

## MASSACHUSETTS DEPT. OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Election Model Partnership CAA  
Assessment Program.

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### Take Away

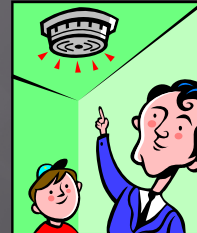


An Example of a Partnership Between the MA.  
Dept. of Housing and Community  
Development (DHCD) and the Northeast  
Institute for Quality Community Action  
(NIQCA) Designed to Identify and Promote  
Excellence in the Management and Governance  
of Local Community Action Agencies

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## Origins of Collaboration



- ▣ CAA's In Crisis...Proactive vs. Reactive Response...Prevention vs. Intervention.
- ▣ Growing Demands/Expectations for Accountability/Transparency in Managing Public Funds.
- ▣ Need to ID "Best Practice Management Standards" for Local CAAs.

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## Building a Model Program 2000 - 2005

- ▣ Tri-State Partnership (MA., CT., RI).
- ▣ OCS Seed Funding for Model Design ("Peer to Peer Project.").
- ▣ Planning Team 100+ Leaders...Design Consultant.
- ▣ Creation - Testing - Adoption of Assessment Philosophy, Tool and Process.
- ▣ Partner Commitment to Create/Support the Creation of the Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action

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## NIQCA Overview



- *Founded:* 2005.
- *Mission:* Promote Excellence in the Mgt. and Governance of Local CAAs.
- *Scope:* 36 CAAs in MA. and CT.
- *Funding:* State CSBG, OCS, Fees
- *Structure:* 1.5 FTE Staff – Advisory Bd.
- *Services:* Assessments, TA., Training.

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## NIQCA Assessment

A PROCESS OF **CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT** USING A STANDARDIZED TOOL TO ASSESS THE STRENGTHS AND DEFICIENCIES OF AGENCY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS THROUGH A 3 YEAR PROCESS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT, PEER REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT PLANNING.



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## The Assessment Tool



- ❑ Identifies a Developmental Sequence of Preferred Practice Standards (58) for 6 Management Systems Using a 5 Point Scoring Scale... #1 At Risk” - #5 “Excellent.”
- ❑ Score of #3 = Best Practice.
- ❑ Provides a Detailed Blueprint to Move from Risk to Best Practice – from Best Practice to Excellence.
- ❑ Identifies Organizational + as well as -.
- ❑ Focus .....Mgt Functions and Systems vs. Programs

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## Sample Standard...HR/ “Job Descriptions.”

1. At Risk	There are no job descriptions; descriptions are missing, outdated or incomplete; descriptions exist but are not made available to employees.
2. Approaching Standard	Updated descriptions exist for all positions but are only made available upon request and/or fail to consistently define qualifications, duties, and reporting relationships.
3. Fully Meets Standard	<b>Complete, updated descriptions exist for all positions and are routinely provided to both employees and candidates interviewed for employment.</b>
4. Approaching Excellence	3 plus, descriptions clearly specify essential skills/competencies and are routinely reviewed during employee performance appraisals .
5. Excellent	4 plus, descriptions are reviewed and updated at least every 3 years to assure alignment with employee responsibilities and agency needs.
Score : 3 Rationale	<b><i>Complete and updated descriptions exist and are distributed but are not reviewed during employee performance appraisals.</i></b>

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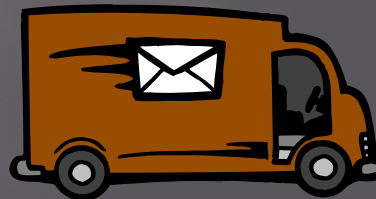
## The Assessment Process

- ▣ Agency Assessment Team Formed – Trained.
- ▣ Conduct Internal Agency Assessment Using NIQCA Tool: (Document Review – Key Informant Interviews).
- ▣ Agency Self-Assessment Team Scoring.
- ▣ NIQCA Peer Review – Feedback Report
- ▣ Improvement Priorities Identified.
- ▣ Improvement Plan Developed/Implemented
- ▣ 3 Year Assessment Cycle Repeated.

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## NIQCA Deliverables 2006–2010

- ▣ 42 CAA Assessments Completed (MA,CT,NY).
- ▣ 5 “At Risk” CAA Interventions.
- ▣ 800+ CAA Staff and 62 Peer Reviewers Trained
- ▣ 14 CAAs Provided TA/Consultation.
- ▣ Governance Training – 5 CAA Boards.
- ▣ Web Site – Best Practice Toolkit  
([www.niqca.org](http://www.niqca.org)) +  
Custom Mgt Tools.



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## DHCD – NIQCA Partnership: Considerations

- \* Simple **Compliance Monitoring Insufficient to Prevent Reputational Risk**, Service/Funding Disruption and Possible Decertification.
- \* **Effectiveness of NIQCA Intervention** Provided to “At Risk” CAA Referred by State.
- \* Compliment and **Support Unit Staffing**.
- \* **Partners Combine Strengths** to Provide Network Wide “Warp Around” Compliance Monitoring, Assessment, TA/Training Services to Local CAAs.

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## Partnership Assessment Election Model

Review of Experience 2006-2010:



**50%** CAA Voluntary Assessment Participation.

Response: Design New Model: **Goal...100%** CAA Participation in Integrated Compliance-Best Practice Assessment Every 3 years.

Actions:

- \*Revision/Update of NIQCA Standards.
- \*Revision of CSBG Monitoring Tool/Process
- \*Development of Joint Assessment Protocols
- \*CAA Executive – CSU Staff Orientation/Trg.

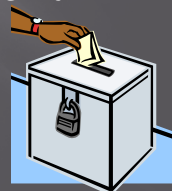
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## Partnership Assessment Model (Cont.)

- CAA State CSBG Assessment Options:

### 1. Independent Assessment Option.

Separate State Compliance and NIQCA Assessments are Required to be Completed Every 3 Years.  
NIQCA Assessment Findings Remain Confidential.



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## Partnership Assessment Model (Cont.)

### #2. Integrated Assessment Option.

Joint DHCD - NIQCA Assessment  
Incorporating Compliance Monitoring  
Using State Tool and NIQCA Best Practice  
Assessment Using a Protocol Involving:



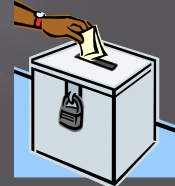
- \*Joint CAA Assessment Orientation
- \*Joint Site Visit - Interviews/Audit
- \*Integrated Report - Recommendations for Improvement.

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## Partnership Assessment Model (Cont.)

### # 3. Independent State Assessment.

Independent State Assessment Using Revised Pre-Visit Assessment Tool Which Incorporates both Compliance and Select Best Practice Standards into 3 Year Review/Audit Schedule.



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## Year # 1 Experience

2010 State Plan: Conduct Monitoring Reviews/Audits of 8 Community Action Agencies (33%).

Agency Assessment Elections:

1. 4 (50%) Option #2. (Integrated Review).
2. 2 (25%) Option #1. (Independent State and NIQCA Assessments)
3. 2 (25%) Option #3 (State Assessment).

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## Thank You



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