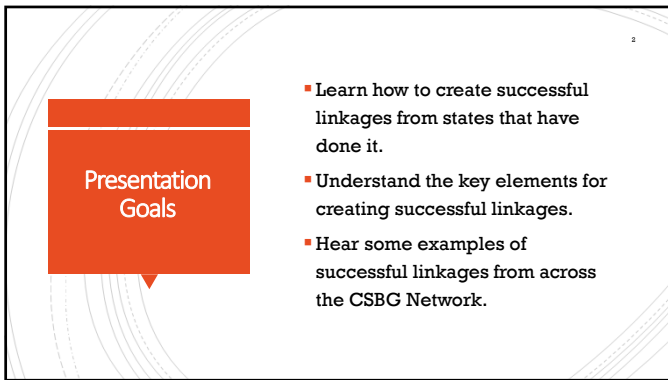
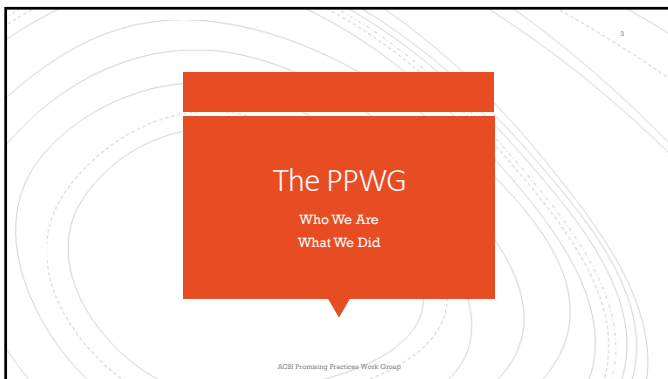


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Work Group Members


- **Beverly Buchanan** AR
- **Jaimi Clifford** ME
- **Matt Fitzgerald** VA
- **Meagan Meadows** OH
- **Karen Quackenbush** UT
- **Jen Underwood** NJ
- **Lauren Johnson** NASCSP
- **Hugh Poole** NASCSP
- **Kate Blunt** NASCSP

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Purpose



Identify and document promising practices undertaken by states to improve "linkages" with the goal of improving this score in the next ACSI survey of eligible entities.



Write up the promising practices identified and share with State CSBG Directors at the NASCSP Annual Conference.

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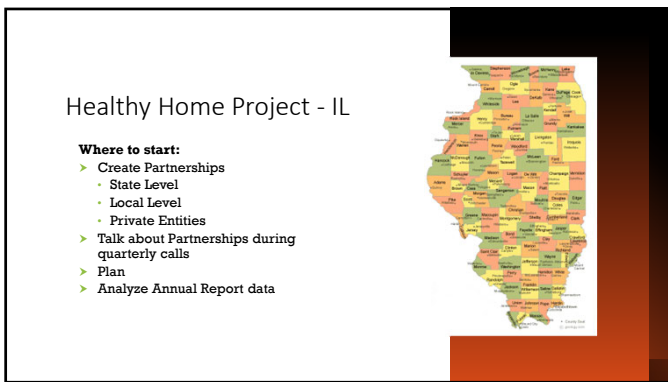
Definition of Linkages

State CSBG Offices connect, collaborate, and communicate with other State departments and external organizations to better leverage resources, enhance information-sharing, and jump-start joint planning between those entities and the local CSBG agencies resulting in a strengthened State Network better positioned to reduce poverty in the state.

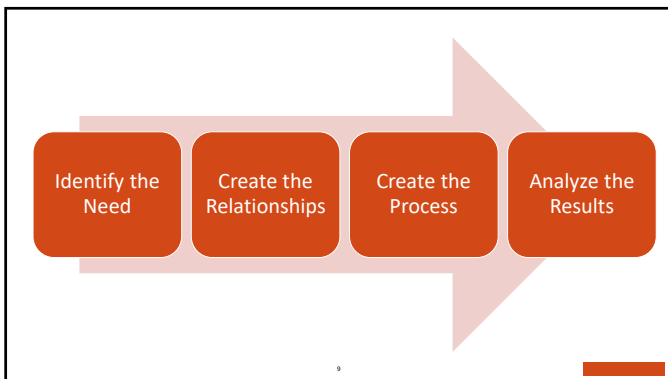
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Healthy Homes Project

Goal: To demonstrate a reduction in emergency room usage by families with children or pregnant mothers

Need:	Relationships:	Process:	Analysis:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families were using the Emergency Room as a primary care facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Local Hospital University of Illinois CAA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospital Identifies families with children and/or pregnant women University of Illinois completes a Healthy Homes Assessment Provides CAA "work order" CAA completes work order and establishes longer term case management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is less time spent in ERs by families with children, pregnant mothers? Are there fewer missed school days or workdays?

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LINKAGES

Why Engage in This Work?

- Better serve individuals and families of low-income
- Create Efficiencies
- It's required

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Creating linkages benefits individuals and communities of low-income.

"Linkages" is high on the list of what local agencies want from the state CSBG offices to better serve their clients.

"While the information, communication, and resources are effectively provided from the State CSBG Lead Agency within their Department, there are many other fragmented services within State government that are not effectively leveraged, partnerships are underdeveloped, and sharing of data and resources is absent in any meaningful way. Universal applications, data sharing for reporting and screening, and referrals would improve low-income individuals' ability to be screened for all eligible services not only CSBG."

"I would like additional information and the opportunity to engage with state agencies that serve our clients. We could be more effective if there was state-level coordination for information sharing and for the identification of opportunities and challenges. Joint problem-solving could provide improved efficiency, access, and overall effectiveness for the households we serve."

"There should be a regular, consistent, flow of information. If they are working to provide partnerships for us, I would love to know about it. We should know these partners and how to work with them. As far as I know, that is up to the CAA to develop and maintain."

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Create Linkages to Create Efficiencies

- The statewide database is a bridge for other federally funded (Ex. LIHEAP) programs to reduce duplicate data entry for CAA (ME).
- Consistent income verification method, documentation requirements, etc. are helpful (only one calculation needed).
- Coordination for specific efforts, such as outreach.

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Create Linkages to Create Efficiencies

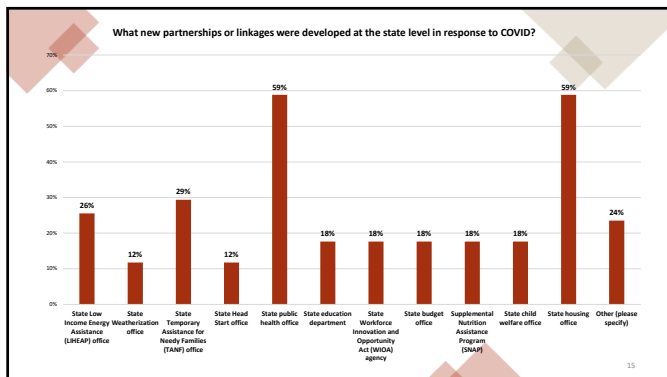
The COVID crisis posed many challenges for state CSBG offices. One critical challenge was coordinating all the available funds in a systemic way that allowed the maximum benefit for the client. This required close coordination with a variety of state agencies and strongly advocating for the local agencies to avoid confusion, duplication of services and funding, and delays in implementation.

There are numerous examples of collaborative efforts at the state level that resulted in improved problem-solving, better utilization of CARES funding, and an increased awareness at the state level of the CSBG network and the important work that they do.

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The CSBG Act and the State Accountability Measures require states to establish linkages.

CSBG Act, Section 676(b)(5) an assurance that the State and the eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals...

State Accountability Measure

7Sa. The State provided both quantitative data and examples of how the State CSBG office maintained and created linkages within State government to assure the effective delivery of services to low-income people and communities.

Model State Plan Language

9.1. State Linkages and Coordination at the State Level: Describe the linkages and coordination at the state level that the state intends to create or maintain to ensure increased access to CSBG services to low-income people and communities under this State Plan and avoid duplication of services (as required by the assurance under Section 676(b)(5)). Describe additional information, as needed.

Note: This response will link to the corresponding CSBG assurance, Item 14.5. In addition, this information is associated with State Accountability Measure 7Sa and pre-populates the Annual Report, Module 1, Item G.1.

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The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)

- What is it?
- Why we use it?
- What did we learn from it?

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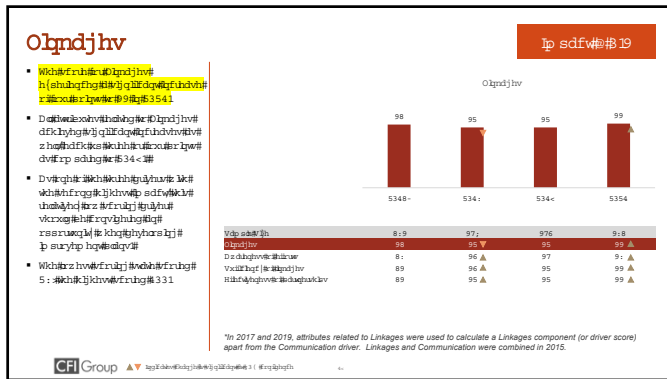
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ACSI
American Customer Satisfaction Index®

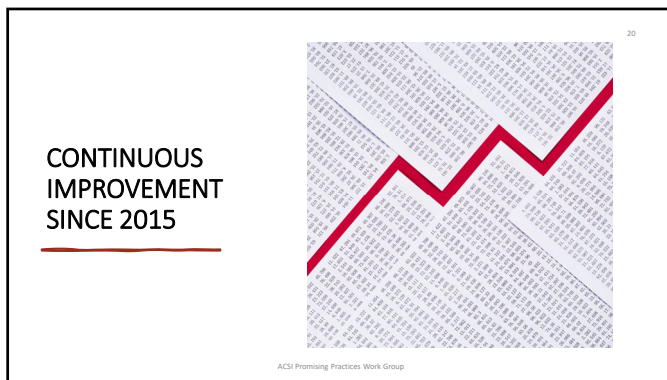
The ACSI is the only measure of customer satisfaction whose predictive link to results are confirmed by third party independent peer review.

- A quarterly measure of the national economy's health; complementary to measures such as inflation and unemployment; more than 200 companies, 41 industries in 7 economic sectors, accounting for roughly one-third of the total U.S. GDP.
- Since 1999, the ACSI is the only standardized, cross-agency measure of customer satisfaction in the federal government; measured annually.
- 200+ departments, agencies, programs and websites of the U.S. Federal Government; used by OCS programs (AFI, LIHEAP, CED, CSBG) over the past ten years.
- Utilizes a cause-and-effect methodology to generate actionable recommendations to improve performance.
- Recognized by academia, media and business as the gold standard for measuring customer satisfaction; credible and reliable data.
- www.theacsi.org for more information.

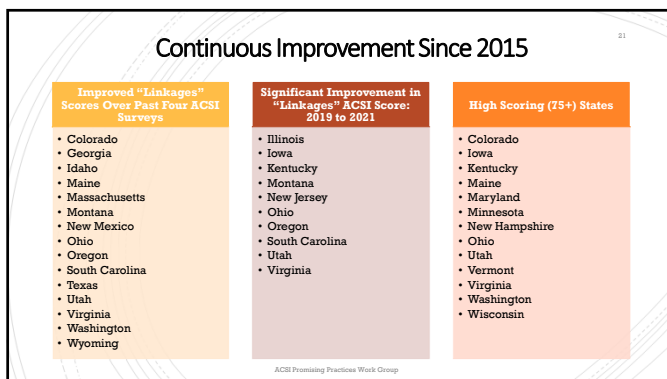
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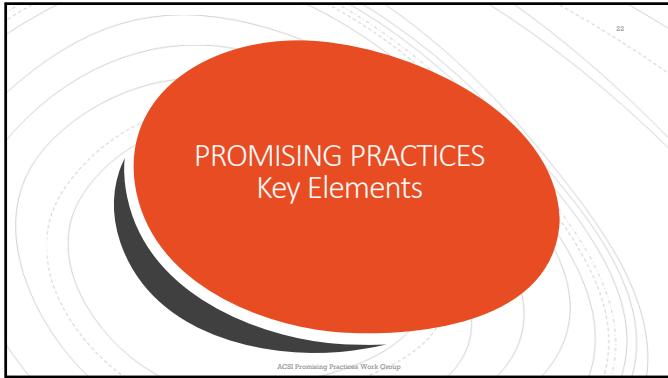
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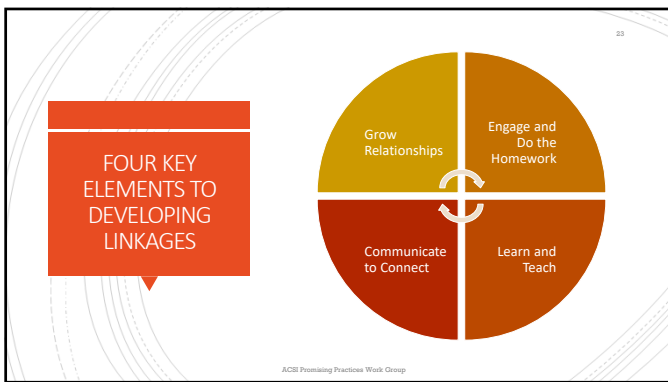
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Transitional Homeless Shelter with Wraparound Services

- **Why?** At the beginning of the pandemic, we recognized that individuals and families experiencing homelessness needed shelter during the day to effectively quarantine given the time of year. This work provided strong evidence that ongoing support and additional supportive housing was needed.
- **What?** Assist those experiencing homelessness and going beyond the need of overnight shelter and providing access to additional services beyond a safe place to live.
- **When?** Beginning of the Pandemic--2020
- **Where?** Aroostook County
- **Who?** State Office CSBG, ACAP Leadership and Staff, University of Maine Presque Isle, City of Presque Isle, MaineHousing and Dovetail Consulting LLC, BRSmith Associates and Aroostook County Homeless Stakeholder group (which includes community partners from Homeless Services of Aroostook, Hope and Justice Project, Presque Isle Housing Authority, United Way of Aroostook, Adult and Community Education, local faith-based organizations, local medical providers, law enforcement, and several members of the congressional delegation along with individuals with lived experience.)

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Transitional Homeless Shelter with Wraparound Services

- **How?** This project is funded through multiple funding streams including CSBG, Private Donations, in-kind donations and HUD funds.
 - Initial funds supported consultant and development expenses have been supported with CSBG CARES and CSBG funds.
 - Building purchase and construction have been secured with Maine Housing, CDBG, and private foundation funding.
 - Hope and Prosperity Construction is funded by a private foundation.
- **Challenges?** Navigating the ever-changing environment of COVID 19 and serving those who were experiencing homelessness during such a challenging time while ensuring the safety of all involved.
- This is the first project of this kind taken on by the agency. They experienced a learning curve as they navigated the world of property development and supportive housing. ACAP had to learn HUD rules and regulations, navigating building codes and addressing the ongoing stigma about homelessness in their community.

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Transitional Homeless Shelter with Wraparound Services

- **Outcomes:** One of a kind program -- a daytime and long-term wrap around services for people experiencing homelessness to have the opportunity to be housed, to work on life goals as such to obtain affordable and safe housing. #housed? #moved out of shelters?
- **On-Going:** The supportive housing units will be sustained through rent from tenants. The Hope and Prosperity Center will be sustained through our newly developed MaineCare billing for Homeless populations and potential supplemental funding through the Continuum of Care as well as staffing salaries through CSBG.
- Community partners support the work of the Hope and Prosperity Center by offering programming to customers that utilize the center daily.
 - Many community partners donate meals (through a meal train) and or support the center in other ways.
 - Many business owners have supported our efforts by helping to connect job seekers at the center with employers looking for help.
 - In addition, we are helping to address the housing shortage by developing 13 new housing units in the community.

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Engage and Do the Homework

Define	Define what "linkages" means in the State and what success looks like (mission/vision).
Assess	Assess office capacity; view linkages as a strategic, mandatory function; pivot, as necessary.
Commit	Commit to spending time now to develop relationships to expend less effort in the future. Designate your time or staff time to this effort.
Build Knowledge	Build a greater knowledge of other resources available at the State level.
Research	Research other State contracts and conduct a Google search of similar types of funding and projects at both the local and State level.
Identify	Identify existing partnerships and build on these. Bring in the State Association and find natural linkages within the State to build upon.
Communicate	Communicate early and often with State leadership about the important work of CSBG.
Say yes	Just say "yes." Be flexible.
Contract	Build into the contracts with the local agencies.

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SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

Refugee Services (WI)

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Refugee Services (WI)

- Refugee Services**—Linkage between the State CSBG Office and the Bureau of Refugee Services
- Purpose:** Offer community support to refugees entering the state (Ex. housing services, personal supplies, diapers, toiletries, etc., workforce skills/jobs).
- Method:** Formed a consortium with other local organizations and together applied to one of the national resettlement agencies


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Engage and do your homework

- CSBG State Administrator was committed to developing the relationship
- Bureau of Refugee Services is a resource at the State Office – Resource was shared during a monthly “spotlight” webinar hosted by the State
- Natural linkages between the State and agencies

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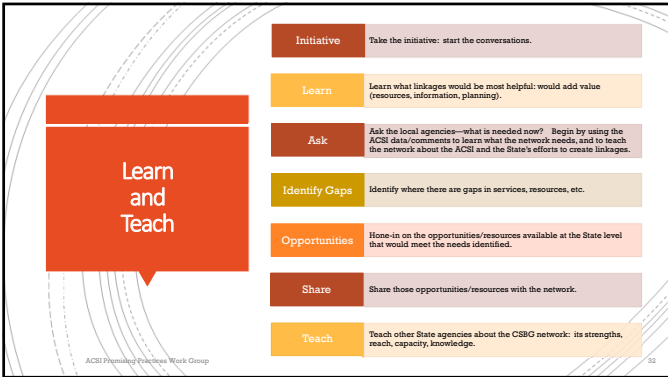


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Learn and Teach

Initiative	Take the initiative: start the conversations.
Learn	Learn what linkages would be most helpful: would add value (resources, information, planning).
Ask	Ask the local agencies—what is needed now? Begin by using the ACSI data/comments to learn what the network needs, and to teach the network about the ACSI and the State's efforts to create linkages.
Identify Gaps	Identify where there are gaps in services, resources, etc.
Opportunities	Hone-in on the opportunities/resources available at the State level that would meet the needs identified.
Share	Share those opportunities/resources with the network.
Teach	Teach other State agencies about the CSBG network: its strengths, reach, capacity, knowledge.

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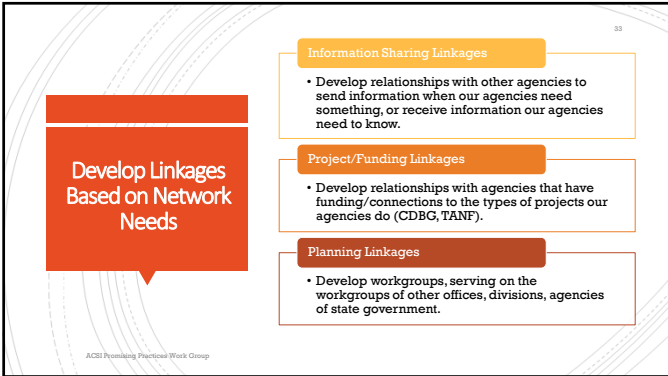


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Develop Linkages Based on Network Needs

Information Sharing Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop relationships with other agencies to send information when our agencies need something, or receive information our agencies need to know.
Project/Funding Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop relationships with agencies that have funding/connections to the types of projects our agencies do (CDBG, TANF).
Planning Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop workgroups, serving on the workgroups of other offices, divisions, agencies of state government.

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Develop Linkages Based on Network Needs

Local- to-State Collaboration Linkages

- Develop relationships with agencies that have State level and local level offices (VDH-local health departments, DHCD-local continuums of care, VDSS-local Dept. of Social Services).

Training and Technical Assistance Linkages

- Utilize and develop the resources of the State and the Network through shared trainings:
- Conduct webinars together on hyper-relevant topics;
- Bring experts in from other fields to talk about emerging topics;
- Share the key resources of other agencies with the network.

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Know The Work of and Advocate for Your Agencies

Develop linkages with agencies that share the work of our agencies, as well as fund, monitor, and have expectations of our agencies.

Present information on the work of CAA's at state conferences, interagency meetings.

Be an advocate for the work of your network at local, state, and national forums.

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Know The Work of and Advocate for Your Agencies

Serve on National Task Forces, Work Groups, Focus Groups, Organizations

- Promote and share the work of the network
- Support the work of community action broadly.
- Encourage CAA leaders to do the same, to energize the network through connectivity and purpose.

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Jail Diversion Project (VA): Background

Virginia Community Action Network members have been working to address issues around public safety, but from a human services lens rather than just criminal justice.

Some state agencies have worked with community partners on initiatives around community criminal justice reform (expungement, sentencing, balancing policing with understanding of trauma).

One Virginia statewide agency focuses entirely on supportive services for returning citizens.

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Jail Diversion Project (VA)

An idea was brought forth by the network to look at Diversion...

- The State Association (VACAP) advocated for a General Assembly project to create a task force led by the CSBG State Office.
- The CSBG State Office took on the administration of the Task Force.
- Multiple partners from various agency perspectives were brought together: Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Corrections, District Attorneys, Department of Housing and Community Development, VDSS, and Community Action agencies.
- **The project:** identify planning needs at the community level around pre-arrest Diversion; then, identify potential implementation projects to pilot ways to address pre-arrest Diversion.
- **The result:** key stakeholders with different primary objectives developed a comprehensive report and plan for a topic that has very different meanings and importance to all these partners.

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Jail Diversion Project (VA): Key Takeaways

Agencies invested time, energy, money, and heart into a topic they felt was important to advancing trauma-informed care in communities.

State Association and CSBG State Office were included in finding a way to address this interest.

Multiple stakeholders/partners came together to develop a comprehensive plan that goes beyond any one interest.

The connections from that workgroup continue to bear fruit in informal and formal conversations following.

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Grow Relationships

Intentional

Be purposeful and intentional in developing relationships across the state and with other external organizations.

Two-Way

Develop two-way, transparent relationships. Be interested in other organizations, know their work, be helpful to them, push their interests. Roll up your sleeves to assist them.

Utilize

Utilize any immediate, internal coordination.

Advocate

Advocate for the local agencies with the state; and advocate for other state agencies, when needed.

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Take Advantage of Any Immediate, Internal Coordination

Utah Team oversees LIHEAP, LIHWAP, and state emergency food assistance and tax credit programs

- Example -- the capacity of food pantries to provide services and manage grants varied widely through the state. CSBG discretionary was used to provide statewide T/TA to help build capacity.

The priority was identified with support from the C&As.

- Division -- CDBG, HOME funds, Rural Planning, Navajo Revitalization, and until recently--homeless programs (now its own division)
- Example--Landlord/Tenant mediation training provided statewide to support housing assistance efforts--funded by Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund (oversees HOME) with some support provided via CSBG--supportive work provided by the state association.

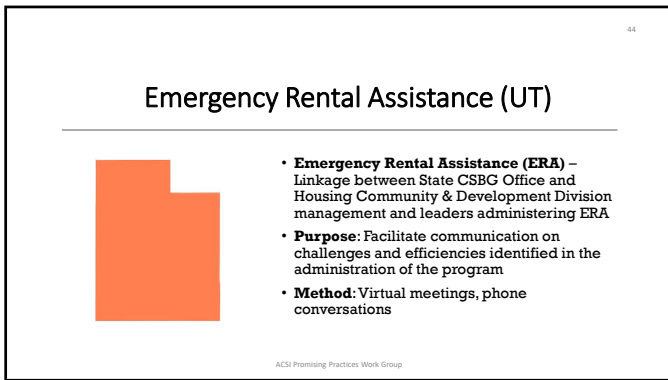
Department -- WIOA, Unemployment Insurance, Workforce Development, TANF, SNAP, General Assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation, Disability Assistance

- Example-- Closer coordination and warm referrals to/from required partners are key to Utah's unified WIOA state plan. In addition to regional meetings held to bring all the stakeholders together and review purpose and process, an electronic platform for the referrals was created. To remind C&As about the link and process, WIOA staff have joined the state office's meetings with the network to provide T/TA on the process.

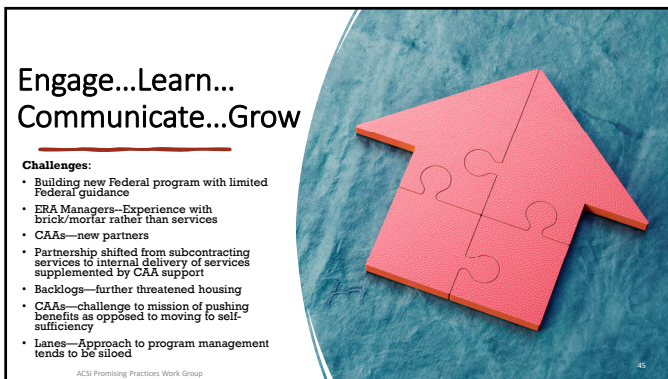
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Engage...Learn... Communicate...Grow

- Success:**
 - Tighter coordination within division
 - Better communication for new program—CSBG facilitated until ERA created own meetings
 - CSBG kept within loop—nimble response when backlogs occurred
 - Improved relationships and improved customer service

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Utah – Emergency Rental Assistance


Clint Coffman—Executive Director, Community Action Partnership of Utah

"Innovative Solutions occur within a state network when there is alignment between the State CSBG Office, State Association, and all Community Action Agencies. The State Association is highlighting the innovations and increased capacity that occurred during the network's pandemic response – primarily through statewide rental assistance programs. The relationships forged and strengthened over the last two years has led to growth across agencies and magnified Community Action's impact!"

In March 2020, the Community Action Network responded to housing concerns of low-income renters impacted by COVID. Most agencies had years of experience providing rental assistance. Prior to the pandemic, Community Action Agencies in Utah distributed roughly 3 million dollars a year for a state with 3.2 million people in it. As housing needs increased during the pandemic, individual agency responses developed into a statewide response. Agencies which lacked prior experience joined in new programs, supported by agencies across the network, the state association, the State CSBG Office, and other partners. The strategy for stabilizing households grew drastically in scope by June 2020. By the end of 2020, or nine months later, Community Action Agencies provided over \$20,000,000 in rental assistance.

To say this was a small undertaking is an understatement. It was not without difficulties at the state and local level. However, as the network implemented the tenant-side of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA), the network played a key role in distributing over \$59,169,434. This could not have happened without the support of the State CSBG Office who maintained relationships with local agencies and for the peer support of the network. Through regular state office webinars, state association meetings, and informal networking enabled by new technology platforms, Community Action Agencies provided each other with peer solutions, support, and consultation. State Association staff can document over 12 examples of where peer recommendations for improving phone systems, database practices, virtual intake, software training, grant management, outreach, and trauma-informed practices increased the capacity of Community Action Agencies.

The drastic increase in rental assistance is not the only outcome to come from the statewide rental programs. As a result of the collective strength of the network, landlord-tenant mediation is being expanded statewide, the Utah Homelessness Network has strong participation and support from Community Action Agencies, and agencies are more comfortable engaging peers in finding solutions to challenges."




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Communicate to Connect

- Be Transparent** Share what is being done by the State from the start—be transparent.
- Meet** Regular meetings with the network and other partners – Roundtables, Work Groups, Monthly Meetings with the network, bring in other state agencies.
- Share** Share state's efforts to create linkages – Newsletters, webinars. Use the State Association.
- Follow-Up** Follow-up with the network.

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Ways to Ensure the Network Knows

- Webinars with other partners at all levels; presenting useful information that shows benefits of connection
- Newsletter articles that highlight partners
- Report-outs regularly at State Association meetings
- Bringing CAA leaders into the workgroups and projects with you
- Round Table discussions

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SPOTLIGHT:
INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

LIWAP-LIHEAP Crossover Eligibility (KY)

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LIHEAP-LIWAP Crossover Eligibility (KY)

LIHEAP-LIWAP Crossover Eligibility – Linkage between the CSBG Office, LIHEAP Office, and LIWAP state offices

- Purpose:** Reduce duplicate efforts (eligibility determinations, documentation, etc.) for customers, LIHEAP, and LIWAP staff. – One application for LIHEAP-LIWAP.
- Method:** Meet with CSBG, LIHEAP, and LIWAP state staff to determine crossover data and federal eligibility requirements. Create an application based on shared information.

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Communicate to Connect - KY

- Linkage added value to the Network
- Required a coordinated effort between the CSBG, LIHEAP, and LIWAP state offices
- Increased communication between the CSBG, LIHEAP, LIWAP, and local agencies

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Grow Relationships

- Be purposeful and intentional
- Develop two-way, transparent relationships with other state agencies/ external partners
- Be interested in other organizations, know their work, be helpful to them, be an advocate for their interests.
- Utilize any existing internal connections
- Advocate for the CAAs

Engage and Do the Homework

- Define what "linkages" means; what success looks like
- Assess office capacity
- Commit time/staff now to this mandatory effort
- Build knowledge of other resources available at the State level
- Research other State contracts/structure and work
- Identify existing partnerships, build on these. Bring in the State Association.
- Communicate early, often with State leadership about the important work of CSBG.
- Just say "yes." Be flexible.
- Build into the contracts with CAAs

Communicate to Connect

- Share what is being done by the State from the start—be transparent
- Regular meetings with the network and other partners
 - Roundtables
 - Work Groups
- Monthly meetings of network: bring in other state agencies
- Share state's efforts to create linkages
 - Newsletters
- Follow-up with the network

Learn and Teach

- Take the initiative: start the conversation
- Begin by using the ACSI (data/commentary)
- Educate CAAs on the ACSI and efforts around linkages
- Learn from the CAAs what linkages are needed now; would add value
- Identify where there are gaps in services/resources
- Hone-in on the opportunities, resources available at the State level to meet the needs identified. Share these.
- Teach other State agencies about the CSBG network, its strengths, capacity, and knowledge.

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Questions

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