

Performance Management



in the Community Action Network

Executive Summary

This issue brief will:

- Examine the history and use of Performance Management in the CAA Network
- Describe how the relationship between the federal government and local CAAs changed and the governing structure of local agencies evolved
- Provide analysis of previous and existing performance management efforts and techniques predominately used in the field
- Discuss the current status of performance management and provide suggestions for areas of consideration for movement forward

Five Decades of History

In the beginning...

The Community Action Network was established as a part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA)¹. The federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was created to administer the EOA. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created in local communities, with built-in flexibility on the structure of these entities. Some CAAs were committees created by the key elected official of a community (mayor or county commissioner, for example), others were grassroots organizations, composed of individuals who were poor themselves, or composed primarily of individuals who came together to work on improving the conditions in communities that caused and continued poverty.

Part of the purpose behind EOA funding was to overcome what was considered an inequity in the way State and local resources were allocated to address the issues facing the nation's poor at the time. A direct relationship between the federal office of OEO and local community action agencies was part of a strategic plan to create new opportunities through local action and public policy changes.

During the first few years of EOA funding, local Community Action Agencies submitted a request for funding in the form of a narrative describing their proposed effort and a budget. Once the agency was awarded the funds and conducted services and efforts as they had proposed, they were asked to submit quarterly narrative reports regarding the effects of their activities. These reports were largely anecdotal and did not follow any specific reporting format. The reporting of progress and results was done against the narratives that had been submitted in the applications. Any Congressional inquiry required a call to the field to gather data.

Very quickly, OEO and the network at-large acknowledged that reporting on the use and effectiveness of the federal EOA funding faced particular challenges:

- Lack of aggregated data due to a wide array of strategies and approaches designed to meet particular local needs and priorities
- Different language in each agency's reports
- Inability to aggregate the results reported by individual agencies across the full CAA network, and
- A general lack of recognized, consistent standards

Early effort to standardize anti-poverty strategies

In late 1967, Congress passed the Green Amendment (Edith Green, D-OR) which required that a CAA must be designated by local elected officials as the official CAA for that area. After designation, OEO then recognized the CAA and provided funds. This change required local agencies to follow some specific steps to become the officially designated anti-poverty agency in the community. The Quie Amendment (Congressman Albert Quie, R-MN) was also passed in 1967, which required that CAA boards of directors

¹ *Economic Opportunity Act of 1964*, August 20, 1964

be composed of one-third elected

officials, and at least one-third low-income representatives selected by a democratic process, with the balance from the private sector.

Around this time, the Grant Application Process (GAP) was instituted. The GAP developed by OEO staff, CAA staff and the management consulting firm of McKinsey and Company, required Community Action Agencies to answer a set of standardized questions about the activity and budget of any project to be funded. The GAP did not limit the selection of the purposes and activities of each CAA project. Therefore, funding supported a wide variety of activities, based on the needs and directions identified by the local agency. This was consistent with the stated legislative purposes of the Act.

The GAP also established a set of about 150 “program accounts” for which funding was being requested. These program accounts attempted to standardize expenditures and reporting of accomplishments (by numbers of participants who were served) in major categories (such as education). This structure made it possible to add the results of different agencies that were operating programs in a specific set of categories. A part of this process also included reporting requirements for very detailed demographic information about each program participant using forms known as CAP 84 and CAP 85.

OEO Instruction 6320-1, *The Mission of the Community Action Agency*,² was issued in November 1970. It addressed the basic purpose of community action agencies and programs, added clarity, and stressed the two-fold nature of the funding stream:

The basic purpose...is “to stimulate a better focusing of all available resources upon the goal of enabling low-income families, and low-income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivation and secure the opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient.”

The Instruction continues:

The key phrase in this statement is “to stimulate a better focusing of all available... resources.” The [Economic Opportunity] Act thus gives the CAA a primarily catalytic mission: to make the entire community more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor by mobilizing resources and bringing about greater institutional sensitivity.

Assessing an agency’s performance would be based both on services provided and success in mobilizing the community:

A CAA’s effectiveness...is measured not only by the services which it directly provides but, more importantly, by the improvements and changes it achieves in the community’s attitudes and practices toward the poor and in the allocation and focusing of public and private resources for antipoverty programs.

Local CAAs often served as effective innovators of new strategies and as testing grounds for new programs.

2 OEO Instruction 6320-1, *The Mission of the Community Action Agency*, November 16, 1970

Some of these programs created by CAAs grew into separately funded, national programs that were often transferred to be administered by other federal agencies. Examples are Head Start being moved from OEO to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps to the Department of Labor. Since the early days of Community Action, and continuing today, CAAs have served as incubators for promising, innovative programs that we now recognize as critical federal anti-poverty programs.

Standards of Effectiveness

The Economic Opportunity Act was reauthorized in 1975 and OEO became the Community Services Administration (CSA) while retaining its independent status. From 1975 to 1981, CSA continued to have a direct federal-local relationship with the CAAs.

The federal statute for CSA included a set of very general standards of excellence, which were translated into Standards of Effectiveness (SOE). Each CAA submitted a narrative description of how it was achieving the SOE. As found in the General Accounting Office's *Review of CSA's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating the Effectiveness of CAAs* (July 1976),³ the following standards "restate the 1969 OEO standards of effectiveness for local community action, and other programs:

- Strengthen community capacity to plan and coordinate poverty-related programs.
- Improve organization of services related to needs of the poor.
- Maximize participation of poor in the program.
- Broaden community resources invested in antipoverty activities.
- Increase innovative approaches attacking the causes of poverty.
- Maximize employment and training opportunities for groups served."

One area that surfaced as a key concern to Congress was the ratio of administrative costs to other expenditures of federal dollars in all federal programs, not just those funded by CSA. The SOE system was intended to track this administrative spending information. The previous GAP "program accounts" were abolished, with only two areas appearing in all budgets: "01-Administration," and "05-Programs." This system did not include a way to trace a path between the activities supported by the federal funding and the results that were reportedly produced. There was no infrastructure to establish such a relationship and consequently the system was not well supported as a viable performance management tool.⁴

Grantee Performance Management System⁵

Under the Carter administration, a large-scale effort to strengthen the role and management systems

3 U.S. Government Accounting Office, *Review of CSA's Policies and Procedures for Evaluating the Effectiveness of CAAs*, July 20, 1976

4 J. Masters, *22 Steps to ROMA Implementation: Peeling the Onion*, Center for Community Futures, January 2000

5 Information in this section was based on J. Masters, *The History of Community Action Agencies*, Center for Community Futures, 1989 (revised 2004)

of the CSA and local CAAs began. During this period some questions were raised about how to evaluate the quality of fiscal administration and program management of CAAs. President Carter commissioned Joseph Aragon to review management capabilities and systems in the CSA and CAAs.⁶ The “Aragon Report” presented President Carter with three options: (1) terminate the whole apparatus completely, (2) merge it with the Social Services Block Grant, and (3) re-tool it. President Carter moved to accept the third option.

The “re-tooling” of the anti-poverty program was to require that all CAAs and the federal agency (CSA) use an integrated planning, management, and reporting system. In 1977 and 1978, CSA invested heavily in staff time and consultants to develop the Grantee Program Management System (GPMS), which required all CAAs to create strategic plans and to specify the outcomes and impacts of their efforts.

Implementation of GPMS began in 1979 with ten CAAs, one in each federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) region pilot-testing the new system. Each CAA created a multi-year strategic plan, which described the causes and conditions of poverty in the community being served, and locally selected goals and objectives for addressing those causes. It was acknowledged that any change at the community, State, or national level took several years’ worth of effort to achieve, so multi-year funding was a part of the strategic “big picture.” The overall plan was for federal staff to take the local reports and translate the results of local activities into State and national reports, with an impact evaluation to be done by each CAA on at least one program every three years.

GPMS was a system that was improved by lessons from the past. There was an explicit expectation that agency managers should benefit directly from the information produced. The GPMS information would be used to improve their local anti-poverty work. This new system was intended to replace the GAP client-characteristics requirements and the post-GAP Standards of Effectiveness, neither of which were universally thought to be relevant to, nor needed for, day-to-day local agency operations.

By 1981, this GPMS process had been fully implemented in some regions and only partially in others.

Community Services Block Grant

In 1981, the Reagan administration consolidated most federally-funded human services programs into several large, general purpose block grants to change the funding streams from Federal-Local to Federal-State-Local. This consolidation served several functions: it reduced federal administration by creating only eight block grants from more than 200 separate federal programs, it reduced the total amount of funding for these services by 25 percent, and it delegated the responsibility for administering these block grants to the states. With the dissolution of CSA, the Office of Community Services (OCS) was created to administer the new Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) at the federal level.

CSBG landed in many different places in state government. States incorporated CSBG into their typical pattern of public administration so the transition was easier for states that had systems that included contracting directly with nonprofit agencies and local government entities (New York and Iowa, for example). In other states (like Missouri and Florida), the majority of social services were provided by state employees at the county level so it was more difficult to develop systems to support local CAAs.

6 D. Alsobrook, *Exit interview with Joseph W. Aragon*, Presidential Papers Staff, January 19, 1979

With their new responsibilities for managing CSBG, States looked to the GPMS system that was in place. Some States elected to continue using that system or to adapt the system to meet their needs. Funds that had been placed at the Institute for Local Self Government (ILSG) in Berkeley, CA for the implementation of GPMS were redirected in the closing days of CSA to assist the States in making the transition to their increased role in administering the block grant.

A study, done in 2004, sought to find if the location of CSBG administration in State government impacted the statewide CSBG Network.⁷ It found that “while there is no one ideal locale for a CSBG office within state government, many would prefer to be located in the governor’s office” so that there was access to the primary state decision makers (governor and legislators) related to anti-poverty work. However, “nearly all respondents recognized that a location that works in one state may not work in another state, and that the fact that a location is satisfactory today does not mean that a change in state administration or in state office personnel would not make the same location less workable in the future.” One conclusion of the study was that “the relative effectiveness of a state office is highly dependent on the ability of state office staff.” This led to a final suggestion related to the resources that must be available to State office staff “to make sure that all the federal certifications are met. Things such as advocacy and technical assistance may become a lower priority than more basic functions such as monitoring, getting the funds out, and crisis response for troubled CAAs, etc. Standards on where the office is located seem less important than standards on staffing resources.”

National Voluntary Reporting System

Consideration of continued use of the GPMS system vied with creation of a new information system based on categories from CSBG legislative language. A working group, comprised of representatives from all levels of the network, felt that a new reporting framework was needed. In designing the National Voluntary Reporting System in 1983, a survey was created based on the kind of information being collected from other federally funded programs such as mental health services and aging programs. This included primarily service and participant counts. A lexicon, a set of definitions reminiscent of the previous “program account” language, was created to guide completion of the survey.

Continuing past history of creating innovative approaches, CAAs expanded their role in energy-related programs like Weatherization and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). They also began new strategies seen as appropriate for the economic and social values of the time, such as family-development programs, micro-business programs, youth programs, home-ownership programs, and programs for minority males. CAAs also greatly expanded their role in housing renovation and housing development.

CSBG Information System

After reporting on activity using the National Voluntary Reporting System, a set of standardized survey questions was added for all States to collect from local CAAs. Also, a request was added for narratives about successes as a result of CAA services. In 1987, the system was re-named the CSBG Information

⁷ Community Action Association of Pennsylvania, *A State Organizational Patterns and Programs Coordination Survey Report – Final Report*, August 2004

System, and the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) took over management of the Information System (IS).

An IS Task Force (ISTF) was created, comprised of one representative from each of the ten federal HHS regions, with representatives from CAAs and State CSBG offices, state CAA associations, and National Partners (such as representatives from the National Community Action Foundation, the Community Action Partnership, OCS, and the National Governors Association). It was and continues to be a group of stakeholders who comprise an independent committee responsible for designing the data collection tool in a manner that meets the political and management needs of the CSBG Network.

On May 18, 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Human Services Amendments of 1994 (P.L. 103-252) which reauthorized the Community Services Block Grant for Fiscal Years 1995 through 1998. A new section was added to the CSBG statute: Section 675(c) (13) (E) requiring a description of outcome measures to be used to monitor success in promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization. This action was influenced by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA).⁸

Monitoring and Assessment Task Force

Partially in response to the latest legislation, OCS convened a work group called the Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF), consisting of staff from national, State, and local community action sectors. These individuals, taken together, represented the field of practitioners and administrators across the country. The MATF identified Six National Goals that were to provide a framework for grouping all outcome measures developed by local CAAs. The Six National Goals were taken from the areas mentioned specifically in the authorization (self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization) and added some additional dimensions taken from other parts of the legislation.

Some approaches considered by the Monitoring and Assessment Task force in developing a new national reporting process included the following identified needs of the Community Action Network:

- Need for specific demographic information about individuals who were participating in programs.
- Need to know more about the results of work completed with individuals.
- Need for evidence based reporting and evaluations of programs and strategies.
- Need to identify successful community development strategies.

From this point forward, the question of “what works” hinges on the definition of the problem to be addressed. Unfortunately there has been no articulated consensus in the network regarding the overarching problem of poverty. Strong disagreements exist in the field regarding the causes of poverty, which strategies work to reduce it, how CSBG funding should be directed, and about what CAAs should be doing.

Is poverty a function of (a) the economy (wages and access to work), (b) social values such as racism, legal injustice, (c) adult individuals and families (family development and motivation), and/or (d) children and

⁸ Government Performance and Results Act of 1993

youth development. These are based on different assumptions regarding how our society works. Different viewpoints about which of these (or others) are most important to address continue to complicate the aggregation of information related to the results that local CAAs are able to document and report, as local agencies employ different strategies based on their understanding of the poverty issues in their own communities.

Historically, we are told that the MATF struggled with foundational concepts as they worked on development of a national strategic plan. Jim Masters, an original member of MATF, tell us:

One person would argue that all change begins at the individual level, and only work with individuals is valid. Another would argue that only change at the national level makes a big impact and our effort should be focused on public policy. Others argued that the new approaches in community building and community development were “where it’s at.” And others argued that our primary role was in providing for basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing for those who do not have enough. There were also healthy disagreements about whether our work should be focused at the national, regional, State, or local levels.⁹

The Six National Goals, established in the late 1990s by the MATF, were the result of discussions that ended in six goals that everyone could agree were basic:

1. Low-income people become more self-sufficient. (Family)
2. The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. (Community)
3. Low-income people own a stake in their community. (Community)
4. Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved. (Agency)
5. Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. (Agency)
6. Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems. (Family)

The MATF also proposed a system of performance management that they named Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA). The ROMA performance management system was voluntarily adopted by many local CAAs when it was included in the 1998 reauthorization of CSBG (see Public Law 105-285, Title II for the section on Community Services Block Grant Program).¹⁰

Results Oriented Management and Accountability¹¹

With the issuance of Information Memorandum (IM) 49 in February 2001, OCS ushered in a new era of “results orientation” that was to apply to both management and accountability for all CSBG eligible entities and State offices administering CSBG funds. As of 2001, reporting on results became mandatory.

⁹ Masters, Op. Cit., *The History of Community Action Agencies*

¹⁰ Public Law 105-285, *Community Opportunities, Accountability, and Training and Educational Services Act of 1998*

¹¹ Information in this section was based on Office of Community Services, ACF/HHS, *CSBG IM 49 – Program Challenges, Responsibilities and Strategies*, FY 2001-2003, February 21, 2001

One of the stated purposes of the IM was identification of challenges facing the network and “How States and eligible entities may use “Results Oriented Management and Accountability” (ROMA) to meet those challenges.” Core principles related to ROMA and core activities expected to be undertaken by the entire network were clearly outlined and described in the IM:

The cornerstone of the Network’s longevity and accomplishments has been its willingness to understand and adapt to changing client needs, community conditions, financial support, and public expectations while maintaining a steady focus on eliminating poverty. The most successful State and local agencies among us have come to understand that community action not only survives, but thrives, when it engages in continuous self-examination. Our “star players” ask and answer, again and again:

“Why are we here, who are we helping, what are we helping them to become, and how will we know and describe success, both theirs and ours?”

...As an effort in progress, ROMA has built strong foundations for continuous program improvement and accountability among State agencies, community action associations, and local entities. A significant number of States and eligible entities have implemented ROMA, but many have been slow to understand or adopt its results-oriented and accountability concepts.

...ROMA is far more than a measurement and reporting strategy, or a management gimmick, or a burdensome requirement that will go away someday and hopefully not be replaced by some other “fad” of the moment. We must work together over the next two years to achieve universal acceptance and adoption of ROMA within the Community Services Network.

We must do so not only because it is required by law, but because the continuation of community action as we know it may depend on our willingness to embrace change, to adopt ideas and concepts that we have fashioned ourselves to enhance program effectiveness and accountability.

ROMA defined

IM 49 is the source of the most complete description of ROMA that we have available to us. First, it refers to the Six National Goals for community action that “both respect the diversity of the Network and provide clear expectations of results from our efforts.”

Then it sets forth expectations:

OCS has identified a number of core activities that appear to be common among CSBG agencies that have succeeded in developing and adopting performance-based management in recent years. OCS will use these core activities as yardsticks to measure ROMA progress among States and eligible entities, and as focal points of State Plan approval, compliance monitoring, and program reporting.

The charge to the network was clear:

We must work together over the next two years to achieve universal acceptance and adoption of ROMA within the Community Services Network.

Of primary importance to the conflict within the network regarding how Community Action Agencies must be organized to achieve true results orientation, this IM provided direction regarding the following questions: Are we talking about results that can be directly attributed to CSBG funding, or about the results that the entire agency is able to achieve? Which results are then attributed to the CSBG funding, which provides the “identity” of the Community Action Network as the designated anti-poverty network? The IM noted:

OCS received a number of comments from the Network questioning whether ROMA should involve programs beyond the Community Services Block Grant. After careful examination of the CSBG authorizing legislation, which speaks to program coordination requirements both within and beyond eligible entities, consultation with the MATF, and review of ROMA implementation activities that have occurred to date, OCS has concluded that it is both necessary and appropriate to apply ROMA concepts to the work of community action, not CSBG alone.

Identification of the core activities that are to be considered ROMA

IM 49 identifies core activities for both State offices and eligible entities. The core activities for entities include a thumbnail sketch of what might be considered to be well recognized high quality business practices. They included a wide range of management and accountability activities -- not just reporting. It was clear that the implementation of ROMA was to provide a framework for development and on-going assurance of high quality organizational capacity as well as:

1. *“The entity and its board complete regular assessments of the entity’s overall mission, desired impact(s) and program structure, taking into account: 1) the needs of the community and its residents; 2) the relationship, or context, of the activities supported by the entity to other anti-poverty, community development services in the community; and 3) the extent to which the entity’s activities contribute to the accomplishment of one or more of the six ROMA national goals;*
2. *Based upon the periodic assessments described above, the entity and its board has identified yearly (or multi-annually) specific improvements, or results, it plans to help achieve in the lives of individuals, families, and/or the community as a whole;*
3. *The entity organizes and operates all its programs, services, and activities toward accomplishing these improvements, or outcomes, including linking with other agencies in the community when services beyond the scope of the entity are required. All staff are helped by the entity to understand the direct or indirect relationship of their efforts to achieving specific client or community outcomes; and*
4. *The entity provides reports to the State that describe client and community outcomes and that capture the contribution of all entity programs, services, and activities to the achievement of those outcomes.”*

In addition to just making good business sense for an agency to consider the identified “core activities” for the agency as a whole and not just for a specific program, the IM set forth the key principles upon which this decision was made:

1. *“Focusing our efforts on client/community/organizational change, not particular programs or services. As such, the goals provide a basis for results-oriented, not process-based or program-specific plans, activities, and reports.*
2. *Understanding the interdependence of programs, clients, and community. The goals recognize that client improvements aggregate to, and reinforce, community improvements, and that strong and well administered programs underpin both.*
3. *Recognizing that CSBG does not succeed as an individual program. The goals presume that community action is most successful when activities supported by a number of funding sources are organized around client and community outcomes, both within an agency and with other service providers.”*

Moving Forward

Where are we now

Observations on the current status of performance management include:

Universal understanding of “ROMA” and its implications both locally and nationally was not accomplished.

1. While the State monitoring tools included “ROMA” as an element, the promise that “OCS will use these core activities as yardsticks to measure ROMA progress among States and eligible entities, and as focal points of State Plan approval, compliance monitoring, and program reporting” was also not achieved. The monitoring guidance (IM 102, which was issued in 2007) separates several of the ROMA activities (e.g. establishing the community action plan, assessing the linkages with other programs), and refers to ROMA monitoring only in terms of Performance Measurement -- thus failing to reinforce the full range of management and accountability functions that are needed to assure agency results orientation.
2. We have continued the dialogues among the various levels of the CSBG network to establish more standardized ways of talking about the results that are being generated by the CSBG funds and the funds that are leveraged by the eligible entities to address their anti-poverty mission.
3. The National Performance Indicators (NPIs) that were instituted in 2004, based on the Six National Goals, have standardized the reporting of results across the country. Using the six broad areas of changes that are made to improve communities and provide opportunities for individuals and families to move out of poverty, these indicators help to define the kind and scope of achievements that are being realized across the country. The NPIs provide a standardized way to collect performance measures from a large number of local CAAs (over 1000) who have created strategies and solutions to address the very different needs they have identified in their local communities. NPI reporting is received from all States.

4. Several factors challenge the usefulness of the NPIs as a performance management system. These include questions regarding individual measure definitions and lack of formalized feedback processes that help agencies evaluate the results they are reporting. There are no standards that indicate what level of results is “good” -- because the communities and the efforts vary widely across the country.
5. We have agencies that say, “We don’t do ROMA” and then proceed to describe their management and accountability functions in language that mirrors the key elements of ROMA. This is a positive, in that the concepts of overall good management and accountability have filtered through the network to the point that the core ROMA activities are well understood and are being used. It is also a negative because the lack of universal identification with ROMA as a way of doing business does a disservice to the overall development of performance measurement and performance management systems for the network as a whole. If everyone is “doing their own thing” we fall apart as a network. When asked why they don’t acknowledge that they are actually implementing good ROMA practices, they say that the field does not care about using the term and what does it matter? Thus they set themselves aside from the overall movement of the network to a standard way of thinking, organizing and acting.

Questions we can currently answer as a Network

- Demographic characteristics of the individuals being served
- Funds being expended in the identified service categories (from CSBG legislation)
- Funds being leveraged from other sources (amount and nature of the funding sources)
- Numbers of results reported on each of the NPIs
- Relationship between targeted expectations for results and actual results (in four areas currently, with the capacity to report in more areas)

Questions we cannot answer

- What’s the relationship between the client characteristics and the services they receive? (What were the characteristics of those who received housing? Employment? Etc.)
- How much service did each individual or community receive (intensity, frequency, quality)?
- What’s the relationship between the services and the results reported? (Which services or set of services produced the results reported through the NPIs?)
- What does the result mean in terms of the original need? (If an agency reports 200 jobs, how does this number relate to the community’s need for job placement?)
- What do the CAA results mean in relation to other similar results? (How did the job done by the CAA compare to other similar agency work?)

Answers that would be helpful going forward

How do we know that agencies are working on the most important issue in the community as it relates to poverty reduction? (How do agencies set their strategic directions? How are needs prioritized?)

How do we know CAAs are more effective than other delivery systems to meet the prioritized needs? What is the comparison with other service delivery systems?

How can we document the value of local CAAs who provide a series of “sequenced, coordinated” services rather than isolated services?

In Progress

Three efforts are currently underway to further enhance performance management within the Community Action Network.¹² Each focuses on a different aspect of the principles and practices of high quality services and outcomes.

Center of Excellence – ROMA Next Generation

The ROMA Next Generation Center of Excellence (COE) is operated by NASCSP and the National Peer to Peer ROMA Training Network. The first step of the COE was to get information regarding what the network sees as ROMA implementation based on the core activities for CAAs and for State offices as identified in IM 49 using two surveys. One was sent to State CSBG offices and another to local CAAs across the country, with a very high return rate of 41 State offices and 750 local agencies. Review of the responses will provide a snapshot of how the core ROMA activities are viewed in the network to inform the work of the ROMA Next Generation Center moving forward. The preliminary results from the surveys were published by NASCSP in December 2012.¹³

Working with National Alliance for Sustainable Communities (NASC), NASCSP has also begun development of a national Theory of Change to help articulate assumptions held across the Network. The theory of change will help unify the approach going forward to performance management and evidence-based practice. Listening sessions are happening at several venues—Community Action Partnership conference, calls with RPICs,¹⁴ through interaction with the CSBG Working Group, with State CSBG office representatives and with other federal partners.

Center of Excellence – Organizational Standards (OSCOE)

OSCOE is operated by the Community Action Partnership. The Partnership is coordinating development and dissemination of a core set of standards and will create tools for

12 Community Action Partnership and National Association for State Community Services Programs, CSBG National Update (webinar recording) – PowerPoint slides, December 18, 2012

13 National Association for Community Services Programs, *2012 ROMA Implementation Surveys*, January 8, 2013

14 Eleven *Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia* have been funded by the federal Office of Community Services to serve as regional focal points to lead Community Service Block Grant Training and Technical Assistance capacity-building activities.

organizational assessment that can be used by all sectors of the CSBG Network to set and reach high quality performance. Extensive outreach has been carried out to the Network, through webinars as well as the listening session activities identified above. Subcommittees of the CSBG Working Group have been developed to focus on specific areas related to organizational performance with the goal of identifying elements that can become standards for the Network.¹⁵ Additional information about the processes and progress of the OSCOE can be accessed on the Partnership's website.¹⁶

Urban Institute Performance Management Task Force

The Urban Institute has convened a national task force, created to provide input to OCS related to performance matters. The Institute is coordinating national efforts to create and support implementation of enhanced performance management tools and protocols for CSBG. Input will be obtained from the field and improvements proposed to performance reporting. This body of information will be used to create suggestions regarding roles and expectations for ongoing maintenance of any new approaches. Individuals were nominated to serve on the Task Force by States, regions, partners, etc. A large number of nominations were made to the Institute and 34 individuals were selected to be spokespersons for the Community Action Network . The Task Force also includes representatives from outside the network, who are providing additional value to the discussions.

15 Community Action Partnership, *CSBG Working Group and Subcommittees*

16 Community Action Partnership, *CSBG Organizational Standards, ROMA Next Generation, and Performance Management Activities*

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*For more information about Performance Management in the Community Action Network please visit
nascsp.org or csbgta.org.*

NASCSP MISSION

Building capacity in States to respond to poverty issues

The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) is the premier national association charged with advocating and enhancing the leadership role of States in preventing and reducing poverty. NASCSPP's vision encompasses the empowerment of low-income families to reach self-sufficiency in its broadest context, through helping States attain full utilization of their resources and implement an extensive array of services to these families, including weatherization, energy assistance, childcare, nutrition, employment, job training, and housing in urban, suburban, and rural communities.



National Association for State Community Services Programs

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