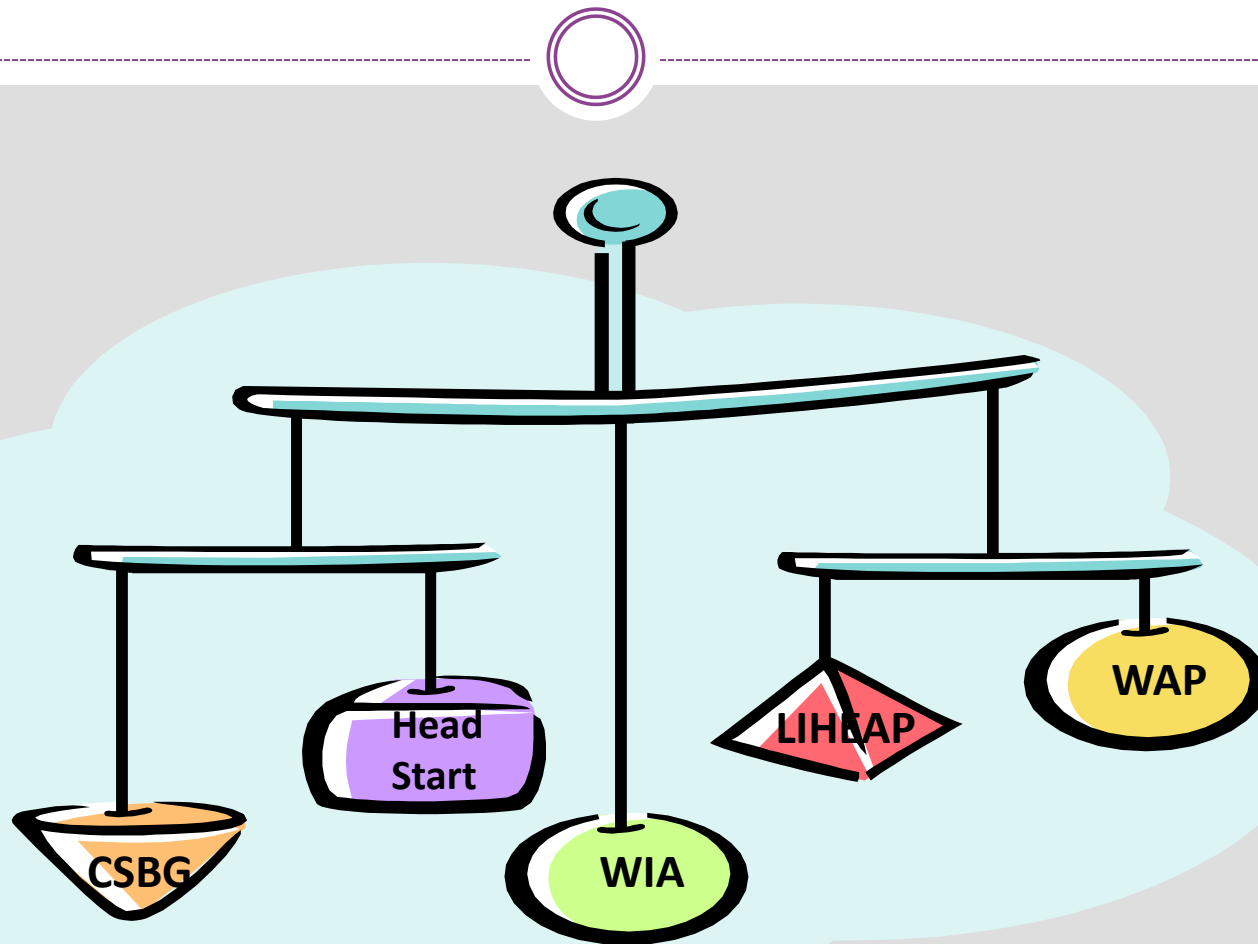


Monitoring Practices and Principles



Federal Requirement



- The CSBG Act of 1998 requires the State CSBG office to monitor local community action agencies at least once every three years.
- The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) established a monitoring taskforce to develop a framework for the development of strong and effective monitoring systems for the nation's community action agencies.



NASCSP Standard Monitoring Principles and Practices for CSBG

Introduction



- Monitoring assists CAAs, “to continually improve outcomes as they strive to adopt high impact strategies to end poverty”
- State forges partnerships with associations and CAAs, “to build capacity at the local level, and to provide training and technical assistance to community action agencies so that they can excel in working to eliminate poverty.”

Guiding Principles



- Mutual Respect
- Open Communication
- Joint Problem Solving

Monitoring Principles



1. State monitors should look at more than mere compliance with program rules and regulations.
2. The Board of Directors must fully understand its roles and responsibilities
3. Managing a community action agency requires a high level of administrative and leadership skills.
4. Monitoring community action agencies is part of a process

Monitoring Principles



5. The State CSBG office should have a system in place to document and inform the agency of findings and/or deficiencies.
6. The State CSBG office should have a system in place to provide training and technical assistance when necessary.

Principle 1: State monitors should look at more than mere compliance with program rules and regulations



- Is the agency constantly looking for new and better ways to do its work, or is the agency still doing what it did (and how it did it) five or more years ago?
- Is the agency striving to integrate service delivery throughout the organization by breaking down the 'silos' of program-specific delivery systems?

Principle 1



- Is the agency partnering with other agencies in the community to strengthen services and provide a community wide approach to address the needs of those seeking services? or
- Is the agency duplicating services already available in the community?
- Programs operated by a CAA must contribute to the agency's overall mission, and each program must achieve measurable outcomes that help to change the lives of low-income people.

Principle 1



- Collects ROMA data, analyzes data on performance measures, and adjusts its short and long range plans on that analysis constitutes significant evidence of a CAA's commitment to making a difference for the families it serves and the communities in which it works.

Principle 2 – The Board of Directors must fully its roles and responsibilities.



- Is the board active and engaged in fulfilling the mission of the agency? Is the board driving the strategic plans for the agency? Board members should be well-trained regarding their fiduciary responsibilities, and should be able to explain the agency mission clearly and with conviction.
- Has the board reviewed and updated its by-laws recently? Does the board follow the by-laws for such issues as board membership, removing board members for lack of attendance, etc.?

The Board



- Is there a quorum at most board meetings?
- Do the board minutes accurately reflect the actions taken at board meetings - including the exact wording of motions?
- Is the board a true policy-making body or does the board frequently wander into operational or procedural matters (micro-managing the agency)? Does the board serve primarily as a rubber stamp for the Executive Director?

Tripartite Board



- Community Action Agencies must have a tripartite board:
 - One-third are elected public officials
 - One-third are democratically selected low-income individuals
 - One-third are private – business, industry, other organizations

IM 82

I.M. 82



- ‘State CSBG officials should meet routinely with boards as part of their overall monitoring of local agencies to determine the extent to which the boards are aware of, and are carrying out, their responsibilities’

OCS Information Memorandum 82



- Roles, responsibilities, appointment, and composition of boards
- Term limits of boards
- Definition of “fully participate in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program.”

Information Memorandum 82



- Board member training
- “Conflicts of loyalty or interest”
- Relationship between a tripartite board and the agency Executive Director
- State CSBG agencies and State Community Action Associations advance the effectiveness of tripartite boards

Principle 3 – Managing a Community Action Agency requires a high level of leadership and administrative skills.

- How does communication flow within an agency? Who are the primary communicators and how do they let people know what is happening?
- What is the morale of the staff in the organization? What is the staff turnover rate over the past several years?
- What type of supervision does staff receive and how often do supervision sessions occur?

Leadership



- What does the organization structure look like? How does each department/division/program within the agency contribute to the goal of helping people move out of poverty? Are there a few people who “control” the organization?
- Can staff articulate the mission of the agency?
- Does the agency have a strategic plan? Who was involved in creating it? Are staff aware of the plan and how their jobs contribute to fulfilling the plan?

Leadership



- Is the Executive Director actively involved in community partnerships and collaborations (by engaging in collaborative efforts with community partners - not just attending meetings)? Or does the agency act like a 'lone ranger,' isolated from community partners and potential allies?
- Is a consistent performance appraisal of staff regularly conducted? When was the last time that staff were evaluated?
- Do program directors create and monitor their own budgets?

Leadership



- What kind of reports are made available to program directors to assist them in managing their programs?
- Does each employee have a development/training plan? Is training encouraged and supported for all staff by the agency? Does the budget support this?
- How is ROMA outcome data used to assess and enhance the work of the organization?

Leadership



- How do program managers and/or staff address problems or concerns that have been identified in self-assessment or monitoring reports?

Principle 4 – Monitoring Community Action Agencies is part of a process to strengthen CAAs and the entire Community Action Network.

- The monitoring process should serve several purposes.
- The first is to provide the CAA with feedback about its programs, going beyond compliance to include an assessment of the agency's ability to change lives.
- The monitoring process should assist CAA leaders in making changes that will improve their organizations. An effective monitoring process can provide CAAs with both an 'early warning system,' and a best practices 'catalog.'

Building the CAA Network



3. Provide the state with data that can be used to assess the statewide CAA network. States can note any recurring themes or trends across multiple agencies, and can respond on a statewide basis, rather than only on an agency-by-agency basis.

Principle 5 – The State CSBG office should have a system in place to document and inform the agency of findings and/or deficiencies.

- Effective monitoring includes a follow-up process
- Exit interview at completion of monitoring
 - Agency Staff
 - Board Members
- Summarize
 - Strengths
 - Findings
 - Deficiencies
- Timely written report

Principle 6 – The State CSBG office should have a system in place to provide training and technical assistance when necessary.

- Effective monitoring includes providing training and technical assistance
- Determine a process for providing assistance
 - State CSBG office
 - CAA association
 - Peer CAA
 - Local or national TA provider
 - Other??

Topic Areas to Review in CSBG Monitoring



- Board of Directors – meet with the Board as a whole, if possible. Have they been trained? Knowledgeable fiscally? Programmatically?
- Planning - Agency mission, vision, values
- Evaluation - ROMA Implementation, Strategic Planning, Evaluation, and Community Assessment
- Partnerships - Coordination/collaboration/linkages with relevant partners

Monitoring Topic Areas



- Administrative systems and procedures – attend staff meetings and/or management meetings
 - HR and Personnel Policies
 - Records retention
 - Technology implementation and planning
 - Equipment and purchasing
 - Conflict resolution and grievance procedures
 - CSBG Assurances and Prohibitions
 - Review pending and past litigation
- Fiscal – Audit and results of previous/other monitoring/fiscal issues

Monitoring Topic Areas



- CSBG Assurances and Prohibitions
- Reporting to funders and to the Board of Directors
- Audit and results of previous/other monitoring, fiscal issues
- Subgrantees/delegates
- Conflict Resolution and grievance procedures
- Agency outcomes and performance measures

State Monitoring Best Practices



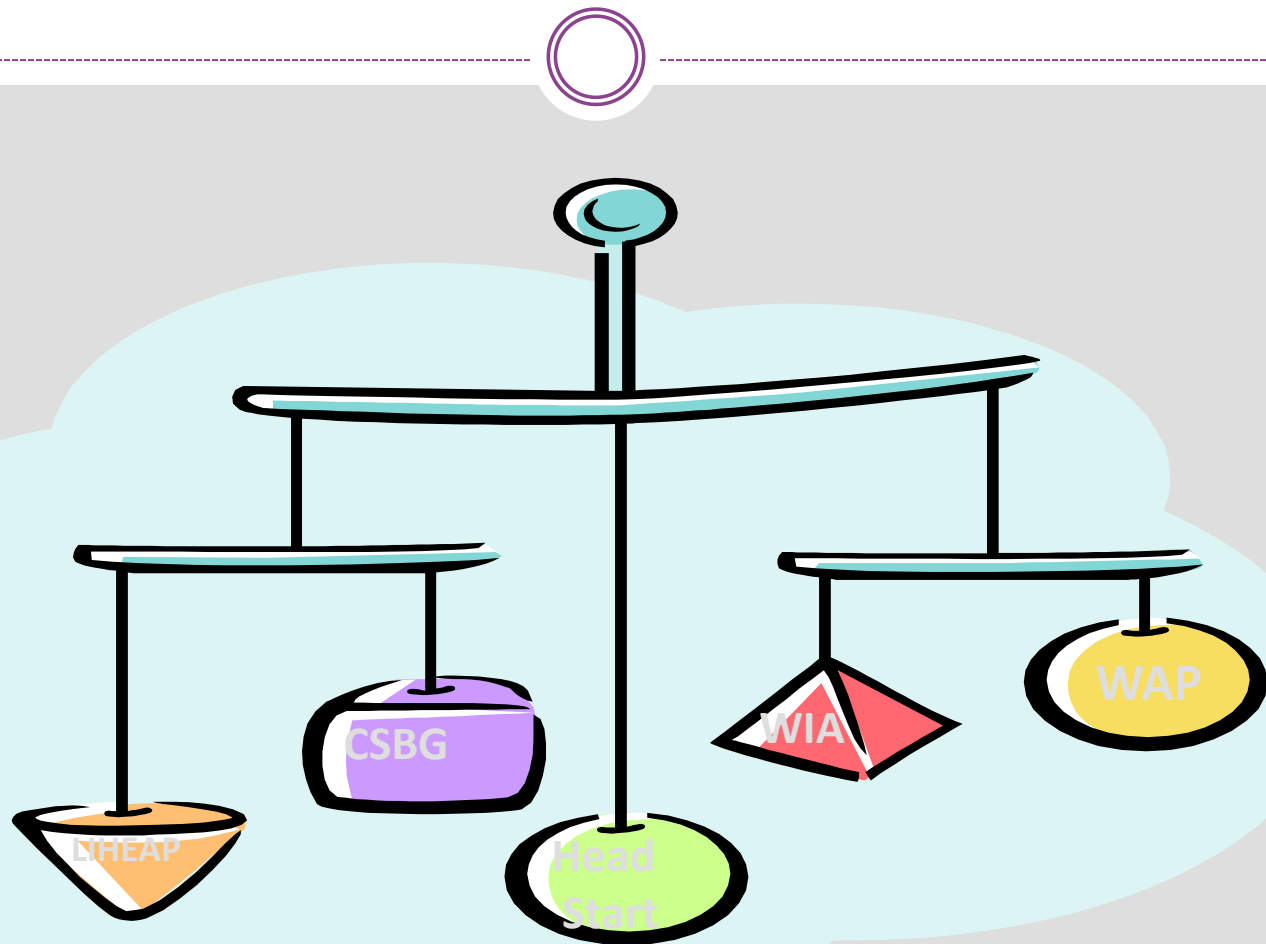
- Update monitoring tools, as needed
- Technical assistance should be provided as part of the monitoring
- Review the agencies, assign risk
- Analyze the trends, where is training needed, etc.

NASCSP's Standard Monitoring Principles and Practices for CSBG



- “Community Action leaders at the national, state, and local levels need to work together to ensure that an enhanced monitoring SYSTEM becomes a valuable tool to increase the capacity of Community Action to help people and change lives.”

A Systems View



What is a System?



“An organized collection of parts (or subsystems) that are highly integrated to accomplish an overall goal.”

Systems Thinking



BROAD perspective of overall:

- Structures

- Patterns

- Cycles

Systems Thinking:



- “Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools...to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively.”
 - Peter M. Senge, ‘The Fifth Discipline’



**To discern an overall pattern
from a mass of detail**

I.M. 94



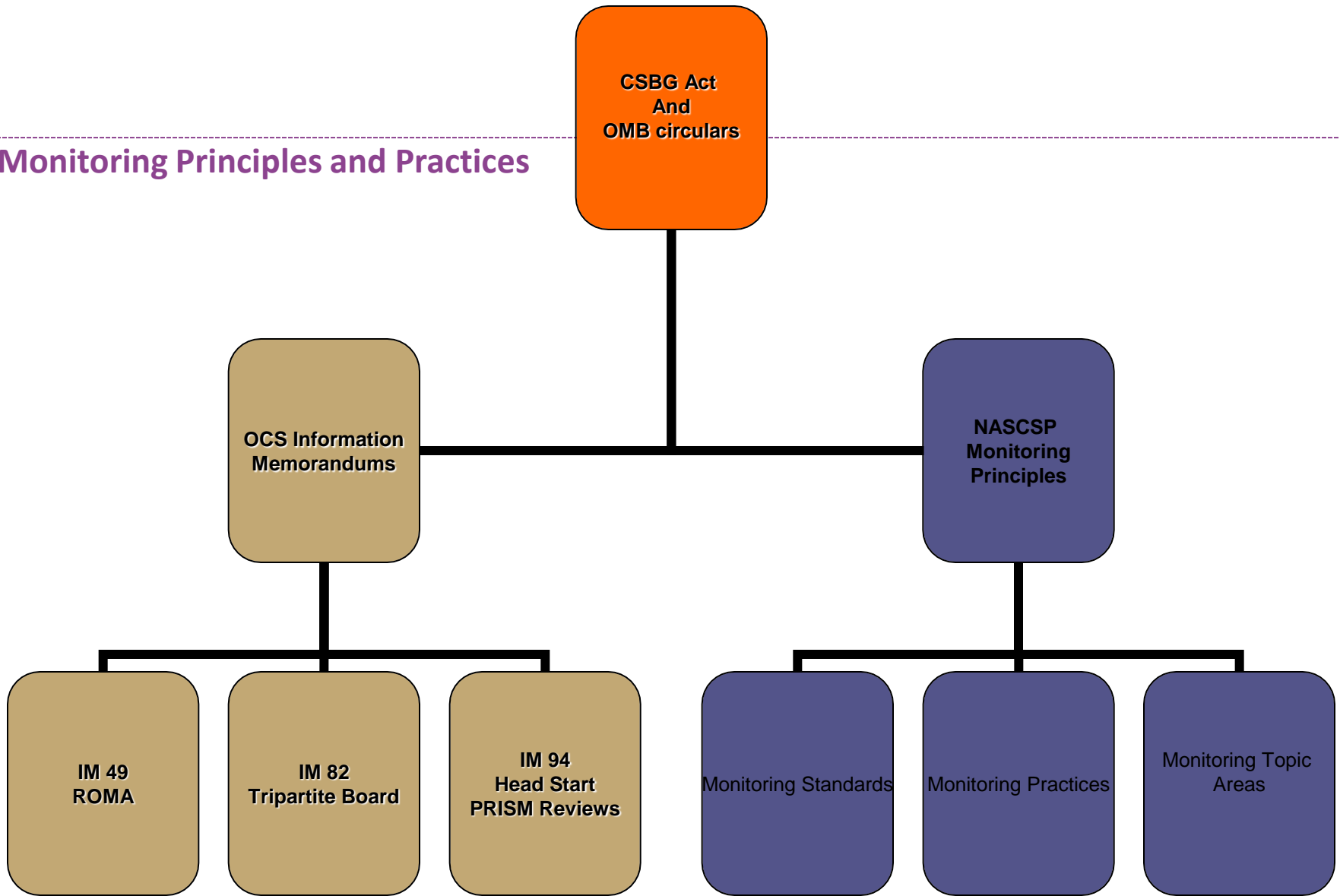
- ‘State CSBG Lead Agencies ...should ... ensure ...that agency Head Start programs have ongoing systems of oversight and monitoring.’
- ‘It is important to stress that quick fixes to identified problems typically result in a reoccurrence of the problems. Most areas needing improvement are often linked to major systems that often require thoughtful planning and time to implement needed changes.’

I.M. 94, cont.



- ‘...the Community Services Network must continue to focus its efforts on strengthening overall agency governance and administration, fiscal control, program effectiveness and accountability to assure capacity to comply with all program requirements of the various programs administered by the agency.’

Monitoring Principles and Practices



ABC Community Action



Board of Directors

Executive Director

CSBG

Head Start

Weatherization

LIHEAP

Housing

Finance

CSBG Staff

Head Start Staff

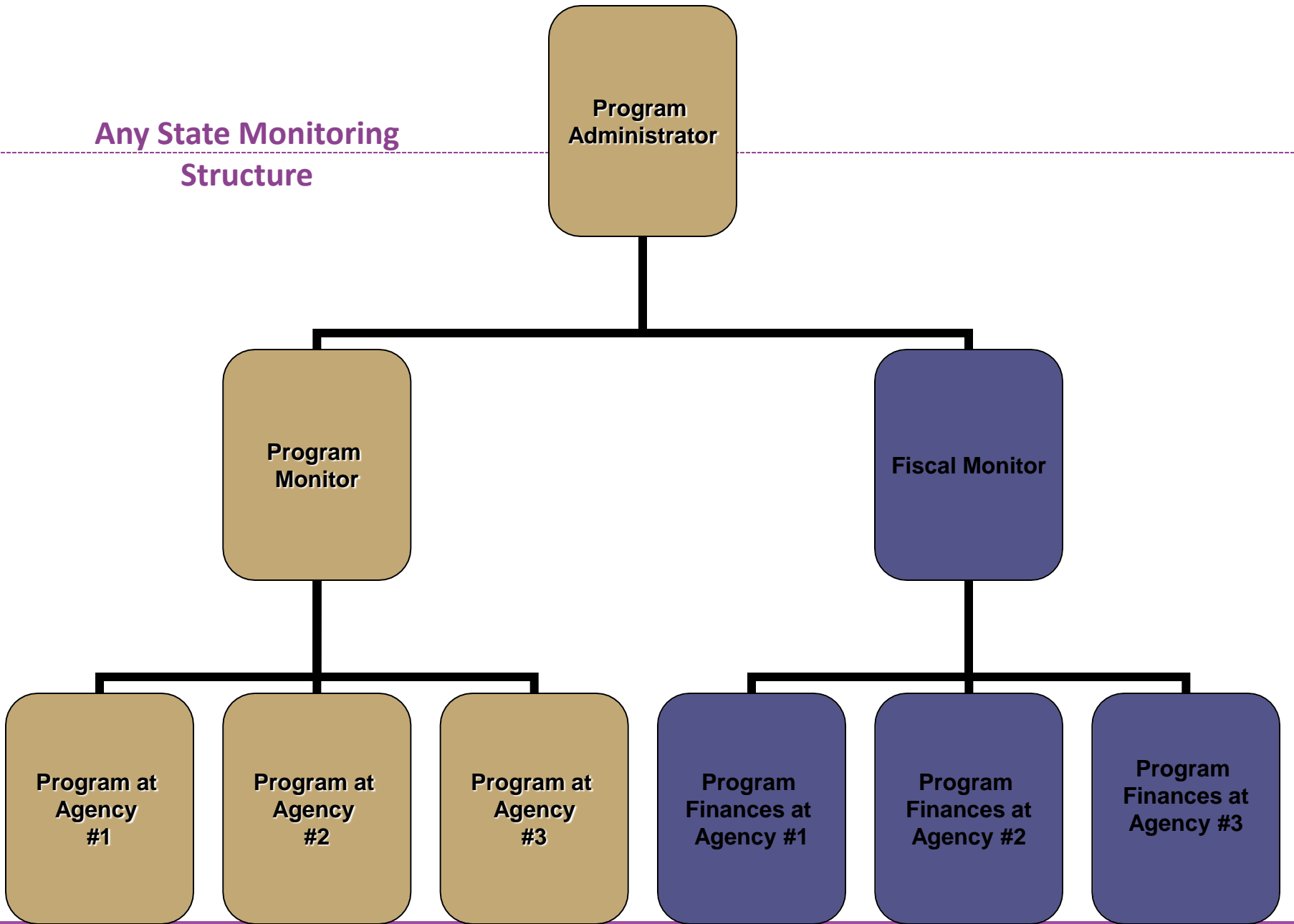
Weatherization Staff

LIHEAP Staff

Housing Staff

Finance Staff

**Any State Monitoring
Structure**





NASCSP Monitoring Principles and Practices

Congress Calls For More Accountability

Monitoring Tool

Monitoring Principles

Monitoring Practices

Mutual Respect

Joint Problem Solving

Open Communications

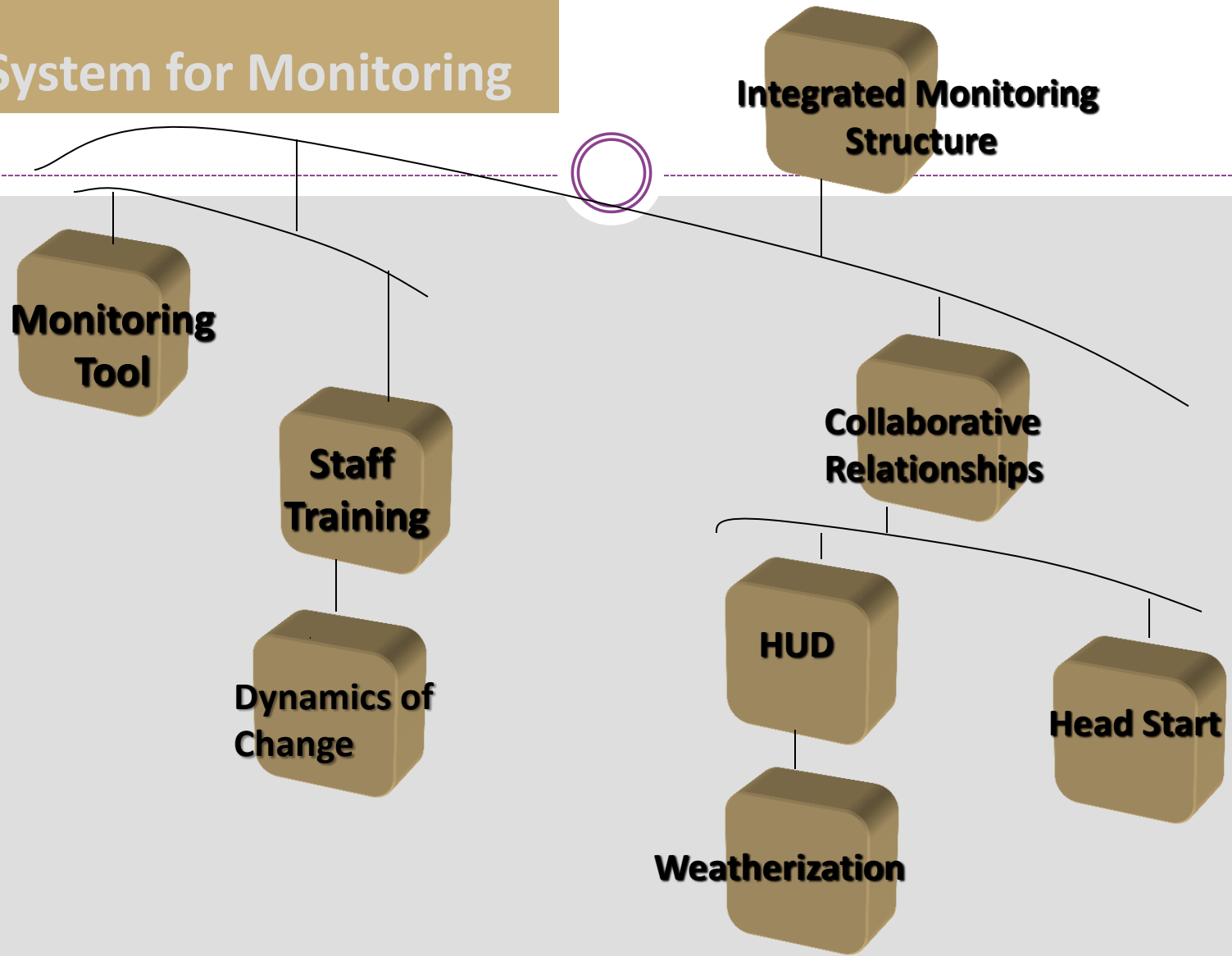
More than Compliance

Systems to Inform & Follow Up

Board Effectiveness

Administrative Capacity

A System for Monitoring



ABC Community Action

Governance

Fiscal Policies & Procedures

Admin. Systems & Procedures

Programs

Planning: Mission & Planning

Evaluation

Outcomes

Partnerships

I.M. 49



- “Recognizing that CSBG does not succeed as an individual program...Special attention will be paid to State capabilities to identify the...needs among eligible entities, particularly those related to strengthening OVERALL program administration, fiscal management,...”

I.M. 49, cont.



- “...State...officials ...(should) reinforce the importance of effective management SYSTEMS...”
- “...As part of ...oversight, we should implement on-going...SYSTEM-WIDE actions...to assure continued administrative and fiscal integrity, program effectiveness, and accountability among ALL PROGRAMS administered by CAAs.”

I.M. 49, cont.



- “...Most areas needing improvement are often linked to major SYSTEMS...”
- “...State ...officials (should) ...reinforce the importance of effective management SYSTEMS...”

I.M. 49, cont.



- “...Agencies in the past have often focused their energies on ‘preparing for the monitoring test’ instead of implementing on-going SYSTEMS that identify areas needing improvement...”

I.M. 49, cont.



- “...Agencies that choose to operate each of their programs separately without a coordinated strategy to address the multi-faceted causes and conditions of poverty...are meeting neither the letter nor the spirit of the CSBG act.”
- “...Community Action is one agency with one mission.”

NASCSP's Standard Monitoring Principles and Practices for CSBG

- “...State monitors should look at more than compliance with program rules and regulations.”
- “...State monitors need to take a SYSTEMS view of each CAA...”

High Functioning Systems



- Continually exchange feedback among the various parts to ensure that they are aligned
- When weakened or misaligned, the system needs to make necessary adjustments to achieve its goals

Assessing Your State's Monitoring System:



1. Is the internal structure of your CSBG office and monitoring responsibilities clear and integrated?
2. Do you have collaborative relationships with other CAA funders (Head Start, HUD, Dept. of Energy, others?)
3. Does your monitoring tool look at the WHOLE agency, or just 'CSBG programs'?
4. How are staff trained to take a systems approach to monitoring?

Assessing Your State's Monitoring System:



5. How does the CSBG office keep up with the changing CAA environment (NASCSIP Monitoring Practices; OCS I.M. releases, Head Start & other funding requirements, etc?)
6. What are your systems for ensuring adequate and timely follow-up to the results of monitoring?
7. How do you use monitoring results to identify and provide system-wide training and technical support to CAA's?



Discernment and Leadership for Monitoring

Characteristics of Effective Leaders



- Integrity
- A deep understanding of the work
- Consistency
- Ability to listen
- Willingness to admit a mistake
- Decisive

As a Monitor



- It is important to:
 - Know your own tendencies and weaknesses so that you can take them into account
 - Ask appropriate questions (refusing to accept conclusions without basis)
 - Carefully consider the validity and sufficiency of information
 - Evaluate evidence – is it reasonable? What are the ramifications if it is true?

Discernment

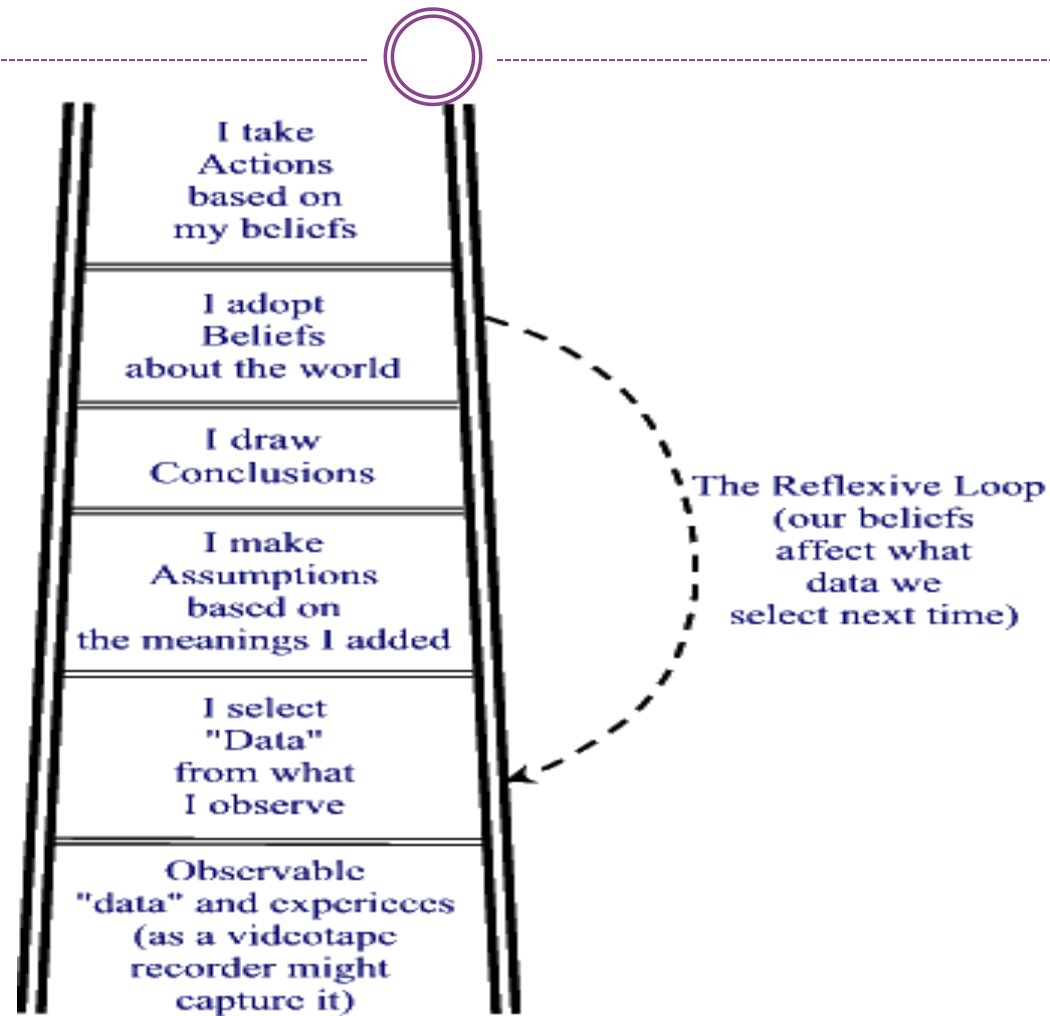


The ability to analyze information with insight and judgment.



To discern an overall pattern from a mass of detail

Ladder of Inference



Discernment



- **Developing the art of discernment:**
 - Knowledge base which provides basis for discernment
 - Experience
 - Confidence in yourself and your judgments
 - Guidance and feedback from an in-state mentor or out of state colleague

Monitoring Process is Ongoing

