Developing Capacities to Lead Change and Achieve Impact

Community Action Association of Pennsylvania
April 18, 2018
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Developed in collaboration with Barbara Mooney and Brown Buckley Tucker for the Community Action Partnership
Workshop Objectives

This session will help leaders consider their role in

– articulating and continuously examining the part values play in decision making,
– creating a shared sense of urgency in their agency for accelerating change,
– developing shared services and strategies for realizing agency purpose,
– encouraging learning and empowering others to be successful, and
– engaging in peer learning to help chart a path forward.
Increasing Impact

• Many in the CAA Network are looking to increase impact for individuals in poverty and for new solutions to complex problems.

• There is a desire to achieve a bigger impact than the best of what we’ve done before.

• Why are we seeing the urgency now?
  – CAA Leaders Can’t Be Satisfied with the Status Quo
While the poverty rate in 2016 declined to 12.7% (40 million people), poverty among many subgroups remains unacceptable.

- 10.8% of non-Hispanic white children lived in poverty
- 30.8% of African American children lived in poverty
- 26.6% of Latino children lived in poverty
• Of those living in poverty, almost half (18.5 million) live in deep poverty with family income below one-half the poverty threshold.
• US infant mortality rates in 2013 were the highest in the developed world.
• America has the highest incarceration rate in the world, ahead of Turkmenistan, El Salvador, Cuba, Thailand, and the Russian Federation. The rate is 5 times the OECD average.
How Do We Increase Impact?

• We know from our conversations across the CAA Network, when working on the National Theory of Change, there are a number of different perspectives and opinions about the role of CAAs in creating change and “making a difference.”

• Today we will be focusing on AGENCY impact. We believe impact is about change at the individual, family, and community level.
Recognizing Complexity

• Individual and family change often requires addressing multiple aspects of a complex problem.
• Many have come to appreciate the need to coordinate services or provide a “Whole Family Approach”.
Redirecting Strategy

Whole Family Approach < - > Whole Agency Approach

CAA leaders can accelerate change and increase impact by redirecting their strategy from program results to creating conditions where the whole agency participates in developing solutions that continually adapt.
How Do We Do It?

• As leaders we face a world that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA World).
• Impact and success in the future will require something new.
• We can’t say exactly what we will need in the future. We can’t predict it, but we can prepare for it.
• It is clear that no one person, no one program, no one organization will have the wisdom, gifts, experience, skills, and/or funding to solve our current and future challenges.
What is Leadership?

“Leadership is accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty.”

- A Practice, not a position
- Authority is earned, not bestowed
- Focus is on developing others, not just yourself

- Grounded in values, interests, and assets
- Built through relationships
Leaders Motivate Action

- Action Inhibitors:
  - inertia
  - apathy
  - fear
  - isolation
  - self-doubt

- Action Motivators:
  - urgency
  - anger
  - hope
  - solidarity
  - Y.C.M.A.D.

Overcomes:
Leaders Motivate Action

• Accelerating change requires leaders who
  – help their staff, board members, and stakeholders commit to a shared agency vision,
  – understand how to harness the wisdom, gifts, and skills of their team to solve complex challenges, and
  – promote learning, outcomes, and continual improvement.
Leaders Ask Questions
Questions Leaders Ask

1. What does success look like?
2. What is holding us back?
3. Who has experience with this?
4. How might we achieve the success we desire?
What Does Success Look Like?

• We can’t increase agency impact if we don’t know what success looks like.
• We spend considerable time planning and much of that is program related. We spend very little time considering what success for the agency looks like.
• Success is tied to what you as a leader value and what the organization values.
• Values drive decisions. So let’s look at values.
Values

Asking, “What really matters?” helps to surface assumptions and beliefs that form our values and influence our decisions.
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.

Services and Strategies

- Employment
- Education & Training Development
- Income, Infrastructure & Asset Building
- Health/Social Behavioral Development
- Housing
- Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

Core Principles

- 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

Performance Management

- How well does the network operate?
  - Local Organizational Standards
  - State and Federal Accountability Measures
  - Results Oriented Management and Accountability System

- What difference does the network make?
  - 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.

This publication was created by NASCSP in the performance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services, Grant Number 90ET0553.
“Value” = “a belief you hold so dearly, it permeates everything you do and say. Your belief is so strong that, when it is challenged, you do not hesitate to speak out and defend your position. We find that very few things fit this criteria at any one time, but the beliefs we hold are very dear.”
What Does Success Look Like?

- Values influence our decisions, how we lead, and how we address the organization’s purpose.

- National CAA Network values
- Agency values
- Individual values
Agency Core Purpose

- To increase impact you need to know what success looks like.
- We often have great clarity on what we do and much less clarity on understanding why we do it (it’s an epidemic).
- When you define the agency’s core purpose (or some might say common agenda) you’re able to get very clear on what’s important in terms of the work.
Agency Core Purpose

• What is the reason your agency exists?
  – Not just from your strategic plan, as that reflects your current focus and efforts.
  – But rather what you think your agency is “in business” to do, as this reflects your vision of the future.

• What is your agency seeking to accomplish?
## Community Action Data

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Community Action Data

• 300 households obtained safe and affordable housing.
• 900 children (0-5) who demonstrated improved emergent literacy skills.
• 83 safe and affordable housing units maintained and/or improved through WAP or other rehab efforts in the identified community.
Community Action Data

• 3000 households with improved energy efficiency and/or energy burden reduction in their homes.
• 2 individuals who increased their savings.
• 100 unemployed adults who obtained and maintained employment for at least 90 days.
What Does Success Look Like?

• Do you agree with Dr. Berwick that Isaiah likely would not make it today?

• What does Isaiah's story have to say to those of us doing anti-poverty work?
What’s holding us back?
programmatic results

- 500 children (0–5) demonstrated improved emergent literacy skills
- 50 adults obtained associate's degrees
- 50 safe and affordable housing units were developed
- 400 adults obtained safe and affordable housing for at least 180 days
- 100 households obtained safe and affordable housing
- 2000 households showed improved energy efficiency and/or a reduced energy burden
- 400 seniors (65+) maintained an independent living situation
- 350 safe and affordable housing units were maintained and/or improved
- 1% decrease in teen pregnancy rate
- 2% increase in time donated to supporting CAA efforts to address conditions of poverty in the community

Jeannie Chaffin, LLC, and Brown Buckley Tucker, LLC
250 Families Moved Out of Poverty

- 500 children (0-5) demonstrated improved emergent literacy skills
- 50 adults obtained associate's degrees
- 50 safe and affordable housing units were developed
- 4000 households showed improved energy efficiency and/or a reduced energy burden
- 100 households obtained safe and affordable housing
- 200 households maintained an independent living situation
- 400 seniors (65+) maintained employment for at least 100 days
- 350 safe and affordable housing units were maintained and/or improved
- 1% decrease in teen pregnancy rate
- 2% increase in time donated to supporting CAA efforts to address conditions of poverty in the community
250 Families Moved Out of Poverty
What’s Holding Us Back?

- Are all our programs pushing in the same direction?
- What does our collection of programs add up to?
- Is this good enough?
- Are we satisfied?
- Perhaps we need constructive dissatisfaction.
What’s Holding Us Back?

• How could a CAA define success?
  • Maintaining a job for 90 days?
  • Ending intergenerational poverty?
  • Helping families reach 200% of poverty?
  • Moving forward on a scale of crisis to thriving?
  • Achieving an array of program results?

• Does the lack of a shared definition allow each program to define success in their own way?
What’s Holding Us Back?

What is holding you back from pursuing your agency purpose/masterpiece?
What’s Holding Us Back?

Some ideas to keep in mind as we consider increasing impact:

• Program versus System
• Coordination versus Integration
What’s Holding Us Back?

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.”

John Muir
Who Has Experience With This?

- A few case studies for review.
- Some organizations have been working on gaining clarity on their purpose, identifying agency success, and increasing impact.
Case Studies

1. Is there a core purpose/common agenda?
2. Are there shared outcomes/measures to measure progress on the common agenda?
3. Are services/strategies aligned to achieve the common agenda?
4. What efforts were taken to attend to shared culture and communication needs?
5. How is backbone support for the effort being addressed?
How might we achieve the success we desire?

• Defining and gaining clarity on your **agency’s** common agenda, and doing so with the full engagement of **all staff and board members**, will unlock new meaning, learning, and the full potential of your organization. Making it possible to increase impact for individuals and families.
Change Requires Leadership and Management

**MANAGEMENT**
- Planning and budgeting
- Organizing and staffing
- Controlling and problem solving

**LEADERSHIP**
- Establishing direction
- Aligning people
- Motivating and inspiring

**PRODUCES**

**PREDICTABILITY AND ORDER**

**CHANGE**

The larger the change, the more leadership is required.

Based on the books and articles by John P. Kotter
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How might we achieve the success we desire?

Considering Leadership and Management
How might we achieve the success we desire?

• “If we think the way we have always thought, we will get what we always got.”

• Together we must create the confidence to act on our deepest convictions.
How might we achieve the success we desire?

• Achieving commitment on a common agenda takes a lot of strategic thinking.
• Identifying what success looks like, and how to measure it, is not easy in anti-poverty work.
• It will be a journey, but on that journey your agency could reach for something new and expand possibilities for everyone in your community, not just those on the economic margins.
How might we achieve the success we desire?

What are the first few steps you need to take to accelerate change and increase impact?
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