

The Facts...

**Public Law 105-285
Title II- Community
Services Block
Grant Program**

- **Sec. 672. Purpose and Goals.**
"The purposes of this subtitle are-
"(1) to provide assistance to States and local communities working through a network of community action agencies and other neighborhood-based organizations, for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient..."

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OCS CSBG Information Memorandums

- **IM 49** – Implementation of ROMA
- **IM 82** – Tripartite Boards
- **IM 116** – Corrective Action, Termination, or Reduction
- **IM 138** – Establishment of the Organizational Standards
- Federal Guidance
- Other Mandates
- Applicable State laws and regulations

CSBG Information Memoranda
Published: March 2017
Address: Community Services Block Grants (CSBG)
Topic: community, competition, eligibility, funding, partners, providers, poverty, state

The Office of Community Services, Division of State Assistance, publishes Information Memoranda (IM) for distribution to CSBG program administrators. An Information Memoranda (IM) provides guidance to assist in implementing the CSBG legislation, program instruction and policy clarification. In addition to disseminating information and program instructions to stakeholders.

The IM numbering system is chronological. The higher number reflects the most recently released IM. Only relevant IMs are posted on this web site. Previous IMs posted may not be as important as the latest IMs have been removed.


The following information memoranda have been released to State CSBG Lead Agencies, State Community Action Associations, CAA Executive Directors and other nonprofit agencies receiving CSBG funds.

2017
• IM No. 132 CSBG Annual Report, January 19, 2017

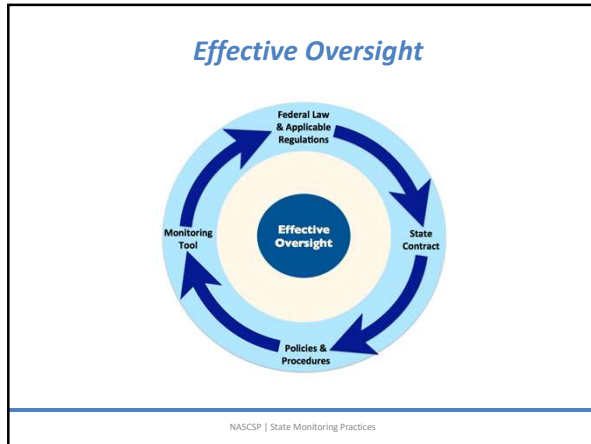
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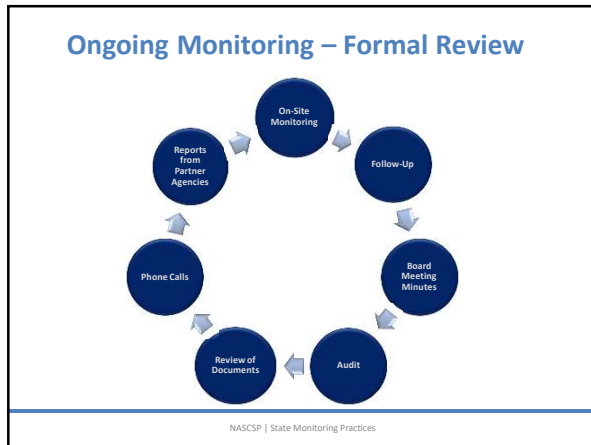
CSBG Statute
Section 676B. Monitoring Eligible Entities

- A full onsite review **at least once** during a three year period.
- An **onsite review for each newly designated entity** immediately after the completion of the first year.
- **Follow up reviews**, including prompt return visits to entities that fail to meet the goals, standards, and requirements set by the State.
- Other reviews as appropriate.



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NASCSP Monitoring Standards

The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) has crafted the following *CSBG Monitoring Standards* as a framework for the development of strong and effective monitoring systems for the nation's CAAs. Ongoing dialogue among Network partners is essential to implementing the *CSBG Monitoring Standards*.

The image shows the cover of a document titled "CSBG MONITORING STANDARDS". The cover is white with a blue border. The title is in a blue box. At the bottom, there is the NASCSP logo and the text "NASCSP | State Monitoring Practices".

NASCSP | State Monitoring Practices

NASCSP Monitoring Standards


Guiding Principles for Monitoring

- Mutual Respect
- Open Communication
- Joint Problem Solving
- 'Whole agency' systems approach

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CSBG Monitoring Principles

Mutual Respect




In working with grantee boards, staff, and consultants, State CSBG offices **value** and recognize the **unique knowledge, ability, and independence** of each person.

CSBG offices are committed to treating all persons fairly and maintaining credibility by matching actions with words.

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Monitor Characteristics

- CSBG monitoring isn't about looking for agency deficiencies and weakness; it's about people and community.
- Monitors need to put agency personnel and board members at ease and are able to see things from their perspective.
- Monitors show respect for the agency staff and board.




They know their business. Monitors emphasize this and demonstrate trust in the process.

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CSBG Monitoring Principles

Open Communication


Effective communication is key in facilitating good working **relationships** with partners. CSBG offices are committed to keeping lines of communication **open**. ... to assist in developing solutions to problems, to share program improvement ideas, and provide information on new developments in the anti-poverty field.



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CSBG Monitoring Principles

Open Communication



CSBG offices communicate **frequently** through a variety of tools and media. CSBG offices are **open to contact** and are committed to **listening** to suggestions/concerns. This aids the CSBG office in gaining an **understanding** of local operations and assisting CAAs in pursuing priorities.

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Monitor Characteristics

- Superior communication skills allow monitors to have connection and rapport with both agency staff and board members.
- The technological world we live in today can negatively impact our ability to become an effective communicator, especially when e-mail becomes a substitute for face-to-face communication with grantees and board members.
- Don't discount a phone call or personal conversation, followed with an e-mail to document the discussion if necessary.
- **Listen, listen, listen!!**

Superior
Communication
Skills


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CSBG Monitoring Principles

Joint Problem Solving

State CSBG offices operate under the belief that a **team approach** to problem solving is in the best interest of all parties involved.

CSBG offices believe that **collectively** the office and the agency can arrive at the best solution to any situation.




State CSBG offices promote an environment in which all Community Action partners will be **open to change** and can work together in developing **mutually agreeable** solutions.

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Monitor Characteristics

Decision Making Ability

- Decision making can be hard. Most every decision involves some conflict or tradeoff.
- Agencies want monitors to be strong and effective decision makers.
- Waffling on a decision can cause agencies to lose confidence in the monitor and create a relationship that can be difficult to repair.



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State Addition to Monitoring Principles



Office of Economic Opportunity
Guiding Principles for Partnership

Valuing Diversity

As an ally in state government we have a responsibility to support the many diverse cultures, perspectives, and abilities of people living in poverty. We support the value of all forms of diversity as community and individual assets, and ensure that we portray the diversity of people experiencing poverty in our work and daily decision-making.

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State Addition to Monitoring Principles



Office of Economic Opportunity

Guiding Principles for Partnership

Ethical Code of Conduct

Honesty and integrity are the foundation of our work. As stewards of public resources and trust, together we will comply with applicable laws, and act honestly and ethically.

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Monitor Characteristics

- Ability to understand community action and the importance of your state's network to the clients and community they serve.
- Recognize each organizations unique "spirit" and their key attributes.
- Take time to step back and see the impact of the agency in the community.

Ability to see the "big picture"

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CSBG Monitoring Principles

Systems Approach


CSBG monitoring should be conducted with a **whole agency**, systems approach that goes beyond simple compliance with CSBG regulations.



CSBG offices should consider the health and functioning of the entire agency, including governance, leadership, financial, human resources, consumer engagement, and other areas key to an agency's ability to achieve its desired outcomes, fulfill the **mission** of the agency, and realize the **purpose of CSBG**.

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Monitor Characteristics




- As you gain experience in working with numerous agencies, you will instinctively begin to understand how unique each agency is and their value to the community.
- You will develop the ability to determine a picture of an agency's overall health and to ascertain what they need in the future to enhance or strengthen their organization.

Yes! Our financial data is PERFECT: nobody touch anything until the CSBG Monitor leaves!

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Monitor Characteristics

“CSBG Monitoring is like a box of chocolates, You never know what you're gonna get.”



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CSBG Monitoring

REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE.

- If a monitor expects “Beyond Compliance” from agencies, then we should provide “Beyond Compliance” service as well.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK.


- Read the organization's website and brochures. Look at recent editions of the local newspaper for any relevant articles pertaining to the community, especially in rural areas.



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CSBG Monitoring: Is there only one answer?

If a dog wore pants would he wear them like this or like this?



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Keys to a Successful CSBG Monitoring Process




- Enculturate NASCSP Monitoring Principles.
- Be responsive and communicate.
- Provide or know how to access appropriate Training and Technical Assistance resources.
- Have competent, trained, and supported monitoring staff.
- Use the brilliance in your network.
- Strong technical and ethical characteristics are fundamental to monitoring success.
- **Remember “why” we monitor and place a priority on the benefits it can offer to the agencies and entities we support.**

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NASCSP Monitoring Standards

NASCSP's Guiding Practices




[Link to: CSBG Monitoring Standards Publication](#)

NASCSP | State Monitoring Practices

Guiding Practices

1. State monitors look at more than mere compliance with program rules and regulations.




The **overall health** of a CAA encompasses more than just technical compliance with specific program mandates. In order for a CAA to be truly 'healthy,' it must be continually striving to find better ways to use programmatic resources to help people move out of poverty.

2. The Board of Directors must fully understand its roles and responsibilities.

The tripartite structure of private non-profit and public community action board of directors ensures that voices from ALL segments of the community have the opportunity to participate in shaping the direction of the CAA. Without **full participation**, the CAA lacks valuable points of view in its decision-making process.

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Guiding Practices

3. Managing a community action agency requires a high level of administrative and leadership skills.

The mission is known and communicated.

4. Monitoring community action agencies is part of a process to strengthen CAAs and the entire Community Action network.

The monitoring process should serve several purposes, including to provide the CAA with feedback about its programs, going beyond compliance to include an assessment of the CAA's ability to impact lives.

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Guiding Practices

5. The State CSBG Office has a system in place to document and inform the agency of findings and/or deficiencies.

Effective monitoring includes a follow-up process.

6. The State CSBG office has a system in place to provide training and technical assistance when necessary.

Effective monitoring includes providing training and technical assistance. The State CSBG office should have a means of providing training or technical assistance to CAAs in need of support and/or resources.



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Group Discussion



- Considering the monitoring principles, practices and characteristics, how would you incorporate these into your monitoring?
- What are the strengths of your monitoring?
- What could you do better?
- What are your challenges?
- What would you like to change?

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Assessing Your State's Systems

- Is the internal structure of your CSBG office and monitoring responsibilities clear and integrated?
- Do you have collaborative relationships with other CAA funders (Head Start, HUD, Dept. of Energy, others?)
- Does your monitoring tool look at the **WHOLE** agency, or just CSBG programs?
- How are staff trained to take a systems approach to monitoring?



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Assessing Your State's Systems

- How does the CSBG office keep up with the changing CAA environment (OCS IM releases, Head Start Standards, ROMA Next Generation, other?)
- What are your systems for ensuring adequate and timely follow-up to the results of monitoring?
- How do you use monitoring results to identify and provide system-wide training and technical support to CAAs?



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