

IT Task Force Meeting

September 10, 2002 / 12:00 Noon – 6:00 PM

Harrisburg Hilton, Harrisburg, PA

Present: Harry Adrian (Union-Snyder Office of Human Resources), Laura Anderson (Westmoreland Human Opportunities, Inc.), Cheri Capela, Robert Cardamone (Community Action, Inc.), Frank Gatti (Community Action Program of Lancaster County), Todd Jackson (Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc.), Tom Rawlings, Brian Reiter (DCED/OCS), Ed Sitter (Greater Erie Community Action Committee), Chris Wastchak (Community Action, Inc.), Paul Webb (Cambria County Community Action, Inc.), Rick White (Armstrong County Community Action Agency), and John Wurzbacher (Community Progress Council, Inc.)

Absent: Damian Bond (Bucks County Opportunity Council, Inc.), Hugh Daly (Central Pennsylvania Community Action, Inc.), Jeremy Hauger (Tableland Services, Inc.), Ken Heilman (Armstrong County Community Action Agency), Michael Schmidt (Community Action, Inc.), and Walt Strowsky (Scranton-Lackawanna Human Development Agency, Inc.)

CAAP Staff: Deborah Gochenour, Donnie Hunsicker, and John Wilson

Handouts: CAAP IT Committee Tentative Work Phases 12/17/2001, IT Task Force On-Site Visit Representation, Difference in Common Data Elements, DCED Client Characteristics, NASCAP Client Characteristics, DCED Service Counts by Service Category, Draft ROMA Goals, Web Hosting Specifications for Civic Action Network and Roma Web, and Sample Strategic Technology Action Plan prepared in Collaboration with the Summit Collaborative

Bob Cardamone welcomed the members of the Task Force and summarized the goals and tasks of the meeting.

Announcements

Bob announced that a draft two page legal document for the transfer of the Civic Action Network (CAN) had been received from the University of Pittsburgh. Bob noted that the document basically states that the University of Pittsburgh will no longer be responsible for the software. He also noted that our new CAN web-site may be required to include a link to the original designers and underwriters of CAN. Bob stated that he had received a copy of the software in August and that changes were already in the works to include adding all of the Pennsylvania's counties.

Brian announced that another state had been interested in purchasing the CAN.

Bob reported that 17 technology surveys had thus far been submitted to the University of Pittsburgh. It was suggested that before the new year, a report should be generated charting the survey results.

Brian reported that most CAAPs did not use the FY2003 one-time CSBG funds for technology as was suggested.

Civic Action Network (CAN)

Chris and Bob presented CAN to the Task Force members so that the system content and functionality could be assessed. Chris explained that state-wide administrators would probably be needed to authenticate new entities as appropriate users. He explained that Dr. Darling had called officials of entities to validate their information. Chris further stated that "appropriate users" would need to be defined. Discussion followed and it was noted that since CAN is a private system an entity could be restricted for any reason. However, it was suggested that a subcommittee assess the system's current entity guidelines and devise criteria that would be more conducive to CAAP related activity. The issue of liability of inappropriate content was surfaced and it was decided that the legal terminology that was incorporated into the system would probably be sufficient. Nevertheless, it was decided that all legal

terminology should be reviewed. The IT Task Force also identified that an administrator would be needed to enter utility data, that a web hosting company would need to be obtained, and a unique domain name would have to be chosen.

Chris described the three CAN administrative privilege levels:

- 1) System Administrator (complete control).
- 2) Restricted Administrators (control over particular application sections).
- 3) Organizational Administrator (control over entity information).
 - a. Points of Contact (POC) (limited entity administrative control).

Possible changes to CAN suggested by the IT Task Force included:

- name change
- add the Community Action Partnership logo
- refining the search process to have less results per page and add criteria to create more detailed searches including a search by county
- add mapping to events
- appearance refinements
- allow entities to indicate that they only serve part of a county
- add help links for selected searches
- create a flag for volunteers that receive a stipend

Ed Sitter noted that there are several systems like CAN that do not have its capabilities so there should be a focused public relations effort so as to maximize this systems capability.

Harry Adrian expressed that Community Action should not be in the new CAN name because it would be very hard to convince entities outside of CAP agencies of the benefits of entering their data into the system.

CAAP Fall Conference Issues

A general discussion of the Task Force Members resulted in the following conclusions:

CAN: The CAN session would present sample information and include a hands-on session with handout. IT Task Force Members indicated their willingness to bring notebooks to connect to a server. John Wilson stated that it could be possible to rent computers if needed. Bob noted that any computers would need a network card and patch cords. He also noted that bringing fully charged notebooks would be helpful. The Task Force Members requested an evening or pre-day training of CAN during the conference.

John Wilson noted that for CAN to succeed that an extensive public relations campaign would be needed. John Wilson felt that the best start would be at the conference and requested that the system be on-line by the conference. Ed also suggested that a state-wide training be conducted for central, western, and eastern PA. John noted that he would like to see the CAAPs train other community entities.

ROMA: The ROMA session will include a demonstration of the web-based system. It was suggested that Brian Reiter attend the presentation. The agenda of the session should include a caveat stating that the reports themselves will not be explained at this particular session.

Bob announced that new ROMA forms had just been received. Brian noted that he did not think that all of the ROMA revisions have been made yet.

General Technology Forum:

The general technology forum could include:

- a review and discussion of the purpose of the IT Committee.
- a discussion of Task Force work and Task Force member's capabilities.

- a discussion of the Technology Survey results to-date.
- an advertisement for ROMA and CAN.
- Task Force future goals.

It was suggested that the forum should not be too “techie”, but instead target managers and program staff.

Web Hosting

The Task Force was asked to recommend a web hosting company for the CAN and ROMA systems researched and compared by Chris. Task Force Members noted that the reliability of the service should take precedence over all other factors. They also suggested there should be more research on down time, data ownership, and technical support.

A motion was made by Donnie Hunsicker to recommend Infosaic as the web hosting company for the CAN and ROMA systems pending liability, service, and reference checks. Seconded by Rick White. Unanimously carried.

Progress Review

Bob asked the Task Force Members to review the IT Committee goals as approved by the CAAP board. After consideration and discussion, it was noted that the following should be addressed by the Task Force after on-site visits are conducted:

- Coordinate with appropriate grantors in developing and recommending information technology policies that meet the needs of CAAs , CAAP, Grantors, NCAF and other relevant organizations.
- Reviews emerging technologies that may be advantageous to CAAs.

Ed suggested that the Task Force also address Partnership with other State IT committees [ex. MASCAP] by inviting a representative from another State IT committee to present their ideas at a future Task Force Meetings. The members of the Task Force agreed to recommend to John Wilson that the travel costs of the visiting individual be reimbursed if possible.

Ed also suggested that the IT Task Force request that the CAAP Board review the phases so that they can create a timeline and prioritize the issues in each phase.

On-Site Visits

A list of initial on-site was created. The Task Force also agreed on an outline of on-site topics. Brian suggested that the surveys be reviewed and the questions prioritized. Ed stated that the surveys would lead the interview and reminded the Task Force that one of the purposes of the on-site visits was to help those agencies that were unable to fill out the survey and also to validate the survey results. It was suggested that while talking to executive directors and management staff that the relationship between the agency’s mission and technology should be discussed, as well as management’s perspective of technology.

Data Elements

Bob expressed his concern regarding the difficulty evaluating standard data elements. The Task Force’s general consensus was that more state systems such as AIMS, CCMIS, HISFIS, SAMS, and PEBS be examined and common data elements compiled to advocate data exportation.

A motion was made by Ed Sitter to gather common data elements within state systems, compile the findings, and invite representatives from the governor’s office to discuss exporting information. Seconded by Rick White. Motion unanimously carried.

Other

Task Force Members were asked to review a sample strategic technology plan.

The next Task Force meeting will be Tuesday, November 12, 2002 in Harrisburg from 12:00 Noon to 6:00 PM.