

Organizational Standards Center of Excellence 2014-2016

Community Action Partnership

Project Overview

The Organizational Standards Center of Excellence is a two-year project funded by the federal Office of Community Services (OCS) that will be coordinated by the Community Action Partnership. It will carry on the work of the previous Organizational Standards Center of Excellence working with the CSBG Working Group, Community Action Agencies, OCS, CAPLAW, NASCSP, State Associations, State CSBG Offices and others to implement Organizational Standards in each of the nine core areas including: consumer input and involvement, community engagement, community assessment, organizational leadership, board governance, strategic planning, human resource management, financial operations and oversight, and data and analysis. In addition, training and technical assistance will be provided to CAAs and State CSBG Offices on assessment and implementation.

The following outlines the Goals and Objectives of the project as well as the core set of activities to be implemented.

Goal 1) Assess organizational capacity and performance in the CSBG Network by facilitating input from Community Action Agencies, State CSBG Offices, RPICs, State Associations, and national CSBG T/TA partners on new and/or existing Organizational Standards. To accomplish this, the Partnership will expand and enhance the CSBG Working Group and its committees in both membership and structure. The Partnership will use a variety of modes and methods to assess the capacity of states and CAAs to implement and meet Organizational Standards and meet guidelines and time frames established by states or OCS for full implementation. These include printed assessment tools, online/web-based assessment tools, in-person and web-based training on assessment strategies for both CSBG eligible entities, and State CSBG Offices, as well as interviews and surveys of CAAs and State CSBG Offices.

Goal 2) Coordinate and lead activities related to implementation of Organizational Standards that will ensure that Community Action Agencies have the organizational capacity to effectively address the needs of low-income individuals and communities. The Partnership will work with state and national CSBG T/TA partners to assist the state with establishing and communicating a technical assistance strategy to help ensure that all CAAs have access to technical assistance to implement and meet Organizational Standards. The project will utilize communication and action plans to ensure clear and consistent messaging on the implementation plan for Organizational Standards. The plans will ensure that implementation and information-sharing strategies are consistently performed across CAAs, State CSBG Offices, RPIC, State Associations, and national CSBG T/TA partners. As part of that Communication Action Plan, *Quarterly Update Webinars* broadcast to the Network will be conducted. In addition, the tracking and sharing of implementation strategies through the Learning Cluster for States will promote consistency as information and best practices are shared between States. The Partnership will convene work groups and committees to gather input on Organizational Standards and other Organizational Standards COE materials. Ongoing, quarterly meetings of the CSBG Working Group and its committees will be a critical element of this project to ensure regular input as the work of the COE progresses over the course of the two project years.

Goal 3) Develop curricula and training materials for tools that will ensure that all Community Action Agencies can be effectively assessed according to a consistent set of Organizational Standards. To accomplish this the Partnership will develop materials to train State CSBG Office staff, including monitors, on Organizational Standards. These materials will be integrated into existing learning opportunities for monitors including NASCSP-hosted trainings and events and include newly developed training opportunities. The Partnership will work closely with NASCSP to develop materials that train State monitors on Organizational Standards and how best to assess Community Action Agencies. The project will also develop tools for organizational self-assessment. The COE will finalize the draft Organizational Self-Assessment Tools that have been developed during the currently-funded COE to assist CAAs conduct a self-assessment and provide web-based and in-person training on how to use them. In addition, the project will develop tools for incorporating Organizational Standards into state assessments, annual State CSBG Plans, and state monitoring practices.

Goal 4) Collaborate with RPICs, ROMA Next Generation COE, CSBG Legal T/TA Center, and other CSBG national T/TA partners and stakeholder organizations. No one project or entity can provide all the training and technical assistance necessary to assist CAAs and State CSBG offices in the implementation of Organizational Standards. To accomplish this, the Partnership will coordinate and convene working groups related to the implementation of Organizational Standards. The CSBG Working Group will be expanded and convened at least quarterly to assess and monitor implementation of Organizational Standards. In addition, the Learning Cluster for States will also be convened monthly to coordinate the exchange of information on the implementation of Organizational Standards across all 50 states. In addition, project staff will participate in CSBG Network events (e.g., presenting at various meetings, conferences, webinars, and regional calls). The COE will participate and conduct workshop sessions at conferences convened by CAPLAW, NASCSP, Partnership, RPICs/State Associations, during the course of both project years to address and continually assess implementation of Organizational Standards. In addition, project staff will participate in quarterly RPIC calls in each of the 11 regions to assess implementation and will regularly meet with the federal Office of Community Services to share information on implementation.

Goal 5) Continue to build and enhance the web-based CSBG T/TA Resource Center to ensure that State CSBG Offices, State Associations, and CAAs have access to a web-based shared calendar, T/TA request system, consultant bank, and discussion forums. Project staff will continue to promote the CSBG T/TA Resource Center and ensure that it is updated with relevant Organizational Standards tools and resources developed under this project. To learn more about the CSBG T/TA Resource Center, go to www.csbgтта.org.

The project will also work to help CAAs move beyond compliance with Organizational Standards toward excellence. To accomplish this, the Partnership will be hosting up to two cohorts of its Pathways to Excellence program as well as train interested and qualified CAA and State CSBG Office staff to become Pathways Peer Reviewers. The reviewers will be critical to provide peer feedback to the cohorts and will also bring core excellence concepts back to their own organization for internal use.

The Partnership will engage a diverse set of strategies as part of its overall approach to the project. These include the following:

- Expanded CSBG Working Group membership and committees as well as quarterly Meetings;
- Network-wide Online *Listening and Update Sessions* on Organizational Standards;

- CSBG Learning Cluster for States on Standards Implementation;
- Finalized Organizational Assessment Tools for CAAs and State CSBG Offices;
- Training Curricula for CAAs and State CSBG Offices on Organizational Assessment
- Curricula for CAAs, State Associations, State CSBG Offices, and others to provide training on meeting the Organizational Standards for each of the 9 Organizational Standards areas;
- Conduct National, Regional and State-level in-person and web-based raining using developed curriculum;
- Incorporate tools, resources, curriculum and training developed through this project into the CSBG T/TA Resource Center
- Coordinate two cohorts Pathways to Excellence Self-Study process, engaging CAAs, State Association, and State CSBG Offices to become peer reviewers;
- Collect information on Standards Implementation and issue semi-annual updates to the Network
- Conduct Surveys and Focus Groups on the Impact of Standards.
- Continue to partner with all CSBG T/TA Partners including CAPLAW, NASCSP, State Associations/RPICs,
- Integration of key OCS-funded Centers housed at the Partnership including the Learning Communities Resource Center and the CSBG Risk Mitigation T/TA Center

The Partnership is pleased to formally partner with CAPLAW, NASCSP, the Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia (RPICs), and others to achieve the goals of this project and look forward to working the full Network to ensure successful implement the Organizational Standards. Questions? Contact Denise Harlow at dharlow@communityactionpartnership.com or Cashin Yiu at cuiu@communityactionpartnership.com.