

# National Association for State Community Services Programs



# 2023

WINTER TRAINING CONFERENCE

April 3 – 7 | Arlington, VA

# MISSION POSSIBLE

## Restoring Hope

**Community Action Boards in Action:  
Helping States Support CAA Good Governance**

[www.nascsp.org](http://www.nascsp.org)



**April 4, 2023**



**N A S C S P**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS

**NASCSP 2023 Winter Training Conference**  
**CSBG New Manager's Orientation**  
**April 3 - 4, 2023**

*Presented by:*

Denise Harlow, CCAP, NCAP

Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, NCAP

National Community Action Partnership

[www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com)

@CAPartnership @PartnershipCEO



# The Promise Of Community Action

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*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live.*

*We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*

# Agenda



**Community Action Board Purpose and Context**



**Duties and Responsibilities of a Board**



**Board Makeup**



**Board Functioning**

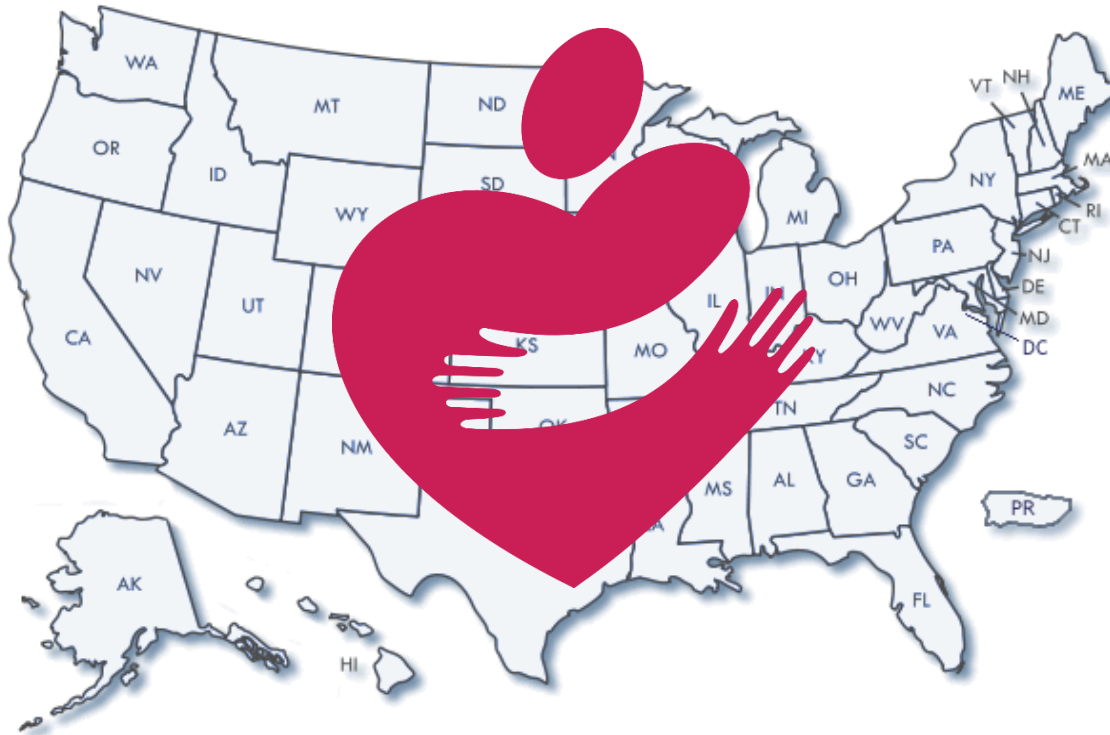


**Ways State Offices can support Good Board Process**

# Community Action Network

Red, Blue,  
Purple States

*Board and Staff  
on All Sides of  
the Aisle*



1000+ Agencies | 44 State Associations | 50+ State CSBG Offices | National Partners  
More than 15 million served

*We work together to promote workable solutions that connect more families to opportunity*



**“The opposite of poverty isn’t wealth.  
The opposite of poverty is justice”  
Bryan Stevenson**



# Board Members

Why do board members serve?

What do board members expect from the CAA?

What do board members give to the CAA?

What do board members get from board service?

What do CAAs expect from them?

What does the State CSBG Office expect from them?



*“Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice and discipline.”*

*— Jim Collins*





What can change the world today is  
the same thing that has changed it  
in the past—an idea and the service  
of dedicated, committed individuals  
to that idea.

— *Sargent Shriver* —

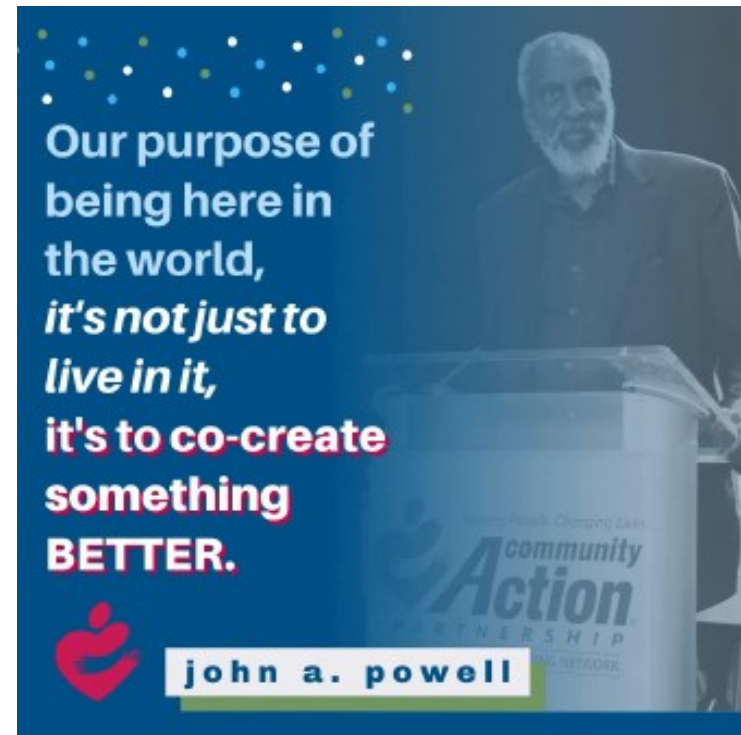
AZ QUOTES

# The Community Action Board

- Community Action Boards are governing bodies that set out the high-level vision, mission, strategic direction for the organization
  - Boards govern the entire agency, not only CSBG\*
    - For a private nonprofit, the governing body IS the board
    - For public agencies, governing body is local government; duties delegated to the board may differ
- \*Public agency boards may be limited to only CSBG and specific oversight or advisement tasks

# Board Roles and Responsibilities

- Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience
- Financial Oversight
- Personnel
- Board Development
- Fund Development
- Strategic Planning
- Program Performance
- Community Ambassador
- Advocacy



# Community Action Boards

- Boards are comprised of dedicated volunteers from specific sectors of the community
  - The CSBG Act requires a tripartite board structure
- Boards are subject to multiple requirements from several sources:

CSBG Act

State nonprofit laws

State CSBG statute or regulations

Contracts between State & CSBG eligible entities

State CSBG policy

Other Agency Funding Source Requirements  
(Head Start, HUD, CHDO, etc.)

Agency Bylaws

# What is the Role of the Board?





# Mission and Board Service

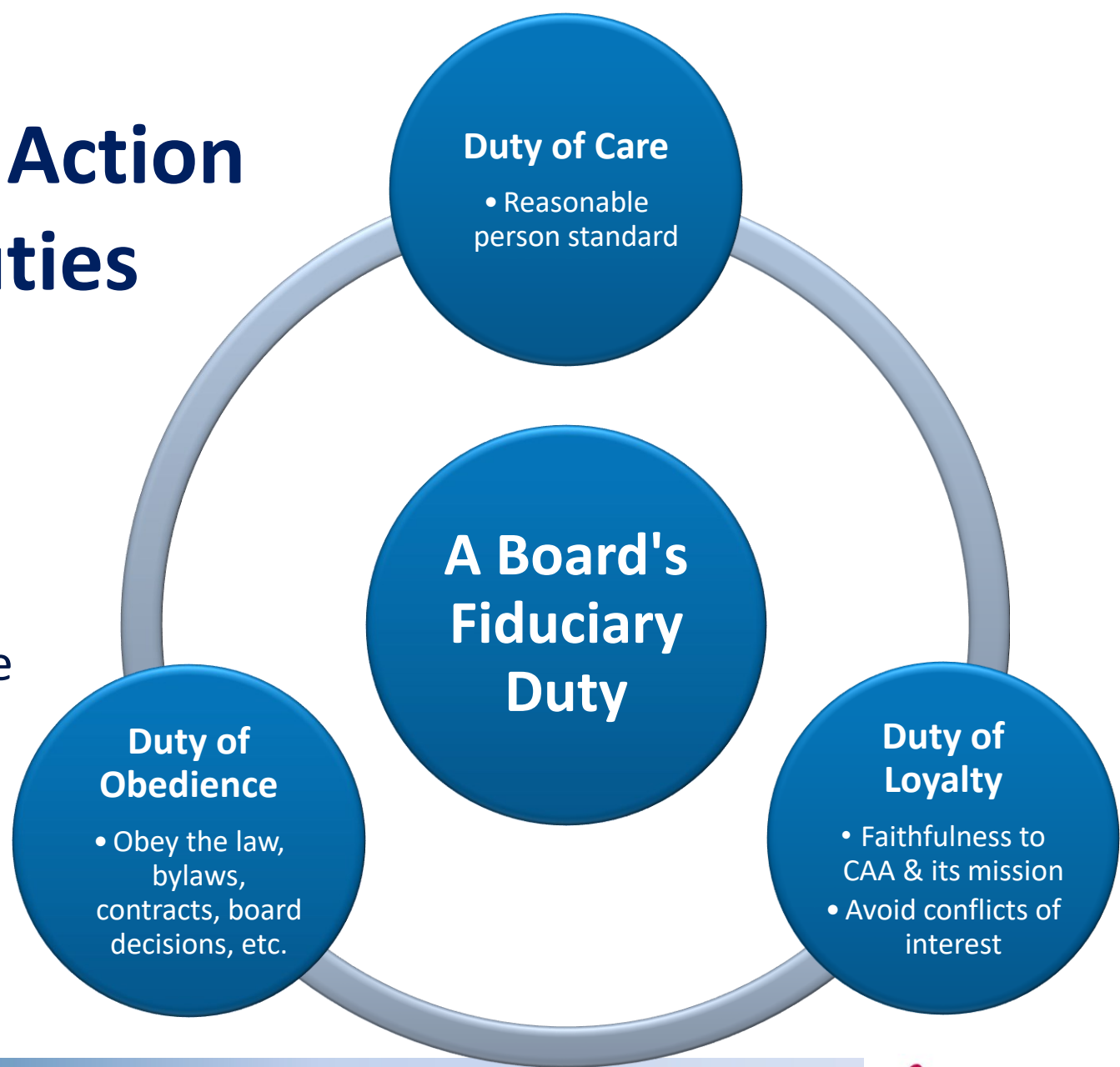
- The mission establishes the purpose to which the agency resources are to be devoted
- Board members are charged with carrying out their duties:
  - In good faith
  - With the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances
  - In a manner the director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation

# CAA Boards (IM 82)

- Sections 676B of the Community Services Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 1998 requires that, as a condition of designation, private nonprofit entities and public organizations administer their CSBG program through tripartite boards that **“fully participate in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program to serve low-income communities.”**

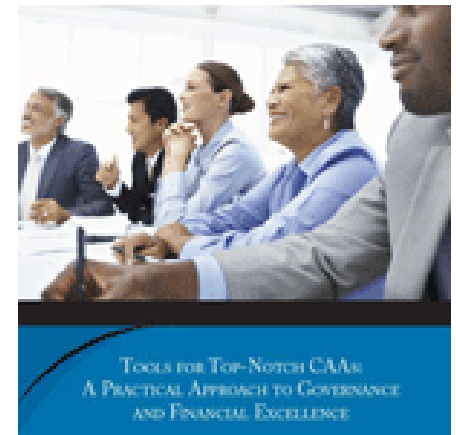
# Community Action Board Duties

Board members are **fiduciaries**. They have the duty to **act for someone else's benefit** and hold the **agency's interest ahead of their own**



# Board Fiduciary Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience

- **Board members are fiduciaries.** They have the duty to act for someone else's benefit and hold the agency's interest ahead of their own
  - **Care:** Reasonable person standard
  - **Loyalty:** Faithfulness to CAA and its mission
    - Avoid conflicts of interest, self dealing
  - **Obedience:** Obey the law, bylaws, contracts, board decisions, etc.



See page 9 for more on  
Fiduciary Duties

# Good Governance is Good Leadership

- Board and Management
- Tone at the Top
  - Compliance
  - Ethical Behavior
  - Avoiding Conflicts of Interest
- Bylaws that work for the organization
- Board Directors and Officers Liability Insurance





# A quick note about bylaws...

- Bylaws are created by the board – therefore, they can be amended by the board assuming...
- Amendments are compliant with relevant federal, state, and local requirements
- Process for amendment is followed



# Supporting Boards in their Roles

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Resources for orientation and ongoing training of board members

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Advocate for flexible policy that meets the needs of your agencies

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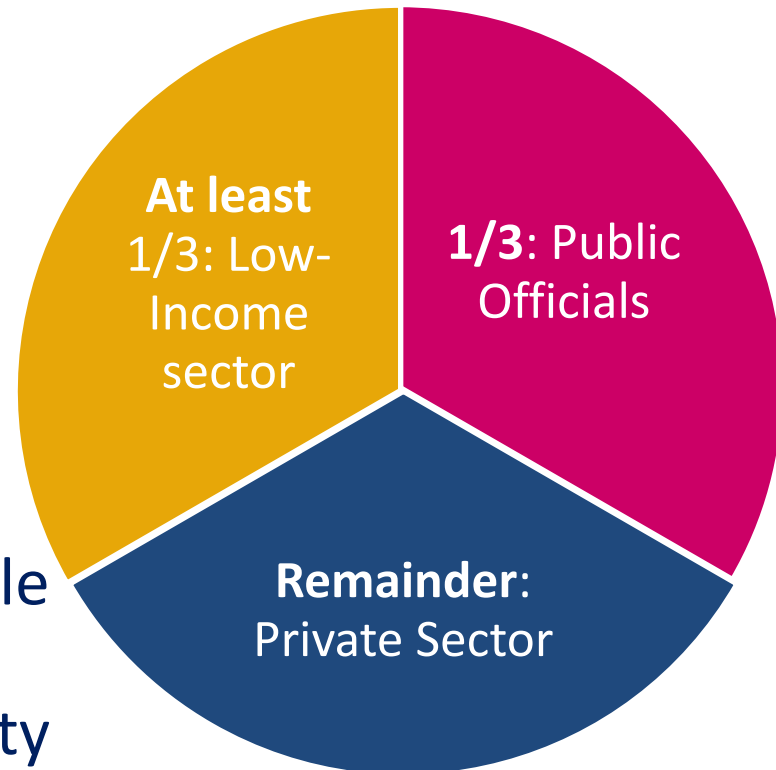
Respecting that not all boards function the same (nor should they)

# Who Makes Up the Board?



# Structure & Composition

- Does the board meet legal requirements for structure?
  - State nonprofit laws
  - Federal CSBG Act
  - State CSBG laws
  - Other funding sources
- The tripartite structure reflects the values of Community Action:
  - Centering in the voice of people with low-incomes
  - Building power and opportunity
  - Multi-sector collaboration



# More than Compliance...

The tripartite structure reflects the values of Community Action:

Centering in the voice of people with low-incomes

Building power and opportunity

Multi-sector collaboration



# The Reality of Recruitment

Agencies, particularly in rural areas, can struggle to find volunteers to serve on their boards

- Consider rules/regulations that recognize this challenge

It's about more than just finding a person to serve – it's about finding the right person to serve

- Skillsets; Connections; Equity

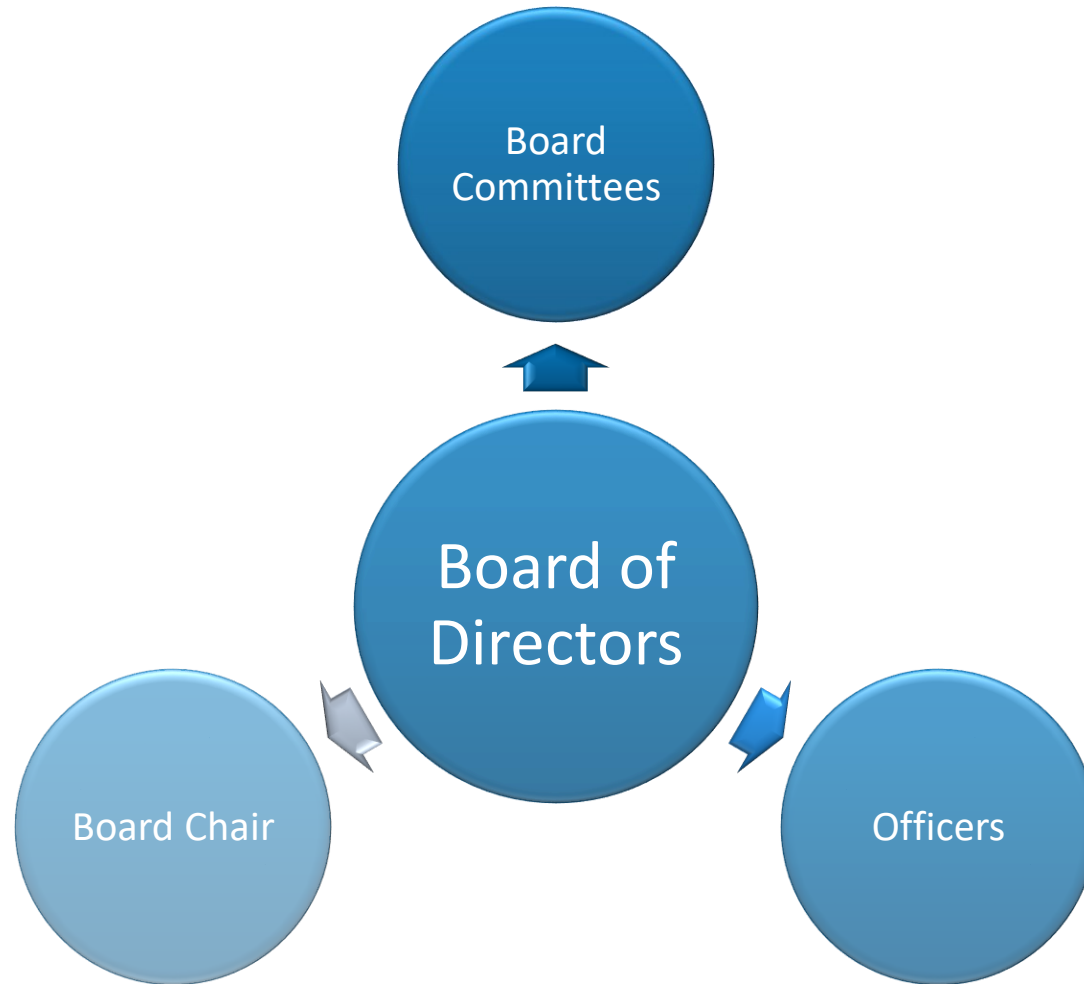
Recruitment is one thing; retention is another

- States can encourage retention by approving CSBG to be used for board member barrier removal such as transportation, childcare, and technology needs,



# Board Functioning

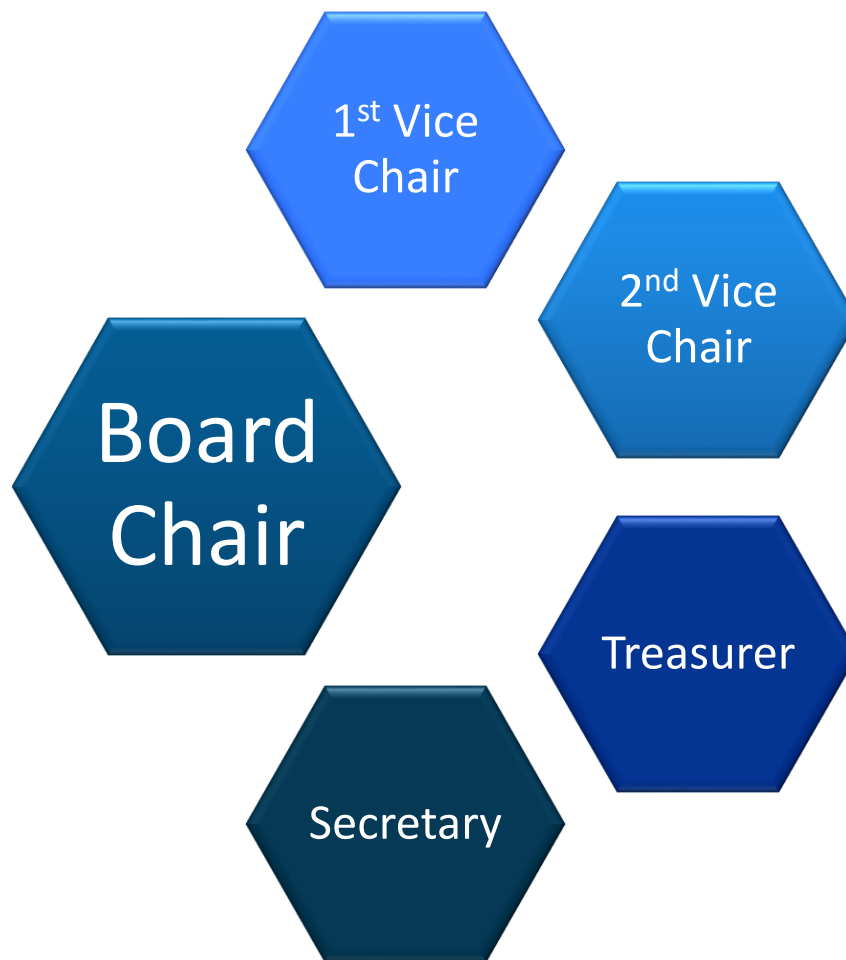
# The Board Acts as Body of the Whole But Has Many Moving Parts



# Board Chair

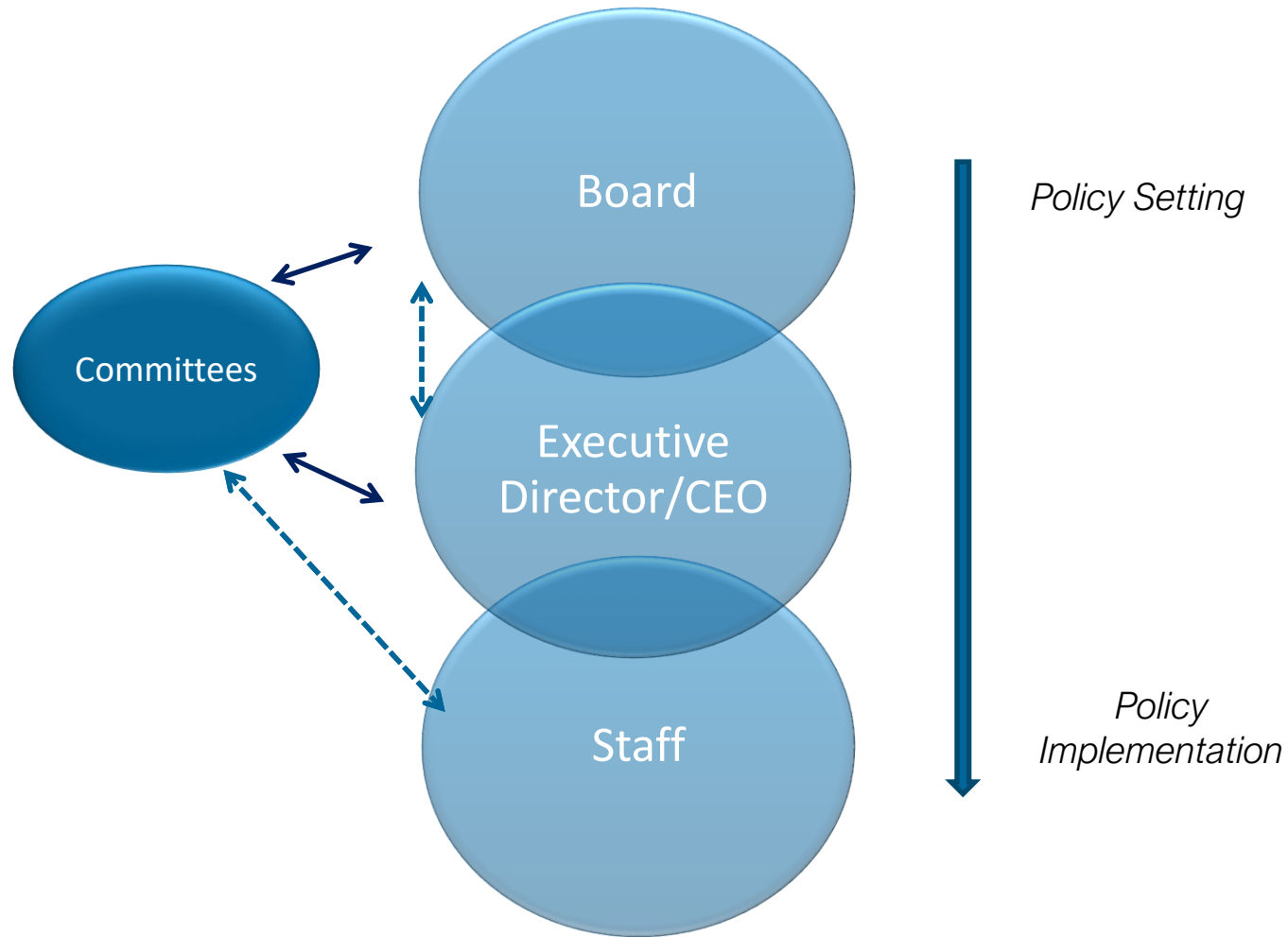
- Leads board meetings
- Works with executive director (and executive committee, if applicable) to plan meeting agendas
- Supports and acts as sounding board for executive director
- Acts as spokesperson for board
  - If given that authority by the board

# Board Officers

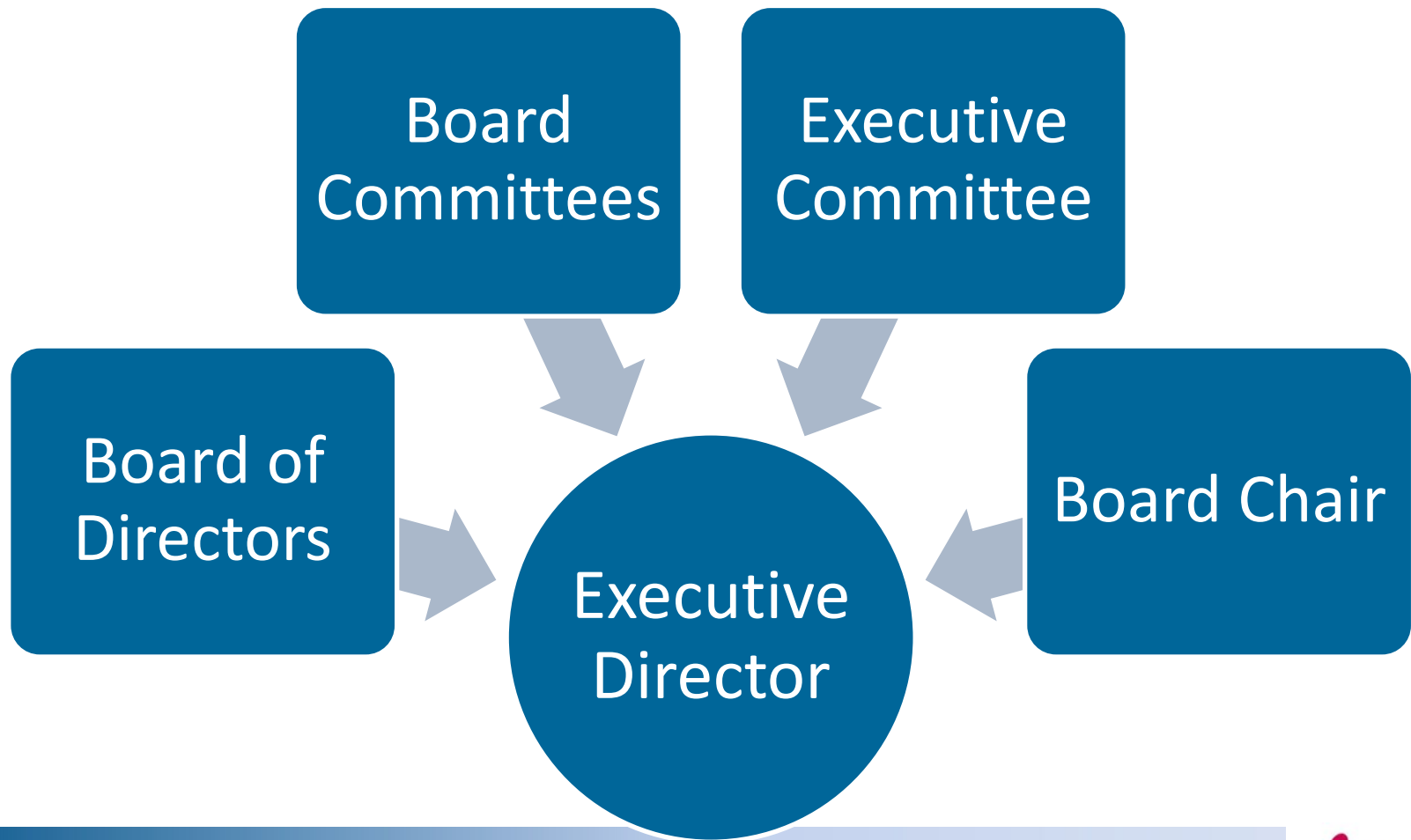


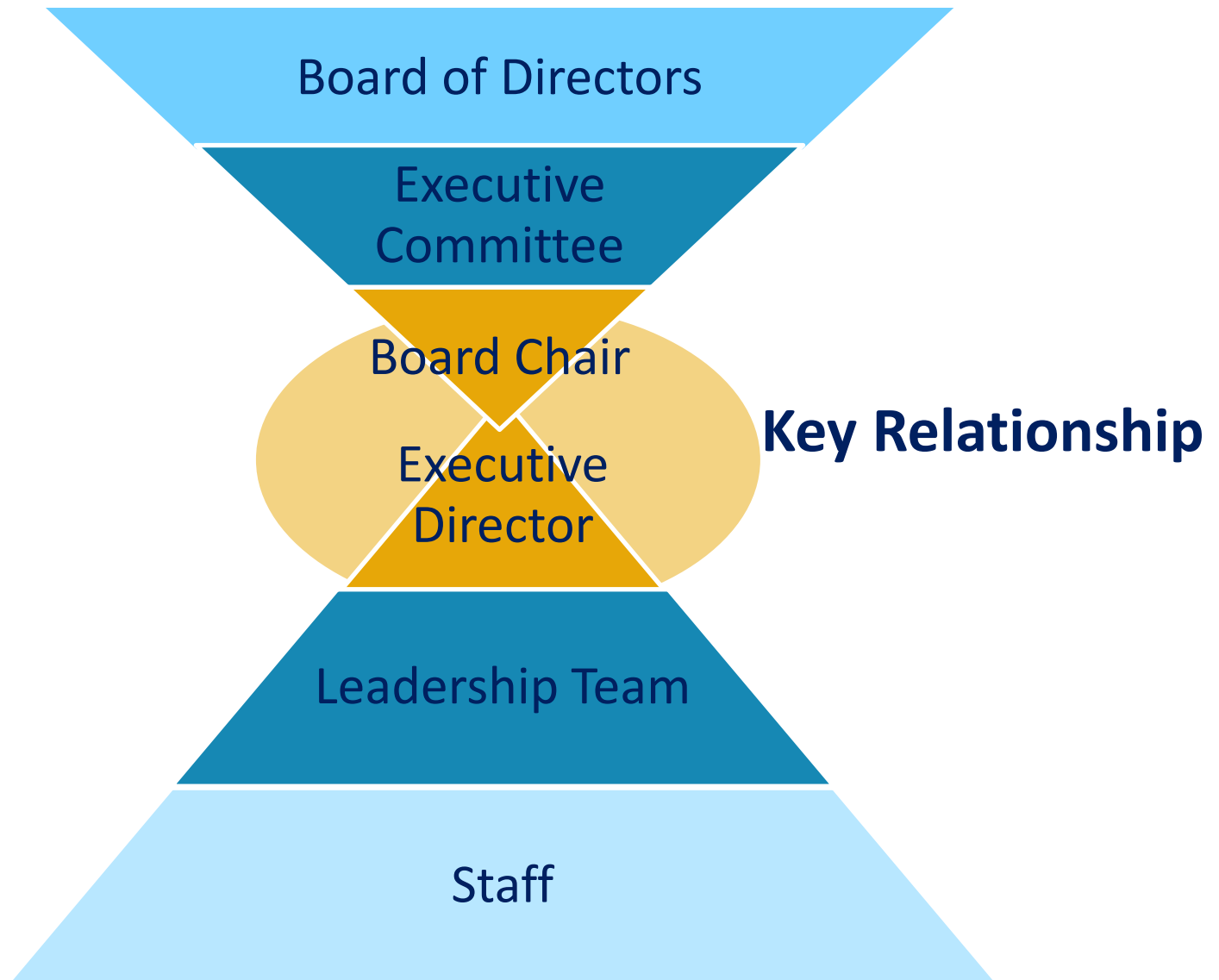


# Board-ED/CEO-Staff Relationship



# Critical Relationships





# Joint Efforts

## Governance

- Meeting Agendas
- Board Calendar
- Board Development
- Board Orientation
- Recruitment

## Planning

- Strategic Planning
- Succession Planning

## Finance

- Financial Oversight
- Fundraising
- Audit

## Advocacy

- Lobbying
- Public Statements
- Community Relations

**Key Facet – No Surprises!**

# The Realities of Board Functioning

- Boards are made up of people
  - Conflict happens
  - People miss meetings due to real life
  - These are volunteers with other responsibilities
- There is no one right way for a board to operate
- Remember, EDs/CEOs work for the board but also work in collaboration with the board to lead
- Board Governance is art, not science

# Current Challenges

## Increased emphasis on:

- High-performance organizations
- Directing resources to organizations that can most effectively serve high-need communities
- Evidence-based practices
- Accountability

## Post-Pandemic Environment

- Politics
- Funding Shifts
- Human Resources & Workforce
- Significant needs but fewer resources



# High Risk Areas for Community Action Agencies

Financial Management

Governance

Program Performance

Human Resources

Leadership

- Board and Management



# States Supporting Good Governance: What Works?



# TOOLS AND RESOURCES

# Critical Relationship: Board Chair-ED/CEO



## DYNAMIC DUO

### A Guide to Enhancing the Board & Executive Director Partnership



In Partnership with:  
**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

#### IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR RELATIONSHIP

The board chair and executive director work closely together to ensure that all board members and senior management are receiving the information they need to execute their respective responsibilities.

##### A. Establishing the Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the board chair often include:

- Working with the executive director (and executive committee, if applicable) to establish the agenda for the board meetings;
- Acting as the liaison between the executive director and the full board;
- Serving as the spokesperson for the full board (if so authorized by the board);
- Convening and conducting regular board meetings and ensuring a quorum is established;
- Moderating and facilitating board discussions to encourage varying points of view; and
- Helping to organize and lead new member orientations (with the executive director and governance committee).

The specific positions, titles and duties of an organization's officers, including the board chair, should be set forth in the CAA's bylaws. For nonprofit CAAs, the majority of state nonprofit corporate laws require officers of a nonprofit board to include a president, secretary, and treasurer, in addition to any other position that the board may wish to designate. A board president is often referred to by a CAA as the board chair. If state nonprofit corporate laws require a president, but a CAA has a board chair, the CAA should specify in its bylaws that the board chair serves as the president for purposes of the state's corporate laws. The board chair, along with the other officers, is elected by the board. Officers typically serve for an annual term but the bylaws may specify a longer term. For public CAAs, a local ordinance, if one exists, that establishes the authority of the tripartite board and its bylaws will govern the designation and selection of officers of the board.

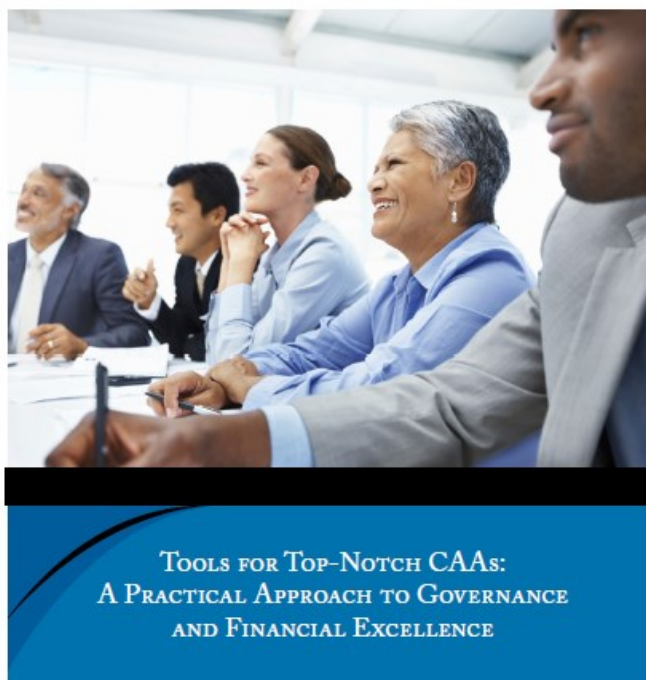
##### B. Cultivating a Partnership

The chair may work with the executive director to help him/her navigate and achieve the goals and objectives established for the executive director by the full board or a board committee. The chair often serves as a sounding board for the concerns of the executive director. When the executive director is under stress or experiencing some difficulty in communicating with board members,

*Dynamic Duo: A Guide to Enhancing the Board & Executive Director Partnership*

25

# Toolkit for Top Notch CAAs



**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

## TOOLS FOR TOP-NOTCH CAAs: A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE

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2017 Edition



Do the Right Thing

## GUIDEBOOK



How CAAs Can Cultivate  
a Culture of Compliance  
and High Ethical Standards

**CAPLAW**  
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

# Toolkit: Do the Right Thing

## SECTION III. HOW CAN CAA LEADERS CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE AND HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS?

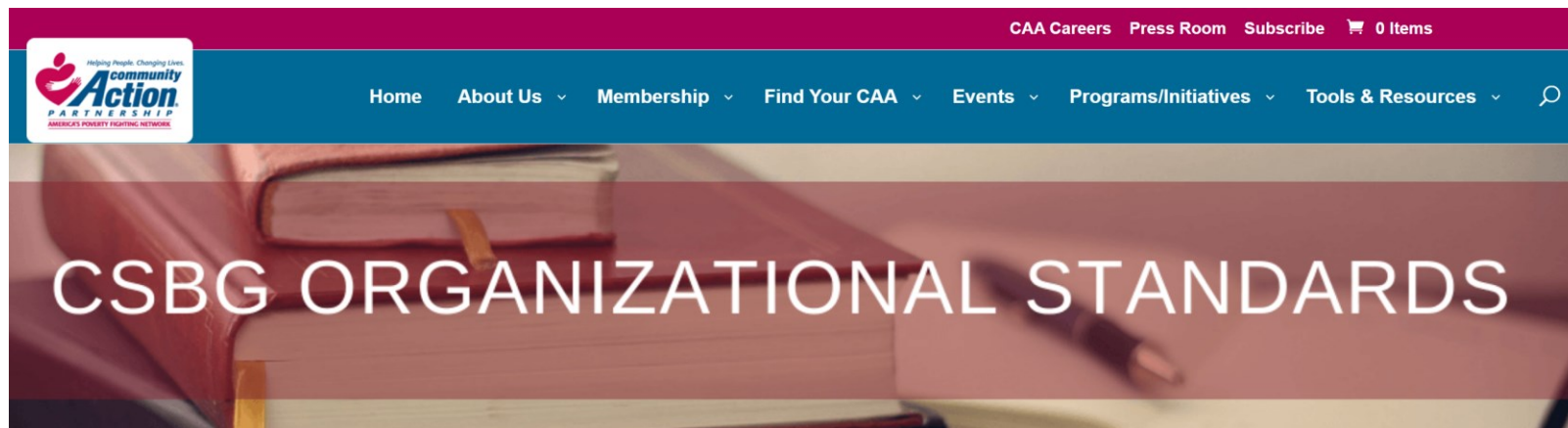
Following are 10 actions CAAs leaders can take to ensure compliance and ethical behavior throughout their organizations:



These actions – which need neither be expensive nor complicated – represent a continuous process that can and should be integrated into the organization's existing operations. This Guidebook describes each of these actions in further detail.



# CSBG Organizational Standards Tools



## A Brief History...



## What are the CSBG Organizational Standards?

The **CSBG Organizational Standards** are a comprehensive set of standards developed with input from the entire CSBG Network through a three-year multi phase process led by the Center of Excellence. The Organizational Standards were announced in January 2015 with the OCS release of *IM 138, State Establishment of Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities*, directing States to establish organizational standards by fiscal year 2016.

The Organizational Standards are organized in three thematic groups comprising nine categories and totals of 58 standards for private, nonprofit entities and 50 for public entities. The purpose of the organizational standards is to ensure that all agencies have appropriate organizational capacity, in both critical financial and administrative areas, as well as areas of unique importance to the mission of the Community Action network.

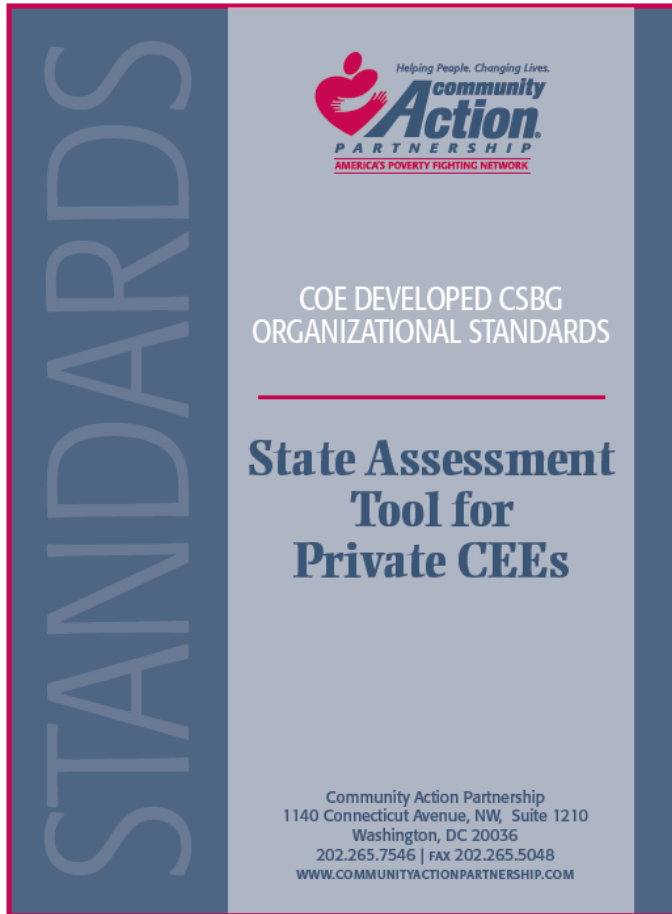
<https://communityactionpartnership.com/organizational-standards/>

# T/A Guides Toolkits and Webinars for Each of the Nine Categories

- Additional Guidance
  - Definition
  - Compliance
  - Document
- Beyond Compliance
- Resources
- Assessment Scales



# Tools to Help Assess



- Assessment Tool
- Separate Tools for States and CAAs
- Separate Tool for Private and Public CAA State Assessments
- Includes Final COE-Developed Standards Language
- COE Guidance



## Raising the Low-Income Voice

Case Studies in Democratic Selection Procedures



### INTRODUCTION

*Updated April 2021*

Since the inception of the Economic Opportunity Act, a fundamental goal of Community Action has been to provide low-income individuals with a voice in the administration of its poverty-alleviating programs. With the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act's call to achieve "maximum participation" of the low-income community in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of CSBG-funded programs, a critical venue for the low-income community's participation is their representation on the tripartite board.

Despite the importance placed on maximum participation of the low-income community,

such as election to a position of responsibility in another significant service or community organization such as a school PTA, a faith-based organization leadership group; or an advisory board/governing council to another low-income service provider."

IM 82 advises CAAs to ensure democratic selection procedures "directly through election [or] public form," but if that is not possible, it lists a number of alternatives. The case studies in Raising the Low-Income Voice are focused on the "direct" democratic procedures. If a CAA determines that direct democratic procedures are not possible, it will likely be able to comply with the law by creating what may be called

# Raising the Low-Income Voice: Case Studies in Democratic Selection Procedures

- Seek applicants through social media, word of mouth, civic/community involvement and other entities that serve low-income population.
- Qualified applicant(s) is/are elected by low-income population in service area.
- Ballot election is held:
  - » In Community Services Department
  - » During high volume service time
  - » Bio for applicant available during the election process
  - » Educate voting participants in person and in written document as to the need for low income Board representation
  - » Voter sign in sheet
  - » Ballots are tallied when election is complete
  - » Hold orientation for newly elected Board member before the next scheduled Board of Directors' meeting
- Outcome of election is presented to Board of Directors for approval at the next scheduled meeting
- Ballots/Voter sign in sheet retained in Board Minutes permanent record

[https://www.capl原因.org/resources/PublicationDocuments/CAPLAW\\_RaisingtheLowIncomeVoice\\_Introduction\\_April2021.pdf](https://www.capl原因.org/resources/PublicationDocuments/CAPLAW_RaisingtheLowIncomeVoice_Introduction_April2021.pdf)

## CAA Board Meetings: Template Meeting Minutes and Index of Form Resolutions

### Introduction

Community action agency (CAA) boards perform vital governance and oversight functions

for the  
members.  
Meetings  
loyalty  
of the

#### CAA Board Meeting Minutes Template

[CAA Name]  
Minutes of a [Regular or Special Meeting of] the Board of Directors  
of [Legal Name of the Organization]  
Held on [Date] at/via [Location]

**Board Members Present:** [List names and titles, if any]

**Board Members Absent:** [List names and titles, if any]

**Staff Present:** [List names and titles, if any]

**Guests Present:** [List names, titles, and affiliations, if any]

#### 1. Call to Order

[Board Chair Name] called this [regular or special] meeting of the board to order at [time]. All board members were present at the start of the meeting [except for Name].<sup>2</sup> A quorum was present. [Board Chair Name] presided over the meeting and confirmed that all participants could see and hear one another. All participated in person, except for [Name] who participated

## Template: Board Meeting Minutes and Resolutions

### 2-part template:

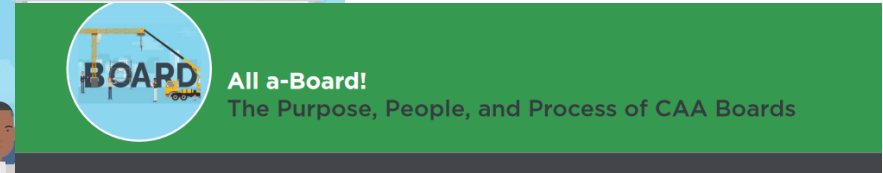
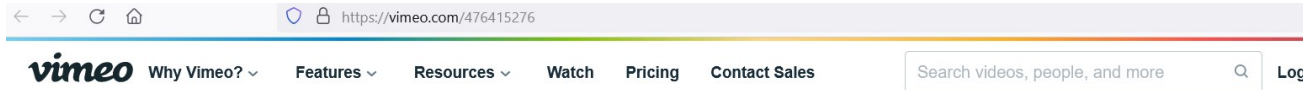
- Board meeting minutes
- Index of board resolutions

Available on the CAPLAW website:

<https://resources.capl原因.org/resources/template-meeting-minutes-and-index-of-form-resolutions/>



# CAPLAW All A-Board! Board Training Videos



**6. Process: The CAA Board Meeting Ecosystem - Consent Agendas and the Conservation of Time**  
Discussion Guide

**Length:** 7:56"  
[Stream](#) | [Download](#)

#### Video Summary

Like a complex ecosystem, a board of directors of a CAA has a highly-developed set of structures and processes that help it navigate survival in its world of compliance and governance responsibilities. This video, which is narrated in a manner similar to a nature documentary film, follows a board of directors as it uses a consent agenda to save time and resources at a board meeting. It provides an overview of a consent agenda, what it includes, and how it can be used effectively to allow for in-depth analysis and discussion of important issues, such as strategic planning or development priorities.

#### Learning Objectives

After watching this video, participants will be able to:

- Understand what a consent agenda is and how a board can use it to help streamline board meetings and improve board efficiency.
- Understand the process required for a board to adopt and implement a consent agenda.
- Highlight the types of items that a board may and may not include on a consent agenda.
- Consider the benefits and drawbacks of a consent agenda and discuss whether it is right for your board.

#### Using the Video Effectively


Suggestions for how to use this video include:



<https://caplaw.org/resources/Videos/BoardTrainingVideosLanding.html>

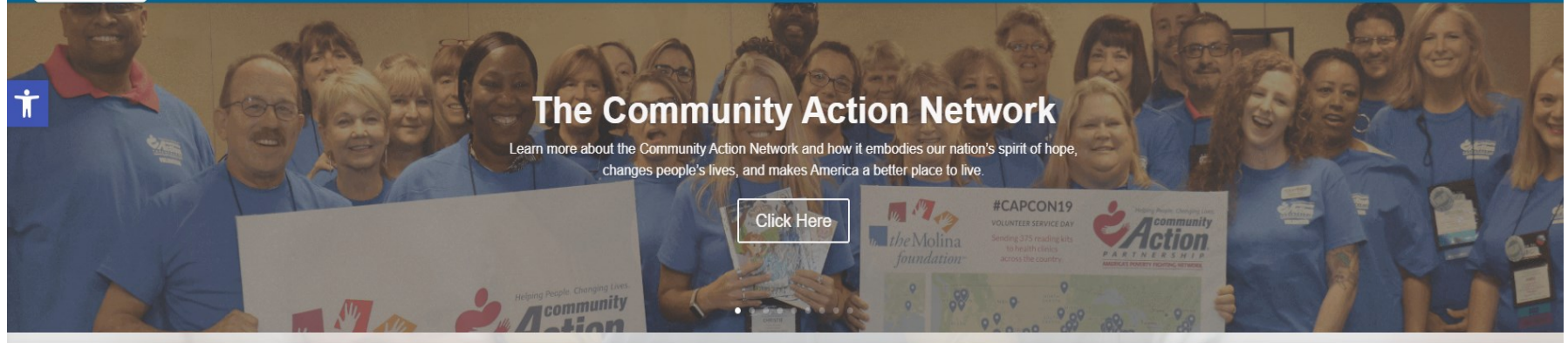


# [www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com)



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## The Community Action Network

Learn more about the Community Action Network and how it embodies our nation's spirit of hope, changes people's lives, and makes America a better place to live.

[Click Here](#)



### Fighting Poverty

The US Census Bureau estimates that 11.4% of the population lives in poverty. We work to end poverty across the country.



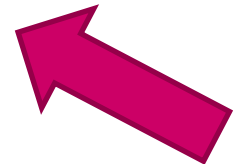
### Community Action Network

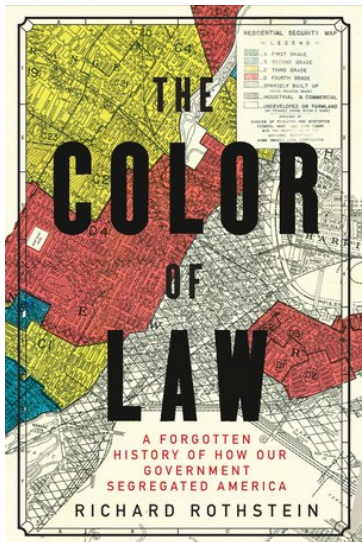
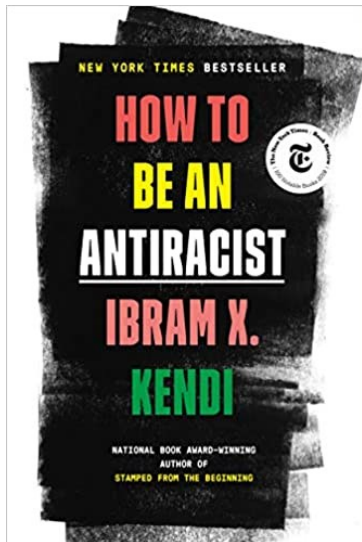
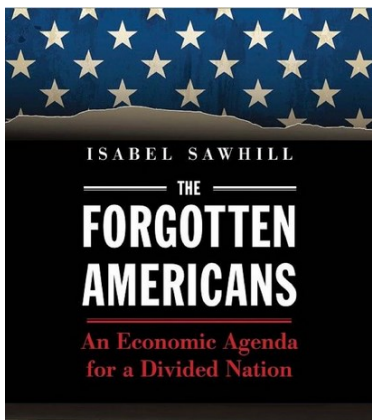
We have over a thousand agencies in local communities, as well as state associations and national partners.



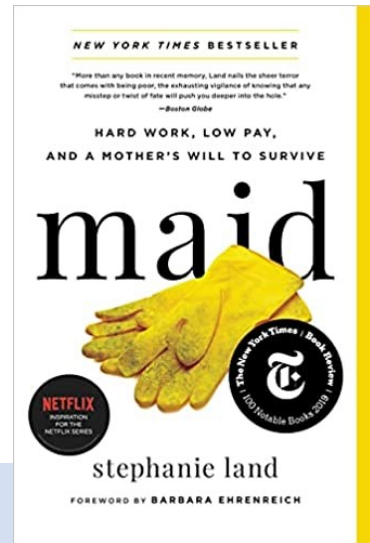
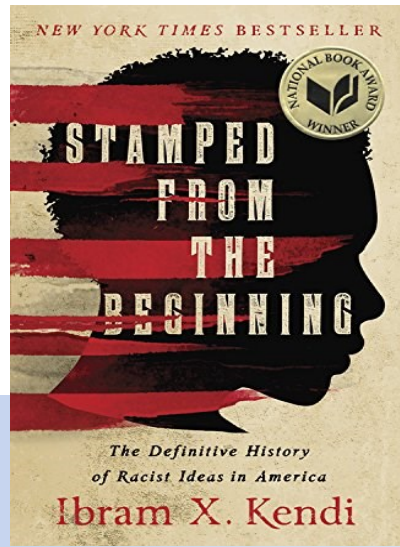
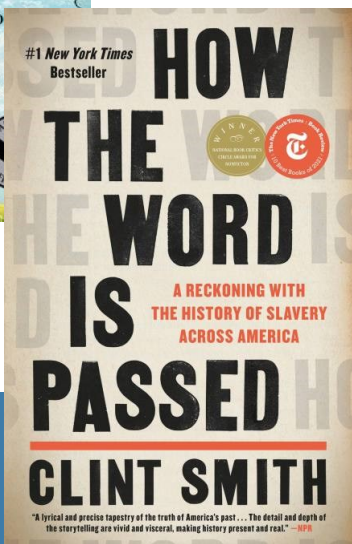
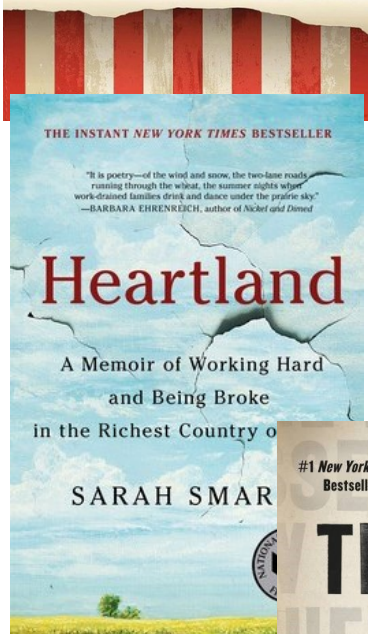
### Tools and Resources

Find all of our Training and Technical Assistance webinars, toolkits, useful information and other resources.





## Books To Build Your Toolbox



# Questions?

Contact

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*#CommunityActionWorks*

*#WeR1000Strong*



Scan here to  
complete the  
survey for this  
session!

