

## Monthly State Administrator Webinars | Community Needs Assessments (CNA) | May 15, 2025

### Community Needs Assessment Overview

- A Community Needs Assessment (CNA) is a systematic process used to identify the strengths, needs, and resources of a community—especially as they relate to individuals and families with low incomes.
- Under the [Community Services Block Grant \(CSBG\) Act](#), eligible entities must complete a **Community Action Plan**, which includes a **Community Needs Assessment**.
- [CSBG IM 138](#) established the Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities; this is the only legally binding IM. There are 10 Organizational Standards that directly tie to the CNA.
- The CNA is the **foundation** for strategic decision-making and ensures CSBG-funded services respond to **real community needs**.

### Maine's Statewide Community Needs Assessment Approach

- [Jaimi Cilford](#) from Maine presented their approach to conducting a statewide CNA, explaining how they consolidated 10 separate agency assessments into a single coordinated effort.
- The process involved creating a templated survey with 16 county profiles and a statewide analysis, with agencies paying their portion based on the CSBG formula.

### California's CNA and CAP Plan Process

- [Wilmer Brown](#) and [Stephanie Williams](#) described California's CNA process, highlighting their use of a 35-page template for assessing needs and developing CAPs across 58 counties and 60 eligible entities.
- Wilmer explained the iterative process of template development since 2014, emphasizing the importance of agency collaboration and feedback.
- Wilmer detailed the template's structure, requirements, and resources available to agencies, including data sources and training opportunities.
- Stephanie highlighted the success of the California ROMA Representative (CAR) training, which increased the number of certified Roma professionals in the network from 15-20 to 60.
- Stephanie and Wilmer presented on their work supporting community action plans and needs assessments, highlighting successful initiatives, including work groups that shared best practices and resources.
- They discussed changes made to their templates over time, including the addition of disaster planning requirements and the incorporation of network feedback to improve data collection and question clarity.
- The presenters agreed to share examples of inclusive survey questions and their contact information, which will be included in next week's digest along with the presentation slides.
- The presentation concluded with lessons learned, including the effectiveness of templates, early release of templates, and the importance of network participation.

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### Resources

- [Monthly State Administrator Webinar: Community Needs Assessment PowerPoint](#)
- [NASCS CAA Guide to Comprehensive Community Needs Assessments](#)
- [NASCS Checklist for Monitoring CNA for State CSBG Offices](#)
- [NASCS CSBG Webinars](#)
- [NASCS Member Portal: CNA](#) (Login Credentials Required)
- [NCAP CNA Resource Guide](#)
- [CAPLAW Organizational Resources Guide](#)