met. Evaluators should examine the documentation and note on the self-evaluation form where confirmation is found.

For most of the Standards, one or more indicators are furnished to assist the Agency Self-Evaluation Committee to make its assessment. The ability to provide positive replies on the Indicators shows a Standard has been met. The Indicators are not intended to be definitive but are included to assist the agency in applying the Standard. Where it is felt the Indicator is inapplicable to the situation, this should be noted.

Where evidence is lacking that an applicable Indicator is met, this should be noted and an explanation provided.

The Agency Action Plan should cite the particular Standard and show what steps toward improvement are suggested. Some Improvements may result from specific corrective action, or from a general effort such as the the agency undergoing a long-range planning process. Where this is the case, the Action Action Plan may simply note: "Long-range Planning."

ATTACHMENT 3. Format for the Agency Action Plan.

Standard	+	Recommendations	+	Responsibility	+	Start/finish
	+		+		+	
	+		+		+	
	+		+		+	

Appendix B. Self Evaluation.

APPENDIX   C

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

These checklists provide a comprehensive self-assessment in selected areas of CAA operations. These checklists should be adapted to include other criteria the CAA wants to use to assess itself, or to exclude criteria that are not relevant for that CAA. The first task then is for the Executive Director, Evaluation Committee or Ad-hoc staff group to review these tools and adapt them to the specific circumstances and needs of the agency.

The second step is to develop a review methodology. If it is being done as a self-assessment, it could be done by one or more people. It could be done in an intensive two or three-day review, or it could be spread over a period of weeks. Two or more CAAs could go together to help each other. This would lend an outside perspective to the review process. It could be a "you review our agency and we'll review yours" type of approach. It could be that you loan one person to our team and we'll loan one to you. It could be that you review our personnel system and we'll review your property management system, or whatever. The State Association could create a committee (like Missouri, Florida, California) to identify desired performance standards and how CAAs will be assessed in terms of those standards.

The important thing is to have some kind of periodic look at how you are doing and to get ideas for continually improving quality.

The specific methodology is not crucial. The crucial issue is: does the CAA have any kind of self-assessment process for systematically comparing itself with explicit standards? If the answer is yes, then use these tools to fine-tune it. If the answer is no, then use these tools to build it.

Conduct of Assessment

The actual conduct of the assessment could involve interviews, personal observations and reviews of CAA records, reports, and related materials. The specifics of each assessment are dependent upon the particular project or activity being assessed. Consequently, it is not possible to provide an all-inclusive list of questions to be asked, issues to be addressed, concerns to be pursued.

However, it is possible to provide some general questions to be used in the conduct of the assessment. These general guidelines are presented on the following pages.

These checklists follow the same organizational structure as the CAA Executive Director's Manual.

- I. Purpose/Mission of CAA
- II. Board
- III. Relationships to Key Groups
- IV. The Seven Major Management Functions in a CAA

    1. Planning
    2. Community Participation
    3. Program Implementation MIS
    4. Personnel
    5. Fiscal
    6. Public Relations and Marketing
    7. Staff and Board Development Training and Technical Assistance

SECTION I: CAA Mission and Purpose

1. Mobilization/Coordination of Resources

The assessment of the CAA's activities to mobilize and coordinate community resources will, for the most part, involve interviews with personnel of other community agencies, community leaders, CAA Board members, and CAA and/or delegate agency staff. In those cases where the CAA's plan identifies goals and strategies directly related to resource coordination and mobilization, a review of CAA records and documentation of accomplishments will also be necessary.

If specific goals, objectives, and strategies are included in the plan, these should be the initial focus of the assessment. If such specifics are not included in the plan, then the starting point for the assessment should be interviews with CAA Board members and CAA staff to obtain their perception of what the CAA's objectives and strategies are for resource coordination and mobilization.

Once the goals, objectives, and strategies are identified, the reviewer can begin the actual assessment. The types of questions and issues that should be addressed in interviews and review of records and documents are as follows:

a. Have there been increases in financial or other resources available to anti-poverty efforts in the community? (This does not mean, necessarily, resources given to or through the CAA.) If so, to what degree do people feel this was attributable to CAA Board or staff efforts?

b. Has the CAA been able to establish, or is it in the process of establishing cooperative agreements with other service agencies?

c. Did other community service groups participate in the CAA's planning and policy development process? If so, how did they participate? Do they feel their participation was worthwhile?

d. Are Board members and staff of other service agencies and community leaders aware of the CAA's objectives, programs and activities?

e. Is there evidence of interagency coordination of activities attributable to CAA efforts? Evidence might include such things as co-location of offices, regular interagency meetings, use of common data and information definitions, elimination of duplicative functions among agencies, outstanding staff members of one agency in the office of another agency, implementation of interagency training and technical assistance activities.

f. Do CAA staff and Board members appear before local governmental bodies and governing boards of independent service entities:

1) To encourage that increased resources be made available to services for low-income people?

2) To explain the CAA's objectives, programs, and activities?

3) To encourage and propose ways to promote better coordination of resources?

g. Have projects or activities originally financed by CSBG been continued and/or expanded with funds or other resources from other community service agencies?

h. Does the CAA regularly provide other service agencies with information about its programs and activities? Do other community service agencies reciprocate?

i. Can staff from other service agencies or community leaders give examples of changes in the operation of service programs in the community which resulted, at least in part, from CAA coordination and resource mobilization efforts?

j. Does the CAA have a system for following up on its referrals to other service agencies? If so, do CAA staff meet with staff of the other agencies periodically to discuss problems or improvements in the process?

k. Have CAA self-evaluations, independent evaluations, and assessments on other reports identified service coordination problems that affect low-income people? If so, does the CAA have any plans or has it undertaken any activities to eliminate or reduce such problems?

2. Evaluation/Assessment

The conduct of the assessment of the CAA's evaluation and assessment activities is discussed in the section of the manual entitled "CAA Self-Evaluation and Self-Assessment." That section should be used as the guide for the reviewer.

3. Equal Opportunity Plan

The assessment of the CAA's Equal Opportunity Plan (EOP) activities will usually focus on: 1) interviews with the CAA's Equal Opportunity Coordinator, members of the Board's personnel or Equal Opportunity Committee, chairperson of CAA Board and CAA and delegate agency staff; 2) review of CAA records, documents, and procedures; and 3) personal observations. The assessment should address the various functions and requirements of the CAA's equal opportunity efforts.

a. Organization

1) Does the CAA have at least one person identified as the Equal Opportunity Coordinator?

2) Does the composition of the CAA Board's personnel or Equal Opportunity Committee (EOC) reflect the composition of the full Board with regard to representation from the public, private, low-income sectors, minorities and women?

3) What role did the CAA staff and Board have in the development of the CAA's Equal Opportunity Needs Assessment, Goals and Objectives?

4) What role do they have in implementing the EOP and evaluating performance under that plan?

b. Communication of Information

1) Does the CAA conduct meetings with delegate agency staff and Boards to explain CAA policies and procedures regarding civil rights and equal opportunity?

2) Is the CAA's Equal Opportunity Policy and discrimination complaint procedure provided to all CAA, delegate agency personnel and the community?

3) Are posters which summarize the rights of employees and program participants displayed in conspicuous and accessible places and in appropriate languages?

4) Does a CAA official meet regularly with the CAA's and delegate agencies personnel staff to discuss recruitment, selection, and promotion procedures with regard to their impact on equal opportunity efforts?

c. Civil Rights Complaint Records

1) Are the records on discrimination complaints current and complete and kept in a secure file?

2) What is the number and status of discrimination complaints currently outstanding? What is the "oldest" unresolved complaint? What is the average time involved from the time a complaint is filed until a determination is made?

3) Is the CAA's data on race, color, sex, and national origin of a) eligible population; b) policy-making or advisory boards; c) CAA and delegate agency staff, and d) program participants current? What system does the CAA use to ensure that such data is kept current and complete? How often is the data updated?

4) Does the CAA maintain a log of discrimination complaints filed? Does the log include an identification of each complainant's race, color, sex, or national origin, the nature of the complaint, the date the complaint was filed, the date the CAA investigation was completed, the disposition of the complaint, and the date of disposition?

4. General Program Oversight and Leadership

The assessment of the CAA's program and administrative oversight and leadership will generally involve reviews of CAA documents and records and interviews with selected CAA and delegate agency staff and supervisors. The types of questions and issues which this review and interview process should address include the following:

a. Administrative Organizations

1) Does the CAA have, and distribute as appropriate, current organizational charts, responsibilities, and functions of the various administrative units, announcements of changes of key administrative personnel, etc?

b. Evaluation and Monitoring

1) How does the CAA monitor and evaluate performance of units of the CAA and delegate agencies?

2) Are the findings of evaluation and monitoring efforts reported to the Board or to Executive Director? What actions have they taken on these findings?

c. Development and Implementation of the Equal Opportunity Plan

1) Has the CAA developed a civil rights needs assessment and equal opportunity goals?

2) Is the civil rights needs assessment a comprehensive review of CAA and community civil rights issues and problems?

d. Fiscal and Program Information Systems

    1) Are audits performed in a timely manner on all agency funds and projects? Are these audits reviewed by the CAA Board, appropriate management staff, and all appropriate delegate agency staff and Boards?

    2) Does the CAA's management information system generate timely and quantitative information about the CAA's project activities?

    3) How and by whom are the reports from the management information system reviewed? And how are the specific project staff involved in this review process?

    4) When problems regarding project performance are identified, how is this information communicated to the affected project staff, senior CAA staff, and CAA Board?

    5) Who (what unit) is responsible for reviewing program or budget changes requested by project directors? What criteria and review process are involved?

    6) Does the CAA have a system for follow-up review of project staff's implementation of recommended changes and planned actions identified in the self-evaluation reports? What person or unit is responsible for doing that follow-up review?

    7) Does the CAA have a process for communicating particular project problems or project success to other project directors who might be affected?

e. Other

    1) Are CAA and delegate agency facilities accessible to the handicapped (e.g. elevators, ramps, braille symbols in elevators, appropriate restroom facilities, etc.)?

    2) Are translation or interpreters available or obtainable for non-English speaking or hearing-impaired individuals?

SECTION II: CAA Board

The assessment of the CAA Board's role and operations could include a review of performance of its statutory functions and other such activities as are appropriate in the particular situation. The following section is specifically applicable to non-profit CAA Boards and should be adapted to each public CAA based on the delegation of authority under which the Community Action Board operates.

The primary sources of information and data regarding the CAA Board would include:

a. Minutes of Board and/or Committee meetings available.

b. Interviews with:

    1) Board members.

    2) Selected staff members.

    3) Community leaders.

    4) Low-income people in the community.

    5) Heads of other community organizations providing services to the low-income population.

c. Observations at Board and/or Committee meetings.

    A set of basic functions and responsibilities of a CAA Board is identified below. Related questions or issues that can be of the assessment are listed under each function.

1. Development and Implementation of Planning Process and Action Plan

    a. Does the Board have a planning process?

    b. Does the process provide opportunity for low-income participation?

    c. Did the Board discuss and approve the priorities, goals, and strategies included in the plan?

    d. Does the Board have a self-evaluation plan, including target reporting dates, and its (the Board's) role in the self-evaluation process?

    e. Did the Board conduct a public hearing on the plan?

2. Review and Approval of Grant Application and Grant Amendments

    a. Does the Board review and approve the CAA's grant applications?

    b. Does the Board review and discuss each application in the context of an overall CAA plan, or is each application seen as a totally self-containing package?

3.   Evaluation/Assessment

    a.   How do members of the Board participate in the CAA's self-evaluation process?

    b.   Does the method of participation allow Board members to take part in the actual reviews and interviews with project officials and program participants?

    c.   Does the Board have a policy or written procedure which ensures the participation of low-income individuals in the evaluation and monitoring process?

4.   Advocacy

    a.   Are a minimum of one-third of the Board representatives of low-income people? Are representatives of low- income people active participants in Board discussions?

    b.   Are representatives of low-income individuals included on all major committees of the Board?

    c.   Do Board members testify or appear before governmental or other groups to support activities or legislation which benefit low-income people?

    d.   Have there been increases in the participation of low- income people on other decision-making bodies in the community?

    e.   What specific changes have taken place as a result of the advocacy efforts of the CAA Board? CAA Executive Director? Volunteers? Other CAA staff or groups?

5.   Mobilization and Coordination of Community Resources

    a.   Has there been an increase in financial or other resources directed toward anti-poverty efforts in the community? (This does not necessarily mean resources given to or through the CAA.)

    b.   Are the Board members aware of other anti-poverty activities in the community?

    c.   Has the CAA been able to establish cooperative agreements with other agencies?

    d.   Do the Board members who represent other groups in the community provide reports of the CAA's activities to the groups that they represent?

6.   Approval of Major CAA Policies and Actions

    a.   Does the Board review and approve personnel policies?

    b.   Does the Board approve fiscal policies?

    c.   Does the Board review audit findings and participate in the development of responses to audit findings and corrective actions to be taken?

    d.   Does the Board review and approve policies relating to property management and procurement activities?

7.   Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

    a.   Did the Board adopt an Equal Opportunity Policy and establish an Equal Opportunity Committee, the composition of which reflects the composition of the Board with regard to public, private, and low-income representation?

b. Has the Board taken an active role in promoting Affirmative Action in the CAA's personnel practices?

c. Did the Board review and approve the progress report on the desired goals and, as appropriate, direct that corrective actions be undertaken?

d. Does the CAA promote Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action in other institutions of the community?

8. Other

a. Are Board meetings well attended by Board members?

b. Do most Board members actively participate in Board discussions and decision-making?

FUNCTION I: Planning

The assessment of the CAA's strategies will involve:

1) Interviews with CAA staff and Board members, representatives of community groups, leaders of other service agencies, and local public officials;

2) Review of CAA documents, materials, and correspondence that relate to its advocacy activities.

To the extent that high impact strategies are included in the CAA's four-year plan of action, the assessment should address the degree to which those activities have been implemented and their results.

The types of questions and issues to be addressed in this assessment could include the following:

a. Did the CAA identify high impact, mission-oriented strategies in its action plan? If so, what efforts have been made to implement those strategies? What results have been achieved due to these efforts?

b. Are Low-income individuals and representatives of target population groups provided training and/or assistance in techniques of presenting their needs to public officials and community groups?

c. Is the CAA staff (and Board members and delegate agency staff) aware of issues or legislation which will affect low- income people? Does the CAA have a mechanism or process by which community groups and low-income individuals and families are informed of such activities and legislation? Does the CAA assist people to make their views known on these issues?

d. Do CAA Board members, low-income representatives, and/or CAA staff serve on committees or task forces in the community as representatives of the needs of low-income people? Has such participation increased during the recent past?

e. Does the CAA have a public information "program" which provides information to the community at large about the activities and accomplishments, goals and objectives of the CAA? Does that "program" inform and encourage the general public about how they can assist or participate in CAA activities and other activities that benefit low-income people?

f. Has the CAA initiated or participated in activities which seek to change rules, procedures, or regulations which adversely affect the interests and needs of low-income people?

Appendix C.   Assessment of Planning and Management Functions

g. Do leaders of community service agencies and local public officials feel that the CAA has undertaken enough advocacy activities? How effective do they believe those activities have been?

h. Are opportunities and plans for advocacy activities presented to the CAA Board and discussed at Board meetings? Are representatives of community groups and organizations of low-income individuals included in the planning and decision-making on advocacy activities?

i. Has the CAA initiated, encouraged, or participated in any actions which address the legality of procedures, regulations, ordinances, or laws which adversely affect the interests and needs of low-income people?

FUNCTION III: Program Implementation -- Information and Reporting System

The assessment of the CAA's information and reporting system(s) is meant to focus on the procedures and process by which the CAA gathers and reports information to funders, to the CAA Board, to program or project managers, to delegate agencies, and to the communities served. The emphasis of this assessment is not on the results reported but on the process by which those results are reported.

The assessment could include the following:

1) Interviews with CAA and delegate agency staff involved in the generation and reporting of project or activity data, with Board members and project or activity managers;

2) Reviews and spot checks of the records and materials that are involved in gathering and reporting data;

3) Personal observation of the operation of the CAA and delegate agency information gathering and reporting system(s).

The first step in the assessment of this activity includes:

1) Obtaining copies of the various data gathering and reporting forms and formats used by the CAA;

2) Reviewing those forms and formats to identify such things as the types of data gathered, the frequency and types of reports produced, the commonality and differences in types of data gathered by similar projects;

3) Reviewing any rules, procedures, and definitions used by the CAA or delegate agencies;

4) Obtaining both a description and an understanding of the "flow" of information from projects and activities to program managers to delegate agencies to CAA staff to the CAA Board and ultimately to funders or other external agency to whom the CAA is accountable.

Without this framework in mind, it will be difficult for the reviewer to relate his/her findings to the operation of the CAA's information and reporting system(s).

(It should be noted that portions of this section may be of limited use to reviewers whose CAA's information systems involve the use of sophisticated automated data processing (ADP) equipment and programs.)

The types of questions and issues to be addressed in this assessment could include the following:

a. What use do the project or activity managers make of the information and reports that they receive? Do the reports contain information that they do not need or use? Is there information that they would like to have but do not receive?

b. What use does CAA staff make of the information and reports that they receive? Do the reports contain information that they do not need or use? Is there information that they would like to have but do not receive? Is such information available at the project or activity level?

c. What does the CAA Board and its committees make of the information and reports that it receives? Do the reports contain information Board members do not need or use? Is there information that they would like to have but do not receive? Is such information available at the project or activity level and/or at the CAA staff level?

d. The reviewer may wish to select a set of data elements used by the CAA and ask the persons responsible for gathering and/or reporting the data for the definitions that they use for these data elements. If different answers are obtained, it indicates that CAA officials may be receiving inaccurate information.

e. Who is responsible for collecting data for reports at the various program sites? Who is responsible for data review and editing? What criteria are used in data editing?

f. If information received is found to be inaccurate, what procedures are used to correct the errors? Is the person initially responsible for gathering and/or entering the data required to correct errors or to be involved in the correction?

g. Does the CAA use exception or variance reports to identify potential project performance problems or issues?

h. Are the reports generated in a timely manner? In other words, are the reports produced on time, according to the CAA's procedures and time requirements; and are the CAA's procedures and time requirements compatible with the needs of project or activity mangers?

i. Are the report forms and formats easily readable and understandable? Are the formats designed in such a way that important relationships are highlighted and/or logical comparisons are easy to make?

j. Does the CAA central staff periodically audit or review the information that it receives from delegate agencies to ensure its quality?

k. The reviewer may wish to randomly select examples of "raw" data from several projects and see if it corresponds to the reports derived from the data.

l. Is the information and data gathered at the project or activity level recorded and edited on a daily or weekly basis? Is there information or data on people's desks that should already have been reviewed and recorded?

m. What procedures does the CAA use to review and control the quality of data and information that it receives? Is there any central control or review of report forms and formats, data element definitions, etc.?

n. What types of reports and information about CAA projects and activities are provided to other agencies in the community? To program participants and/or service recipients?

o. Do those who receive such reports feel they are useful and/or informative? Do the recipients of the reports feel that additional information should be included? That the reports should be more or less frequent?

FUNCTION IV: Personnel Administration

The assessment of the CAA's personnel administration could include:

1) Interviews with the CAA staff involved in personnel activities, randomly selected CAA employees, or one or more delegate agency staff involved in personnel activities;

2) Reviews and spot checks of records and materials relating to personnel;

3) Personal observation of the operation of the CAA personnel office.

The types of questions and issues to be addressed in this assessment could include the following:

a. Are all employees provided with written summaries of CAA personnel policies and procedures, fringe benefits available and eligibility criteria, employee grievance rights, work rules, vacation and sick leave policies, etc.?

b. Are changes in personnel policies or procedures distributed to all employees and to delegate agencies? How is that distribution made?

c. Are announcements of job openings published and posted in places accessible to employees? To low-income individuals and groups? To the community in general?

d. Based on a review of randomly selected personnel files of the CAA or delegate agencies, do the files contain:

 1) The employee's original job application?

 2) Reference letters or notes from reference checks?

 3) An appointment letter for the employee, including salary and fringe benefit information and employment starting date?

 4) Records of all salary changes and other personnel actions?

 5) A description of the employee's current duties and responsibilities?

 6) Performance evaluations?

e. Is a current and complete set of all CAA personnel policies and procedures readily available in the CAA?

f. Is there a system established for logging in all personnel actions requested? Is that log reviewed and maintained as activities take place for the personnel action request?

g. Is there someone specifically responsible for such functions as review of position descriptions, payroll, employee orientation and training, salary determination, recruitment, selection, counseling, grievances, official custody of personnel files, etc?

h. Does the CAA conduct information and training sessions for CAA employees?

i.   Is there a formal system of employee performance evaluation established (e.g. criteria, format for evaluation, appeal rights of employee)?

j.   Has the CAA Director delegated any authority to other organizational units of the CAA or to delegate agencies?

k.   What is the turnover rate in CAA employment? Is this turnover concentrated in certain units of the CAA or in certain delegate agencies?

l.   Is there a formal, written grievance procedure for employees? What are the employees' rights under the procedure, and what are management's responsibilities?

m.   Does the CAA Board or Executive Director receive, review, and act upon:

   1)   All changes in personnel policies and procedures?

   2)   Employee grievance actions?

   3)   Reports of personnel office activities?

   4)   Performance evaluations of any CAA staff?

   5)   Employee salaries and issues of salary comparability?

n.   Are there vacancies for which the CAA has been recruiting without success for a long period of time?

o.   Is there a formal, written recruitment, examination and selection process that applies to most CAA jobs? If not, who determines the process?

p.   Based on a review of records, what are the time periods from job announcement to selection of an employee for that job?

q.   Who is responsible for initial determinations of salary comparability?

r.   What special efforts or activities has the CAA undertaken to:

   1)   Promote affirmative action recruitment and hiring?

   2)   Promote the recruitment and hiring of low-income individuals?

   3)   Encourage upward mobility of CAA employees.

FUNCTION V: Financial Administration and Control -- Includes Property Management

The assessment of the CAA's financial administration and control could include:

1)   Interviews with the CAA and delegate agency staff involved in the financial management (accounting, purchasing, auditing, payroll, etc.) of the program and members of the Finance/Budget Committee(s) of the Board;

2)   Reviews and spot checks of records and materials relating to financial operations;

3) Personal observation of the operation of the CAA (and delegate agency) finance and accounting units.

The types of questions and issues to be addressed in this assessment would include the following:

a. Are summary financial reports prepared by the CAA and presented to the CAA Board on a regular basis? Do the reports compare actual expenditures with the approved, budgeted amounts? Does the appropriate committee(s) of the Board review and comment on the reports? Do the reports indicate problem areas or reasons for variances from approved budgets?

b. Are the CAA's (and delegate agencies') ledgers posted on a current basis? For example, do they show all financial transactions through the previous day or previous week?

c. Are invoices (bills) logged in? How rapidly (how many days) are invoices processed? Does the system require that the person or official who is supposed to have received the purchased item to certify that it was received prior to payment of the invoice? Are there any invoices which are more than one or two days old sitting on anyone's desks, unlogged?

d. Does an adequate system of internal control (separation of duties and responsibilities) exist? For example, is the person responsible for writing checks different from the person responsible for processing invoices and vouchers? Does more than one person have to sign all checks; checks of more than a certain amount; checks for certain types of activities, etc.?

e. Based on a random selection of travel vouchers:

1) Is there documentation for the expenses listed on the travel voucher?

2) Are the expenses listed and paid consistent with the CAA's written travel regulations?

3) Are employee travel vouchers reviewed and approved by supervisors?

4) Is there any travel which seems inappropriate?

f. Is there anyone on the CAA or delegate agency staff who can approve his/her own travel or other expenses?

g. How are non-federal share, in-kind funds reviewed and recorded? Are there time records kept for volunteer time, and is the value credited for such time appropriate for the activity performed? Are the values credited for donated space and equipment consistent with prevailing or market rates? Are the contributions (of whatever kind) related to the purposes of the project or activity to which it was provided?

h. Based on a random sample of payroll records:

1) Are time and attendance records kept for all employees?

2) Is the supervisor responsible for certifying attendance?

3) Is use of vacation or sick leave regularly reported and kept current?

4) Are employee salary payments consistent with the salaries that their personnel records indicate that they should be receiving?

5) Are employees in similar or in the same positions receiving comparable salaries?

i. How large is the CAA's petty cash authorization? What records are kept of petty cash disbursements? Who authorizes the use of petty cash and for what purposes?

j. Are any credit cards used by the CAA? In whose name are they issued? Do payments of credit card invoices require documentation of the expenses and purposes for which the expenses were incurred? Who is authorized to approve the use of credit cards by CAA or delegate agency employees?

k. Is there evidence that recommendations of previous audits have been implemented? Have CAA or delegate agency procedures changed to correct inadequacies identified in previous audits? Is there evidence that the CAA is in the process of making such changes?

l. Do expenditures of specific projects or delegate agencies for telephones, equipment, supplies, travel, or any other item seem unreasonable or inconsistent with other projects of similar size and/or purpose?

m. Based on a quick review of the CAA log of checks dispersed, the reviewer may wish to check the voucher records for any individuals who appear to be receiving an excessive number of checks for expenses or for any large payments.

n. Does the CAA Board or appropriate committees review and act upon all audits and audit findings? Do they meet with the auditors to discuss differences and recommendations?

o. Has the CAA Board established any policies and procedures regarding such areas as employee travel (particularly travel out of the area served by the CAA), use of credit cards, and delegate agency expenditure flexibility?

p. Does the CAA financial management unit review and pre-audit or post-audit delegate agency vouchers or expenditures?

q. What expenditure authorities and flexibility is delegated by the CAA to delegate agencies?

Property Management and Procurement

The assessment of the CAA's property management and procurement responsibilities could include:

1) Interviews with CAA and delegate agency staff involved in property management and procurement and members of appropriate committees of the CAA Board;

2) Reviews and spot checks of records and materials relating to property management and procurement;

3) Personal observation of the CAA's (and delegate agencies') property management and procurement functions.

The types of questions and issues to be addressed in this assessment could include the following:

a. Does the CAA have written policies and procedures regarding property management and procurement? Has the CAA Board reviewed and approved these policies and procedures? Does the Board review and approve amendments or changes to these policies and procedures?

b. Are any property management or procurement responsibilities delegated to program units of the CAA? Are such delegated responsibilities monitored by the CAA? Are property

management and procurement systems of delegate agencies monitored by the CAA? Are the findings of such monitoring presented to the CAA Board for review and action?

c. Based upon a review of a random sample of procurement files:

   1) Does the file contain specifications for the product to be purchased?

   2) Does the type of item or amount of purchase require competitive bids? If yes, were bids sought (e.g. are there copies of public notices indicating the CAA's interest to purchase, are there copies of letters to various vendors, are there copies of bids from various vendors, etc.)?

   3) Does the file indicate that the low bid for the product was selected? If not, is the reason for selecting an alternate bid stated specifically?

   4) Is there documentation to show that the product received was reviewed by a responsible official to ensure that it met specifications?

   5) Are warranties or guarantees on the product maintained in the file?

d. Does the CAA have a specific procedure or process for soliciting bids or announcing interest to purchase products?

e. Who is responsible for reviewing bids submitted by vendors? What criteria does he/she use in that review? What authority does he/she have to accept or reject bids which may not meet product specifications or submission procedures?

f. What types of products, if any, can be purchased without competitive bidding? Who, if anyone, has the authority to waive competitive bidding requirements? What information is required to justify waivers of competitive bidding requirements?

g. Based upon a review of personal services contracts entered into by the CAA:

   1) Were such contracts subject to some form of review and evaluation?

   2) Are any recipients of personal service contracts current or former staff or Board members of the CAA (or delegate agencies)?

   3) Do the personal services contracts have specific performance or product requirements?

   4) Do the files provide evidence that such performance or product requirements were met?

h. Is there any evidence or any allegation that any members of CAA or delegate agency staff have a financial interest in any of the companies or business entities supplying products or services to the program? Are there CAA policies about these relationships? Are the policies followed?

i. What review and approval process is required to amend or extend contracts? Does that process provide adequate internal controls in order to ensure that contract amendments and/or extensions do not circumvent funding agency or CAA policies and regulations?

j. Does the CAA (and delegate agencies) have a property inventory system and related procedures? Does this system include a regular updating and review of CAA and delegate agency-owned property.

k. With regard to the CAA's property inventory system:

    1) Does the inventory include the date that items were purchased?

    2) Does the inventory include the value or cost of the items?

    3) Does the inventory include the location of the items and/or some form of numbering or identification marking of the items?

    4) Does the inventory include a depreciation schedule or some indication of the expected useful life of the items?

l. Is Federal Excess or Surplus property included in the inventory system? Is donated property included?

m. Is there a specific person or unit in the CAA (and delegate agencies) responsible for maintaining and updating the property inventory?

n. What procedures and policies exist regarding the disposal of property purchased by the CAA?

o. Are CAA (and delegate agency) vehicles included in the property inventory system? Is a separate log or information system kept regarding the assignment and use of vehicles? Do these records and the related CAA policies and regulations indicate the permitted uses of such vehicles, the responsibility for control and assignment of vehicles, mileage traveled, maintenance schedules, etc?

p. In reviewing the CAA's property inventory records, the reviewer should:

    1) Randomly select several items from the inventory and ask to see them.

    2) Confirm that equipment or products recently purchased are included on the inventory.

    3) Identify the process by which information on items purchased is communicated to the person(s) responsible for maintaining the property inventory.

q. Is there evidence to indicate that any previously identified inadequacies of the property management or procurement procedures have been corrected?

FUNCTION VI: Staff and Board Development

Training and Technical Assistance

The assessment of the CAA's training and technical assistance activities could involve:

1) Interviews with CAA staff, Board members, delegate agency staff, program or project managers, and other participants in the activities.

2) Review of CAA documents, reports, and materials.

3) Personal observation of such activities, if possible.

To the extent possible, the focus of the assessment should be on the quality and results of training and technical assistance efforts rather than on the quantity of such efforts.

The types of questions and issues to be addressed in this assessment could include the following:

a. Does the CAA have a training and technical assistance plan? If so, does it address project or program needs, administrative functions, and management activities?

b. What are the most frequently used resources for the conduct of training and technical assistance (e.g. funding agency staff, other CAA staff, consultants or specialists, etc.)?

c. Does the CAA seek to involve local individuals or groups with appropriate expertise in the provision of training and technical assistance (e.g. college or vocational school staff, local accounting or information system firms, etc.)?

d. Is feedback on training and technical assistance activities obtained from participants? Are these assessments taken into account in the design and conduct of future training and technical assistance activities?

e. What are the CAA's training and technical assistance priorities for the next work program period?

f. Based on interviews with various participants in training and technical assistance activities, the reviewer may wish to find out such things as the following:

    1) Did the participant feel the activity was worthwhile?

    2) Did he/she learn things that have helped in improving performance on the job or as a Board member?

    3) Were there information or assistance needs that he/she had which were not addressed in the training or technical assistance?

    4) Was he/she given an opportunity to evaluate the activity, orally or in writing?

    5) Does he/she feel that the training and technical assistance activities of the CAA are too limited, too great, or about right?

    6) Are there particular training or technical assistance needs which he/she feels the CAA should address?

g. Does the CAA Board (or its appropriate committee) receive and review planned training and technical assistance activities and/or reports on the conduct of such activities? What actions or recommendations has the Board taken or made as a result of such reviews? Does the Board discuss the training and technical assistance needs?

h. Do contracts entered into by the CAA for training and technical assistance adequately specify the content of the activities and the results expected?

i. Is there an individual or unit in the CAA responsible for developing, coordinating, and/or evaluating training and technical assistance efforts?

j. Is there evidence of positive changes in program, administrative, or management performance as a result of training or technical assistance activities?

k. How are low-income individuals, target groups, and/or community groups involved in determining or reviewing training and technical assistance?

1. Does the process of development of training and technical assistance activities take into account the findings of the CAA's self-evaluation and monitoring efforts?

Exit Interview and Report

Upon completion of the assessments, the reviewer should prepare an outline of his/her initial findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The outline is used as a basis for discussions during the exit interview. The exit interview could include the CAA Executive Director and/or the Board Chairperson -- or their designees -- and other CAA staff and Board members as are appropriate. The purpose of the exit interview is threefold:

1) To inform the CAA of the reviewer's initial findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

2) To allow the CAA staff and Board members to respond to those initial findings, conclusions, and recommendations and provide such additional information or data as may be relevant and necessary.

3) To permit the reviewer to obtain and review additional information based upon the response and comments of CAA staff and Board members.

The reviewer's presentation should be made in an objective and constructive manner. The reviewer should avoid getting into arguments with the persons at the interview. If questions of fact arise, the reviewer should request such additional information as the CAA can provide. The reviewer should emphasize that the conclusions and recommendations are preliminary at this stage and may be altered after further analysis or after receiving additional information from the CAA.

The reviewer should begin the discussion of each project or activity by identifying:

1) The project or activity that was assessed.

2) The sources of information (maintaining confidentiality as necessary and appropriate) and the methods used to obtain the information (e.g. document review, spot checks of project or activity files, interviews, personal observations, etc.).

3) Criteria and indicators that were used to assess performance.

4) Any additional information which the reviewer would like to have but which was not available.

At that point, the reviewer should ask those at the exit interview if they have any questions or comments. Following his/her response to any questions or comments, the reviewer could:

1) Summarize the significant assessment findings.

2) Indicate his/her initial conclusions based upon those findings.

3) Indicate what recommendations he/she has for action to be taken by the CAA.

4) Ask the CAA representatives for their comments or reactions.

In most circumstances, the CAA representatives will have some comments, questions or reactions. The reviewer should attempt to respond to each as completely and concisely as possible. In cases where the CAA representatives indicate that the findings or conclusions have not taken into account certain information or data, the reviewer should request that the data be provided. If the CAA representatives feel that other persons

should be interviewed by the reviewer, he/she should attempt to do so prior to leaving, and should ask for any assistance necessary in arranging such a meeting.

If the exit interview will involve a variety of projects or activities, the reviewer should, in most cases, begin with some of the projects or activities which he/she believes are the "best" or which have the fewest problems. Further, the order that the projects and activities are discussed should alternate those projects or activities which have the most problems with those that have few or no problems. The reviewer should approach the exit interview in a positive and constructive framework.

Report of Assessment Findings/Conclusions/Recommendations

The final step in the reviewer's assessment activities is the development of a report on the findings/conclusions/recommendations of the assessment.

The report should be directed to the CAA Executive Director. The format of the report will depend, in part, on the number of activities or projects assessed, the specific projects or activities assessed, and other factors. Regardless of the specific format, the report could include the following:

a. Each project or activity assessed should be identified.

b. If the findings and conclusions about one or more projects are virtually all positive and require no further comments, the report should list those projects and so state. If the reviewer believes that any of such projects or activities are exemplary in terms of performance, or if they may have applicability as a model for other CAAs, he/she should indicate that as well.

c. Each project or activity which the reviewer believes is not in compliance with CAA or funding agency policy should be identified and discussed separately. The specific aspect of non-compliance should be stated. The source(s) of information that indicate non-compliance should be identified. Recommendations for corrective action should be stated.

d. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the reviewer regarding projects or activities which are not proceeding as planned or which have other problems should be presented. This presentation should identify the differences between planned and actual performance (or the nature and scope of the problems), discuss the reasons for the differences (or problems), and state what actions the CAA plans to take.

The report should be put in final form after the reviewer has verbally discussed the findings/conclusions/recommendations with the CAA Executive Director and Board chair during the exit interview.

APPENDIX:

Management Functions Assessment Review Form

After reading the following statements, please mark the expression which most clearly expresses your view:

0	=	Lack of knowledge concerning described situation.
1	=	No, never.
2	=	Rarely so, very seldom.
3	=	To a certain extent, sometimes.
4	=	Usually so, frequently.
5	=	Yes, always.
N/A	=	Not applicable.

CAA Board

1. The composition of the Board is in accordance with the law and CAA policy.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    a. The Board genuinely represents the public, private and poverty sectors of the community.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    b. Board composition conforms to the racial make-up of the community.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    c. Selection of the Board is in compliance with the CAA policies on prohibition of nepotism.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    d. Major businesses and industries are represented on the Board.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    e. Private groups and anti-poverty interests are represented on the Board.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    f. Board representation from the public sector includes major elected officials and administrators of public agencies.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

    g. In resolving issues, Board representatives from low- income individuals and private sectors maintain two-way communications with their organization and/or constituencies.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

2. The Board carries out its responsibilities regularly in an organized and productive manner.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  a.   Board meetings are held as specified in the by-laws.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  b.   An agenda is prepared in accordance with the by-laws and distributed to the Board members in advance of meetings.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  c.   The Board monitors and evaluates the operation of CAA programs.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  d.   The Board determines major ends to be achieved, but delegates responsibility for selection of means to the Executive Director.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  e.   The Board does not interfere with the daily operations of CAA programs.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

3. The selection, composition, and functioning of committees of the Board are organized in accordance with by-laws and the law.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  a.   Standing committees of the Board meet on a regular basis.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  b.   Each committee of the Board is comprised of representatives from low-income populations, public and private sectors of the community.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  c.   Each Board member serves on at least one committee.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

  d.   At committee meetings, at least 50% of the members must be present to conduct business.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

4. The Board has knowledge of the community's poverty problems and understands the role of the CAA in combating them.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

a. The Board has knowledge of and tries to influence the uses of non-CAA resources available to combat local poverty problems.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

b. The Board has a knowledge and understanding of CAA and delegate agency programs.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

c. The Board has a thorough knowledge and understanding of its own powers and responsibilities.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

5. The Board has a knowledge and understanding of funding source policies.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

a. Funding source policies are readily available to all Board members.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

b. Funding source policies are utilized by the Board in its decision-making process.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

6. The Board has been successful in mobilizing and channelling new resources into anti-poverty efforts.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

a. Mobilization of resources is one of the major strategies of the CAA.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

FUNCTION V: Financial Management

1. Within the central office, there is a unit responsible for accounting and other financial activities.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

2. Training is provided to fiscal department staff members for the improvement of their accounting skills.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

3. The CAA maintains an auditable accounting system which conforms to generally accepted accounting principles.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

4. The receipt and expenditures of all funds are recorded separately for each grantee, and subsequently for each transaction.

0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

5.   Accounting records clearly reflect the nature of business transactions and the monetary value of assets and liabilities.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

6.   All recorded transactions are traceable to their source.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

7.   The steps in maintaining the CAA accounting system are described in a document on accounting procedure.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

8.   The responsibility for a sequence of related tasks is divided among different employees.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

9.   A policy of using or losing accrued vacation time is observed.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

10. The responsibility for maintaining accounting records is separated from the responsibilities for authorization of purchasing and custody of assets.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

11. The CAA has established thorough procedures for controlling the fiscal systems of delegate agencies.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

12. Financial reports from delegate agencies are accurate and timely.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

13. A comprehensive contract between the delegate agency and the CAA provides for fiscal control.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

14. Periodic reviews are conducted of the delegate agency's accounting systems, records and operational procedures.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

15. Timely, useful and comprehensive financial reports are provided to the CAA's decision-makers.

     0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

Remarks:

FUNCTION VI: Property Management

1.   There is a staff person responsible for property management.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

2.   A process has been established for bidding on non-expendable property and service contracts.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

3.   Services received fulfill the original contract.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

4.   Procurement authority is clearly defined and observed at all times.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

5.   Bids are requested, where appropriate, and contracts are awarded to the lowest bidder; if not, there is adequate justification.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

6.   Equipment and supplies on hand are adequately controlled and utilized.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

7.   All records of property are maintained in accordance with approved funding source and accounting procedures.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

8.   There is a periodic physical inventory of non-expendable assets.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

9.   Disposal of property is in accordance with funding source regulations and sound property management.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

FUNCTION VII: Staff and Board Development

1.   A comprehensive plan exists for the career development and training of non-professionals and professionals.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

2.   Career development plans, tailored to staff needs, are periodically reviewed with employees.

        0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

3. Supervisors regularly use performance reviews and appraisals for identifying personal development and making staff promotions.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

4. The staff member has an opportunity to discuss, with the supervisor, ideas for improving personal performance.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

5. Performance reviews and appraisals are used for motivating and directing personal improvement, not for the harassment or embarrassment of employees.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

6. No employee is paid a wage lower than the federal minimum.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

7. Salaries are in accordance with appropriate funding source regulations.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

8. The CAA salary schedules and fringe benefits are commensurate with those in comparable local public and private non-profit agencies and businesses.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

9. The CAA salary structure and staff member compensation program are reviewed periodically by the CAA Board and Executive Director.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

10. Vacancies in program areas are promptly filled.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

11. Programs employ, train and advance para-professional employees.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

12. Professional and clerical program employees receive adequate training to do their jobs.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

13. Program supervisors handle grievances and disciplinary matters in a fair and consistent manner, in accordance with CAA policies.

    0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
PEER REVIEW SYSTEM

A.   PURPOSE AND PREMISES

The purpose of the Community Action Agency Peer Evaluation Review System (CAA PERS) is to assess the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of institutional relationships and management systems which are necessary for Community Action Agencies to be effective. Peer review is one way of promoting, achieving and maintaining a credible level of excellence among all CAAs. The system described in this paper is a self-help effort among Florida's CAAs. CAA PERS enables (1) credit to be given for good performance, (2) problems to be identified and corrected, and (3) strengths to be shared by all.

A successful evaluation describes what an agency is doing well and what is innovative, and it formulates practical and constructive recommendations to make improvements. The results of a peer evaluation can be utilized by an agency as an input in reordering priorities, changing management operations, and revising board and administrative policies.

The effectiveness of the agency in operating its programs and systems will be assessed in terms of the extent to which the agency meets standards developed by all Florida CAAs through the NACAA New Partnerships Project.

The focus of the Peer Review is on these relationships and administrative systems as described in the Performance Standards. It is not the primary purpose of the peer-review to review the specific results or outputs of program activity. The Peer Review Team is not there to audit or monitor programs on behalf of funding sources. However, monitoring reports and audit reports will be reviewed to help reach conclusions about the adequacy of overall management systems.

The Peer Evaluation Process includes evaluation, monitoring, and compliance review. The goal of evaluation is to determine how effective a system or activity has been. Monitoring focuses on the consistency of an agency's policies, procedures and management activities with approved goals, objectives and performance standards. Compliance review assesses the extent to which an agency is maintaining its eligibility to receive federal or state funds, as well as its ability to operate according to the terms of applicable laws, regulations, policies and guidelines.

This evaluation process uses a generally stated set of expectations against which all agencies can be compared and to which all evaluators refer when making valuative judgments and recommending improvements. We understand that there is more than one way of operating, all of which achieve acceptable results. The intent, then, is not to force all agencies to use one detailed "model" of a perfect CAA. That does not, however, preclude use of standard descriptions as benchmarks of the way things should be structured or should function in a high-quality CAAs.

These standard descriptions are drawn from three sources: 1) legal and contractual "musts," e.g. on board structure, 2) ideas and concepts that were required in the past but are now optional, but are worth retaining, and 3) the concept of a CAA as it is developed collectively by Florida CAA Executive Directors and embodied in the Performance Standards developed by FACA.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Peer evaluations are sponsored by the FACA. They are conducted by teams of individuals drawn from Florida's CAAs and the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Periodically, the agencies are requested to submit names of individuals who would be willing and able to serve on one or more evaluation teams. This includes board members, executive directors, operations directors, fiscal officers, planners, personnel officers, project directors or community services directors.

Teams are composed of at least four members, one of whom must be an executive director who serves as the team leader. One of the four must be a fiscal officer. The other members of the team are drawn from the other categories listed above.

CAA PERS will operate on a XX year cycle during which all Florida CAAs would be reviewed. A visit lasts approximately three days. The members of the team meet on-site and go over assignments and procedural matters. An entrance interview is then held with the agency's executive director, board president, upper-level managers, and board members and advisory committee members. The purpose of the entrance interview is to acquaint the agency people with the review process and to discuss any concerns or questions that might arise.

The team members then begin to undertake review activities, which consist of: interviewing staff and board members, program participants and community leaders; and examining agency documents, policies, procedures, and files. Team members meet at the end of each day to report progress, problems, or raise other issues and to coordinate activities for the subsequent day.

When finished with evaluation, the team members return to their respective agencies and compile a report of their findings and observations. These are sent to the team leader who compiles the final report and sends it to the CAA. At an agreed upon time, the team leader will return to the evaluated agency, meet with the board of directors, and go over the findings of the team.

The overall responsibility for ensuring that reviews take place belongs to the Peer Evaluation Project Steering Committee, which is a committee of the Florida Association for Community Action. The committee is made up of four people selected by the association. The committee: develops and revises the review tools, orients and trains people who will participate on review teams, schedules the agencies to be visited, and offers technical assistance to team leaders in compiling the final report which is sent back to the CAA. The committee will also assess the evaluation process itself in order to "fine tune" it, or to recommend more substantive changes.

C. PEER EVALUATION COMPONENT AREAS

The Peer Evaluation Team reviews the Five Relationships and Seven Management functions as described in the NACAA Executive Director Manual. The five basic relationships are:

a. Board of Directors in which the composition and functioning of the board are reviewed.

b. Low income people. How the CA relates to them.

c. Community leadership. CAA leadership and advocacy on issues.

d. Staff management. Including board/staff relationships.

e. Funding agency liaison. In particular to key programs operated by most CAAs.

Appendix D. Peer Review.

The seven areas of management functions are described briefly below.

1. Planning, Goals, Strategies., in which the plans and timetables, objectives and results are examined in terms of their relatedness to the agency's mission, local conditions of poverty, and existing community resources. This review will also include efforts at mobilizing resources and efforts at implementing new approaches for dealing with problems of poverty in the community.

2. Community Participation, including community organization, community development.

3. Program Management. Monitoring, program efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Property Management. Management Information Systems includes the gathering and flow of information both internally and to external entities, and how that information is then used in the agency.

4. Personnel Management.

5. Financial Management in which the agency's financial system is examined, including a review of the audit, the source documentation, internal controls, accounting records, and reporting.

6. Community Relations in which the interaction between the agency and its "publics" are examined. The "Publics" include the general public, elected officials, other organizations in the community, the agency's funding sources, and most importantly, the low-income residents.

7. Staff and Board Development in which the agency's job performance evaluation system and staff training efforts are examined.

D.   PEER EVALUATION RATING PROCESS

The Peer Evaluation Instrument consists of a series of statements related to each of the functional areas. The statements assert that a particular "state of the world" is indeed the case. An example is, "Program Reports accurately reflect program activities and developments." The subjects of the statements may be intangible, like "understanding of individual roles and responsibilities," or a thing, like a personnel policy document. The review team's task is to test the "match" between what the statement says and what the reality is, as the reviewer came to know it. The reviewer may interview staff and board members, participants, or community leaders; examine policies, procedures, funding documents, work plans, and so on; and observe actual operations.

The reviewer then rates the "match" on a 0 to 5 rating system. Each rating category (O, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) matches a description, which, if limited to one word, would range from "unacceptable" for an "0" rating, to "exemplary" for a "5" rating. That category which best describes the evaluator's conclusions about a statement would be the appropriate numerical rating to assign for that conclusion.

Once the rating of the statements is complete, recommendations are made to help the agency improve its operations.

The evaluation report is reviewed by the board and executive director of the agency. It is, of course, up to them to decide which of the recommendations to adopt.

E.   HOW TO DO THE REVIEW

A successful review is one that discovers what an agency is doing exceptionally well, what is innovative, and that formulates practical constructive recommendations to make improvements. As a Review Team Member, you should always keep this positive objective in mind during a Peer Review.

The first action of the Team Member is to study carefully the Review Instrument and its 0-to-5 Performance Rating System. Close attention should be given to the survey statements for the specific areas which you have been asked to evaluate.

The Framework

You will be given a booklet in which survey statements are printed. Some statements will be found in all booklets, therefore, the subject of the statement will be evaluated by all team members. Other statements will be found in only one or two of the booklets, and therefore, the subject of the statement will be evaluated by one, two, or three team members, respectively. Different reviewers will deal with some of the same areas and materials. This is a cross-check procedure to assure a thorough treatment of certain important areas.

All survey statements in the Review Instrument should be rated <u>after</u> you have found the answers through interviews with individuals, discussion with groups, a study of records and documents, and by other means.

Make notes initially of specific questions which you think you need to ask program staff, board members, program participants, representatives of related agencies, or others to be sure what the rating for each of your survey statements should be.

You may wish to discuss information-gathering techniques with the Team Leader or with other team members, if the right approach and technique to obtaining data to base your assessment on is not readily apparent to you.

How to Conduct an Interview

The reviewer gains the necessary facts from a study of grant documents, reports and interviews. When beginning an interview, introduce yourself briefly, giving the stated purpose of the review. Advise the interviewee that he/she will not be quoted. Then establish and record his/her credentials: how long with the program, in what capacities, and other relevant facts.

There are many ways of starting an interview. With staff members, you may want to get right to the subjects of your assigned statements, or you might want to talk "in general" about the component area and get to specific subjects later. With committee members or board members, you may want to talk about how they first became involved with the agency or with what particular agency activities or programs they are most involved. With participants, you might encourage them to talk about themselves and establish an informal relaxed atmosphere in which to ask specific questions.

The review statements themselves are not phrased as questions. They are stated as conclusions or as a description of "what should be." Therefore, in the interview, you may need to ask a number of questions in order to make the judgment regarding a statement. This is why it is important for you to study the statements in your booklet. This study, and discussion with other team members, will suggest to you additional questions to ask in your interviews. It is safe to say that many of your questions will be simply asking the individual to clarify, explain or expand upon previous answers.

A general rule of thumb in interviewing is to avoid asking "yes/no" questions. Rather, ask questions like "what do you believe is the purpose of...?" or "what is your understanding of...?" or "how informative are the materials...?" Sometimes a "yes/no" question is appropriate, of course, but even then a follow-up would also be wise.

The most difficult part of your assignment is to listen and not to talk.

Appendix D. Peer Review.

Aside from asking questions and perhaps guiding the interviewee's conversation, you should express no opinions and should show no reactions no matter what is related to you. Above all, you should not repeat what other people have said or make derogatory remarks.

Often what is not said -- or known -- is significant.

The best method of interviewing is, of course, in person. There are times when telephone interviews are acceptable, however, as in verifying participants in a program, or when working within time constraints (time is especially short), or in deciding whether an individual has sufficient knowledge of a subject or program to justify an in- person interview.

It is necessary to organize and plan your assignment. It usually saves time to phone ahead for an appointment.

Your interviews should be recorded (that is, written down) after each interview, because by the time you have talked with several persons you will not be able to recall who said what. Normally, it is best to write as the interview progresses, though sometimes it "turns a person off," in which case a record should be made right after the interview is concluded. At the start of the interview ask, "Is it all right if I make notes?"

In conducting your review you will also review various documents that are the subject of or are relevant to the review statements in your booklet. These are requested of the agency being evaluated in advance of the arrival of the team. In some cases, each team member may have a copy of a particular document. In other cases, a copy of the document will be available to all team members.

Finally, some information will be gathered through observation. For example, if you visit a community center as part of completing your evaluation, you will look for certain things, like a sign identifying the center for the public, or you will be able to see how the staff conduct themselves in the center, or you may see a program activity or advisory committee meeting in progress. The impressions that you form from observations such as these will help you make your valuative conclusions.

Making Judgments

Sometimes, it is difficult to know how much weight to give impressions, favorable or unfavorable. You do not want to be "snowed" by best behavior and you do not want to be overly influenced by what might be an isolated "negative" incident.

Another source of influence to be mindful of is the situation that you come out of in your own agency. If you come from an agency that is very well organized and operated, you may have a tendency to rate things in terms of how they are done "back home" and may be overly critical if they are not done in the same way by the agency being reviewed. On the other hand, you may come from an agency that is not so well operated and is having some problems. The danger here is that you might be overly generous in rating the statements because "things" seem so much better than what you are used to.

There is no model of a CAA definitive enough for us, acting as outside evaluators, to compare to and that would nullify completely the effect of our varied experiences.

When it comes time for you to pull all of these impressions and findings together, it becomes clear that peer review is a difficult process. Never forget that you are treading on a very sensitive area -- where individuals make their living and where they devote most of themselves to what they are doing. Information is sometimes conflicting; facts are frequently gray rather than black or white. There are more avenues open for inquiry than can be followed. You will need to take a detached look at your progress from time to time to assure that you are placing proper emphasis on important matters that you develop while going lightly over items that appear in order. Frequent team meetings will help you in this assessment. Be sure to listen to what other team members say in the many team meetings which will occur (formally or informally) during the

on-site visit. Team leaders have learned that what seems sometimes casual observations by team members can be important parts of the review.

Research is required in order to rate some of the statements. The subject of the statement and the assertion about that subject that the statement makes are, to the reviewer, the "tip of the iceberg." It serves as a point around which to focus an organized inquiry, but in order to reach an valuative conclusion, the reviewer may need to look at related systems, policies or relationships.

Interviews, document review, and observation provide the raw data upon which to develop valuative conclusions. "How well does the reality, as I have come to know it, fit the expectations outlined in the standard description?" This is the basic question the reviewer grapples with. The answer will be a rating of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 (and in a few cases, "NA", if the statement does not apply in the agency's situation).

A description of each of these ratings is provided to assist the reviewer in the actual assignment of a rating to a statement, so that the rating selected will be the most appropriate one to describe or characterize the "reality" that the evaluator sees. The perceived match between reality and expectation is the critical element in the evaluation process. What should be there? What did I find? It is clear that the value of the whole evaluation activity rests squarely on the skill, objectivity, and dedication that the evaluation team members bring to the task.

Since one purpose of the review is improvement, it can result only if the conclusions of the review are accepted. They will be accepted only if the process and the conduct of the review are seen as fair, balanced, objective. Maintaining the integrity of the process is the job of each team member. Whereas the agency's staff, board members, and participants are trying to demonstrate to you, the team member, that they do "measure up" to the standard descriptions, you, through your demeanor and seriousness of purpose, are conveying to them that this process is viable and valuable to their interests.

Review is hard work and the hours are necessarily long. At the same time, it is a rewarding learning experience -- many team members ask to go again.

F. THE 0-5 PERFORMANCE RATING SYSTEM

Each statement in the evaluation booklet is to be rated from 0 to 5. The following is a brief explanation of the rating scale.

A rating of "0" indicates that the subject of the statement (a system, policy manual, level of understanding, and so on) either does not exist or is so poor that, in the opinion of the evaluator, it is of little real value to the agency and may even be counterproductive in its present state.

This may affect eligibility to receive funds.

A rating of "1" indicates that the subject of the statement does at least partially exist but is functioning at the lowest discernible level. This is a serious problem requiring immediate corrective action, especially if continued eligibility or contract compliance is in question. Efforts at improvement are mandatory. Without appropriate attention, the problem will persist or get worse. It may adversely affect other areas.

A rating of "2" indicates that the subject of the statement is in place and meets minimum requirements, but that a problem does exist. It would be proper to say that improvement is recommended and would enhance the overall success and effectiveness of the agency, program or system.

A rating of "2" might be given for situations wherein:

- A program or system lacks adequate supervision.
- Staff do not have a clear understanding of what is expected.

- Reports are frequently late and inaccurate.
- Program or system is rigid and incapable of meeting new situations without intensive outside guidance and assistance.

A rating of "3" indicates that the subject of the statement is in place and is operating at an adequate level, that things are under control and if such effort is maintained the likelihood of serious problems developing is remote. All agencies should strive for and maintain at least a rating of "3" in all areas. If an improvement is recommended, the result should be cost effective and strengthen the agency overall.

A rating of "3" might be given for situations wherein:

- A program or system is adequately supervised.
- Staff understand most of what is expected.
- Reports are usually on time and accurate.
- Outside assistance and guidance are only occasionally required.

A rating of "4" indicates that the subject of the statement is in place and operating above average. While there is always room for improvement, improving this situation would be "fine tuning," so the issue of cost-effectiveness should be examined before expending resources to further improve this item.

A rating of "4" might be given for situations wherein:

- Supervision is strong.
- Staff has a very good understanding of what is expected.
- Reports are timely, accurate, and complete.
- Program or system shows initiative and is able to handle new situations on its own, requiring outside help rarely if at all; instead, actually provides assistance occasionally.
- Program or system could be considered for dissemination to other CAAs.

A rating of "5" indicates that the subject of the statement is in place and is functioning at an exceptional level and that the situation is about as good as it can be.

A rating of "5" might be given for situations wherein:

- Supervision of program or system is excellent.
- Staff have a very good understanding of what is required.
- Reports are always timely, accurate and contain all relevant information.
- Program or system shows great initiative and provides assistance to others regularly.
- Program or system is a model for other CAAs and should be recommended to them.

A rating of "N/A" will apply only when the statement is irrelevant: i.e., the statement deals with a delegate agency or subcontractor and the agency has none.

G.   MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

From the agency's point of view, the "pay-off" to the review process is the recommendations made in the team's report. How are we doing? How can we improve? Those are the questions that the Peer Evaluation Review System answers. The ratings assigned to the statements answer the first question. The team's recommendations answer the second.

Your final task as a team member is to make recommendations for improvement. As you approach this task there are a number of considerations to keep in mind.

A. Implementing any recommendation will involve the agency in change. Individuals (and therefore agencies) vary in their capacity to accommodate to change. They often have a stake or an investment in the status quo.

It is natural to resist change. Whether the impetus for change is from external or internal sources, change has a cost. It may involve dollars, time, mental energy, or stress on those involved in it.

A recommendation for improving something, whether a system, a policy, or a relationship, if implemented, will ultimately affect people and their behavior. What looks good in the "detached" frame of reference of evaluation may look very different when placed in the context of human behavior and interaction.

B. The changes that would have to be made if your recommendations were adopted may be major or minor, necessary or optional (and just which is in the eye of the beholder).

Recommendations for "necessary changes" will most likely be seriously considered and implemented. The key word here is necessary. If both you and the agency agree on the "degree of necessity," then your recommended improvement could well be made.

A guiding principle to you as a maker of recommendations is that if you have rated an item 0, 1, or 2, you should make some recommendations.

If in addition to a low rating the statement involves a compliance issue, the case for making a corrective change should be made with urgency.

Recommendations related to statements rated 4 or 5 may be made, but changes are not expected as often.

C. Statements that you rated a "3" occupy a middle ground on the "necessary-optional" scale. As far as the Peer Evaluation Review System is concerned, a 3 rating says that what is in place is acceptable. There is no real need or push to do anything unless the agency has identified the subject area as one to consider for improvement. In that case, the agency may solicit recommendations of the team. The improvements that may result from implementing them could well raise an average agency to an outstanding one.

D. Formulating a recommendation requires careful consideration and thought. Recommendations should be relevant to and target specifically stated problems. They need to be detailed enough to be understandable by a board person. They should be tailored to the agency's circumstances; that is, they must be workable within the confines of an agency's structure, an agency's resources, and the agency's community context (external constraints, politics, public image, etc). In other words, recommendations should be do-able by the agency.

E. An important test of the worth of a recommendation is its cost-effectiveness, both in terms of dollars and in the emotional energy of the people implementing it and adjusting to it. The agency is the final judge in this matter, of course, but you should propose recommendations where the trade-offs are reasonable.

If you are dealing with a compliance issue or a rating of 0, 1, or 2, then it could be said that the agency should implement some change for the better. In this situation, even "expensive" changes can be cost-effective.

In the case of the other extreme (ratings of 4 or 5), the CAA will not implement costly changes for marginal levels of improvement.

Again, it is the middle of this scale, the "3" ratings, where the cost-effectiveness factor will weigh most heavily and undergo the most scrutiny.

Keeping this cost-effectiveness test in mind should help you to avoid nit-picking when formulating your recommendations, and assist you to craft meaningful and appropriate suggestions worthy of serious review by the agency.

H.   PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND EVALUATION STATEMENTS

The Evaluation Statements themselves are not phrased as questions. They are statements. For example, "The information collected and reported by the program is used to monitor, evaluate and improve program performance."

As an evaluator, your task is to rate this statement on a 0- 5 rating scale. A "0" rating, with respect to this statement, might reflect a situation where you find that information is collected but is never seen by anyone except the clerk who files it away. On the other hand, a rating of "5" might reflect a situation where you find that information is collected, thoroughly analyzed, distributed widely within the organization, and its use in improving program performance is documented in staff meeting minutes. (The rating system is discussed more thoroughly in an earlier section.)

Each functional area is described in terms of its key features. These are characteristics that should be addressed in the agency's system or policy. These standard descriptions are intended to establish a common frame of reference for the team members and to provide continuity from one evaluation to the next. The task is to design a set of descriptions of "what should be".

Each Performance Standard statement is assigned a number, for example, 2-8. The first number shows the functional area to which the statement belongs. The second number is the number of the statement within that area.

There are five sets of relationships that a CAA must maintain.

     I.   Board of Directors
     II.   Low Income People
     III.   Community Leadership
     IV.   Staff Management
     V.   Funding Agency Liaison.

There are seven major management functions within a CAA.

     VI.   Planning: Goals, Strategies.
     VII.   Community Participation, Organization, Development
     VIII. Program Administration. MIS, Property Management.
     IX.   Personnel Management
     X.   Financial Management
     XI.   Community Relations
     XII.   Staff Development

For each of these areas, there are one or more standards and measurements. These standards and measurements were developed by the Missouri CAA and the Missouri CSBG Office. They are reformatted here to fit in the outline described above.

<u>Relationship A</u>:　<u>CAA Board</u>

1.　　<u>Private Nonprofit Corporations</u>

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) shall have a Board of Directors, as provided by the bylaws of each corporation, of not less than _____ nor more than _____ members.

One-third of the members of the board shall be elected public officials currently holding office, or their representatives, except that if the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the membership of the board, membership on the board by appointive public officials may be counted in meeting such one- third requirement.

At least one-third of the members shall be persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representative of the poor in the area served.

The remainder of the members shall be officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education, or other major groups and interests in the community.

The governing board shall determine personnel, fiscal and program policies and approve proposals for financial assistance and the systems used for disbursement of funds.

Each member of the board selected to represent a specific geographic area within the community must reside in the area represented.

The governing board of a CAA shall possess all powers and responsibilities afforded non-profit corporations, including the following:

1.　To determine overall mission goals and priorities for the CAA, including provisions for evaluating program performance.
2.　To determine rules and procedures for the governing board.
3.　To select the officers and the executive committee, if any, of the governing board.
4.　To oversee the extent and the quality of the participation of the poor in the programs of the CAA.
5.　To hire, fire, and evaluate the performance of the Executive Director of the CAA.
6.　To enforce compliance with all contract and grant requirements.

2.　　<u>Community Action Board</u> (Public CAA)

The composition requirements are the same. The division of responsibility with the elected officials is specified in a written document.

<u>Relationship A</u>:　<u>Board of Directors</u>

<u>CAA Mission Statement</u>

The CAA should have a Mission Statement which contains the key ideas underlined in the following paragraph:

A.1　　The mission of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) is to <u>assist economically disadvantaged persons</u> in identifying problems and causes, then to develop a plan to overcome these barriers in order <u>to achieve the highest level of family self-sufficiency</u>. In carrying out this mission, CAAs contract with a variety of sources <u>to provide a comprehensive local program in every county</u>.

A. **CAA Board Statements**

A.2   The composition of the Board of Directors is in accordance with the law and CSBG/State regulations.

A.3   The Board carries out its responsibilities in an organized and productive manner.

A.4   The Board has knowledge of the community's needs and problems and understands the role of the Agency in combating them.

A.5   The Board has a knowledge and understanding of resource mobilization, including funding source policies, procedures and guidelines and understands their purposes.

A.6   The Board has been successful in mobilizing and channeling local resources in support of the Agency's efforts.

A.7   Board members legitimately and effectively speak for their constituencies and actively participate in planning, conducting and evaluating agency programs.

A.8   By-Laws are in Compliance.

By-Law Compliance Checklist:

-    Number of seats is no less than ____ nor more than ____.

-    Procedures for selecting board members and alternates are described.

-    Performance Standards for board members and alternates (i.e., attendance, etc.) are stated.

-    Process for removal of board members is stated.

-    Quorum for meetings is at least 50% of non-vacant seats.

-    Requirement that board meet regularly is stated.

-    Requirement that board meetings are open to the public is   stated.

-    Requirement that board keep written minutes is stated.

-    Provides for the appointment of board committees, including an executive committee, and requires that committees reflect the tripartite composition of the board.

-    Operating procedures for the conduct of board meetings are described (i.e., convening board meetings, board officers and election and duties of same, adherence to rules of order, notice of board meetings, etc.).

-    States that alternates cannot hold board offices, and that an alternate cannot be counted toward quorum or cast a vote if the primary board member is present.

-    Board participation in planning is stated.

<u>Area I</u>:   Functional Planning

<u>Statement #</u>   <u>Statement</u>

I.1   The Agency's Board, Executive Director, Administrative/ Program Staff and Advisory Groups have a shared understanding of the Agency's goals, mission, and strategies.

I.2   Specific, quantifiable measures for mobilizing and focusing resources are included in the agency's goals and objectives.

I.3   Schedules for accomplishments allow time for community decision making processes (resulting in commitments) to take place.

I.4   Accomplishments are measured in terms of standards of performance (activity) and standards of impact (result of activity).

I.5   The total effort of the agency includes activities to expand opportunities and resources available to low-income people and to remove obstacles to the pursuit of self-sufficiency.

I.6   The Agency has demonstrated new, successful approaches for dealing with problems of poverty in the community.

I.7   The Agency has worked with other agencies in the community during the planning and development of programs and services to promote joint projects, foster coordination and cooperation and to avoid duplication.

FUNCTIONAL AREA III: Program Administration

The CAA should have in place an organizational structure and internal operating procedures which facilitate the management of the agency as a whole. The statements listed for this component area describe some elements of this general administration system. These statements range across the management functions of planning, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating.

Other areas of the evaluation are more focused and therefore easier to deal with for purposes of evaluation. This one is broad in scope and therefore more difficult to describe in terms of expectations.

Some of the statements address organization structure. The organization chart can be evaluated in terms of its clarity, completeness, the number of supervisory layers, span of control for supervisory personnel, distinction between line authority and staff authority or "coordinative" control, how well it corresponds to "reality" (does the agency actually function the way the chart would indicate?), and how up-to-date it is (are all current positions present? Does it still show positions that have been taken out of the staffing pattern?). The chart should reflect accurately how authority is distributed within the organization and what positions make up the staffing pattern.

Job descriptions should accurately describe the duties and responsibilities involved in doing a particular task. There should be a job description for each position in the staffing pattern, and the descriptions should follow a standardized format which would include, but not be limited to, the following: job title; job summary; work station/assigned area; supervisory responsibilities; line of authority (responsible to whom); major duties and responsibilities (as specific as necessary so as to be complete and easily understood); knowledge, skill, and abilities; qualifications required; qualifications desired; salary.

It is important that a standardized format be used and that a system be in place to update job descriptions regularly and to write new ones when necessary. Approvals of senior management be obtained before job descriptions be used in the organization.

A written hiring procedure should:

- Provide for the public advertisement of vacancies to staff as well as to other known sources of employment.

- Establish controls to ensure consistency with the budget plan.

- Enable a comparison of job candidate qualifications with position requirements.

- Establish procedures for applicant interviews, reference checks and final selection by an appropriate official.

- Assure compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, and all other applicable equal employment laws and executive orders.

Several statements address information collection, processing and reporting functions. This is a very complex area to evaluate in a brief time. At the least, the Management Information System should collect that information necessary to compile reports to funding sources. The MIS will encompass all programs and gather some data beyond what funding sources require, data that can be analyzed for purposes of needs assessment, recipient characteristics analysis, geographical analysis of services provided, unit cost or cost/benefit analyses, and so on. The system should allow for relatively easy sorting and retrieval of data. The information generated by the system in the form of reports should be accurate and usable by agency managers as a basis for making decisions regarding program performance issues.

If the agency is truly "managed as a whole" there should be written management policies and procedures that apply to all program components; and in interview responses, it should be evident that among agency board and staff members, there is a general agreement or commonality of understanding about how the agency is structured and how it operates to achieve its program goals and overall mission.

FUNCTION AREA III: Program Administration Statements

Statement #	Statement
III.1	Relationships between the CAA administration and the program staff are clearly defined and understood by those concerned.
III.2	Staff members have a clearly written listing of job responsibilities and duties which matches their actual work.
III.3	The staff's understanding of individual roles and responsibilities matches the expectations of supervisors.
III.4	The agency has a well designed organizational structure which clearly defines lines of authority.
III.5	The agency has a written hiring procedure and affirmative action plan.
III.6	The agency has sought, obtained and effectively utilized a significant amount of volunteer support.

III.7 The agency maintains an agency-wide administrative procedures manual which contains instructions on implementing management and administrative tasks, such as the hiring process, job performance evaluation, purchasing, travel authorization and reimbursement, and so on.

III.8 The agency maintains a current, readily available filing system which contains the program and MIS information needed for efficient program and agency management.

Client application forms capture all information necessary to determine eligibility for participation in various programs and services, including: Social Security Numbers, sources and amounts of household income, household size and composition, age and handicapped status (for eligibility purposes and residence).

III.9 Program reports accurately reflect program activities and developments, and can be audited (confirmed) from basic forms or original data entries.

III.10 The staff receives training in the maintenance of the program/agency information system.

III.11 Information reported for program progress can be easily compared with program objectives.

III.12 The information collected and reported by the program is used to monitor, evaluate and improve program performance.

III.13 The administrative staff is adequately aware of current program activities/budgets and is adequately informed of actual program performance and expenditures.

III.14 The agency has written procedures to guard against (and to handle cases of suspected) fraud and abuse in all agency-sponsored programs.

III.15 Monitoring Reports from funding sources are reviewed by administration and program staff, and are used as tools to strengthen overall management of the agency and program activities.

III.16 The family needs assessment process is a structured approach by staff and client to jointly review various areas of family (and individual) strengths, weaknesses, and needs; and results in a plan to meet specific needs and in general to enhance self-sufficiency.

Referrals made on behalf of families and direct services provided by the agency are largely in response to needs identified during the family needs assessment process.

III.18 Standardized Intake/Assessment/Referral System

IAR is viewed for this purpose as a strategy and not as a project activity. It is a central idea in the concept of a community action agency. It is an organizing principle around which the agency is structured, a springboard for the successful operation of program activities, and a vehicle through which the CAA participates in the activities of the community.

A standardized IAR System should exhibit the following six key characteristics, which, taken together, are the general description of a CAA IAR system:

a. Accessibility. The Intake/Assessment/Referral system must be easily available to target groups. The centers should be located in high traffic areas to ease transportation problems. Because the center is part of the local community, local resources can be identified and easily mobilized. The building must be free of architectural barriers to the handicapped. The center should be business-like and encourage client participation.

b. Flexibility. The Intake/Assessment/Referral system should be able to deal with unexpected situations, program changes, and additions. The basic system must be able to expand and handle additional programs incorporated into the system. An example of this characteristic would be the rapid start-up of distribution of a large volume of commodities to eligible people, even though the program was not anticipated.

c. Maximum Access to Community Resources. The Intake/ Assessment/Referral system should present a comprehensive range of services and established linkages to these services so as to ensure that a comprehensive mix of services will be available to eligible clients, and that these services will be tailored to the client's individual needs and coordinated between service providers and other community organizations. The system should provide a means for the low-income population of the target area to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community.

d. Accountability. The Intake/Assessment/Referral system should demonstrate productivity on both a quality and quantity basis and provide the primary documentation of eligibility, services provided, and collection of data for the management information system.

e. Effective Referral. Effective referral would be judged on its relevance to assessed needs, its feasibility of success, ease of implementation, and its appropriateness to the problems. Effective referral would be measured by client acceptance and acceptance by the receiving agency or program. Effective referral can be established by the ability to deal with a combination of problems in an individual and/or family situation.

f. Follow-Through. Follow-through is an on-going process that ensures adequate client progress. The object of follow- through is to ensure a completed action. If initial referral is determined to be unsuccessful or incomplete, then follow-through can initiate supplemental or alternate action.

FUNCTIONAL AREA IV: Personnel Management

The CAA should have in place a Comprehensive Personnel Management System to provide for the consistent and equitable treatment of employees and to assure that all such employees fully understand the terms and conditions of their employment. One person within the organization should have primary responsibility for administering personnel policies, development of an organizational chart which delineates the lines of supervision and total organizational relationships, establishment of personnel files, and development of written Personnel Policies to assure:

a. Hiring retention, and promotion of staff based upon documented skill levels, knowledge, and performance.

b. Staff are provided fair and adequate compensation, assuring hiring and retention of competent and qualified staff.

c. Regular meetings and training sessions are conducted for staff.

d. Staff retention, promotion, and pay increases are commensurate with performance as measured by the immediate supervisor of each staff member.

e. Fair treatment of all program applicants and employees without regard to political affiliation, belief, race, color, sex handicap, national origin, religion, or age.

The system should include a comprehensive position classification methodology which:

1. Provides for assignment of all activities specified in program work plans to specific positions.

2. Differentiates between levels of responsibility and complexity of work.

3. Requires position descriptions and job titles.

4. Calls for periodic determination of correctness of position descriptions.

Compensation determination should be based on job requirements, comparability with similar work in the local market, periodic reviews of pay scales, and fringe benefits comparable to other similar organizations. The results of job classification and compensation determination should be embodied in a printed wage and salary plan in which jobs and salary amounts are assigned to wage ranges.

The personnel file and records system should be maintained to include official documents for each staff member related to qualifications for appointment or promotion, periodic pay increases, records of continued training or education, official recognition, performance evaluation and adverse actions. The system should be maintained so as to protect the confidentiality of personnel records.

FUNCTIONAL AREA IV: Personnel Management Statements

Statement #   Statement

IV.1   The agency staff plays an active role in reviewing and updating personnel policies and plans.

1V.2   The executive director or designated person maintains accurate and complete personnel records on each staff member.

1V.3   The executive director supplies to program supervisors, upon request, the personnel records of program staff members.

IV.4   The agency has established an effective mechanism to ensure that all eligible persons are allowed equal opportunity for participation in agency programs and employment by the agency.

IV.5   Each staff member has a copy of the personnel policies and understands it.

IV.6   Personnel records are updated periodically and after each major personnel action.

IV.7   The agency has a published wage and salary plan which covers all agency employees, and is updated periodically.

IV.8   The agency has established an effective procedure for resolving issues arising between it and employees, and the procedures shall provide for:

- Opportunity for an informal hearing.
- Written notification of actions and determinations.
- Notice of procedures for appealing final determinations.

IV.9   Agency procedures allow for:

- Obtaining employee background information (current address, phone, employment and education summary, etc.).
- Reference check.
- Participation in fringe benefit plans.

- Insurance coverage or bonding.
- State and Federal tax forms.
- Job descriptions.
- Disciplinary correspondence.
- Employee status change (salary, job assignment).
- Performance evaluation.
- No employee being paid less than the federal minimum wage.
- Periodic review by board and executive director of the agency salary structure and compensation program.
- Handling of grievances and disciplinary matters in a fair and consistent manner by supervisors.
- Employee Examination of his/her personnel file.

IV.10   Salary increases are awarded to employees in accordance with written procedures governing all employees.

IV.11   The executive director or designated person has, on an agency-wide basis, the responsibility for oversight review of the implementation of personnel management functions such as performance evaluation, salary increase administration, new employee orientation and updating of policies and procedures.

FUNCTION AREA V: Financial Management

Each CAA must have and maintain a sound Financial Management System which provides for adequate control of grant agreement funds and other assets; ensures the accuracy of financial data; provides for operational efficiency and internal controls to avoid conflict-of-interest situations; and prevents irregular transactions or activities. Each CAA will develop a written Financial Procedures Manual establishing procedures which must meet the following standards.

1. Accurate, current and complete disclosure of the financial results of each project in accordance with federal and/or state reporting requirements and is accordance with general accepted accounting principles.

2. Records which identify adequately the source and application of funds for grant-supported activities. These records shall contain information pertaining to authorization, obligated balances, unobligated balances, assets, liabilities, expenditures and income. This information should be maintained directly in the books of account, or in a series of subsidiary cost ledgers or records.

3. Effective control over the accountability for all project funds, and property acquired for project use should be assured through a sound structure of internal controls that will safeguard assets and assure the reliability of accounting data and compliance with management policies and contract requirements.

    a. Written accounting procedures to ensure the consistent and correct handling of all project financial transactions.

    b. Division of accounting duties to ensure employees do not authorize, execute, and approve transactions.

    c. Authorization limits to ensure funds are expended by authorized personnel for that level of transaction.

    d. Record all cash receipts immediately; employees handling cash transactions must be bonded.

e. All payments must be made by checks consecutively numbered, only after review of approved invoices that have been matched to appropriate procurement documents. All documentation must be marked at payment to ensure non-use as further payment documentation.

f. Reconcile bank accounts monthly and retain copies of reconciliations in the files.

g. Ensure that program operators with either purchased or transferred equipment assume total responsibility for such equipment and that periodic inventories are taken to account for the equipment.

h. Balance subsidiary ledgers with control accounts regularly.

i. Review system to ensure contract compliance with federal, state, and project grant conditions.

4. Procedure to ensure that program costs are allowable and are based on a sound cost allocation plan to assure compliance with applicable federal and/or state regulations.

5. Accounting records which are supported by source documentation. Adequate documentation in support of all transactions such as original contract and amendments; competitive bids and purchase orders for supplies and equipment; staff time sheets and attendance orders for supplies and equipment; staff time sheets and attendance records, with vacation and sick leave approvals; expense accounts with travel reports documentation; other invoices, payments documents including vouchers; and all canceled and voided checks.

6. CAA shall maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of a procurement. These records shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, information pertinent to the following: rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the cost or price.

7. A system for contract administration shall be maintained to ensure contractor conformance with terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract, and to ensure adequate and timely follow-up of all purchases.

FUNCTIONAL AREA V: Financial Management Statement

Statement #	Statement
V.1	The central office has a person responsible for accounting and other financial activities.
V.2	The agency maintains an auditable accounting system which conforms to generally accepted accounting principles.
V.3	The receipt and expenditures of all funds are recorded separately for each grantee/program, and subsequently for each transactions.
V.4	Accounting records clearly reflect the nature of business transactions and the monetary value of assets and liabilities.
V.5	All recorded transactions are traceable to their source.
V.6	The steps in maintaining the agency accounting system are described in a document on accounting procedure.
V.7	The responsibility for a sequence of related tasks is divided among different employees.

V.8   Accounting policies and procedures are in writing.

V.9   The responsibility for maintaining accounting records is separated from the responsibilities for authorization of purchasing and custody of assets.

V.10   The agency has established thorough procedures for controlling the fiscal systems of delegate agencies.

V.11   Financial reports from delegate agencies are accurate and timely.

V.12   A comprehensive contract between the delegate agency and the CAA provides for fiscal control.

V.13   Periodic reviews are conducted of the delegate agencies' accounting systems, records and operational procedures.

V.14   Timely, useful and comprehensive financial reports are provided to the agency's decision makers.

V.15   Audit findings and recommendations are considered by the board and administrative staff, and corrective actions are implemented in a timely manner.

V.16   The Board of Directors acting through formal resolution: Authorizes the opening and closing of agency bank accounts; authorizes designated individuals to sign checks and contracts on behalf of the corporation; authorizes designated individuals to invest agency funds according to Board approved investment plan; and authorizes borrowing of funds in the name of the corporation.

FUNCTIONAL AREA VI: Community Relations

The CAA should have in place a program of maintaining regular contact with the general public, elected officials, and other community leaders. The manual, "Public Relations in Action, California's Community Action Agencies," is a blueprint for contact with the general public. The key message points described there, and the use of agency brochures, media releases, agency newsletters and a speakers' bureau, should enable the agency to communicate its story effectively to the general public.

The CAA should maintain regular contact with the social service networks in its communities. In each agency facility, there should be a Social Services Directory and a manual containing current eligibility criteria and income guidelines for all programs sponsored by the CAA. Agency staff should participate in organizations like "Related Agencies Councils" if they exist. Otherwise, formal, periodic meetings between the CAA staff and staffs of other agencies might be appropriate for updating knowledge of programs and for explaining major changes in existing programs or the implementation of new ones.

The agency should ensure that its community contact activities include opportunities for low-income people to: express their views about poverty problems, program activities, and agency planning for new or innovative activities, and to participate in the agency's day-to-day activities through membership on the governing board, advisory committees, or as volunteers in county center activities.

The agency's county centers serve as a principal point of contact with low-income people and, therefore, should be easily identifiable, be conveniently located, be accessible to the handicapped, and generally provide an inviting atmosphere in which client contact activities can take place.

FUNCTIONAL AREA VI: Community Relations Statements

Statement #   Statement

VI.1   The agency undertakes activities to foster the participation of the poor in Community Affairs and decision making processes which affect their lives.

VI.2   Agency/program staff allocate sufficient time for community relations.

VI.3   The agency, through the use of publications, newsletters ad local media, keeps the public well informed concerning programs and issues.

VI.4   The agency's activities receive significant favorable coverage in local media.

VI.5   Agency/program information is regularly provided to Agency Advisory Groups, Committees of the Board and the Full Board.

VI.6   The agency's/program's goals and objectives accurately reflect the current attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the poor.

VI.7   Agency/program staff have productive, working relationships with other social service agencies which promote mutual understanding and facilitate delivery of services to low-income people.

VI.8   Agency facilities checklist:

- Provide for adequate privacy for interviewing.
- Location within community is convenient.
- A facility is located in each county of the agency's service area.
- Accessible to the handicapped.
- Easily identified by signs visible from street or prominent listing in building directory.
- Adequate for staff and other activities that occur at location.
- Agency records are kept in secure file cabinets.
- Current directory of social services is in each facility and is readily available to staff.
- Telephone system is adequate to handle incoming and outgoing telephone traffic.
- Current eligibility criteria and income guidelines for all programs sponsored by the agency are in each facility and are readily available to staff.

FUNCTIONAL AREA VII: Staff Development

The CAA should have in place a system for evaluating the job performance of employees. The system should exhibit the following characteristics:

1. Performance appraisals take place at regularly scheduled intervals (annually or more often as needed).

2. It should be done by the employee's immediate supervisor.

3. A copy of the completed appraisal form given to the employee.

4. It should be discussed with the employee in a face-to- face meeting.

5. It should evaluate performance on duties and tasks that are defined in the employee's job description.

6. It should enable the employee and supervisor to pinpoint areas needing improvement and for which training is appropriate.

There are many job performance appraisal systems and techniques available, many of which would exhibit the above characteristics. Whatever specific system is used, it should be used to evaluate job performance for all agency employees.

The CAA should provide training to its employees so that they may perform satisfactorily, and may upgrade or increase skill on knowledge levels. The training program should include: new employee orientation; on-the-job or in-service training for employees on a one-to-one basis or as part of an employee group (such as I & R specialists or finance clerks, and so on) conducted in-house; and opportunity to attend job-related training provided at conferences and workshops (subject to budget constraints).

FUNCTIONAL AREA VII: Staff Development Statements

Statement #	Statement
VII.1	In general, the performance review system is used to foster personnel development and is a basis for making staff promotions.
VII.2	Performance reviews are done annually. The staff member has an opportunity to discuss the results with the supervisor and is provided a copy of the review.
VII.3	Performance reviews and appraisals are used to motivate personnel and to provide an objective basis for performance improvement.
VII.4	Performance reviews are centered around job performance on duties and tasks that are defined in the employee's job description.
VII.5	Programs employ, train, and advance para-professional employees.
VII.6	Employees receive adequate training to do their jobs.
VII.7	New employee orientation is structured, and is implemented agency-wide; and includes information on the Community Action concept, agency history, and a comprehensive overview of all agency activities and programs, as well as specific items relating to each employee's job and work station.

FUNCTIONAL AREA VIII: Property Management

Each CAA will develop a written Procurement Procedures Manual establishing procedures for, at least, the following:

A. Proposed procurement actions shall follow a procedure to assure that unnecessary or duplicative items are not purchased. Where appropriate, an analysis shall be made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economically practical procurement.

B. Solicitations for goods and services shall be based upon a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service to be procured. Such description shall not, in competitive procurements, contain features which unduly restrict competition. When it is impractical or uneconomical to make a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements, a "brand name or equal" description may be used as a means to define the

performance or other salient requirements of a procurement, and when so used, the specific features of the named brand which must be met by offers shall be clearly specified.

C. The type of procuring instruments used, e.g., fixed price contracts, cost reimbursable contracts, purchase orders, incentive contracts, shall be determined by the procuring party but must be appropriate for the particular procurement and for promoting the best interest of the grant project or program involved.

D. Contracts shall be only with responsible contractors who possess the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement.

E. All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to maximize open and free competition.

F. Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the offerer must fulfill in order for the offer to be evaluated. Awards shall be made to the responsible offerer whose offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the CAA, price and other factors considered. Factors such as discounts, transportation costs, and taxes may be considered in determining the lowest bid. All offers may be rejected.

G. CAAs may not place unreasonable requirements on firms in order to qualify to do business or unnecessary experience and bonding requirements.

H. Property records should be maintained which include: a description of the property; manufacturer's serial number or other identification number; acquisition date and cost; source of the property, location, use and condition of the property; and ultimate disposition data.

FUNCTIONAL AREA VIII: Property Management Statements

Statement #	Statement
VIII.1	There is a staff member responsible for property management.
VIII.2	A process has been established for bidding on non- expendable property and service contracts.
VIII.3	Services received fulfill the original contract.
VIII.4	Procurement authority is clearly defined and observed at all times.
VIII.5	Bids are requested, where appropriate, and contracts are awarded to the lowest bidder; if not, there is adequate justification.
VIII.6	An inventory control system for both expendable and non-expendable items is used as an index for purchasing and as a checklist for property.
VIII.7	A file record of purchase orders is initiated prior to the actual acquisition of goods or services and is maintained thereafter.
VIII.8	Equipment and supplies on hand are adequately controlled and utilized.
VIII.9	All records of property are maintained in accordance with approved funding source and accounting procedures.
VIII.10	Non-expendable property is properly marked with a control number.

VIII.11   Property obtained with grant funds is separately identified from other agency property.

VIII.12   There is periodic physical inventory of non-expendable assets.

VIII.13   Disposal of property is in accordance with funding source regulations and sound property management.

VIII.14   Procurement policies and procedures are in writing.