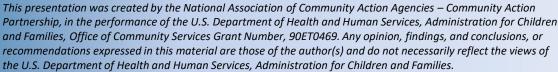
Strategic Planning in Community Action: Best Practices from the Field

North Dakota Community Action Association September 13, 2022

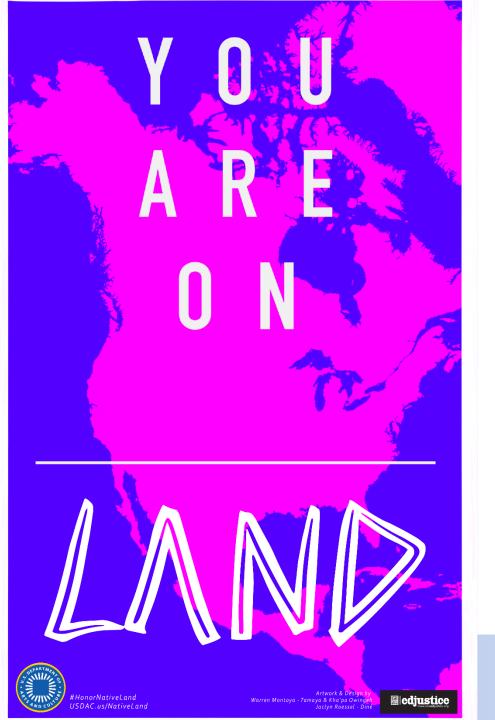


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Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted.





Land Acknowledgement

- This meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Cheyenne People, and I pay my respect to elders both past and present, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations."
 - Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.
- Learn more by taking time to learn about the Indigenous history of the land you live on. Visit https://usdac.us/nativeland to get started.





The Promise of Community Action

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.



Learning Objectives

- Establish a foundational understanding of the significant role of planning and the Strategic Planning requirements in the Organizational Standards
- Understand how the best practices in the Community Action network inform how CAAs can share knowledge about effective planning
- Consider how a CAA can revisit its Strategic Plan structure, updating and tracking to ensure it is a "living" plan
- Identify some useful resources for enhancing a CAAs Strategic Planning capacity



Agenda



Why Plan?



The Minimum Requirements: Organizational Standards



An Excellence frame:

The Standards of Excellence and 4 Best

Practices:

- 1. Structure and Content
- 2. Strategic focus
- 3. "Living" Plan
- 4. Measurement and monitoring



Resources



Why plan?

- The act of "planning" provides an opportunity for an agency or a community to step away from day to day operations and consider a vision of the future.
- It allows you to consider how your agency will address its **anti-poverty mission**.
- A well thought out plan will help to unify agency staff (from all programs) and board members around a common vision and common goals.



ROMA and Planning

The Results Oriented Management and Accountability Cycle

Assessment

Community needs and resources, agency data



Evaluation

Analyze data, compare with benchmarks



Achievement of Results

Observe and report progress



Planning

Use agency mission statement and assessment data to identify results and strategies



ImplementationServices and strategies produce

Services and strategies produce results

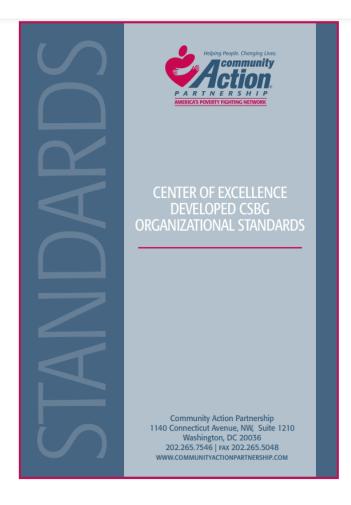






Integration: Needs
Determine Long
Term and Short
Term Plans





- Developed to ensure every CSBG
 Eligible Entity functions according to a common set of standards to assure accountability and effectiveness.
- They provide an effective benchmark for a CAA to assess its organizational capacity
- They <u>do not</u> assure that a CAA is operating according to best practices.



Standard 4.3

The organization's Community Action plan and strategic plan document the continuous use of the full Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle or comparable system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation). In addition, the organization documents having used the services of a ROMA-certified trainer (or equivalent) to assist in implementation.

Did you use ROMA (or a comparable planning process) to develop your Strategic Plan?

Assess, Plan, Implement, Achieve, Evaluate



Standard 6.1

Private CAA: The organization has an agency-wide strategic plan in place that has been approved by the governing board within the past 5 years.

Public CAA: The department has a strategic plan, or comparable planning document, in place that has been reviewed and accepted by the tripartite board/advisory body within the past 5 years. If the department does not have a plan, the tripartite board/advisory body will develop the plan

Standard 6.5

The tripartite board/advisory body has received an update(s) on progress meeting the goals of the strategic plan/comparable planning document within the past 12 months

Is your approved Strategic Plan current?

(Approved within the past 5 years)

Has your Board received an update in the past year?



Standard 6.2

The approved strategic plan (or comparable planning document) addresses reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and/or empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.

Standard 6.3

The approved strategic plan (or comparable planning document) contains family, agency, and/or community goals

Does your Strategic Plan have fairly basic Community Action elements (mission-aligned and defined goals)?



Standard 6.4

Customer satisfaction data and customer input, collected as part of the community assessment, is included in the strategic planning process, or comparable planning process.

Does your Strategic Plan use customer input?



Meeting the Organizational Standards for Strategic Planning only requires that:

- ROMA/planning process was used
- Board-approved in past 5 years
- Is directed at some form of poverty-reduction
- Has defined goals
- Has customer input
- Progress has been shared with Board in past year



Using an Excellence Lens

- Developed by experienced Community Action practitioners to capture "best-in-class practices"
- Represent real-world practice in use by CAAs
- Frequently updated to reflect evolving and emerging practices in the field







4 Areas of Best Practice in Strategic Planning

- 1. Plan structure and content is integrated and institutionalized throughout the CAA
- 2. Plan "lives" through regular updates, assessments and communications with stakeholders
- 3. Plan is "strategic" promotes innovation and resource development
- 4. Plan is closely and regularly measured and monitored



2.1 Strategic Plan and Deployment

The agency Board has formally adopted and actively uses an agency-wide strategic plan. The plan serves as a framework for an agency-wide performance management system and scorecard instrument or equivalent to track the progress and overall success of all agency resources and services. It is systematically used throughout the agency as a guide to implementing and tracking goals and strategies. The plan incorporates the agency's mission/vision and articulates its focus on both poverty reduction and equity via family, agency and community goals that integrate a local/national theory of change. The plan includes specific strategies, outcome measures, and metrics that form the foundation of agency-wide performance management that drive all agency action.

2021 STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Pursuing and Achieving Excellence in Community Action

Plan structure/content is *integrated* and *institutionalized* throughout the CAA

Board **actively** uses the Strategic Plan

Plan provides a framework for agencywide CAA management

Plan structure guides staff activities and operations

Mission/vision, goals, poverty/equity focus integrated through a local Theory of Change



Plan structure/content is integrated and institutionalized throughout the CAA

How can you make your plan more "Board -friendly?"

Does your plan's structure encompass agency operations?

How does the structure of the plan connect concretely to staff?

Does your agency have a local TOC that integrates the Strategic Plan?



Planning Committee: Size and Structure





Strategic Planning Roles

Board	Executive Director	Staff
 Provide input on agency's strategic direction Assist with process design and research Identify resources to support process 	 Initiate discussion on purpose and timing Ensure adequate resources Oversee process design and research Engage key internal and external stakeholders 	 Participate in the Planning Committee Assist in gathering information Assist in development of the Plan Assist in management of communications and logistics



The Plan's Structure

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction: Purpose, Process, Stakeholders
- III. Organize the content so requirements are clearly found: Organizational Standards, ROMA
- IV. Assessment Summary
 - a. High Priority Needs (CNA)
 - b. SWOT
 - c. Mission, vision, values
- V. Agency Goals and Outcomes
- VI. Services, Indicators, Strategies, Actions
- VII. Recommendations





Utilize Knowledge of ROMA Implementers/Trainers

- Ensuring connection between CA/CSBG Plan and agency mission, CNA, and Strategic Plan
- Consult and provide examples of connected needs, outcomes, and strategies
- Encourages appropriate planning decisions about agency programs and services based on evaluation (strengthened, maintained, abandoned)



Utilize Knowledge of ROMA Implementers/Trainers

Provide clarity and training to group on front end Serve to double check/evaluate on back end

- ✓ Are the needs identified in the agency's CNA utilized and referenced?
- ✓ Are there outcomes (denoting change) for the identified needs?
- ✓ Are there strategies or objectives that connect the needs to achieving the outcomes?
- ✓ Do the strategies proposed match the level of the need (family, agency, community)?



Local Theory of Change

- What does your agency believe it should be doing to address issues related to poverty in your community?
- The answer to this question will guide the selection of outcomes and actions that will accomplish those outcomes.

The Local Theory of Change can be a great <u>quiding</u> exercise for Strategic Planning

OR

Local Theory of change can help to bring it all together <u>after</u>
Strategic Planning



Incorporating the National Community Action Theory of Change

The National Community Action Network Theory of Change **Community Action Goals**

Goal 1: Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.



Core Principles

Development

- · Recognize the complexity of the issues of poverty
- · Build local solutions specific to local needs
- Support family stability as a foundation for economic security
- Advocate for systemic change
- Pursue positive individual, family, and community level change
- Maximize involvement of people with low incomes
- Engage local community partners and citizens in solutions
- Leverage state, federal, and community resources





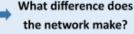
Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

Performance Management

How well does the network operate?

Housing







- State and Federal Accountability Measures
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability System
- Individual and Family National Performance Indicators
- Community National Performance Indicators

A national network of over 1,000 high performing Community Action Agencies, State Associations, State offices, and Federal partners supported by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to mobilize communities to fight poverty.

Economic Security Corporation Local Theory of Change

Local TOC

from

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Children are ready for school

Families are ready to engage

The agency is ready to support

The community is ready to invest



from
Economic
Security
Corp.

Joplin, MO

FAMILY

- Increased engagement child development
- Increased engagement in community
- Sufficient income to support needs
- Insured and equipped with medical payment options

OUTCOMES:

AGENCY

- Increased knowledge of agency programs internally and externally
- Higher employee wages
- Increased flexible funding
- Established communication strategy

COMMUNITY

- Increased reliable transportation options
- Increased affordable/quality childcare options
- More living wage employment opportunities
- Additional safe, healthy, affordable, energy-efficient housing units



Early Head Start
Head Start
Asset Development
Rental Assistance
Housing Assistance
Employment Assistance

Case Management
Utility Assistance
Agency Capacity Building
Resource Development
Communication Strategy
Poverty Simulations

Weatherization
Home Repair
Housing Development
Job Creation
Leadership

Training



COMMUNITY ACTION CORE PRINCIPLES



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

VISION: A thriving community of neighbors that is free from poverty

MISSION: To provide comprehensive services that instill hope and share opportunities to eliminate the conditions of poverty and help neighbors achieve self-sufficiency





2.2 Plan Development/ Updates

A systematic and structured process and pre-set timetable is in place to keep the strategic plan current and up to date and ensure community and customer/partner/stakeholder input in identifying critical needs. The Board is provided semi-annual updates on strategic plan outcomes and progress. As part of plan development/updates, the agency systematically assesses causes and conditions of poverty, constituent needs, and available resources to eliminate poverty using current published data and information, community surveys, and stakeholder input. The Strategic Plan is current and under its pre-set timetable, the agency systematically updates its plan to keep it relevant via community and customer input in identifying necessary changes and critical needs.

2021 STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Pursuing and Achieving Excellence in Community Action

Plan "lives" through regular updates and communications to stakeholders

Structured process and timetable for updating the Plan

Semi-Annual Board updates and participation in revisions to the plan

Multiple data sources from CNA update(s) inform Plan revisions

Revisions draw from data collected from stakeholders who receive updates



Plan "lives" through regular updates and communications to stakeholders

How and when is your Plan updated?

How and when does your Board review/revise the Plan?

Which data are needed to update/revise the Plan?

How is the plan communicated to stakeholders to promote sharing?



Options and Responsibilities for the Implementation Process

Process

- Single committee
- "Handoff" to leadership team
- Task groups organized by strategic plan outcomes
- Integrate into program or department work plans

Responsibilities

- Develop action plans
- Develop strategic planning score card
- Review budget and resource needs
- Regular meetings to review progress (at least quarterly)
- Report to leadership team and board
- Identify and address implementation challenges

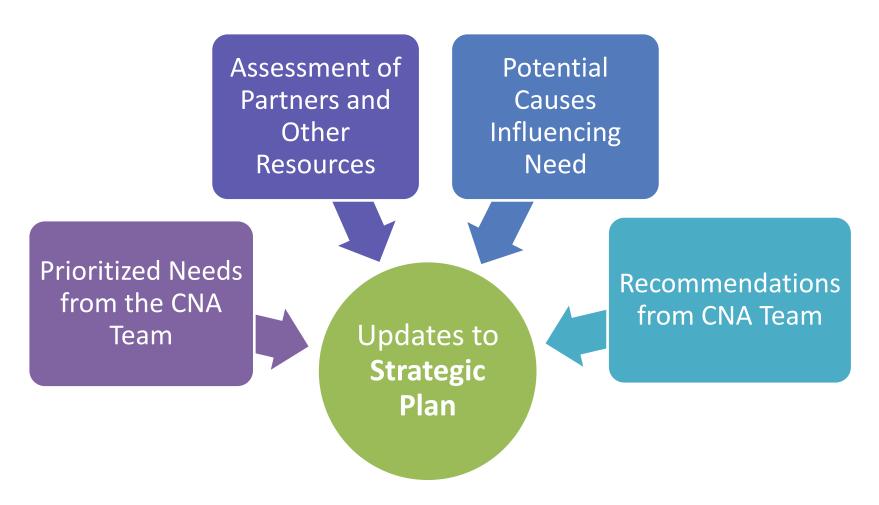


Integrating the Strategic Plan into Management and Operations

- Quarterly or Annual report to the board
- Monthly or quarterly updates to the leadership team
- Monthly meetings by the implementation team to oversee progress on individual strategies and action plans
- Creation of task committees to manage individual action plans
- Integration into or development of an agency-wide or balanced scorecard to track progress
- Make strategic plan outcomes part of formal job descriptions
- Updates on strategic plan progress at staff meetings



Using the CNA to keep the Plan "Living"





Collect Existing Information

- Previous Strategic Plan, Community Action Plan and any other plans available
- Agency-wide budget
- Summary data from the needs assessment
 - Output and outcome data from programs and services
- Customer satisfaction data
- Key studies and reports related to priority topics



Do you have sufficient information about:

- Where do low-income individuals and families live in the agency's service area?
- Where are the areas of highest need in the agency's service area?
- Where are there gaps in resources?
- Are there barriers to access in specific areas of the community?
- What is the demographic breakdown of population in poverty by age?
- Are there gaps in services for specific populations (e.g. child care/early education, seniors?)
- Did our agency data showing that we served the population in need? Serve the population you thought you'd serve Not serving a population, despite data telling us there is a high need?

If not, now is the time to find this information before proceeding into planning. However, many comprehensive Community Assessments include this information – best case scenario!



Why Share Your Agency-wide Strategic Plan?

- Educate others about your agency
- Tell a local chapter of the Community Action Story
- Advocate for increased knowledge about the issues your agency plans to address related to people with low income and the communities in which they live.
- Strengthen Partnerships by sharing what you plan to do and what you plan to accomplish



What you share...

Depends on the audience & purpose or goal

- Create an Executive Summary with high level overview of what you plan
- Create a Graphic to show agency-wide connections between goals, outcomes and services/strategies
- Develop logic models to show program essentials and outcomes



With Whom do you Communicate?

- Partners and other Service Providers
- Business owners and operators
- Community Members
- Elected Officials
- News Media
- Current and Potential Funders





How do you communicate?

- Post to website
- Use Social Media
- Hold public forum
- Participate in Community/Advocacy Meetings





Activity: Planning Strategic Communications

Strategic communications requires intentional planning. Using the chart below, think about your stakeholders in your strategic plan, their interest or key issues, and develop a strategy for keeping them engaged and informed in the Strategic Planning processes.

Stakeholder	Interest/Key Issues	Engagement Strategy	Communication Channel	Frequency	Owner / Responsible Party



2.3 Mobilizing New Resources/ New Programs/ New Partnerships

The agency diversifies its resource base by mobilizing substantial additional non-CSBG federal, state, private, local, and in-kind investment dollars for every CSBG dollar it receives to support stated strategic goals/strategies, and it regularly develops new or innovative programs, services, and partnerships in response to its community needs assessment and as identified in its strategic plan via a goal or specific strategy. The agency uses its CSBG funding to leverage or mobilize additional investment to support stated strategic goals/strategies, and it regularly develops new or innovative programs, services, and partnerships that are equity-informed in response to its community needs assessment and as identified in its strategic plan via a goal or specific strategy. There is a specific strategic plan goal for resource development and metrics for developing and tracking new sources of funding over time.)

2021 STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Pursuing and Achieving Excellence in Community Action

Plan is "strategic" – promotes innovation and resource development

Non-CSBG resources are developed for strategic purposes

CAA develops innovative programs & initiatives

Innovation & strategic goals support equity

A specific Strategic
Plan goal addresses
resource
development



Plan is "strategic" – promotes innovation and resource development

What specific new resources have been developed through the Plan?

What innovations are driven by the Plan?

How is equity advanced through innovation and new resources?

Does the Plan have a specific resource development goal?



The SWOT Analysis

Helpful		Harmful	
Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses	
External	Opportunities	Threats	



On What Level Will You Work?

- Direct services to individuals and families to produce changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors.
- Strategies that include community initiatives to promote changes in infrastructure, access, policy or specific conditions.
- Strategies that support agency capacity such as staff, facilities, resources or practices.



Examples of Different Levels

Family Need	Family Outcome	Family Strategy		
Some parents are not involved in their children's school activities	Parents increase their involvement with children's school activities	Parents will participate in monthly parent support group meetings during the school year		
Community Need	Community Outcome	Community Strategy		
The fire department reports that the low income neighborhood has fires that are more life-threatening and cause greater property damage.	The impact of fires on life and property in low income neighborhood is reduced	A community campaign (of several partners) will make smoke detectors available to low income residents and landlords; community fire code inspectors will more actively target higher-risk neighborhoods; firehouse locations will be reviewed to determine if response times can be improved.		
Agency Need	Agency Outcome	Agency Strategy		
Our agency does not have staff who understand the "whole family approach"	Our agency case manager are able to apply the "whole family approach"	Agency case manager will participate in training for direct service and supervisory staff will be trained in providing support to them.		



Developing Action Plans

- Each strategy will typically have its own Action Plan
- Action plans are developed by the staff responsible for implementing the plan
- Action plans should include:
 - ➤ List of action steps
 - > Resources required
 - > Staff responsible
 - > Timeline
 - Outcomes
 - Method of tracking



Selecting Services and Strategies

- What are you already doing? (look at your plans and reports)
- Is it working? (customer satisfaction data, agency report data)
 - Yes? What adjustments may be needed? Can your success be improved?
 - No? Do you know why it is not working? Do you abandon or strengthen?
- What will you do going forward?



2.4 Strategic Measures of Success

The agency's strategic goals/strategies have specific performance measures and metrics that are systematically tracked over time by senior leadership and the Board to assess the agency's progress and success over time. An agency-wide scorecard instrument or equivalent is utilized by the staff and Board to track and report overall agency progress and success trends over time, including family, agency and community goals and outcomes, as well as the CSBG Organizational Standards. All agency projects (See definition under Standard 6.6) are linked to and support one or more of the agency's strategic goals/strategies, or one or more of the CSBG Organizational Standards to Standard 7.1 and Standard 4.3)

2021 STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Pursuing and Achieving Excellence in Community Action

Plan is closely and regularly measured and monitored

Plan has specific measurement indicators

Leadership
systematically
tracks Plan
indicators

Agencywide scorecard or equivalent tracks progress

All CAA projects connect to the Plan and are monitored in connection to it



Plan is closely and regularly measured and monitored

What are the specific indicators in the Plan?

What system is used to track Plan data?

Is the CAA consistently using a agencywide scorecard?

Can every CAA

project clearly

connect to Plan

goals and measures?



Definitions

- Goals Broad, overarching goals or core business areas
- Outcomes The change you want to see based on the needs and the goals.
- Indicators How much change? What will you measure?
- Services and Strategies Identification of how the initiative will reach the outcome.
- Action Steps The details of making it happen (who, what, by when, where, resources)



Identify Goals and Outcomes

- 1. Review the community assessment
- Review the prioritized list of your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- 3. Review the discussion of your vision, mission, and values
- 4. Review any additional key data budget, program outcomes, reports
- 5. Identify three to five major goals that will set the organization's fundamental, long-range direction
- 6. Develop and prioritize outcomes
 Remember that outcomes are needs restated as a positive result. Make sure
 your outcomes match the identified needs.



Indicators Identify What Will Be Measured

- Specific and measurable
 - ➤ Specific
 - ➤ Measurable
 - ➤ Attainable
 - ➤ Realistic
 - **≻** Timely
- Indicators include the number of clients to be served, the number to achieve the outcome
 - A percent represents this relationship
 - Set the indicator within a time frame
- Example:
 - OUTCOME: Customers obtain the necessary skills for jobs.
 - INDICATOR: 50 out of 100 or 50% of the customers in training classes will obtain skills within one year



Elements of a Strategic Plan Scorecard

Strategic Priority:							
Outcome	Indicator	Strategy	Measurement of Success	Year to Date	Progress R/Y/G		
		1 2 3					
		2					
		1					



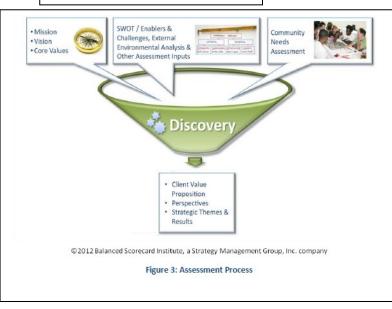
Top Ten Tenets to Create a Balanced Scorecard

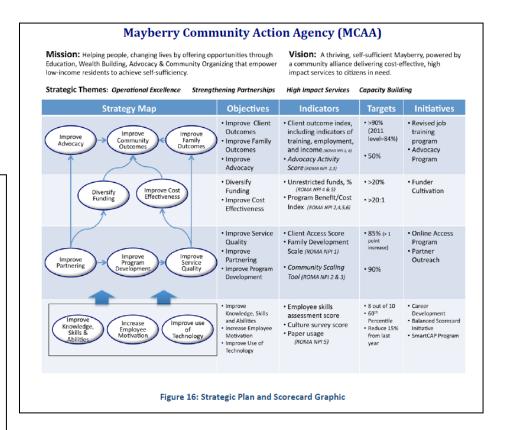
- 1. Gain top leadership support; it helps if there is a 'burning platform' for change.
- 2. Measure the right things things that customers, stakeholders, and employees find value in -- not everything.
- 3. Create a governance process that engages key stakeholders.
- 4. Design the system to follow the actual work of the organization.
- 5. Start development of measures at both the top and bottom of the organization and cascade them in both directions.
- Create a communications campaign that explains how a Scorecard both reflects and drives a focus on mission.
- 7. Align systems: tie them to the organization's planning, measurement, and budget cycles.
- 8. Insure the credibility of the process and honesty in reporting.
- Create transparency of information that is as real-time as possible; this is key to its credibility and usefulness to both senior and frontline managers.
- 10. Align incentives: link rewards to performance through effective evaluation and performance appraisals.





Balanced Scorecard Toolkit







Managing the Evaluation Process

- Clarity and accountability for the monitoring process are critical
- Use a dual accountability system staff checks in monthly or quarterly with leadership, leadership checks in quarterly or semi-annually with the board
- Maintain a board strategic planning committee to monitor progress
- Focus on outcomes not just implementation progress





Resources



- A Comprehensive Guide to Community Action Strategic Planning – National Community Action Partnership
- <u>Creating a Local Theory of Change</u> ANCRT/CAP ROMA NG Training Series
- <u>Strategic Planning Webinar Series</u> National Community Action Partnership
- Organizational Standards Category 6 Strategic Planning Technical Assistance Guide: <u>Nonprofit</u> | <u>Public</u>
- <u>Developing an Agency-Wide Strategic Plan eCourse</u> –
 Community Action Academy
- <u>Developing a Strategic Plan</u> Community Toolbox, Ch. 8





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Questions and Discussion







Thank You!

The National Community Action Partnership is YOUR partnership and is always ready to support your organization in any way.

Contact us at any time!

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