Excellence in Community Action

It’s a journey, not a destination!

What is Excellence?

Compliance is not Excellence!
What is Excellence?

Compliance is the starting point for Excellence!

But Excellence Doesn’t Happen in a Vacuum!

“I think you should be more explicit here in Step Two.”
Excellence is a Culture

- Every organization can improve
- BUT - you can’t improve what you don’t measure
- Continuous improvement is a commitment and a process
- Excellence is always customer-focused

Continuum of Excellence

From Good…

…to GREAT
The Excellence Program in Community Action uses the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence tailored to the language and operations of the CAA system.

Defining an Excellent Organization

Core Values

- Visionary Leadership
- Customer-Driven Excellence
- Organizational and Personal Learning
- Valuing Employees and Partners
- Agility
- Focus on the Future - Sustainability
Defining an Excellent Organization

Core Values

- Managing for Innovation
- Management by Fact
- Societal Responsibility
- Focus on Results and Creating Value
- Systems Perspective

Excellence Programs

- CCAP – Certified Community Action Professional
- Pathways to Excellence
- Award for Excellence
Pathways to Excellence is a Capacity-Building Initiative

- Getting Started at Getting Better – the process starts where you are today
- Diagnostic process using 34 National CAA Standards in a guided Self-Study Process
- Feedback reports identify Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

Pathways to Excellence

- Two ways to enter Pathways:
  - **State-based** – can start any time during the year
  - **Individual CAAs** – open enrollment period each year
State-Based Pathways Initiative:

- State CAA Association and/or State CSBG Office set up a collaborative agreement with the Partnership for the voluntary in-state Pathways initiative;
- The Partnership conducts in-state Pathways training for the agencies choosing to enroll;
- Nine-month Self Study timetable, with technical assistance and support;
- Self-Study Reports submitted followed by a three month period for peer review and feedback reports to be issued.

National Open Enrollment Cycle:

- A Pathways “Open Enrollment” cycle is announced annually. Open enrollment usually ends in December;
- An agency submits a Pathways to Excellence application with required forms, fees and documents;
- Agency team attends a Pathways two-day training session within a month of the end of open enrollment;
- Nine month Self-Study timeline begins after training;
- Self-Study Reports submitted followed by a three month period for peer review and feedback reports to be issued.
To recap the basics:

- 2 day Self-Study training for your Pathways team
- 9 months to complete the Self-Study
- 3 months for the expert peer review and Feedback Report process

You’re Not in this Alone!
It Starts With Training

Your Pathways team (5-6 people) goes through a comprehensive 2-day training on the Self-Study process and the Standards of Excellence
The Standards of Excellence
- Seven Categories -

1. Organizational Leadership
2. Strategic Planning and Direction
3. Customer, Constituent, and Partner Focus
5. Human Resource Focus
6. Organizational Process Management
7. Organizational Results
The Self-Study – the heart of Pathways

- The organization responds to 98 questions organized within the 7 categories and 34 Standards of Excellence.
- The agency describes what it does and documents how well it currently meets each of the 34 Standards.

Using the 10-Step Agency Wide Self-Study Process

1. Establish/engage a leadership team
2. Charter the team
3. Conduct an overview/orientation
4. Adopt a basic communication plan
5. Ground the team: complete the Organizational Profile
6. Conduct the self-study/gather data/document facts
7. Draft initial category responses
8. Conduct independent reviews/solicit comments on clarity
9. Reach final team consensus
10. Compile/review/edit final 55 page self-study report
The Feedback Process & Report

- A team of trained peer reviewers studies the Self-Study in *great* depth.
- They participate in a consensus call to discuss each and every response.
- The reviewers submit written strengths and opportunities for improvement, which are folded into the written Feedback report.

And Afterwards? Keep it Simple!

- Use the Feedback Report to identify gaps between where you are and where you want to be.
- Set priorities and next steps.
- Set a structured path to continuous improvement.
- Set measures to track agency progress.
Award for Excellence

- A way to recognize and reward excellence
- 8 Award winners since 2003
- Closely follows the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

Award for Excellence

- Application/Intent to Apply
- Organizational Self-Study
- Self-Study Technical Review
- On-site Peer Review
- Award Announcement
Award for Excellence

Application/Intent to Apply

- Short application signed by the CAA Executive Director and Board Chair
- Most recent IRS Form 990
- Board resolution,
- Application fee,
- State CSBG office letter of support.
- The submission deadline is the second Wednesday in September.

Award for Excellence

Organizational Self-Study

- Using an internal leadership team, the CAA completes a rigorous “state of the agency” assessment based on the 34 Standards of Excellence.
- The Self-Study is due the first Wednesday in February.
Award for Excellence

Self-Study Technical Review

Peer expert teams review each Self-Study to make one of the following determinations:

- **Acceptable**: The agency meets or exceeds all Standards of Excellence benchmarks and is recommended for the on-site visit;

- **Not Yet Acceptable**: The agency demonstrates merit in many areas, but can benefit from a written feedback report detailing strengths and areas for improvement to permit the CAA the opportunity to continue the Award process using the feedback information as a guide.

Award for Excellence

On-site Peer Review

- The on-site visit clarifies and verifies details submitted in the self-study report.

- The site visit is the final basis for receipt of the Award for Excellence. A site visit is not a guarantee of a recommendation to receive the Award.
Award for Excellence

Award Announcement

- The Award for Excellence Commission makes final recommendations to the Partnership Board
- Agency award notifications are made by July 15
- Award presentations are made at the Partnership’s National Convention

Award for Excellence Winners

- Southeast Kansas Community Action Program (SEK-CAP) - Girard, Kansas
- Community Action Partnership of Riverside - Riverside, California
- Community Action Council of South Texas – Rio Grand City, Texas
Award for Excellence Winners

- Fayette County Community Action Agency – Uniontown, Pennsylvania
- Community Action Council-Lexington, Kentucky
- Little Dixie Community Action Agency – Hugo, Oklahoma

Award for Excellence Winners

- Maui Economic Opportunity – Kahului, Hawaii
- Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources (SHARE) – Greenville, South Carolina
Reinventing Organizations

- What gets measured gets done.
- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it.
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure.
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it.
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it.
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

*Reinventing Government, David Osborne & Ted Gaebler, 1992*

Questions?

For more information….

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Click on Excellence

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