

# COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

Volunteer board members desire to have engaging and rewarding volunteer experiences. Non-profits seek leadership and support of a board that brings their very best to every meeting and to the organization. The board self-assessment process is a way to see whether the board and organization are meeting these mutual goals.

The self-study process will provide a framework that assesses board member's perceptions of current governance practice and stimulates conversation of how to strengthen the board's performance. This board self-assessment is a measurement tool that facilitates a greater understanding of how the board thinks it is doing at a particular point and time and to identify priorities for enhancing governance and organizational effectiveness.

Remember, that this is just the starting point, and that this journey should proceed to a steady pace with every step leading to a stronger board and organization.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Assessment is one of the most powerful interventions available for turning a good board into a great board.** This self-study is comprised of 11 sections. Sections 1-9 address **your perception of the board's performance**. Section 10 addresses **your perception of your PERSONAL performance on the board**. Section 11 of the self-study requires demographic information that is important for board recruitment and evaluation.

Each of these sections consists of statements that you will rate using a numerical rating of agreement or disagreement. In addition, each section includes open-ended questions that require your comments. It is important that you take the time to rate each statement honestly based on your personal knowledge and experience.

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

Please complete the self-study in its entirety. **Remember individual responses of the self-study are anonymous.** No board member's name will be identified with specific responses. All responses will be tabulated to obtain the percentage of members that gave an item a particular rating and an average rating for each statement will be calculated. All responses to open-ended questions will be recorded as written and included in the report, but not identified with any individual. **Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this self-study it is greatly appreciated!**

## SECTION 1: VISION AND MISSION

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
1. The organization has clearly stated vision and mission statements.	
2. The organization's vision and mission have specific goals.	
3. The organization's mission is clearly understood and accepted by the board.	
4. The board considers how all programs, activities, and policy decisions fit with the organization's mission.	
5. There is consensus among the board that the vision and mission accurately reflect where the organization is headed in the next two to three years.	

6. What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

7. What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

8. What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY DECISIONS

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>9.</b> The board engages in a strategic planning process that lays out the organization's goals over the next two to three years.	
<b>10.</b> The board demonstrates a strong ability to promote improvement and manage change in the organization.	
<b>11.</b> The board takes primary responsibility for establishing and regularly reviewing the organization's policies and procedures.	
<b>12.</b> The board operates using clearly written policies and by-laws that enhance the governing body.	
<b>13.</b> The board has and follows the conflict of interest policy when making official program and policy decisions for the organization.	

**14.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**15.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**16.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 3: EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>17.</b> The executive director demonstrates the ability to maintain a positive, constructive relationship with the board that maximizes organizational performance.	
<b>18.</b> The executive director ensures the board has access to relevant information and data to facilitate informed decision-making regarding the organization and its programs, activities, and services.	
<b>19.</b> The executive director and board chair are viewed as working cooperatively as a team.	
<b>20.</b> The executive director ensures that the organization has clearly defined and implemented board approved policies and procedures that are used for oversight of operations.	
<b>21.</b> The executive director's performance and compensation is formally assessed annually based on objectives established by the board at the beginning of the organization's fiscal year.	

**22.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**23.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**24.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 4: ENSURING ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>25.</b> Board members are clear about expectations for their personal fundraising responsibility (i.e., individual giving, volunteering at fundraising events).	
<b>26.</b> The board works to diversify and maximize sustainable revenue sources beyond CSBG funding to ensure the health of the organization.	
<b>27.</b> The board supports efforts to seek public and private funding to implement new programs and services to address the identified needs of the community.	
<b>28.</b> A clearly written fund development plan is in place with specific implementation strategies and goals.	

**29.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**30.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**31.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 5: EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>32.</b> The organization collaborates with other agencies and groups that provide assistance to low-income families in the community.	
<b>33.</b> The board and staff engage community members to strengthen the organization's advocacy efforts.	
<b>34.</b> The organization can readily mobilize a network of community allies and advocates who can be influential at neighborhood, city, town, and state levels.	
<b>35.</b> The board actively promotes the organization and its activities to enhance its reputation in the community.	
<b>36.</b> The board and organization invite policymakers and elected officials to agency events, such as the annual meeting.	
<b>37.</b> The organization has an effective public relations and communication plan in place, keeping the community informed about the organization's activities and accomplishments.	
<b>38.</b> Community members and other partners that are not on the board have opportunities to serve on board committees.	

**39.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**40.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**41.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 6: PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FISCAL OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>42.</b> The organization's annual budget is fully discussed and understood by board members prior to its approval.	
<b>43.</b> The fiscal status of the organization is regularly reviewed and necessary board action is taken in a timely manner.	
<b>44.</b> Organizational funding needs are reviewed annually and priorities are established.	
<b>45.</b> The Chief Financial Officer provides relevant financial statements and documents to the board at least one week before every board meeting for review by board members.	
<b>46.</b> The organization's audit report is reviewed by the full board and necessary actions are taken in a timely manner.	

**47.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**48.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**49.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 7: ASSESSING PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>50.</b> Data is used to inform decisions regarding implementation of programs and services targeted to reduce inequality in outcomes for low-income children and families.	
<b>51.</b> The organization staff demonstrates the ability to work effectively with diverse populations.	
<b>52.</b> The board uses the results of activity performance reviews to update the strategic plan.	
<b>53.</b> The board annually engages in a thorough review of performance of the organization's programs and services.	
<b>54.</b> The board uses evaluation and activity performance review information to guide decisions about program modification and/or new programs.	
<b>55.</b> The board evaluates program performance against the organization's mission on a regular basis.	
<b>56.</b> Written organizational procedures are in place to ensure equitable access to program services and facilities.	

**57.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**58.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**59.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 8: BOARD AND ORGANIZATIONAL STAFF ROLES

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>60.</b> Line of responsibility for board and organizational staff are clearly defined and differentiated.	
<b>61.</b> The board delegates to the executive director sufficient authority to lead the staff and carry out the organization's mission.	
<b>62.</b> Board and staff have a shared understanding of the organization's strategic goals and work cooperatively to achieve those goals.	

**63.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**64.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**65.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 9: BOARD STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR PRECEPTION OF BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

	RATING
<b>66.</b> The roles, responsibilities, and expectation of board members are clearly understood.	
<b>67.</b> The board size is adequate.	
<b>68.</b> The areas of expertise, skills, and other factors needed to be an effective board for the organization are adequately represented among current board members.	
<b>69.</b> Board members are actively recruited based on the organization's needs.	
<b>70.</b> Board members are provided a comprehensive orientation that includes the history of community action, community action promise and code of ethics, and the organization's mission, vision, by-laws, policies, programs, and roles and responsibilities as board members.	
<b>71.</b> The board has a written succession plan in place for board leadership to provide guidance when there is an anticipated or unanticipated change.	
<b>72.</b> The board thoroughly examines the pros and cons of all major issues before decisions are finalized.	
<b>73.</b> The board's committee structure is effective, the number of committees is appropriate, and their objectives are well-defined.	
<b>74.</b> Each board member serves on at least one board committee.	
<b>75.</b> The organization's conflict of interest policy is clear and all board members adhere to it.	
<b>76.</b> The format of the board meetings is the right balance of information sharing and strategic thinking about major issues and concerns.	
<b>77.</b> The board's meeting schedule has the right number and length of meetings.	
<b>78.</b> Board meeting are generally well-run and make good use of members' time.	

**79.** What are your suggestions for how the board can do a better job in this area?

**80.** What resources and/or organizations does the board obtain information from when working on issues in this area?

**81.** What resources or training would be helpful to your board and help them improve their performance in this area?

## SECTION 10: INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER SELF-REFLECTION

RESPONSE RATING				
1	2	3	4	DK
<b>Strongly Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Agree with Statement</b>	<b>Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree with Statement</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>

### ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR **PERSONAL** PERFORMANCE ON THE BOARD

	RATING
<b>82.</b> I get excited about the mission of the organization and support where we are headed in two to three years.	
<b>83.</b> I look for news and trends that impact our organization.	
<b>84.</b> I am knowledgeable about and can describe the organization's program and services.	
<b>85.</b> I have a clear understanding of my role and responsibilities as a Community Action board member.	
<b>86.</b> I thoughtfully prepare for board and committee meetings.	
<b>87.</b> I actively participate in board meetings and feel very engaged in the governing process.	
<b>88.</b> I actively participate on at least one board committee.	
<b>89.</b> I actively participate in board and committee work.	
<b>90.</b> I recommend people for the board and board committees.	
<b>91.</b> I respect the other members of the board and have a strong working relationship with them.	
<b>92.</b> I actively participate in the development of the organization's strategic plan.	
<b>93.</b> I actively participate in the annual review of the organization's executive director.	
<b>94.</b> I am knowledgeable enough about the organization's budget to make informed funding decisions about the organization and the programs and services it offers.	
<b>95.</b> I make an annual financial gift to the organization.	
<b>96.</b> I share information about the mission and programs of the organization with people in the community.	
<b>97.</b> I actively participate in at least one organization activity or event a year.	
<b>98.</b> I am an advocate for Community Action in my community.	
<b>99.</b> I believe that being a member of this board is meaningful and a productive commitment of my time.	

**100.** What resources or training would be helpful to you as a board member and that you feel would help you improve your performance as a board member?

## SECTION 11: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This demographic information that is important for board recruitment and evaluation.  
Please select the answer that applies to each question.

### How long have you served on the board?

- 1 year or less
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- More than 10 years

### Gender

- Male
- Female

### Ethnicity

- African American
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Caucasian/White (non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic/Latino
- Multi-Ethnicity

### Age

- 18-21
- 22-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Over 60

### Are you a board officer?

- Yes
- No

### What board position do you occupy?

- Public (elected official, policymaker, council person)
- Private (lawyer, CPA, business)
- Low-Income (low-income person or representative from the community)