



NASCSP 2026 Annual Training Conference

CSBG Core Conference Agenda

September 23 - 25, 2026
(subject to change)

Wednesday, September 23rd

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Opening Plenary**

The strength of our network has always been built from the ground up thanks to decades of federal, state, and local partnerships dedicated to reducing poverty and increasing energy equity in communities across the country. Our opening plenary honors that foundation while looking ahead. Join NASCSP leadership and our federal partners from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Community Services (OCS) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as they share their vision, priorities, and what's next for the CSBG and Weatherization networks. From the roots of where we've been to the reach of where we're going...this is how we kick things off.

PRESENTERS: **Keishaa Austin**, Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of State and Community Energy Program, U.S. Department of Energy (invited); **Corine Frank**, Acting Director, Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; **Melanie Sanford**, Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and NASCSP Board President; **Cheryl Williams**, Executive Director, NASCSP

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **Networking Break**

Take a moment to connect and recharge during our networking break. This is your chance to mingle with fellow attendees, exchange ideas, and build valuable professional relationships. Enjoy refreshments and engage in stimulating conversations that could spark new collaborations and opportunities.

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **CONCURRENT SESSIONS:**

Annual Business Meeting (MEMBERS ONLY)

Join us for NASCSP's Annual Business Meeting, where members will receive key updates on organizational priorities, board activities, strategic initiatives, and financials. This meeting is an opportunity for members to engage with leadership, participate in decision-making processes, and help shape the direction of the association. Your voice and vote matter, so don't miss this critical session.

Strategic Restructuring from a CAA Perspective

This session will explore how states can support agencies considering strategic restructuring as a pathway to long-term sustainability and greater community impact. Building on work underway to develop practical tools and resources, the discussion invites participants to examine the range of options agencies may consider, what those choices can mean for organizations and the communities they serve, and how states can encourage thoughtful planning and decision-making. Through facilitated conversation, participants will take a broader, CAA-centered view of possibilities, key considerations, and state-level supports that can help agencies navigate change with clarity and purpose, leaving with a clearer picture of how to position strategic restructuring support within their state networks.

PRESENTER: **Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev**, *Director, Organizational Capacity Building, National Community Action Partnership*

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Lunch (On Your Own)

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Office of Community Services (OCS) Perspectives – Part I

Join the Office of Community Services (OCS) for updates on current CSBG initiatives, priorities, and federal guidance. Topics may include the Home for Every Child initiative, CSBG Annual Report 3.0, State Plan updates, discretionary grant opportunities, performance management resources, and other emerging priorities. Participants will have the opportunity to hear directly from OCS and gain insight into upcoming developments affecting CSBG State Offices.

PRESENTERS: **TBD**

3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Networking Break

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3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Office of Community Services Perspectives – Part II

This session continues OCS Perspectives, Part I, providing additional time for updates, discussion, and participant questions. Topics may include the Home for Every Child initiative, CSBG Annual Report 3.0, State Plan updates, discretionary grant opportunities, performance management resources, and other emerging priorities.

PRESENTERS: **TBD**

Thursday, September 24th

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

CSBG Member Planning and Action

CSBG Member Planning and Action is devoted to in-depth peer exchanges facilitated by your elected NASCSP regional representatives, covering critical topics in CSBG operations and administration. This session is reserved for **NASCSP members only**.

Exploring Data: Using AI to Enhance Your Work

The ROMA cycle generates data at every phase that must be analyzed to identify areas of practice needing to be strengthened, maintained, or eliminated. This session explores how AI can streamline the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. We will explore what questions you would like AI to help you answer and how to prepare your data for AI analysis. Finally, we will discuss the importance of verifying the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated responses.

PRESENTER: Cary Gibson, *Deputy Director, Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Professionals*

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

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10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

CSBG Joint Member Planning and Action

This workshop will focus on in-depth exchanges, facilitated by NASCSP's regional representatives, covering critical CSBG topics including T/TA assessment and delivery, Annual Reporting, and others. This session is designed as a joint State Office/State Association collaborative discussion.

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

State Management Work Group 2.0: Advancing Promising Practices for Rural Communities

This session will highlight the work of the State Management Work Group (SMWG) 2.0 and its efforts to identify state administrative practices that reduce burden and strengthen support for rural Community Action Agencies (CAAs). Participants will hear an update on the initiative, learn about promising practices identified through the project, and explore the tools and resources developed to help State Offices improve efficiency and better serve rural communities.

PRESENTERS: Kate Blunt, *Principal, Kate Blunt & Associates*;
Genevieve Fields, *Workforce Development Manager, Louisiana Workforce*

*Commission; **Alicia McDaniel**, CSBG Program Administrator, Delaware Office of Community Services; **Amy Parker**, Grants Manager, Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families; **Geoffrey Pippenger**, Community Services Director, Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity; **Karen Quackenbush**, Program Manager, Housing and Community Development Division, Utah Department of Workforce Services; **Christine Shall**, CSBG Empowerment Program Coordinator, Arizona Department of Economic Security; **Lindsay Whittin**, CSBG Program Director, Tennessee Department of Human Services*

Co-Creating the Future: How Pennsylvania Reimagined Training Models for Real Organizational Impact

Explore how the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development partnered to reimagine training in their state, shifting from a compliance-focused model to a continuous improvement learning system designed for long-term organizational impact. This session will walk through the development process, share early lessons learned, and discuss how other states might apply a similar approach.

PRESENTERS: **Beck Moore**, CEO, Community Action Association of Pennsylvania; **Melissa Tabb**, Deputy Director, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Rooted in Service: The Courage to Keep Serving

In times of change, the strongest organizations are not those that simply adapt to new policies or funding environments but those that remain deeply rooted in their purpose while continuing to evolve their practices. This engaging keynote invites participants to reflect on what it means to lead with courage, curiosity, and purpose during times of uncertainty. Through storytelling, facilitated dialogue, and experiential learning, participants will be introduced to the HUMAN Framework, a practical leadership model designed to strengthen individual leadership while building organizational capacity during times of change. Grounded in Bright Places' human-centered learning approach, this session is designed to create meaningful conversation, encourage reflection, and connect participants to the concepts and to one another.

PRESENTER: **LaVada English**, CEO, Bright Places, Inc.

Friday, September 25th

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Soft Skills for Hard Conversations

Difficult conversations are an unavoidable part of working with others but navigating them effectively requires more than knowing what to say. This interactive session explores the dynamics that can make conversations difficult, including differing perspectives, underlying interests, emotions, and personal reactions to conflict. Participants will reflect on how they interpret and respond to challenging interactions and explore approaches for building understanding, reducing tension, and moving conversations forward. Through reflection, discussion, and practical application, participants will strengthen interpersonal skills that support active listening, curiosity, constructive dialogue, and conflict resolution. Participants will leave with new perspectives and practical strategies for approaching hard conversations with greater awareness, confidence, and intention.

PRESENTER: Brandy Boulos, Senior Research Analyst, NASCSP

10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Networking Break

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10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Rooted in Service: Applying the HUMAN Framework

Building on Thursday's keynote introduction of the HUMAN Framework, this highly interactive session invites participants to take the concepts deeper and apply them directly to their work in CSBG, WAP, and community action. Through collaborative activities, facilitated discussion, and hands-on exercises, participants will explore how purpose-driven leadership shows up in their day-to-day operations, from navigating shifting priorities to strengthening partnerships and supporting the communities they serve. This session is designed to move from inspiration to implementation, giving participants practical strategies they can carry back to their teams and organizations.

PRESENTER: LaVada English, CEO, Bright Places, Inc.

12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Closing Plenary

Join us as we bring the conference to a close with reflections on key themes, takeaways, and connections made throughout the week. This session will highlight shared insights, celebrate collaborative learning, and look ahead to the work that continues beyond the conference. Participants will leave with renewed energy, strengthened relationships, and a clearer sense of how to carry forward what they have learned into their organizations and communities.

