Nevada CSBG Organizational Standards
Community Needs Assessment Guidelines
January 2016

I. Overview

The purpose of a community needs assessment is to create a deeper understanding of the conditions in the community that create barriers for low-income families to live securely and advance toward self-sufficiency. The results provide a starting point for updating the CAA's strategic plan. CAAs should use the priority needs identified through the community needs assessment process to determine how well agency services and activities are aligned with the major needs and to adjust strategies for delivering service, collaborating with community partners, and building agency capacity.

CAAs are required to complete community needs assessments every three years under the CSBG Organizational Standards. Of the 58 standards, 8 relate to the completion of the community needs assessment. Information must be gathered from at least three perspectives: the perception of people who are low-income, the perception of other organizations in the community, and demographic data.

These guidelines are designed to help CAAs plan for a community needs assessment, conduct it, analyze the information, and produce a summary report in compliance with the CSBG Organizational Standards. The guidelines identify the key documents that should be used, help organize the steps in the process, and provide guidance on some of the questions that should be asked along the way. The needs assessment is a locally driven process and therefore it will be necessary for the participants to determine which information, data and issues should be given the most weight in order to identify the priority unmet needs in the community.

Additionally, the guidelines should be considered minimum requirements. CAAs are encouraged to add elements to the basic process outlined in these guidelines if it determined that it will result in a deeper and more comprehensive analysis.

DHHS will review the community needs assessment completed by each CAA to determine whether the required elements have been addressed. If a CAA decides to use a different approach than the one outlined in these guidelines, the CAA will need to submit a needs assessment plan to DHHS for review and approval in advance of starting the needs assessment.   It is not necessary to seek prior approval if the CAA will be including additional elements over and above the required minimum standards.

II. Organizational Standards Related to the Community Needs Assessment:

Requirements for Non-profit CAAs:

1.2 The Organization analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the Community Assessment.

2.2 The Organization utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources. This would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions.

3.1 The organization conducted a Community Assessment and issued a report within the past 3 years.

Note, For Public CAA Organizations: The organization conducted a Community Assessment and issued a report within the past 3 years, ***if no other report exists***.

3.2 As part of the Community Assessment, the organization collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).

3.3 The organization collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the Community Assessment.

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

3.5 The governing board formally accepts the completed Community Assessment.

4.2 The Organization's Community Action Plan is outcome-based, anti-poverty focused, and ties directly to the Community Assessment.

Requirements for Public CAA Organizations:

As noted above in standard 3.1, Public CAAs may use a community needs assessments conducted by county government and/or another community organization to meet the Community Needs Assessment requirement. DHHS will review alternative needs assessments completed by Public CAAs and determine whether they adequately meet the requirements of the Organizational Standards. DHHS may request additional information, including completion of one or more of the core components, as outlined below, if the existing needs assessments are determined to lack key elements. At a minimum, Public CAAs will be required to complete standard 1.2, which is based on analyzing client demographics and needs assessment data from eLogic since it is unlikely that any alternative needs assessment will have included this component.

III. Core Components of the Nevada CSBG Community Needs Assessment:

a. Complete a customer needs assessment. Collect eLogic demographic and initial intake needs assessment data. (Standard 1.2)

b. Gather needs assessment information from each of the following sectors: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions. (Standard 2.2)

c. Collect service area demographic data that includes poverty data and it's prevalence based on age, gender, and race/ethnicity. (Standard 3.2)

d. Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on the service area. At a minimum, the data collected under items a, b, and c meets the data collection portion of this requirement. Analysis of the data collected is the key ***additional*** component that is required under this standard. (Standard 3.3)

e. Identify key findings on the causes of poverty and community needs. (Standard 3.4)

f. Obtain Board approval of the Community Needs Assessment. (Standard 3.5)

g. Use of the Community Needs in preparing the Community Action Plan. (The directions for this component will be prepared by DHHS as part of the SFY 2017 annual application requirements.) (Standard 4.2)

h. Prepare a Community Needs Assessment report that summarizes the information collected and analyzed under items a through e above. (Standard 3.1)

GUIDELINES FOR CORE COMPONENTS A through H

Pre- Planning

a. Select a team of agency staff members to work on the data collection and Community Needs Assessment. In small agencies, a team might be two people. In larger agencies, the team may include several people, including managers and direct service staff. The team might also include board members.

b. Review the guidelines. Determine whether the agency will use an alternative approach and should contact the State CSBG Office for approval. Identify any additional elements that may be added to the process.

c. Create a schedule and plan for completing the needs assessment.

Needs Assessment Data Collection

a. <u>Customer Needs Assessment</u>

This is designed to be an internal agency staff exercise.

Step 1- Print the eLogic Needs Assessment Report submitted with your agency's most recent Community Action Plan or contact the Center for Applied Management Practices for an updated report.

Step 2 – Put the domains in rank order with 1 being the domain that is considered to be the most critical. The following is the recommended process for identifying the most critical needs:

1. Identify and rank the domains that have the largest number of clients who were in-crisis or vulnerable based on the intake assessment. The ranking should range from 1 through 12 based on the 12 primary assessment scales.
2. Determine how well the resources in your agency and the community address each of the needs ranked in #1 above. Questions to ask: Do

adequate resources exist in the community to address these needs? What gaps within each of the domains still exist?

3. Based on the analysis from #2 above, re-rank the domains with 1 representing the highest needs. Include notes to indicate the gaps in resources that are associated with each domain. A resource gap might involve funding, but also might touch on issues of community coordination, collaborative planning and execution.

b. Community Poverty Data

Step 1 - Service area demographic data is available from Community Commons. Go to the Community Action Partnership website and click on the Resources tab to access the Community Commons website tool for community action. Once you are on the Community Commons website, you will be able to access the reports for your county (or counties). Run **all** of the available reports from the Data Category menu item. These are *Employment, Education, Housing, Income, Nutrition, Health Care, and Population.*

Step 2 - Identify the 10 reports that indicate that the county's data is worse than the statewide average. If there aren't 10 reports with data worse than the statewide average, use the national average as a secondary benchmark.

Step 3 – Rank the reports from 1 – 10, with 1 being the report that has the most critical or concerning data. Agency staff should then identify the factors that create the adverse statistics. For example, if the Seniors in Poverty rate is high, what are the community conditions or causes that create this adverse statistic. Use the Table provided in Attachment 2. Attach the reports ranked 1-10.

c. Community Forum

Step 1 – Identify the partner organizations that you want to include in a forum. Technically, the Organizational Standards only require CAAs to include one agency from each of the required five sectors: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions. Most agencies, in order to gather a meaningful cross-section of community perceptions should include multiple agencies in each sector (if they are present in the community). There should be a strategy to your selection process. This might include selection based on the level of knowledge and involvement of an organization in addressing the needs of low-income families, organizations that your agency currently does <u>not</u> partner with but might want to in the future, or organizations that work in a wide variety of need areas.

Step 2 – The approved method for obtaining input from community organizations is a forum. If another method is utilized, contact DHHS for pre-approval.

Step 3 – Select a facilitator to lead the discussion and also identify a note taker to insure that the results are captured.

Step 4 – The purpose of the forum is to ask the participants to provide input on the critical needs that are faced by low-income individuals and families. Use the eLogic domains as the framework for the discussion:

Childcare
Education - Youth
Employment
Energy
Food Assistance
Health Insurance – Adults
Health Insurance – Children
Household Budgeting
Housing
Primary Health Care
Transportation

Ask the participants to identify and discuss the primary issues related to each domain. Find out from the participants why they determined that these were the most significant barriers. Identify as clearly as possible what the participants believe is causing the barriers. Be sure to capture this input in the meeting notes.

Ask the participants to identify other barriers impacting low-income individuals and families beyond the standard domains. Think broadly in terms of service gaps as well as larger community issues and barriers.

Step 5 – Following the discussion, ask the participants to select and rank the top 10 most critical domains. This can be accomplished in different ways. One method, for example, is to give everyone five adhesive dots to stick on a flip chart.

Needs Assessment Analysis and Report

The Needs Assessment Report should contain the following sections:

1. Overview of the Data Collection Sources and Methodology

   Purpose *(Org Standard requirements, periodically re-evaluate community needs, review alignment of agency services with community needs, first step in strategic planning process, etc..)*

   Data Sources (*Types of Data Collected – eLogic Customer Intake, Community Commons, Forum)*

   Data Collection Process (*How was it collected/who participated in community forum?)*

2. Customer Needs Assessment

   Summary of Key Findings *(what was the ranking, how was the ranking determined, what are the key needs with each domain based on the data)*

3. Demographic Data Assessment

   Summary of Key Findings *(what was the ranking, how was the ranking determined, what do staff feel are the key areas of need within each of the priority need areas.)*

4. Community Forum

   Summary of Key Findings *(what was the ranking, how was the ranking determined, what did forum participants determine to be the underlying cause that creates the priority needs)*

5. Crosswalk Key Findings

   Complete the Crosswalk Table (Attachment 4)
   (Identify and highlight findings that are identified in more than one process. From the highlighted list, identify the top five priority areas based on ranking and whether the priority area showed up as a priority in all three assessment areas. Note the key areas of concern. These are the barriers and causes identified during the three assessment processes.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Ranking of Customer Needs – (Prepared by the Center for Applied Management Practices)

Attachment 2 – Ranking of Demographic Reports

Attachment 3 – Ranking of Domains from Community Forum

Attachment 4 – Crosswalk of Key Findings

ATTACHMENT 1

Ranking of Customer Needs Assessments

ATTACHMENT 2

Ranking of Demographic Reports

(Attach the reports ranked 1-10)

Ranking	Demographic Report	Causes
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

ATTACHMENT 3

Ranking of Domains from the Community Forum

Rank	Domain	Key Barriers	Causes

Other Domains Discussed during the Forum:

ATTACHMENT 4

Crosswalk of Key Findings

Rank	Customer Needs Assessment	Demographic Needs Assessment	Community Forum
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Top Five

Rank	Domain	Key Areas of Concern
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		