

# PUBLIC CAA CASE STUDY



## The Power of a Tripartite Board

September 2016

### INTRODUCTION: The Board's Role in the CSBG Organizational Standards

This case study focuses on how the tripartite board of a public Community Action Agency (CAA) fulfills its responsibilities with respect to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards set forth in the federal Office of Community Services' (OCS) Information Memorandum (IM) No. 138. Because a public CAA and its tripartite board are usually operating under the auspices of an established local government framework, the applicability of the CSBG Organizational Standards (Standards) is markedly different from their applicability to a nonprofit CAA.

While the federal CSBG Act requires the board to “participate actively in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation”<sup>1</sup> of Community Action programs, the reality of how to fulfill this role in an impactful way is not always clear. A public CAA tripartite board often perceives its ability to act on behalf of the public CAA as limited by the level of authority delegated to it by the local governing body. Even though establishing a delegation of authority arrangement is necessary and important, doing so does not lessen the impact and role the board plays. As you will see in this case study, defining and establishing the role of your public CAA tripartite board helps to foster a positive relationship between the board and the local governing officials and results in more engaged and effective board members.

After spending time speaking with representatives of Montgomery County Community Action Agency (MCCAA), a public CAA in Maryland, we were impressed by the ways in which its tripartite board helps the CAA achieve compliance with the Standards. Two key characteristics stand out with MCCAA's board – they understand the vital role they play and they embrace that role. Even though MCCAA's delegation of authority arrangement does not often place the tripartite board in a decision-making position, the board continually manages to effect change. This case study highlights many of the ways in which the board does so. The board not only takes very seriously the recommendations it is asked to make but it is also constantly advocating on behalf of MCCAA and the low-income community. A few of the ways in which the board fulfills its responsibilities include: developing and implementing initiatives to engage the community served; regularly meeting with local government officials; participating in county-wide hearings and meetings; and collaborating with other county groups to ensure the community's needs are met.



MCCAA acknowledges that it is not yet 100% in compliance with the Standards but the ongoing efforts of its tripartite board to reach that goal are inspiring and, we hope, informative, especially for those public CAA tripartite boards that are struggling with challenges related to compliance with the Standards. Throughout the case study, we identify Standards that we believe MCCAA's tripartite board is either addressing or attempting to address through its actions. Our goal with this case study is not to identify all of the Standards that may be met through the board's efforts; but rather, to highlight key characteristics of the board that contribute to its effectiveness and compliance with CSBG Organizational Standards.

<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 9910 (b)(1)(C).

## MCCAA Overview

<b>MAIN OFFICE LOCATION:</b>	Division of the county’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS or Health and Human Services) in Montgomery County, Maryland
<b>STAFF SIZE:</b>	15 employees (2 part-time), 7 contractors (3 part-time)
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE:</b>	Sharon Strauss
<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	1 county, 500 square miles, 1 million total population
<b>ANNUAL REVENUE:</b>	\$9,000,000
<b>BOARD SIZE:</b>	18
<b>DIRECT SERVICES SITES:</b>	Takoma East Silver Spring Center (TESS) Center and administrative office
<b>MAJOR PROGRAMS:</b>	Head Start, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, summer meals program, legal clinics, benefits application assistance, interpretation and translation services, senior services programs, play groups for young children, monitoring of approximately 30 grant recipients that receive funding from the county (not from MCCAA)

## BACKGROUND

Tackling the Standards is a team effort that involves not only a CAA’s staff and tripartite board but also ongoing support from the state CSBG office. A CAA’s success in implementing the Standards hinges on fostering a healthy collaboration between CAAs and their state oversight agency. Public CAAs are often in a good position to develop and maintain a positive relationship with their state CSBG office because public CAAs are more likely to understand, from first-hand experience, general government operations. Public CAAs and their tripartite boards also derive additional benefits from being a part of their local governments that can assist them in meeting the Standards.

### State CSBG Office Support

According to MCCAA’s Executive Director, Sharon Strauss, the positive relationship that MCCAA (and, she believes, most Maryland CAAs), has with the state CSBG office, the Department of Housing and Community Development, has made implementation of the Standards more manageable. Ms. Strauss explained that the state office has “gone ahead and used the network standards, they’ve adopted them. This year they showed up in our grant. Everything we had to complete in the grant was referenced with the...Standards.” Even though the board was involved in the development of the CAA’s CSBG grant application, MCCAA’s executive team took the lead on a line-by-line review of the Standards for purposes of integrating them into the CAA’s systems, processes, and procedures. Doing so helped MCCAA’s staff educate the board on its role and responsibilities with respect to the Standards.

Ms. Strauss also explained that the state office is “very supportive” and “understands how we work in different ways.” The state, for example, recognizes that MCCAA’s board “is a public board that is appointed by the executive

and confirmed by our County Council and there is a process of how...different kinds of positions are suggested or approved by the board.” Communicating these differences to the state office in its application, Ms. Strauss believes, has helped the state CSBG office develop a good understanding of how MCCAAs operate as a public CAA.

## Benefits of Being a Public CAA

“Our framework is a lot different than the nonprofits’ but I think there are supportive aspects to being in a public agency,” Ms. Strauss says. For one, MCCAAs’ Program Manager, Leah Goldfine, who supports the CAA’s communications needs and data assessment obligations, also acts as the board liaison. Ms. Goldfine works with the tripartite board to ensure that it has the information and support it needs to excel. The local government supports this staff role and, while the role “is not unique to our community action board,” according to Ms. Strauss, the role is just “another strength of being a public community action agency.”

The political leadership also works to ensure that the different county groups are working together. The groups include commissions on aging, childcare, veterans, people with disabilities, and those groups with a human service interest meet collectively on a quarterly basis with the tripartite board leaders. As Ms. Strauss explains, “so if affordable housing...is an issue across populations...there may be unique concerns, let’s say with seniors and people can go very deep into their particular niche.” These efforts help in meeting:

**STANDARD 2.1: The department has documented or demonstrated partnerships across the community, for specifically identified purposes; partnerships include other anti-poverty organizations in the area.**

Ms. Strauss believes that these collaborations “really also support governance” because training by the county, such as ethics training, is available to these groups, including the tripartite board.

The collaborations “help coordinate and keep people from tripping over each other with policy priorities.” Tripartite board members will participate in the different hearings which allow for a deeper discussion of the issues and enable the tripartite board to connect with groups that may not fall directly within the human

services area. For example, Ms. Strauss explains “if we are talking about the earned income tax credit, EITC, we might also be talking to the commission for women, they’re not part of health and human services, but our board chair would be able to bring that into a conversation in a group of other leaders.” These conversations, often led by tripartite board members, help MCCAAs to understand what other groups are operating in the space where MCCAAs are trying to work and to identify its own policy priorities. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 2.2: The department utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources during the community assessment process or other times. These sectors would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector and educational institutions.**

## MCCAAs’ TRIPARTITE BOARD

It is hard to pin down exactly why MCCAAs’ tripartite board is so successful at not only specifically meeting the CSBG Organizational Standards but also generally engaging the community and supporting the CAA. Understanding the way in which the board recruits its members, as well as orients and educates them, offers some insight into the board’s strengths and high level of engagement. Currently, the board consists of eighteen members who meet nine times each year which equates to monthly board meetings except for the months of July, August, and December. The executive committee of the board meets every month and *ad hoc* committees meet on an as-needed basis. The executive committee consists of seven members and reflects the three different sectors of the tripartite board.

### Recruitment

Several factors have influenced board member recruitment. The board’s visibility in the community through its programs and initiatives has resulted in increased interest by the community in serving on the board. According to Ms. Goldfine, the community sees “the work that the board is doing and people who are interested in these issues would want to be a part of that.” MCCAAs count themselves as lucky in terms of outreach because of its wide network, “both through our current board members but also just through our

partner programs and agencies that we work with here in our office.” This outreach enables MCCA to effectively get the word out about tripartite board opportunities to a wide range of people. Ms. Goldfine also explained that MCCA’s tripartite board, through an *ad hoc* committee, holds “interviews when there are vacancies on the board and that provides a really great opportunity to share more detailed information...about the board’s role.” The board members take the lead on those interviews and use them as an opportunity to speak with potential board members about what is expected of them.

### Orientation, Education and Training

Board member orientation is led by both board members and staff who use a PowerPoint presentation that Ms. Goldfine updates with current information for each new orientation session. *See Appendix I: MCCA Board Orientation PowerPoint.* The PowerPoint provides an overview of the board structure, the agency structure, where MCCA sits within the county government, some Community Action history, and the tripartite board’s role within MCCA and the county. The orientation session also always includes current information about what the board is working on at that particular time, such as advocacy issues, programs and initiatives. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 5.7:** The department has a process to provide a structured orientation for tripartite board/advisory members within 6 months of being seated.

MCCA staff also continually educates the tripartite board through their interactions with the board. As Ms. Strauss explains, “we are trying to infuse that language in meetings and other kinds of work that we do so that, again, they have this vocabulary and they start to have the orientation which I think our board chair would say, probably took her five years to really get the whole thing because it is pretty complicated, it takes a long time.”

While board members will attend national and state conferences, participate in trainings that come up along the way, and learn from guest speakers at meetings, the board is constantly looking into additional training opportunities and is considering devoting a part of every meeting to training, as discussed in the

Challenges section below. In particular, the board is interested in obtaining more training focused on the board’s role and responsibilities with respect to the Standards. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 5.8:** Tripartite board/advisory members have been provided with training on their duties and responsibilities within the past 2 years.

### Role and Authority

The main function of the board is summed up simply by Ms. Goldfine – “to serve as advocates” – and they embrace that role. She explains that they “advocate to the local elected local officials but also at the state and federal level as well.” She elaborates further that “most of their work, I would say, is at the local level...meetings with County Council members, meetings with the County Executive and then also other officials within



county government.” The board has developed and nurtures a “really good relationship” with the county and “with the local elected officials in particular.” The relationship between the tripartite board

and county government is further facilitated by the representatives of the County Executive office and the County Council both of whom serve on the tripartite board and act as liaisons between the groups.

The specific powers of the tripartite board are established in the bylaws as well as the enabling legislation for MCCA. *See Appendix II: Bylaws and Enabling Legislation.* The enabling legislation, in particular, lists in detail the actions the tripartite board may take. It is interesting to note that most of the actions involve the tripartite board providing recommendations and advice on a number of matters specific to MCCA’s Community Action program. Even though the delegation of authority arrangement does not often place the board in a decision-making role, MCCA manages to effect change through its collaborations and its advocacy efforts on behalf of the CAA and its clients.



## Strengths

Ms. Goldfine believes that the board particularly excels in three critical areas. The first is program planning. In addition to its oversight role with regards to Head Start and CSBG programs, the board has taken the lead on developing and implementing poverty forums and is now working on a new initiative, the *Leadership Development Institute*.

The second is advocacy. They have been “very, very engaged in different advocacy efforts” — from small actions, like adding the board’s name to sign-on letters,



to bigger actions, such as testifying in person at County Council hearings and before the County Executive and submitting written testimony for different bills that impact the low-income residents.

Ms. Goldfine explains that when legislation

arises that is relevant to issues identified by the board through its community involvement, “the board really wants to make sure that they address it because those were the issues that the residents came to them and talked about.” Also, she stated that “the board has done a great job of advocating for the agency.” The board visits the TESS center (MCCAA’s main direct service site) and gets a “first-hand perspective on what actually takes place through our agency on a daily basis and really understands what the agency does.” Ms. Goldfine exclaims that “our board members are really great about that...they really do have an excellent understanding of all the different services that our agency offers and they’re really very much aware of those services. I think that helps them to advocate for the agency.”

The third is collaboration. She explained that “the board has done a really great job of working with other boards and commissions in the county but also a lot of our partner organizations and other groups to really advocate for issues and plan programs...They’ve just done a really great job, especially in the last couple years in developing those relationships.” These efforts help in meeting:

**STANDARD 2.1:** The department has documented or demonstrated partnerships across the community, for specifically identified purposes; partnerships include other anti-poverty organizations in the area.

## Challenges

Ms. Goldfine described several challenges that the tripartite board is currently addressing. One is the need for more training. The board currently has some opportunities to participate in training such as attending the Maryland Community Action Partnership annual conference, traveling to national partner conferences when they are within driving distance, and listening to guest speakers invited to board meetings. However, the board feels as if more needs to be done, especially with regard to the Standards and the board’s involvement with them. To this end, the board is hoping to incorporate more training into its regular meetings. The board chair proposed this idea to the board, which is now considering including a brief training as part of the agenda at every meeting. MCCAA also sometimes faces challenges recruiting new members for the low-income representative sector of the board. The board hopes that its new *Leadership Development Institute* initiative to train the low-income community on being effective advocates will also stimulate interest in serving on the board.

## Engagement

MCCAA is overflowing with board engagement and Ms. Goldfine accredits this partly to the fact that their “board members come from a lot of different backgrounds and areas of expertise...[and] are involved in a lot of different organizations and different local initiatives.” Even though the tripartite board members mostly have full-time jobs, they remain “very, very involved in the community...so they were really engaged residents to begin with and really care about these issues.”

The board orientation session for newly appointed members, Ms. Goldfine also believes, helps with the board engagement. The orientation goes into more detail than what the new board members might have received at their interview. As discussed earlier, the board uses a PowerPoint as part of its orientation process. The PowerPoint provides an overview of the

board structure, the agency structure, where MCCAAs sit in terms of county government, some community action history, and the tripartite board's role within MCCAAs and the county. Furthermore, all board members are required to participate in at least one committee. Both Ms. Goldfine and the board see this commitment as "a really a great way for them to get more involved, especially for the new board members." The board is exploring other ways to engage, in particular, its new members and is considering a mentoring program for the future.

Lastly, the structure of the board meetings has resulted in an increased level of engagement. Ms. Goldfine sends the meeting materials to the board members ahead of time, including the reports and other items that will be discussed at the meeting so that everyone has a chance to review them before the meeting. After



every meeting, the board completes a brief evaluation of that meeting. The results of these evaluations have helped to improve the board's

cohesiveness and member satisfaction. The board has also started using the consent agenda format for its meetings. Generally, a consent agenda is used to expedite routine business during board meetings, such as approval of the minutes from the prior meeting, so that more time can be spent educating and discussing substantive, action-oriented issues. Most of the materials that Ms. Goldfine sends in advance to the board are included on the consent agenda and this enables the board to review those matters more quickly at the meeting. Typically the consent agenda includes the prior meeting's minutes and meeting evaluation form, written reports from executive and key program staff, recent testimony given by the board at various hearings, and committee reports. The consent agenda enables the board to move on to discussions about current issues and guest speakers. According to Ms. Goldfine, the consent agenda format has "actually been really helpful in terms of making the best use of their time during the monthly board meetings" and "it's

been quite effective." Board meetings usually range in length between one and a half to two hours.

Ultimately, Ms. Goldfine feels that the tripartite board is "a very committed group of individuals who are very engaged in the community and very active and really, really want to participate. They come to the meetings but they do so much more than that. They are constantly engaged in these other committees, planning programs and everything. We just have a really excellent group."

## MEETING ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS

MCCAAs's tripartite board is not always making a conscious effort to meet a specific Standard. Rather, the way in which the board operates and the passion that drives its members, many times results in its achieving compliance with individual Standards in a non-taxing and seemingly effortless way.

### Board Organizational Standards Survey

One specific step MCCAAs's board took to begin incorporating the Standards was to assess individual board members' understanding and knowledge of the Standards. When the state required CAAs to do a self-assessment on the Standards, MCCAAs engaged its board in a parallel process. The board established a committee to review the Standards in relation to the board's work and the committee developed an online survey that fifteen out of the eighteen members completed. *See Appendix III: Board Organizational Standards Survey.* The survey included questions that focused on the Standards specific to the board. The board used the results to help the board and staff determine what training was needed and what areas required further attention. Ms. Goldfine explained that the survey "was definitely a successful initiative in terms of addressing the...Standards...It was a really helpful tool in terms of figuring out where the board is right now, what areas do they need to learn more about." After the survey, MCCAAs reached out to the national Community Action Partnership for a training on the Standards specific to the board's role and focused on the differences between nonprofit and Public CAAs.

## Community Involvement

The board excels in its advocacy role by regularly engaging the community and receiving its feedback.

One way the board recently did this was through poverty forums that it developed and conducted at different venues around the county. The idea for the forums began with the board and involved inviting members of the low-income community to come out, discuss their concerns, and share ideas and recommendations for how to address those



issues. Some board members were involved in the planning of the forums, others in the implementation by serving as

facilitators for the forums, while others participated by attending the forums. One forum occurred in early 2015 and a second one took place in Spring 2016. The board partnered with another county service provider, East County Regional Services Center, to host the forum which was, according to Ms. Goldfine, “a huge success...we had over 150 people there.” The forums provided the community with the opportunity to share their concerns and ideas about four important issues: child care, housing, jobs and transportation. Feedback received ranged from asking the county and other providers to “consider innovative ideas such as ‘tiny houses’ and shared housing options” to requesting that they “post job information at bus stops and Metro stations.” The board also hosted a few different sessions specifically at MCCA’s TESS center so the board could talk to clients coming to the center for different services. Ms. Goldfine explained that “those were also incredibly helpful because we were hearing directly from the community that our service site is working with each day.”

Additionally, the board receives information from partner organizations such as Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools and organizations that the CAA monitors on behalf of the county. The information received is shared with board members through e-mails, a monthly newsletter, and written reports at meetings and helps the board better understand what resources are available in the

community. Board members and staff also attend community events where critical issues impacting the low-income community are discussed such as the community policing forum, youth and law enforcement forum, food security meetings, and public forums about early childhood issues. The tripartite board has a formal relationship with the Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection and the Human Rights Commission that is reflected in each groups’ enabling legislation. Representatives of each group serve as members of the tripartite board and, along with staff, attend committee and commission meetings and report back to the board. These efforts help in meeting:

**STANDARD 2.2: The department utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources during the community assessment process or other times. These sectors would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector and educational institutions.**

Information gathered by the board, especially from the different forums, was used to create reports and advocacy tools that the board shares with the local elected officials to provide them with a sense of what the community is feeling right now, what are their main concerns, and what are the primary issues they are facing. The report also included statistical information such as “Nearly 70,000 County Residents Live in Poverty” and 10.4% of African Americans are unemployed. According to Ms. Goldfine, the forums in particular have helped board members “to connect even more with local elected officials” because they are “arranging meetings with them, specifically discussing the findings of these programs and really highlight the information, make sure that its on their radar.” See *Appendix IV: Poverty Forum Report*. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 3.2: As part of the community assessment, the department collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area.**

**STANDARD 3.4: The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.**

Another new program the board is starting this upcoming fall is the *Leadership Development Institute*. Ms. Goldfine sees this program “in some ways...[as]



a continuation of the poverty forums, and in some ways kind of a separate initiative.” The program will consist of a series of workshops where the participants learn about advocacy skills, and then they will have the opportunity to testify before the County Council. One-third of the tripartite board members are involved in the planning of this new initiative. One benefit the board hopes to derive from this new program is to increase the low-income representation on the board. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 1.1:** The department demonstrates low-income individuals’ participation in its activities.

These activities that the board develops and facilitates also feed into the active role the board plays in the community needs assessment. The staff prepares a report called the *Faces of Poverty* that includes statistics about the low-income community in the county and is constantly updated. The board members are given copies of the report and they use it in developing the community needs assessment, in board testimony at public hearings, and to highlight the needs of the low-income residents by sharing it with partner organizations and elected officials. The report is also used by county leaders to explain the extent of poverty in the county. See *Appendix V: Faces of Poverty Report*. These efforts help in meeting:

**STANDARD 3.3:** The department collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the community assessment.

Lastly, the direct services programs through both the TESS center and the VITA program include customer satisfaction and evaluation forms. Data from these forms is used to compile a report that is reviewed by the board before being submitted to DHHS for the CSBG Information System (IS) Survey. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 1.3:** The department has a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing and reporting customer satisfaction data to the tripartite board/advisory body . . .

## Conflicts of Interest

MCCAA has a conflicts of interest policy that is part of the county’s ethics rules for boards and commissions. All new tripartite board members have an opportunity to review the policy and their receipt of the policy is documented. The county also offers annual ethics

training led by the county attorney’s office for boards and commissions. New board members are required to attend the trainings which cover conflicts of interest and other issues that are part of the county’s rules about ethics. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 5.6:** Each tripartite board/advisory body member has signed a conflict of interest policy or comparable local government document, within the past 2 years.

## Mission Statement

While there is a county-wide mission statement and one for DHHS, MCCAA, a division of DHHS, has its own mission statement. Recently, the staff took the lead on crafting a simpler mission statement for the CAA which was brought to the tripartite board for review. The board, desiring to make the mission statement as clear and understandable as possible, recommended language to add and words to use. The combined efforts of staff and the board resulted in taking MCCAA’s old mission statement: “To conduct and promote programs that create an awareness of poverty, to promote coordination among agencies and better use of resources, to develop leadership among low-income residents of the County, and to develop community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty” and streamlining it. Doing so resulted in the following, more succinct version: “To reduce poverty and increase self-sufficiency among County residents through services, partnerships, and advocacy.” These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 4.1:** Each tripartite board/advisory body has reviewed the department’s mission statement with the past 5 years and assured that: 1. The mission addresses poverty; and 2. The CSBG programs and services are in alignment with the mission

## Community Action Plan and Strategic Plan

The tripartite board has an opportunity at its annual retreat to review MCCAA’s community action plan and add its input. The board also receives regular programmatic reports that include information about specific strategies laid out in the plan.

As to involvement in a strategic plan, DHHS has its own action plan and all the boards and commissions that are a part of DHHS have the opportunity to review that document. DHHS provides for quarterly meetings with



the DHHS Director which the tripartite board leadership participates in to provide feedback. The board also has the opportunity at its retreat to review DHHS's plan and see where the department as a whole is headed. These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 6.1:** The department has a strategic plan, or comparable planning document, in place that has been reviewed and accepted by the tripartite board/advisory body within the past 5 years . . .

Ms. Goldfine explained that the board takes “an active role in reviewing these things and providing their input and we like to make sure that they have the opportunity to do it and have enough time to review the documents and put some thought into it.” Further, she elaborated that staff “have tried really hard to make sure that the board is knowledgeable and aware of issues going on at the agency...[which] really helps them to be better advocates, actually, both for the agency and for the different issues they are working on.”

## Programmatic and Financial Reports

The board and its executive committee receive written program reports at every meeting and almost always in-person updates and/or written reports from staff who attend the meeting. The reports include updates on the agency as a whole, as well as Head Start and the contracts for county funding (not from MCCA) that MCCA monitors for the county. The board will make recommendations in response to the reports and many times they have questions about the report. The board always has an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about anything that seems confusing. These efforts help in meeting:

**STANDARD 5.9:** The department's tripartite board/advisory body receives programmatic reports at each regular board/advisory meeting.

The board also has an opportunity to review financial information and the annual budget. MCCA has a fiscal person on staff in its office who is charged with compiling the data for the financial reports. The board receives updates on MCCA's budget throughout the year. Ms. Goldfine explains that the board's receipt of this information “helps them to monitor how the agency is doing throughout the year.” These actions help in meeting:

**STANDARD 8.7:** The tripartite board/advisory body receives financial reports each regular meeting, for those program(s) the body advises, as allowed by local government procedure.

In addition to providing input on MCCA's budget, the tripartite board also provides input on the county-wide budget. The board leadership and MCCA's executive staff always participate in public hearings on the budget that the County Council holds. Ms. Goldfine explains that the board will “testify about key issues that they want the council to focus on, certain programs that they strongly encourage the county to fund, things like that so they do have an advocacy role in the county's budget as well.” There is also an opportunity, around the time that the budget is being finalized, for the board and MCCA's executive staff to attend an annual meeting with County Executive. These efforts help in meeting:

**STANDARD 8.9:** The tripartite board/advisory body has input as allowed by local governmental procedure into the CSBG budget process.

## CONCLUSION

Even though the decision-making power of MCCA's tripartite board is limited, the board excels at effecting change for the CAA and the community it serves. The ongoing support provided by MCCA staff, especially by the board liaison, is key to helping the board successfully fulfill its responsibilities. The board's active role in understanding the CAA's and community's needs, developing relationships with key stakeholders and regularly advocating on behalf of the CAA and its clients places MCCA on the path to achieving excellence, specifically with regards to the Standards and generally as a sustainable and highly impactful Community Action Agency.



*This case study was created by the Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. in the performance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services, Grant Number 90ET0441-02. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. This case study is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Please consult an attorney for advice regarding your organization's individual situation.*