

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Volunteer board members desire to have engaging and rewarding volunteer experiences. Non-profits seek leadership and support of a board that brings their very best to every meeting and to the organization. The board self-assessment process is a way to see whether the board and organization are meeting these mutual goals.

The self-study process will provide a framework that assesses board member's perceptions of current governance practice and stimulates conversation of how to strengthen the board's performance. This board self-assessment is a measurement tool that facilitates a greater understanding of how the board thinks it is doing at a particular point and time and to identify priorities for enhancing governance and organizational effectiveness.

Remember, that this is just the starting point, and that this journey should proceed to a steady pace with every step leading to a stronger board and organization.

INSTRUCTIONS

Assessment is one of the most powerful interventions available for turning a good board into a great board. This self-study is comprised of 11 sections. Sections 1-9 address **your perception of the board's performance**. Section 10 addresses **your perception of your PERSONAL performance on the board**. Section 11 of the self-study requires demographic information that is important for board recruitment and evaluation.

Each of these sections consists of statements that you will rate using a numerical rating of agreement or disagreement. In addition, each section includes open-ended questions that require your comments. It is important that you take the time to rate each statement honestly based on your personal knowledge and experience.

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

Please complete the self-study in its entirety. **Remember individual responses of the self-study are anonymous.** No board member's name will be identified with specific responses. All responses will be tabulated to obtain the percentage of members that gave an item a particular rating and an average rating for each statement will be calculated. All responses to open-ended questions will be recorded as written and included in the report, but not identified with any individual. **Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this self-study it is greatly appreciated!**

SECTION 1: VISION AND MISSION

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING		
1. The organization has clearly stated vision and mission statements.	1) 1 2) 5	3) 0 4) 1	DK) 0
2. The organization's vision and mission have specific goals.	1) 1 2) 5	3) 0 4) 1	DK) 0
3. The organization's mission is clearly understood and accepted by the board.	1) 2 2) 4	3) 0 4) 1	DK) 0
4. The board considers how all programs, activities, and policy decisions fit with the organization's mission.	1) 2 2) 4	3) 0 4) 1	DK) 0
5. There is consensus among the board that the vision and mission accurately reflect where the organization is headed in the next two to three years.	1) 1 2) 4	3) 0 4) 1	DK) 1

6. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

- "More communication with the director for better direction of all involved."
- "More communication w/ appointed officers for a clear plan for future programs, current programs & issues to address and in turn have discussion at regular board meeting."
- "Develop and adopt a strategic plan."
- "Needs to pay closer attention to the details."

7. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

- "Yearly trainings and D.E.S. joins our quarterly meeting."
- "Board Trainings, bring outside contractor for assessment tools to address issues."
- "SEACAP."
- "None."
- "Only the employees of the organization."

8. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

- "Time to meet and having a mission and vision displayed at meeting of the Board."
- "Only the employees of the organization."
- "Too much information in a short time. Hard to get all the details."

SECTION 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY DECISIONS

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
9. The board engages in a strategic planning process that lays out the Organization's goals over the next two to three years.	1) 2 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 1
10. The board demonstrates a strong ability to promote improvement and manage change in the organization.	1) 3 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 2 4) 1
11. The board takes primary responsibility for establishing and regularly Reviewing the organization's policies and procedures.	1) 0 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 1
12. The board operates using clearly written policies and by-laws that enhance the governing body.	1) 3 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 1
13. The board has and follows the conflict of interest policy when making official program and policy decisions for the organization.	1) 5 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 1 4) 1

- 14.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?
- "As new board members take over they should immediately be educated of the By-laws, our mission/vision and our policy and procedures."
 - "Appointed officers meet separately before the meeting to discuss and then inform at regular board meetings."
 - "ALL Board Members should be paying attention to the policies, procedures and bylaws and adhering to them. The Board should honestly and frankly evaluate the director's performance in these areas instead of rating each evaluation are with a high score simply because it is easier to do."
 - "The Board needs to be more responsible in the strategic planning process".
- 15.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?
- "We work with the strategic planning to see what else we can improve on."
 - "Contracted our strategic planning"
 - "Evaluation form, Board members who are not afraid to speak up when issues are found"
 - "The Employees."
- 16.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?
- "No Comment."
 - "I believe the retreats have been very successful and the training such as the strategic planning." "Board training from an outside, objective source"
 - "More information."

SECTION 3: EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING		
17. The executive director demonstrates the ability to maintain a positive, constructive relationship with the board that maximizes organizational performance.	1) 1 2) 3	3) 3 4) 0	DK) 0
18. The executive director ensures the board has access to relevant information and data to facilitate informed decision-making regarding the organization and its programs, activities, and services.	1) 1 2) 3	3) 2 4) 1	DK) 0
19. The executive director and board chair are viewed as working cooperatively as a team.	1) 1 2) 3	3) 3 4) 0	DK) 0
20. The executive director ensures that the organization has clearly defined and implemented board approved policies and procedures that are used for oversight of operations.	1) 1 2) 2	3) 4 4) 0	DK) 0
21. The executive director's performance and compensation is formally assessed annually based on objectives established by the board at the beginning of the organization's fiscal year.	1) 1 2) 1	3) 5 4) 0	DK) 0

22. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

- "Officers of the board should have a sit down and set up the expectations for the year and they get with the E.D to see how the set goals are working."
- "More communication with the E.D from officers on issues and expectations and follow up."
- "Having the E.D retire in a timely matter."

23. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

- "H.R requirements- policies and procedures."
- "Training in the process of the H.R process to follow up on goals or changes and ask E.D. to focus." "The budget spread sheets, information packets."
- "Honestly evaluate the Director. Don't glaze over issues because it's difficult to bring out deficiencies."
- "The executive director."

24. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

- "Follow up process."
- "Outside, objective training not performed by staff"

SECTION 4: ENSURING ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
25. Board members are clear about expectations for their personal fundraising responsibility (i.e., individual giving, volunteering at fundraising events).	1) 1 3) 3 2) 1 4) 1 DK) 1
26. The board works to diversify and maximize sustainable revenue sources beyond CSBG funding to ensure the health of the organization.	1) 1 3) 2 2) 2 4) 1 DK) 1
27. The board supports efforts to seek public and private funding to implement new programs and services to address the identified needs of the community.	1) 1 3) 2 2) 3 4) 1 DK) 0
28. A clearly written fund development plan is in place with specific implementation strategies and goals.	1) 1 3) 4 2) 1 4) 1 DK) 0

- 29.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?
- "Board members need to work alone with E.D and his staff in the area to see what community events and volunteer work is being performed.
 - "Board members could make an effort to work closer with E.D. and staff in their communities- volunteer at community events- more exposure.
 - "Maybe go over the expectations.
 - "Some Board members have suggested fundraising activates but the idea has never gotten staff support."
 - "The budget is very hard to follow and most of the time is wrong.
- 30.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?
- "Just the information packets and spread sheets."
 - "Other CAP's efforts would be a good resource, but staff has not taken an interest in this area."
 - "Employees only."
- 31.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?
- "Staff should be involved in community events. I.E: Resource Fairs etc. in each community."
 - "Outside training from an objective party. Training should be meaningful and ongoing not held once every 2-3 years."
 - "Clean information on the budget."

SECTION 5: EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
32. The organization collaborates with other agencies and groups that provide Assistance to low-income families in the community.	1) 2 3) 2 DK) 1 2) 2 4) 0
33. The board and staff engage community members to strengthen the Organization's advocacy efforts.	1) 0 3) 3 DK) 1 2) 3 4) 0
34. The organization can readily mobilize a network of community allies and advocates who can be influential at neighborhood, city, town, and state levels.	1) 0 3) 2 DK) 0 2) 5 4) 0
35. The board actively promotes the organization and its activities to enhance its reputation in the community.	1) 1 3) 3 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 0
36. The board and organization invite policymakers and elected officials to agency events, such as the annual meeting.	1) 0 3) 3 DK) 2 2) 1 4) 1
37. The organization has an effective public relations and communication plan in place, keeping the community informed about the organization's activities and accomplishments.	1) 0 3) 2 2) 3 4) 1 DK) 1
38. Community members and other partners that are not on the board have opportunities to serve on board committees.	1) 0 3) 0 DK) 3 2) 3 4) 1

39. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

- "Communicate more with all levels of government. I.E: City, county, and state."
- "Involvement with community outside of daily office work. The board members could ask more pointed questions."

40. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

- "None, but could get ideas from other CAPs."
- "Employees only."

41. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

- "Outside objective training, ongoing training."

SECTION 6: PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FISCAL OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING				
42. The organization's annual budget is fully discussed and understood by board members prior to its approval.	1) 1	2) 3	3) 1	4) 2	DK) 0
43. The fiscal status of the organization is regularly reviewed and necessary board action is taken in a timely manner.	1) 1	2) 4	3) 2	4) 0	DK) 0
44. Organizational funding needs are reviewed annually and priorities are established.	1) 1	2) 3	3) 2	4) 1	DK) 0
45. The Chief Financial Officer provides relevant financial statements and documents to the board at least one week before every board meeting for review by board members.	1) 1	2) 2	3) 1	4) 3	DK) 0
46. The organization's audit report is reviewed by the full board and necessary actions are taken in a timely manner.	1) 1	2) 4	3) 1	4) 1	DK) 0

- 47.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?
- "Demand more transparency and accurate financial reporting documents. Board should demand a new auditing firm be procured immediately."
 - "The budget needs to be correct. Easier to understand."
- 48.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?
- "Staff should receive proper training in accounting practices and procedures to improve accuracy in financial reports"
 - "Employees only"
- 49.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?
- "Better training for the CFO."

SECTION 7: ASSESSING PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING		
50. Data is used to inform decisions regarding implementation of programs and services targeted to reduce inequality in outcomes for low-income children and families.	1) 1 2) 1	3) 3 4) 0	DK) 2
51. The organization staff demonstrates the ability to work effectively with diverse populations.	1) 2 2) 4	3) 1 4) 0	DK) 0
52. The board uses the results of activity performance reviews to update the strategic plan.	1) 1 2) 2	3) 2 4) 0	DK) 2
53. The board annually engages in a thorough review of performance of the organization's programs and services.	1) 0 2) 3	3) 3 4) 1	DK) 0
54. The board uses evaluation and activity performance review information to guide decisions about program modification and/or new programs.	1) 1 2) 2	3) 3 4) 1	DK) 0
55. The board evaluates program performance against the organization's mission on a regular basis.	1) 1 2) 1	3) 4 4) 1	DK) 0
56. Written organizational procedures are in place to ensure equitable access to program services and facilities.	1) 1 2) 4	3) 2 4) 0	DK) 0

57. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

- "I Think that things are being done to improve the program as for as long term outcomes."
"Require data from staff."
- "The board does not have the time to do a full review of the performances of all the programs."

58. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

- "The community and the surveys."
- "Information on the data used by other CAPs."
- "Staff only."

59. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

- "Staff should get training on data collection methods used by other CAPs and how their Boards evaluation of data funds into program modification."
- "Better evaluations of staff and programs."

SECTION 8: BOARD AND ORGANIZATIONAL STAFF ROLES

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
60. Line of responsibility for board and organizational staff are clearly defined and differentiated.	1) 0 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 0
61. The board delegates to the executive director sufficient authority to lead the staff and carry out the organization's mission.	1) 1 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 0
62. Board and staff have a shared understanding of the organization's strategic goals and work cooperatively to achieve those goals.	1) 1 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 4 4) 1

63. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

- "Develop a strategic plan with SMART goals."
- "The board needs to input more information for the staff."

64. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

- "Most of what I know about this comes from the meetings and the manual."
- "A facilitator to lead the strategic planning process. Strategic plans from other CAPs."
- "Staff."

65. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

- "Same as # 63."

SECTION 9: BOARD STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
66. The roles, responsibilities, and expectation of board members are clearly understood.	1) 0 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 0
67. The board size is adequate.	1) 1 3) 3 DK) 0 2) 2 4) 1
68. The areas of expertise, skills, and other factors needed to be an effective board for the organization are adequately represented among current board members.	1) 0 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 0
69. Board members are actively recruited based on the organization's needs.	1) 0 3) 3 DK) 1 2) 3 4) 0
70. Board members are provided a comprehensive orientation that includes the history of community action, community action promise and code of ethics, and the organization's mission, vision, by-laws, policies, programs, and roles and responsibilities as board members.	1) 1 3) 3 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 0
71. The board has a written succession plan in place for board leadership to provide guidance when there is an anticipated or unanticipated change.	1) 1 3) 4 DK) 0 2) 2 4) 0
72. The board thoroughly examines the pros and cons of all major issues before decisions are finalized.	1) 1 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 5 4) 0
73. The board's committee structure is effective, the number of committees is appropriate, and their objectives are well-defined.	1) 2 3) 4 DK) 0 2) 1 4) 0
74. Each board member serves on at least one board committee.	1) 2 3) 3 DK) 0 2) 2 4) 0
75. The organization's conflict of interest policy is clear and all board members adhere to it.	1) 2 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 4 4) 0
76. The format of the board meetings is the right balance of information sharing and strategic thinking about major issues and concerns.	1) 1 3) 3 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 0
77. The board's meeting schedule has the right number and length of meetings.	1) 0 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 0
78. Board meeting are generally well-run and make good use of members' time.	1) 1 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 5 4) 0

79. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

- "We are getting there."
- "Become more engaged and devote more time to improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities as Board members."
- "Need more members. More time."

79. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

- "SEACAP."
- "Could take examples from other CAPs."

80. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

- "Same as previous sections."
- "More members."

SECTION 10: INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER SELF-REFLECTION

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
Strongly Agree with Statement	Agree with Statement	Disagree with Statement	Strongly Disagree with Statement	Don't Know

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PERSONAL PERFORMANCE ON THE BOARD

	RATING
82. I get excited about the mission of the organization and support where we are headed in two to three years.	1) 1 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 5 4) 1
83. I look for news and trends that impact our organization.	1) 1 3) 2 DK) 0 2) 4 4) 0
84. I am knowledgeable about and can describe the organization's program and services.	1) 1 3) 2 DK) 0 2) 4 4) 0
85. I have a clear understanding of my role and responsibilities as a Community Action board member.	1) 2 3) 1 DK) 0 2) 4 4) 0
86. I thoughtfully prepare for board and committee meetings.	1) 2 3) 2 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 0
87. I actively participate in board meetings and feel very engaged in the governing process.	1) 2 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 5 4) 0
88. I actively participate on at least one board committee.	1) 1 3) 3 DK) 1 2) 2 4) 0
89. I actively participate in board and committee work.	1) 1 3) 1 DK) 1 2) 4 4) 0
90. I recommend people for the board and board committees.	1) 1 3) 3 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 0
91. I respect the other members of the board and have a strong working relationship with them.	1) 2 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 5 4) 0
92. I actively participate in the development of the organization's strategic plan.	1) 2 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 4 4) 1
93. I actively participate in the annual review of the organization's executive director.	1) 1 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 6 4) 0
94. I am knowledgeable enough about the organization's budget to make informed funding decisions about the organization and the programs and services it offers.	1) 0 3) 3 DK) 1 2) 3 4) 0
95. I make an annual financial gift to the organization.	1) 0 3) 4 DK) 0 2) 1 4) 2
96. I share information about the mission and programs of the organization with people in the community.	1) 3 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 1
97. I actively participate in at least one organization activity or event a year.	1) 2 3) 1 DK) 1 2) 2 4) 1
98. I am an advocate for Community Action in my community.	1) 3 3) 0 DK) 0 2) 3 4) 1
99. I believe that being a member of this board is meaningful and a productive commitment of my time.	1) 3 3) 1 DK) 1 2) 2 4) 0

100. What resources or training would be helpful to you as a board member and that you feel would help you improve your performance as a board member?

- "I would like more training to have better understand as a board member."
- "Support from other Board members."
- "Better understanding of the budget. More time of being a part of a Board."

SECTION 11: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This demographic information that is important for board recruitment and evaluation.
Please select the answer that applies to each question.

How long have you served on the board?

- 1 year or less
- 1-3 years x x x x (4)
- 4-6 years x (1)
- 7-9 years x x (2)
- More than 10 years

Gender

- Male x x (2)
- Female x x x x x (5)

Ethnicity

- African American
- American Indian/Alaska Native x (1)
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Caucasian/White (non-Hispanic) x x x (3)
- Hispanic/Latino x x (2)
- Multi-Ethnicity x (1)

Age

- 18-21
- 22-30
- 31-40
- 41-50 x x x (3)
- 51-60 x x (2)
- Over 60 x x (2)

Are you a board officer?

- Yes x (1)
- No x x x x x x (6)

What board position do you occupy?

- Public (elected official, policymaker, council person) x x (2)
- Private (lawyer, CPA, business) x x (2)
- Low-Income (low-income person or representative from the community) x x x (3)