

Today's Goals

Each of you walks away with one idea that excites you!

Each of you decides to focus your energy & determination to implement that idea!

SMWG 2.0 Members

Member	State	Region
Marc Tremblay	New Hampshire	I
Nikki Battistoni	New York	II
Alicia McDaniel	Delaware	III
Lindsay Whittin	Tennessee	IV
Amy Parker	Minnesota	V
Genevieve Fields	Louisiana	VI
Monice Crawford	Kansas	VII
Karen Quackenbush	Utah	VIII
Christine Shall	Arizona	IX
Elizabeth Rackham	Idaho	X
Beverly Buchanan	Arkansas	NASCSP Board President

SMWG 2.0 PURPOSE

WITH A FOCUS ON RURAL COMMUNITIES, ASSIST OCS WITH THE RESEARCH AND IDENTIFICATION OF BOTH HIGH-IMPACT AREAS CRITICAL TO CSBG ADMINISTRATION AND THE ASSOCIATED PROMISING PRACTICES.



- Identified key challenges facing rural communities
- Identified local CAA challenges to serving rural communities
- Identified and prioritized state levers to assist CAAs to better serve rural communities
- Identified existing Promising Peer Practices that address those challenges/obstacles

Rural Poverty: The Data

Census Bureau's 2021 data provides the definitive overall picture of of poverty in the U.S.

- Over 46 million people, 14% of the U.S. population, live in rural areas.
- The poverty rate in the rural U.S. is 15.4% compared to 12.8% nationwide.
- This translates to approximately 7 million rural poor in the U.S.

Rural Poverty: The Data

Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) data shows:

- There are 353 persistently poor counties in the United States (comprising 11.2 percent of all U.S. counties).
- The large majority (301 or 85.3 percent) of the persistentpoverty counties are nonmetro, accounting for 15.2 percent of all nonmetro counties.

For purposes of the SMWG 2.0's work, it is worth noting that

- 30% (17 states) of U.S. states and territories have between 30%-50% rural populations;
- 45% (25 states) of states/territories have between 10-30% rural populations.
- 4 states have a population over 50% rural.
- Only 10 states have populations that are less than 10% rural.

Rural Poverty: The Issue

As established by the ERS:

"In the United States, people living in poverty tend to be clustered in certain regions, counties, and neighborhoods rather than being spread evenly across the Nation. Research has shown that the poor living in areas where poverty is prevalent face impediments beyond those of their individual circumstances. Concentrated poverty contributes to poor housing and health conditions, higher crime and school dropout rates, and employment dislocations. As a result, economic conditions in very poor areas can create limited opportunities for poor residents that become self-perpetuating."

Rural Poverty: Critical Issues Identified

Lack of jobs with a living wage

Lack of transportation options

Affordable housing and housing stock issues (old inventory, short-term rentals, etc.)

Food insecurity

Lack of community resources (healthcare clinics/hospitals, public transit, affordable housing units, etc.)

Cost of utilities

Lack of childcare

Lack of youth services (jobs, community services, mental health)

Rural Agencies: Critical Pain Points

Workforce shortages/finding qualified staff & contractors

High cost of serving remote, often large areas (i.e., travel time of staff to rural communities); service delivery and outreach more difficult.

Overstretched capacity/multiple programs managed by few personnel

Limited community resources/services (including lack of internet access)

Limited coordination between agencies

Funding challenges with federal allocation to states (minimal funding based on current funding formulas), and state allocation to agencies

Increased administrative burdens and documentation requirements from states (i.e., monthly reimbursement documentation)

Addressing cultural and language barriers

Conflict of interest rules/procurement (where only one vendor)

Board vacancies



State Survey

PROMISING PEER PRACTICES IDENTIFIED



Eleven Focus Groups



Thirty One-on-One Interviews with State CSBG directors/staff

Critical State Levers to Assist CAAs to Better Serve Rural Communities

01

Administrative
Requirements
(reporting, board member recruitment policies, audit report requirements, client application requirements, etc.)

02

Standardized Tools and Templates for CAAs (i.e., Org Standards, local CNAs, CAP Plans, Strategic Plans) 03

Specialized Rural Strategies (work groups, linkages, targeted funding, etc.)

Streamlined Administrative Requirements and Processes

Genevieve Fields (SMWG2: LA)

Jaimi Clifford (ME): Statewide CNA

Matt Fitzgerald (VA): Reduce both the frequency and content of reporting and monitoring



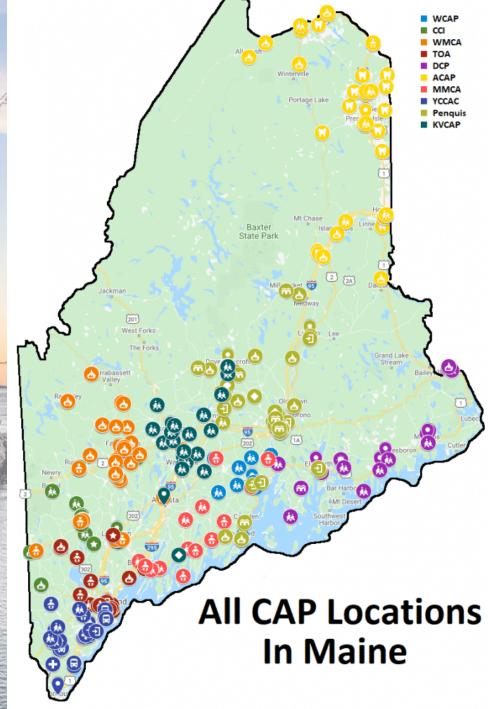
Streamlined Administrative Requirements and Processes

Statewide Community Needs Assessment or an equivalent

 Reduce both the frequency and content of reporting and monitoring

 Coordinate with other state agencies to reduce duplication of information collected



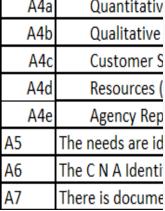


Why? Statewide Community Needs Assessment



A1	The agency has a comprehensive Community I	Needs Assessment (CNA) document that w	vas created within the past 3 years	
A2	The C N A document identifies the community	being assessed. (This could be a service ar	rea or other designation)	
A3	The C N A identifies the population in need. (Clear demographic profile, not just "low income.")			
A4	The Community Needs Assessment includes a	variaty of data from reliable sources, inclu	ıding:	
A4a	Quantitativ		CHECKLIST FOR MON	
A4b	Quantative	ssociation for State ut their needs		
ΛΛc	Customer S Communit	y Services	COMMUNITY IN	

Assessment





NASCSP Programs

A Community Action Guide to Comprehensive Community Needs Assessments

www.nascsp.org

NITORING IEEDS ASSESSMENTS FOR STATE CSBG OFFICES

National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) 111 K St NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20001 (202) 370-3657

nascsp.org



This publication was developed under grant #90ET0451 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services and the endorsement of the federal government should not be assumed unless otherwise granted.

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assessment process

Coordinate and Evaluate

- When are your agencies due? How many will be conducting early? On time? late? How do you handle those conversations?
- What is your role at the state office?
- What is the agency's role?

2. Discuss the pros/cons

- Maximizing resources (time and energy, cost, etc.)
- Being on the same cycle
- Potential comparisons/differences highlighted
 - (Apples to Apples when we are Apples to Oranges
- Brought the network together to discuss their own needs and how we were going to meet them all

3. Take Action – Just say YES!

- Plan and implement
- Discuss and analyze
- Report out
- One report for the State Office to review
- Statewide data to share to the legislatures, no need to worry about what district they reside in

4. Re-evaluate at the end

Sound familiar? ROMA

Virginia CSBG Network

- 31 CAA's
 - 22 Private Non-Profit
 - 6 Public CAA's
 - 3 Statewide Organizations (funded with 5% discretionary)
- Housed in Department of Social Services
 - CSBG Program Manager (full time)
 - CSBG Program Consultant (full time)
 - CSBG Fiscal Officer (full time)
 - 2 CSBG Program Specialists (1 fiscal, 1 communications) (part time)



Virginia CSBG Monitoring

• Philosophy:

- Mutual respect
- Open communication
- Joint problem solving

Goal:

- Provide CAA feedback on effectiveness of programs
- Assist leaders with making changes
- Early warning system
- Build upon strengths
- Provide State with data to assess statewide network
- Note trends to provide more effective T/TA



Streamlining the CSBG Monitoring Process

- The Hybrid Approach: What's New?
 - Our new monitoring process combines the best of both worlds: a virtual, desk review and an in-person or virtual site visit.
- Virtual Desk Review: We will review most of your documentation remotely, allowing us to be more efficient and reduce the time required for the on-site visit.
- In-Person or Virtual Site Visit: This portion of the review will be used for interviews, Q&A, and a deeper dive into specific areas of your agency.

This hybrid model reduces the burden on your staff and allows for a more focused and productive conversation during our visit.

The New Monitoring Packet: A Single Source

- We have consolidated all of our monitoring tools and practices into one comprehensive document: the New Monitoring Packet.
- This packet replaces multiple documents and checklists, providing a single, organized reference point. It includes:
 - A clear timeline of the monitoring process.
 - A checklist of all required documentation.
 - The specific monitoring instruments we will use.
 - Interview questions for staff and board members.
 - This packet is designed to be your one-stop-shop for all monitoring-related information.

Streamlining the CSBG Reporting Process

Use of CSBG Reporter

- Statewide database system for all CAA's in Virginia
- Serves as the central hub for all reporting information
- Simplifies data entry and management for agencies across the state

Quarterly Reporting

- Agencies submit quarterly reports to track their progress.
- Reports focus on services provided and progress toward established outcomes.

Annual Reporting

• Agencies also submit the Module 2 reports and demographics within the system annually

Note: Virginia agencies do **not** use SmartForms for reporting to OCS, XML's are exported directly from CSBG Reporter for the State office to upload to OLDC.

The CAP Plan

- The CAP Plan is completed within the same database system.
- This single plan directly translates into the agency's annual report for services and outcomes.
- This integration ensures consistency between planning and reporting.

The CAP Plan & Reporting Manual

- Developed by the state office to streamline the reporting process.
- A single, comprehensive resource for both the Annual CAP Plan and all components of the annual report.
- Manual includes:
 - Tips and advice
 - Examples
 - Step-by-step instructions

Key Benefits of This Approach

- Centralized Data: All information is in one place, making it easier to manage and access.
- Consistency: The CAP Plan directly informs the annual report, ensuring alignment between goals and results.
- Clarity: The detailed manual provides clear, consistent guidance for all agencies.

A New Approach to the Organizational Standards Process

- Over the past year, the Virginia Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) office has been working to make the organizational standards review process clearer and more efficient for all of our Community Action Agencies (CAAs).
- Our goal was to simplify the process and provide more clarity on what documentation is needed and when. We wanted agencies to move beyond compliance and help them understand the intent behind each standard.

Our New Manual: What's Inside?

- We've developed a comprehensive new manual to guide you through the organizational standards. This manual:
 - Defines each standard in clear, understandable language.
 - Categorizes standards by when they will be reviewed (e.g., annually, triennially, etc.).
 - **Highlights standards** that require specific board action, ensuring the board is actively engaged in its oversight role.
- This manual is the new go-to resource for understanding and meeting the requirements.

A Tool for Success

- We utilized the National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)
 tool to create a detailed chart. This chart is a quick reference
 guide that outlines:
 - Every organizational standard
 - The specific documentation that will be used to evaluate each standard.
- This chart ensures transparency and helps agencies prepare for their reviews by knowing exactly what documentation to have ready.

Beyond Compliance: The "Why" Behind theStandards

- While our new tool makes it easier to meet the requirements, the real goal is to go **beyond compliance**. The organizational standards are not just rules—they're the foundation of a high-performing CAA.
- They are designed to help agencies:
 - Build a strong, effective board.
 - Manage your finances responsibly.
 - Ensure your programs are making a real impact in your community.

Our goal is to help agencies strive for the **highest level of performance**, not just minimum compliance.

Standardized Tools and Templates

Amy Parker (SMWG2: MN)

Adrian Angel (IL): Utilize a statewide data system to create a onestop shop for documents

Jaimi Clifford (ME): Understand the requirements and the purpose of the tools



Standardized Tools and Templates

- Utilize a statewide data system to create a onestop shop for documents
- Understand the requirements and the purpose of the tools
- Don't reinvent the wheel: develop standardized tools across multiple programs (e.g., WAP, LIHEAP, Head Start, etc.) utilizing the Network's input

- Standardized Forms (CNA and CAP)
 - Reduces the required capacity at the CAA level
 - Don't have to reinvent the wheel
 - Reduction of errors
 - Less Confusion
 - No guessing on requirements
 - Statewide training
 - More Consistency
 - CAA Submittal
 - State Review

- Statewide data collection system
 - Consolidates all documents to one location
 - CAAs have access to all previously submitted documents
 - State has access to all CAA's documents in one location.
 - Enables real time reporting and feedback
 - State assigns a tool to request required information
 - CAAs complete the tool, attaches supporting documentation, and submits
 - State reviews the tool from within the system
 - Request additional follow up
 - Approve the tool
 - Improved analytics

- Reduces redundancy & manual work
 - Once a document is saved it can be attached to multiple tools
 - Board Minutes uploaded for Quarterly Reporting can then be attached to Org Standards
 - Procedures guides uploaded for Org Standards can then be referenced for on site monitoring
 - Standardized Templates eliminates double entry
 - CNA template eliminates entering previous years data points, only requires updates to data point
 - CAP template keeps existing data that doesn't change such as service area
 - Saves times by not requiring everything to be started from scratch

- Improves collaboration & Transparency
 - Improved collaboration with partners
 - Each question has an area for CAA comments, State comments, and Final determination comments
 - State Association has access to tools
 - Can assist CAA with submittal
 - Can assist State with identifying training needs
 - CAAs are better informed on requirements
 - No guessing on what is being reviewed
 - Instructions for each tool highlighting the review process and what the State is looking for to ensure compliance

Jaimi Clifford (ME): Understand the requirements and the purpose of the tools



Jaimi Clifford (ME): Understand the Requirements and the Purpose of the Tools

Focus on gathering what is required without adding additional burdens to understand the impact it has on all agencies but particularly those small rural agencies

- Ask yourself:
 - Why am I collecting this information?
 - CSBG Act or Administration requirement?
 - State requirement? Network wide work? Etc.
 - Am I using the information we collect?
 - If so, how?
 - If not, is it absolutely necessary?
 - Only add what is needed consolidate when possible
 - Examples: templated statewide CNA, CAP Plan narrative and budget and monitored board governance (one report used all year)

Specialized Rural Strategies

Elizabeth Rackham (SMWG2: ID)

Genevieve Fields (LA): Use of Discretionary Funds

Barbara Schachern (WI): Rural Workgroups

Tawny Chapman (NV): Statewide Rural Convening



Specialized Rural Strategies

- Develop, coordinate and share statewide linkages
- Maintain a robust and well-defined relationship with the State Association
- Develop/participate in rural work group(s) and/or issue-focused affinity group(s)
- Provide specific funding to support rural communities (both state and discretionary funds)

Use of Discretionary Funds: Advancing State Office and Tribal Office Partnerships





Presented by:

Genevieve Fields, CSBG Program Manager, Louisiana Workforce Commission











Why Fund Tribal Organizations?

- About 23,296 (.5%) Louisiana residents are American Indians
- The poverty rate for American Indians in Louisiana is 21.36% compared to the overall state poverty rate of 19.6%
- 70% 80% of the tribal population resides in rural areas
- There is a disproportionate impact of poverty on American Indians
- Tribal allocation for Louisiana is \$244,000 annually compared to about \$17,000,000 for the state as a whole

Identifying the Gaps

- How do we ensure we are reaching CSBG eligible American Indian households with CSBG dollars?
- Need to know:
 - Who is in need?
 - Where are they located?
 - What do they need?
- Foster authentic partnerships with the trusted subject matter expert

Building Partnerships

- Attending network-wide Zoom meetings
- Participating in network-wide conferences and other training opportunities
- Sharing CAA and Tribal events and information regularly through newsletters and the Constant Contact platform

Increasing Awareness

- -Provided specific information about services provided by each CAA to help IID share relevant information with Tribal communities
- -Distributed information on CSBG services at Pow Wows, Tribal Council meetings, and other events held by Tribal communities
- -Increased comfort and familiarity with local CAA (bridged by IID)
- -Developed a crosswalk directory of CAAs and Tribal organizations
- -Utilized discretionary funds to meet needs in Tribal Communities

Contracting with Tribal Grantee

- Assessing needs Tribal grantee and Tribes are the experts on needs
- Drafting contract documents
- Navigating State Procurement processes
- Collecting and reporting data

Results

- Educational Opportunities: 75 tribal members participated in language classes and other educational programs
- Emergency Food Assistance: Emergency food assistance was provided to 26 tribal families and 8 individual tribal members
- Emergency Utility Assistance: 76 tribal families received emergency utility assistance

Impact of Efforts

- Partnership continues to be strengthened
- State Office and network have a deeper understanding of needs of Tribal communities
- Resources directed to those disproportionately impacted by poverty

WI Resources

State Plan Goals' Workgroups

- Best Practices
- Tools
- Data

Roundtables

- Holding Spaces for Collaboration
- Questions

Sharing Resources

- Staff Vacancies
- Programs
- Focus Groups

Trainings

- Monitoring Visits
- CSBG
 Organizational
 Standards

WI Impact





Removing administrative burden from rural agencies

Assisting agencies to better serve individuals in their communities

NEVADA RURAL COMMUNITIES SUMMIT:

How Providers in Rural Nevada are Increasing Community Resilience

Presented by:

Tawny Chapman Nevada Department of Human Services



PLANNING



EVENT

Opening

Breakout Sessions

Networking

Audience

Closing

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Food Insecurity

Early Childhood
Care and
Education

Affordable Housing

Mental Health

IMPACT

Collaboration Disparity Knowledge Opportunity

Conduct focus groups with CAAs.

Add the Promising Peer Practices identified by SMWG 2.0 to the NASCSP Compendium.

Provide refresher training on use of the Compendium.

 Develop and/or update tools, training/technical assistance to improve the delivery of services to rural CAAs/communities.

NEXT STEPS

State Management Work Group (SMWG)

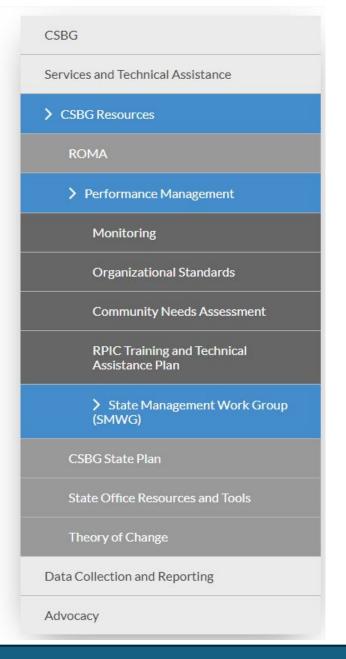












Wrap-Up

What's the one idea you heard today that most excited you and that you would like to implement in your state?



This material is supported by Grant Number 90ET0506 from the ACF Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant within the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Neither the Administration for Children and Families nor any of its components operate, control, are responsible for, or necessarily endorse this material (including, without limitation, its content, technical infrastructure, and policies, and any services or tools provided). The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Administration for Children and Families and the ACF Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant.

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