Assessing ROMA Culture at the State Office

No matter the change, no matter the company, there is one constant that largely determines success or failure – it is the role and importance of **organizational culture**.

Culture is the beliefs, values, and assumptions that shape behaviors and help individuals understand the organization.
Culture is often so strong and so powerful that when there is a discrepancy or inconsistency between the current culture and the objectives of change, the culture will win. An organization's culture is directly related to its effectiveness and its success.

Consider the prompts in the left column as they relate to your State Office. Make notes in the right column about what you observe and what it might mean as you attempt to make changes.

Look around	
What do the headquarters/buildings look like? 　　Are they well kept, clean, ease of access, etc? Do different areas of the building look different? 　　Think about lighting, colors, decorations, tec. 　　Are differences connected with specific departments or areas of the organization? 　　Look at the things people have on their desks, or on the walls. 　　Look for what is NOT there. Do you see evidence of the characteristics of the people being served? 　　Are signs in multiple languages? Are pictures multi-ethnic/racial? 　　Are there pictures of people of different ages (etc.) 　　How do the demographics of the staff compare to those being served? How are people dressed? (e.g. formal/informal) 　　Does this differ in the various areas of the building? How much interaction is there?	

Who is talking to whom?
Where do people congregate?
How is the furniture arranged?
What is the noise level?
    Is everything quiet? Or loud? Are people talking? Can you hear conversations? Or just general voices?
    Is the noise the same throughout the agency?	

## Internal Communications 	
 	
How are messages (information) communicated?
    Review employee news letter, if available. Look at posted memos to staff Review other communication tools such as emails that are shared among staff.
    What other methods are used?
What values are emphasized?
    Is anyone held up for praise? How are they selected?
    Are parties, celebrations, or other ceremonies mentioned?
What is the procedure when there is a complaint (concern/problem)?
    How do you know how problems are solved?	

## Chain of Command 	
 	
What are the channels of communication?
    Is there a well-defined organizational structure? Are staff expected to work through official channels?
    Do some staff work outside formal channels? How does that happen? Is it common or rare?
    Can staff challenge authority? When is this accepted?
Are job descriptions loosely or tightly followed?	

## Decision Making	

How quickly does the organization want or need to drive decision-making?
 	
    Where does the urgency for decision making come from? Internal? external ?
    Does upper management push projects through quickly ? Is there little input from direct service staff or are they consulted during decision making?
 	
Does the Management demonstrate a high need to respond to changing conditions in the community?
 	
    Does decision making proceed slowly -- sometimes appearing to be off the table ?
    Do all decisions go through upper management?	

## Values 	
 	
Does the agency put staff first?
    Or are tasks and processes first?
What is more important: efficiency or quality? Or both? Or neither?
How much flexibility is tolerated? Staff hours, work sites, duties, etc.
    What is important? What do people say is most important to their job duties?
What happens when people accomplish something?
    Describe "rites of passage" such as promotion ceremonies and retirement parties. What kind of regular "get-togethers" such as holiday parties, social events, and company luncheons are promoted by the agency?
    Think about the behaviors that are rewarded or discouraged.	

## *New Staff Orientation* Who is involved in new staff orientation? Consider how new Program Managers s are "taught" about Community Action and other Programs (history, expectations, etc.)	

Are "old ways" and "negativity" being transferred to new staff?	

Staff Qualifications
 	
What are the "qualifications" required of staff?
    Are they different for different positions in the State Office?
    Do some positions require professional certifications?
Is experience valued as much as professional certification?	

Communication with Others
 	
How does the State Office communicate with partners in the community?
    With the community at large? With perspective customers?
    (newsletters, websites, etc.)
What kind of relationships does the State Office have with Subgrantees? Do the agency and state office value the same things?	

What themes did you see emerge as you did this organizational culture assessment?
What things did you notice that were not on the list?