



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS

A History and Systems Approach to Monitoring

March 27, 2017

Presenters

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CSBG Monitoring:

Is it art? Is it science?

Yes!

Bill Brand

Division of Community Action Agencies

Iowa Department of Human Rights

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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..."

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 New Organizational Standards

Federal Guidance

Other Mandates

Applicable State laws and regulations

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

The Philosophy:

NASCSP Guiding Principles for Monitoring

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

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.

CSBG Monitoring Principles

Open Communication

Effective communication is key in facilitating good working **relationships** with partners, and 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.

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 in the CSBG office in gaining an **understanding** of local operations and assisting CAAs in pursuing priorities.

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.

Through a **team approach** to problem solving ... come up with the best strategies for program development, conflict resolution, or compliance issues.

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.

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.

Keys to a Successful CSBG Monitoring Process

- Inculturate NASCSP Monitoring Principles
- Responsiveness-communication
- Training and Technical Assistance- provide or know how to access appropriate T&TA resources
- Competent, trained, and supported monitoring staff
- Use the brilliance in your network
- Use NASCSP!



Department of Commerce

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



March 27, 2017
NASCSP Monitor Training

CSBG & Other Facts About Washington State

Population: 7.6 million

Size: 71,362 square miles

60% of the state's residents live in Seattle, King/County Metro Area

39 Counties

30 Community Action Agencies (providing services in 39 counties)

26 Non-profit agencies (Including 1 Farmworker Health Clinic)

4 Public agencies (including 1 Limited Purpose Agency)

Grantees receive both Federal and State CSBG funding



CSBG & Other Facts About Washington State

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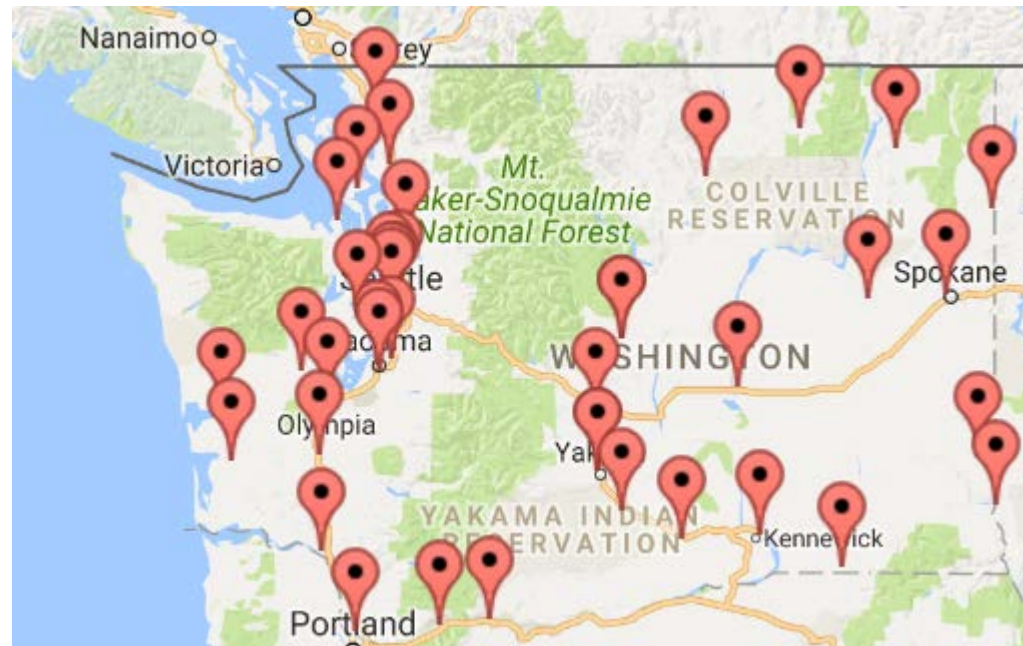
26 Non-profit agencies (*Including one Farmworker Health Clinic*)

4 Public agencies (*including one Limited Purpose Agency*)

12 agencies located in urban cities

18 agencies located in rural areas

Grantees receive both Federal
and State CSBG funding



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CSBG Monitoring



THE FUNDAMENTALS:

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 grantees and entities we support.



CSBG Monitoring



Monitors should continually develop these characteristics:

- Vision and instinct
- Ability to see the “big picture”
- People skills
- Decision-making ability
- Superior communication skills



CSBG Monitoring



VISION AND INSTINCT:

As you gain experience in working with numerous agencies, you will instinctively begin to understand their how unique each agency is and their value to the community.

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 .



CSBG Monitoring



ABLE TO SEE OUTSIDE THE “BIG PICTURE”:

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.



CSBG Monitoring



PEOPLE SKILLS:

CSBG monitoring isn't just be 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 be able to see things from their perspective.

Very Important.....show respect for the grantee staff and board. They know their book of business, demonstrate that you trust that process.

The most often overlooked skill is listening. Listening may seem like a simple concept, but few do it well.



CSBG Monitoring



DECISION-MAKING ABILITY

Decision making can be hard. Most every decision involves some conflict or tradeoff.

Grantees want monitors to be strong and effective decision makers.

Waffling on a decision can cause grantees to lose confidence in the monitor and establish a relationship that can be difficult to repair.



CSBG Monitoring



SUPERIOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

Superior communication skills allow monitors to have connection and rapport with agency staff and board members.

The technological world we live 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.



CSBG Monitoring



REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE.

If a monitor expects “Beyond Compliance” from grantees, 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.



CSBG Monitoring



NEW APPROACH:

Take photos of a project or facilities during monitoring. Include highlights of the program along with the photo in the monitor report.

EVALUATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES:

Look outside of the box, some things may not be as they seem.



CSBG Monitoring

SHARE IN THE EXPERIENCE:

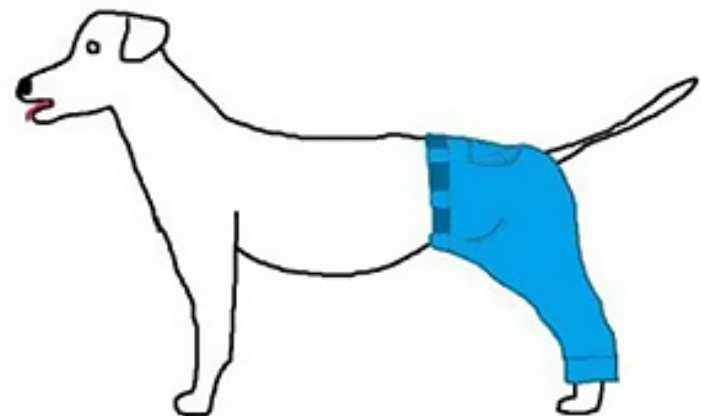
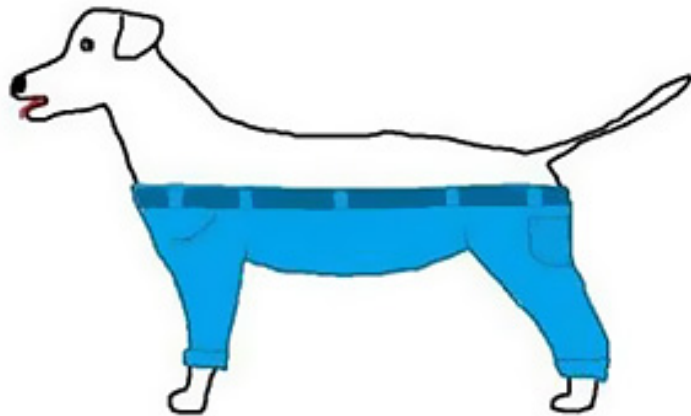


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CSBG Monitoring

Is there only one answer?

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





Department of Commerce

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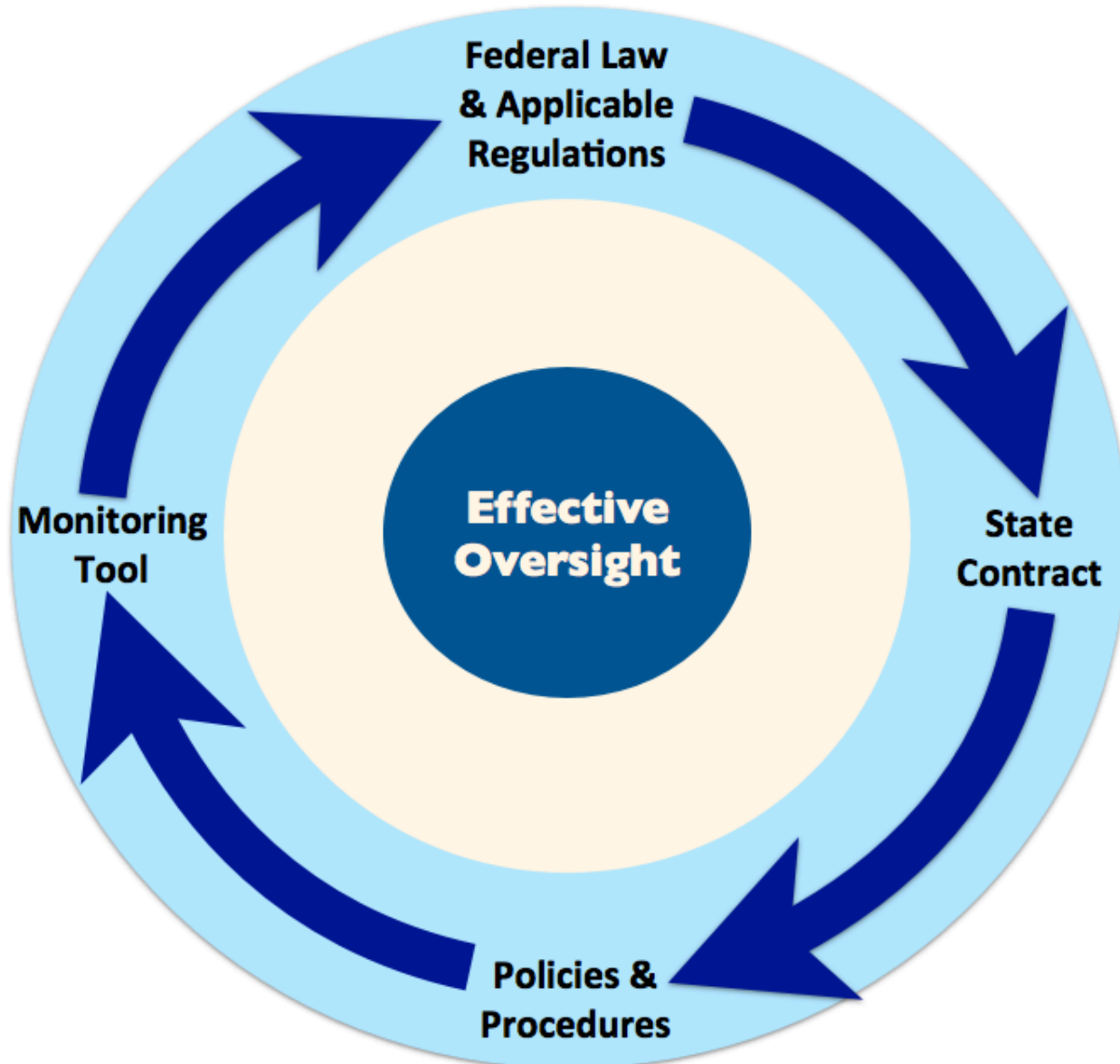


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Effective Oversight



Ongoing Monitoring



CSBG Application and Plan

Purpose: To determine that the State Application and Plan are in compliance with the duties and responsibilities required for the receipt and usage of CSBG funding.

Program Requirements: The Chief Executive Officer of the State must designate an agency to carry out the State activities for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. The designated agency has a current State Plan on file at the Office of Community Services (OCS). Legislative hearings are convened at least once every three years and in conjunction with the development of the State Plan. A successful legislative hearing has rules of conduct and a standard agenda, both of which are available to the public prior to the hearing. The State offers a public inspection [sec. 676(e) (2)] of the Plan or revised Plan in a manner to allow review and comment of the Plan.

Question 1: Did the State provide specific details regarding the administrative operations of the State Community Services Block Grant program?

Statutory References	Critical Information	Examples of Supportive Information
Sec. 676 - Program Administration Sec. 676(b)(3) - Legislative Hearing Sec. 676(e)(1) - Revisions Sec. 676(a)(2)(B) - Public Inspection Sec. 676(a)(1) - Lead Agency Section 676(b)(13) - Narrative CSBG	<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative Hearing - documentation from the State Plan showing that, in conjunction with the development of the State Plan, at least one legislative hearing was held every three years. <input type="checkbox"/> Public Inspection - evidence that the lead agency of the State's CSBG program held at least one public hearing about the proposed use and distribution of CSBG funds, in sufficient time to provide for public response and comment. <input type="checkbox"/> Designation - document from the Chief Executive Officer of the State designating, in an application to OCS, an appropriate State agency to act as a lead agency for carrying out the State's CSBG program. <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Authority - reference to the State's statutory authority for the CSBG program. <input type="checkbox"/> State Application and Plan - evidence that the State submitted an Application and State Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Examples of public comments or responses to the State Plan, if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> Revisions - indication or verification of revisions to the State Plan by the Chief Executive Officer

Distribution of CSBG funds made available to Eligible Entities

Purpose: To determine how the State assures that not less than 90% of the funds made available shall be used for the purposes of reducing poverty, revitalization of low-income communities and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas.

Program Requirements: States have well-defined policies and procedures that compliment the assurances.

Question 1: Did the State provide specific details regarding funds distribution?

Statutory References	Critical Information	Examples of Supportive Information
<p>Sec. 675C (a) Grants to Eligible Entities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 90% CSBG funds available to eligible entities 2. Obligational authority 3. Carry over policies <p>Sec. 675 (b)(2) -Administrative Funds Caps</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> State Plan - documentation of the State's policies and procedures to assure that no less than 90% of CSBG funds are available to eligible entities for reducing poverty.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Obligation - evidence that the State made funds available to eligible entities for the fiscal year and succeeding fiscal year.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$55,000 or 5% Administrative Cap - records documenting the State's administrative expenses. Documentation of the number of full time and part time CSBG staff. Records of the monitoring budget.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NASCSP Information Survey - review of the State's information as reported in the Information Survey.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> CSBG operations manual</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Award letters</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Budget for Statewide activities/services</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sample payments including FT/PT employees</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Travel expenses for monitoring activities</p>

Linkages & Coordination (Between Programs to Assure Employment and Training Activities/LIHEAP & Others)

Purpose: To determine how States demonstrate encouragement of coordination and linkages between Federal, State or local social service programs which target low income populations to assist them in achieving self sufficiency.

Program Requirements: The State provides evidence of formal and informal agreements that stimulate coordination and linkages. The State has established linkages with other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of services to low-income individuals. Policies and procedures are established to avoid duplication of services.

Question: Describe how the State and eligible entities coordinate and develop linkages.

Statutory References	Critical Information	Examples of Supportive Information
Sec. 676(b)(5) Linkages & Coordination Sec. 676(b)(6) Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Sec. 676(b)(9) Other Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Linkages - evidence of new partners, new partnerships, and newly coordinated service delivery systems resulting from State's efforts to stimulate coordination and linkages within the CAA system. <input type="checkbox"/> Organization Coordination - evidence of agreements that establish linkages, partnerships or collaborations with other social service program providers, (i.e., Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)). <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Investment Act - evidence of State agreement(s) with WIA, which determine to what extent cooperation and linkages are developed and nurtured	<input type="checkbox"/> Description of the linkages established with other social services programs to determine their effectiveness in the delivery of services for the low-income population <input type="checkbox"/> Examples of procedures created to prevent duplication of services <input type="checkbox"/> Policies used to coordinate the provision of employment and training specifically to WIA at the State and eligible entity levels <input type="checkbox"/> Verification procedures that allow the State to determine that the eligible entities are working with the WIA One Stop programs? <input type="checkbox"/> Examples of the written CSBG services eligibility and document verification policies and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Examples of any media which demonstrates effective coordination and linkages within the service areas

NASCSP Monitoring Standards

Community Action leaders at the national, state, and local levels need to work together to ensure that an enhanced monitoring SYSTEM becomes a valuable tool to increase the capacity of Community Action to help people and change lives.

Guiding Practices

1. State monitors look at more than mere compliance with program rules and regulations.
2. The Board of Directors must fully understand its roles and responsibilities.
3. Managing a community action agency requires a high level of administrative and leadership skills.
4. Monitoring community action agencies is part of a process to strengthen CAAs and the entire Community Action network.

Guiding Practices

5. The State CSBG has a system in place to document and inform the agency of findings and/or deficiencies.
6. The State CSBG office has a system in place to provide training and technical assistance when necessary.

SYSTEMS MONITORING

Systems Thinking

Broad perspective of overall:

Structures, Patterns, and Cycles

“Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools...to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively.”

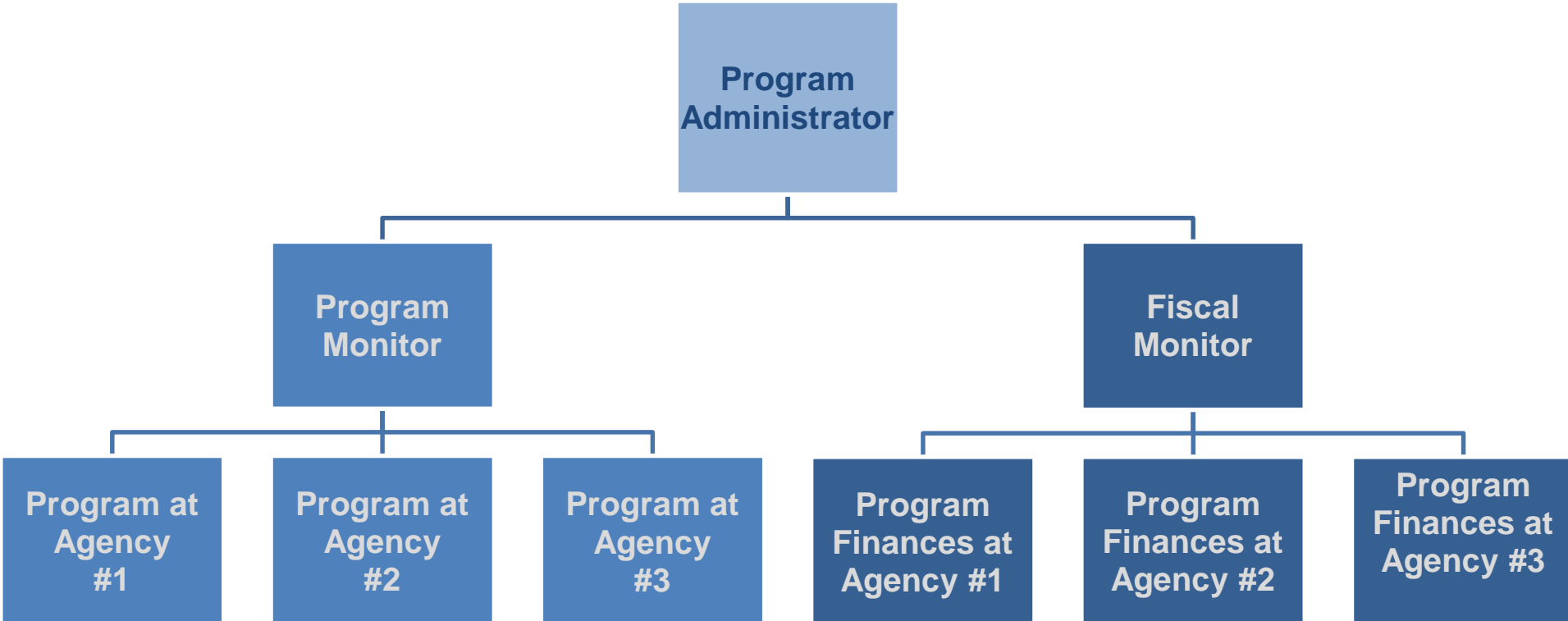
~ *Peter M. Senge, The Fifth Discipline*

Systems Review and Discernment

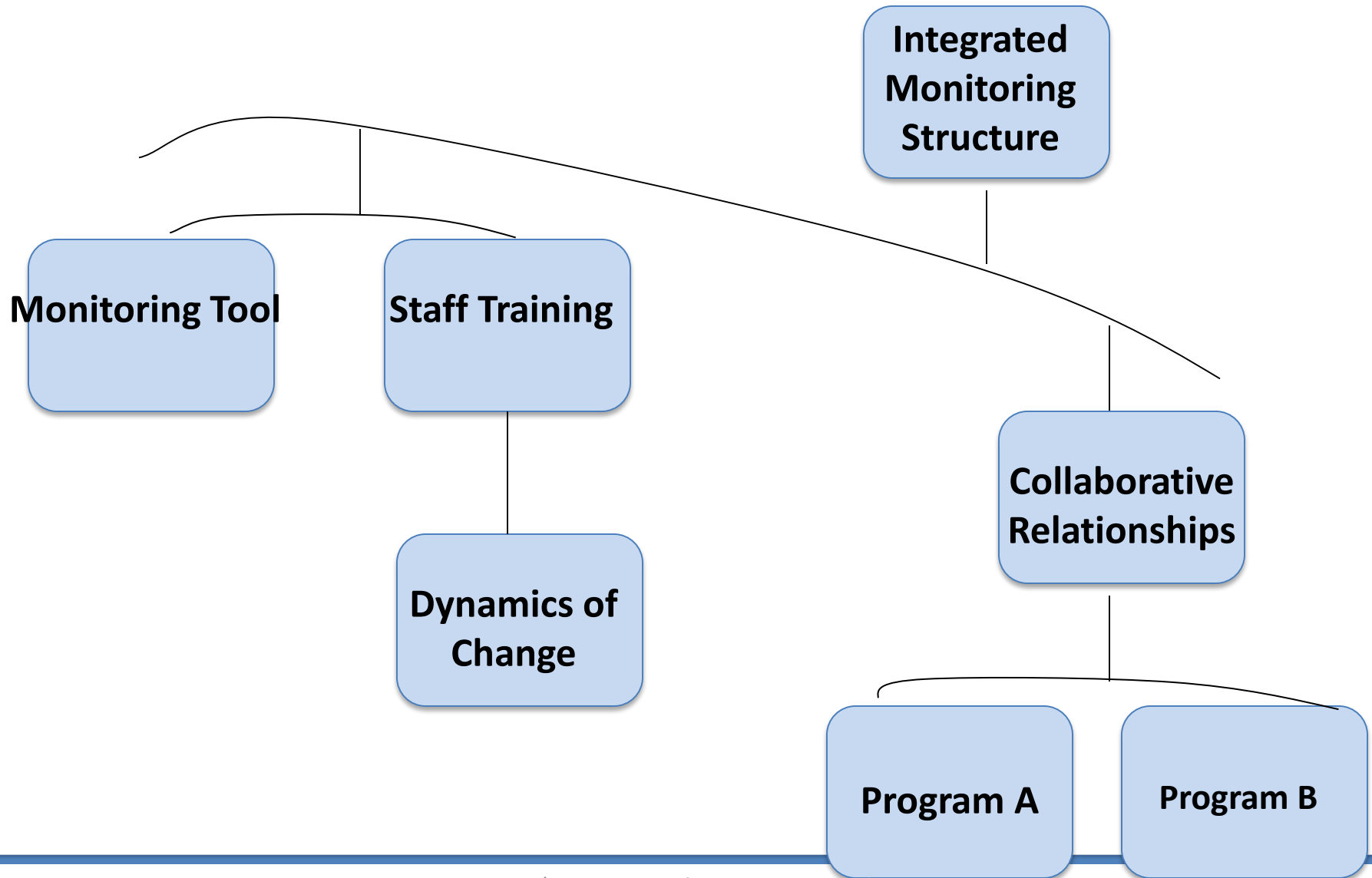


**To discern an
overall pattern
from a mass
of detail**

Any State Monitoring Structure



Systems Monitoring Structure



Systems Monitoring

NASCSP Monitoring Principles

- State monitors should look at more than compliance with program rules and regulations
- State monitors need to take a **SYSTEMS** view of each CAA

High Functioning Systems

- Continually exchange feedback among the various parts to ensure that they are aligned
- When weakened or misaligned, the system needs to make necessary adjustments to achieve its goals

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?

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?

Questions?

**Visit www.nascsp.org for
more resources and information.**