

DRAFT National Community Action Theory of Change

This Theory of Change portrays the National Community Action Network's unique operating structure. It also articulates the assumptions the Network is built on and the long-term goals the Network aims to achieve.

ASSUMPTIONS

Our assumptions articulate the principles and belief system that underlie the work of Community Action.

Community Action stabilizes families by meeting their immediate needs. Stable families and communities create the needed environment to foster self-sufficiency.

Community Action works to create pathways to self-sufficiency for America's families with low-income by employing long-term strategies that recognize family and community success are interconnected.

Community Action believes that community stakeholders, particularly those with a low-income, best know their community's needs.

- Locally driven based on local needs and resources
- Promotes bundled, integrated service delivery to address the interconnected causes and effects of poverty
- Stimulates community engagement in governance, advocacy, program design, and evaluation
- Creates nationwide organizational infrastructure and coverage
- Engaged in community planning with partners
- Coordinates and develops community resources to address local issues
- Leverages local, state and federal funding to address complex issues
- Promotes individuals with low-incomes having a stake in their community

SYSTEMS CAPACITY

Systems capacity at every level within Community Action enables family and community strategies to become actualized.

Community Action's Organizational Performance Standards ensure local agencies have the capacity to employ high quality strategies that are efficient and effective.

Federal and State standards support local agencies efforts to employ high quality strategies that are efficient and effective.

Local Organizational Performance Standards – leadership; governance; strategic planning; fiscal; human resources; community assessment; consumer input; community engagement; data and analysis

Federal and State Standards – T/TA and capacity building; data collection, analysis and reporting; monitoring and oversight; communication, relationship management and convening

Community Action Partnership and the Urban Institute

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT & MANAGEMENT

System designed to preserve the focus of Community Action and to promote greater effectiveness among State and local agencies.

Outcomes of performance management and measurement look different at the Federal, State and local level as different data is needed.

The ROMA Cycle is carried out at the local level to ensure we are addressing locally identified needs in a strategic way and to ensure we use the information we gather to improve our strategies and outcomes.

The National Performance Indicators of ROMA work to show the collective impact of Community Action within specific domains.

Federal and State performance measures will ensure these groups are strategically addressing the needs of their direct grantees and using data to improve their outcomes.

Implementing high quality services

Data Collection, Analysis, Reporting

Communication/Convening

Using data for improvement

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Represented by this arrow, systematic data collection and analysis are needed to test these assumptions, continuously improve strategies, and increase Community Action's effectiveness and efficiency.

LONG-TERM GOALS

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & REVITALIZED COMMUNITIES

National Long-Term Family Level Outcomes
National Long-Term Community Level Outcomes

NOTE: These outcomes occur along a continuum and vary based on a family or community's need.

