Community Action Advisory Board

Dear Potential Board Member,

We are excited that you are interested in joining the Community Action Advisory Board! We hope the information in this packet will give you a good idea of the role of the Board and its members.

Included in this packet:

- Description of Board Member Responsibilities
- Who Makes Up the Community Action Advisory Board?
- Current Executive Board and Committee Members
- Time, Date and Location of Meetings
- Background Information

If after reviewing this information, you feel you would like to be a member of the CAAB to learn more about the social services in the community and have input in program funding allocations, please submit an application and return it with a current resume to Rebecca Royce.

Just want additional information? Please call Rebecca Royce at 564.397.7863. You are welcome to attend a meeting with no obligation. Please see the Time, Date and Location of Meetings.

MAIL
Rebecca Royce
Clark County Community Services
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666

E-MAIL
Rebecca.Royce@clark.wa.gov

Board Member Responsibilities

Clark County Community Services (CS) has primary responsibility for developing and implementing human service programs for residents of Clark County. Many of the programs operated by CS are managed with the oversight and guidance of community advisory boards.

The Clark County Council has encouraged the development of knowledgeable and involved community groups and has outlined the role and functions of these volunteer groups. To ensure decisions are made in the best interest of our community and its citizens, groups are asked to:

- Facilitate a process for integrating community input and other expertise with the perspectives of the advisory board members as a basis for recommendations to the County Council.
- Recommend program priorities and service delivery funding allocations to the County Council.
- Communicate and/or collaborate with other individuals and groups who have complementary interest and expertise.
- Maintain public awareness of program policies, priorities and direction.
- Maintain formal and informal periodic communication with the County Council.
- Maintain the advisory board as a dynamic, diverse and responsive entity, with membership, composition and rotation designed to sustain vigor and preserve continuity.
- Review funding proposals and make recommendations to the County Council.

Funding responsibilities include:

- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Federal and State
- Document Recording Fees (2060, 1359, 2163)
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
- Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG)
- Marriage License Fees
- Human Services Fund

Who Makes Up the CAAB?

The Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) is comprised of local elected officials, community representatives and low-income representatives from all over Clark County. The CAAB has an executive board consisting of a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, and is assisted by Clark County staff. Members represent each County Council district.

Current Board Members

Local Elected Officials

- Laurie Lebowsky, Vancouver City Council
- Vacant
- Vacant
- Mavis Nichols, School Board Member, Battle Ground School District

Community Representatives

- Adam Kravitz, Secretary
- Bridget McLeman, Chair
- Judith Walseth
- Hilaree Prepula

Low-Income Representatives

- Sheree Thun
- Karyn Kameroff
- Vacant
- Lydia Sanders, Vice-chair

CAAB District Key

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4

Time, Date and Location

Please join us at our next Community Action Advisory Board meeting.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each ***odd*** month from 8am to 10am (January, March, May, July, September, November).

Center for Community Health
1601 E Fourth Plain Blvd, Bldg 17
Conference Room C210A
Vancouver, WA 98661

Clark County Staff

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About CAA's

Community Services Block Grant Act:

The Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) is a tripartite board including elected off as described: Section 675(c)(3) is amended to require each State to certify as a part of its annual application that: (A) in the case of community action agency (CAA) or nonprofit private organization, each board will be selected by the CAA or nonprofit private organization; (B) in the case of public organization receiving funds, such organization either establish (1) a board which at least one-third of the members or persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representatives of the poor in the area served; or (2) another mechanism specified by the State to assure low-income citizen participation in the planning, administration and evaluation of projects for which such organization has been funded.

State Policy:

Local government eligible entities will select an advisory board constituted so that: (a) one-third of the members of the board are elected public officials, currently holding office, or their representatives, except that if the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the membership of the board, appointed public officials may be seated and counted in meeting the one-third requirement; (b) at least one-third of the members are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representative of the poor in the area served; and (c) the remainder of the members are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education, or other major groups interested in the community.

Where local government receives and retains funds under this plan, it must assume the following responsibilities:

- Determination, subject to Department of Commerce policies, of major personnel, organization, fiscal and program policies;
- Determination of overall program plans and priorities for the service agency, including provision for evaluating progress and performance, consistent with federal law and this plan;
- Final approval of all program proposals and budgets;
- Enforcement of compliance with all statutory and contractual requirements;
- Delegation of appropriate responsibilities to the advisory board; and
- Development of methods and criteria for selection and training for the advisory board.

History of Community Action Agencies

Background

From the earliest settlers, the spirit of helping others has been a key element of American Society. As communities sprang up and populations grew, the church became an important social institution and helpmate to those less fortunate.

The industrial revolution in the mid-1800s witnessed the development of the settlement house. One of the early examples of a physical facility, other than a church, that served as a center of activity for community problem-solving.

In the early 1900s schools began to offer formal training in the principals and methods of social work, which led to the birth of a new profession. The great depression of the 1930s overwhelmed the nation's communities, leaving churches and voluntary social welfare programs unable to cope with the magnitude of the existing social problems.

The federal government stepped in to provide additional retirement income through a new Social Security Program and to assist those temporarily unemployed with the Unemployment Insurance System. It created new banking and labor laws to strengthen the economy. A program to provide "temporary public assistance" to widows and children of men killed in industrial accidents also was created. Social workers were hired to determine eligibility, advise recipients about how to use the money, and help the obtain services necessary to get them off welfare.

From the 1930s to the late 1950s, state and local governments had much of the responsibility for administering the programs created during the depression.

As the communications media expanded their scope across the United States, the American public became more aware of the problems of the aged, the effects of segregation of poor education, of health problems caused by malnutrition and hunger, of the need to educate people so they might work, and of the growing difficulties of the low income population.

The American public soon believed that everyone could live "the good life" and that society as a whole had responsibility for helping people overcome barriers that prevented them from sharing in the benefits of American Society.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier" included support for programs to prevent juvenile delinquency with the focal point the President's Council on Juvenile Delinquency chaired by U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy. In New York City, the President's Council funded Mobilization for Youth (MYF) with the Ford Foundation and the City of New York. MYF organized and coordinated neighborhood councils composed of local officials, service providers and neighbors to develop plans to correct conditions which led to juvenile delinquency. It also enlisted the aid of school board and city council members to implement those plans.

It was called Community Action, and it looked like an effective and inexpensive way to solve problems.

The Ford Foundation was funding other projects, including one in New Haven, Connecticut which recruited people from all sectors of the community to come together to plan and implement programs to help low-income people. MFY and New Haven are often cited as the "models" for a community action agency.

Creation: 1964

After the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963, President Lyndon Johnson expanded the policy ideas initiated in the Kennedy Administration. In his message to congress on January 8, 1964 President Johnson said:

> Let us carry forward the pains and programs of John F. Kennedy, not because of our sorrow sympathy, but because they are right... This Administration today, here and now declares an unconditional War on Poverty in America...Our joint Federal-local effort must pursue poverty wherever it exists. In city slums, in small towns, in sharecroppers shacks, or in migrant workers camps, on Indian reservations, among whites as well as Negro, among the young as well as the aged, in the boom towns and in the depressed areas.

The "War on Poverty" was born. In February R. Sergeant Shriver was asked to head a task force to draft legislation. In August, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) was passed, creating a federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) placed in the President's Executive Office. "Sarge" Shriver was named Director, serving until 1969.

Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, guaranteeing equal opportunity for all. The Economic Opportunity Act, designed to implement that guarantee in the economic sector, stated in part: "lt is therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening, to everyone, the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

The EOA included new education, employment and training, and work experience programs such as the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Volunteers in Cervices to America (VISTA) the "domestic Peace Corps". Congress bypassed the state and local governments and provided for direct funding of community groups: the community action concept.

Formative Years: 1964 -1967

The Federal OEO was to lead the efforts of the War on Poverty and coordinate related programs of all other federal agencies. So-called Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created at the local level to fight the War on Poverty "at home."

The EOA also provided for the creation of economic opportunity offices at the state level in order to involve governors in the war on Poverty. While governors were not authorized to give prior approval on OEO grants, they did retain the right to veto any of these they thought inappropriate. Many, especially those in the South, exercised this right, only to be checked by another EOA provision for veto override by the Director of OEO. Indeed, Shriver overrode virtually all vetoes.

CAAs varied from grass-roots, community-controlled groups to those with experienced board members and a highly visible professional staff. Most were incorporated as private nonprofit organizations. A few were city agencies.

Funds were provided through the OEO. The local CAAs determined the use of the funds to meet the problems of the poor as they defined them. These were called "local initiative funds" and were used for a variety of purposes.

One provision of the EOA called for the poor to have "maximum feasible participation" in identifying problems and in developing solutions. Across the nation, CAAs opened neighborhood centers in storefronts, housing projects, and other buildings in low-income areas to identify people who need help and to determine eligibility.

A new group of community leaders developed out of these neighborhood organizations, voicing the concerns of the poor and insisting on change. The philosophy, the strength, and the personal commitments of community action were formed during this period. It was also during this phase that OEO hired 3,000 new federal employees to manage and monitor all the new programs. Most of these people came from CAAs, civil rights groups, churches, labor unions, and other activist organizations.

A new group of community action programs grew rapidly and poured large amounts of federal funds into communities, leaving some local elected officials concerned over the control of CAA boards. Unhappy with the new power blocks outside their own political organizations, a few big-city mayors communicated their concerns to Congress and President Johnson. As a result, Congress began to earmark new funds into congressionally defined National Emphasis Programs that reduced the ability of the CAAs to use the funds for other purposes. The President's enthusiasm began to decline.

Restructuring Phase: 1967 – 1968

In late 1967, Congress passed the Green Amendment which required that a CAA must be designated as the official CAA for that area by local elected officials in order to operate in that community. After designation, OEO could then recognize the CAA and provide funds. After months of negotiations, over 95 percent of the existing CAAs were designated. In several large cities, the CAA was taken over by the mayor and turned into a public agency.

Congress also passed the Quie Amendment which required that CAA boards of directors be composed of one-third elected officials, at least one-third low-income representatives selected by a democratic process and the balance from the private sector.

By 1968, there were 1,600 CAAs covering 2,300 of the nations 3,300 counties. OEO also required many small single-county CAAs to join together into multi-county units. By 1969, about 1,000 CAAs had been designated under the Green Amendment and recognized by OEO reorganized to meet the Quie Amendment criteria and consolidated in accordance with OEO policy. Almost all of these CAAs are in existence today and operate the programs.

These amendments had a positive effect on most CAA boards though the issue of increasing the influence of local elected officials on the board of directors was a significant issue to the leaders of poverty groups which had been operating independently. The formal connection of the political, economic, and community power structures proved to be a tremendous strength. In many places the CAA board became the arena for local officials, the business sector, and the poor to reach agreement on the policies, self-help activities and programs to help the poor in their community.

Transition Years: 1969 – 1974

By 1969, many successful self-help programs had been initiated by OEO and the community action agencies, including Head Start, Family Planning, Community Health Centers, Legal Services, VISTA, Foster Grandparents, Economic Development, Neighborhood Centers, Summer Youth Programs, Adult Basic Education, Senior Centers, Congregate Meal Preparation, and others.

Picking up on the concept of using OEO and CAAs as "innovators and the testing ground" for new programs and spinning off successful programs to be administered by other federal agencies, President Richard Nixon's administration saw the transfer of several large programs from the OEO to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Department of Labor. Along with the program went administrative oversight responsibility for a substantial part of CAA funding.

At the start of his second term in 1973, Nixon did not request any funds for OEO's Community Action Program division. Congress nevertheless provided funds. Nixon appointed Howard Philips as Director of OEO and told him to dismantle and close the agency and not to send the money Congress provided.

After a series of lawsuits, the Federal District Court in Washington, D.C. ruled that the President could not refuse to spend funds that had been appropriated by Congress. Philips resigned without having been confirmed by the Senate.

Program Management Years 1974 -1981

Under President Gerald Ford in 1974, the Community Services Amendments were passed. OEO was dismantled and a "new" Community Services Administration (CSA) replaced it. The employees remained and continued to administer the programs. Community Action had found a new home in federal government.

From 1974 to 1981, CSA continued to fund CAAs. CAAs continued to help communities and neighborhoods to initiate self-help projects such as gardening, solar greenhouses, and housing rehabilitation. They additionally helped create and support federally funded senior centers and congregate meal sites. Home weatherization and energy crisis programs were initiated in the 1970's.

Block Grant Years: 1981 – Present

President Ronald Reagan's Administration began a strong movement to reduce substantially the federal government's support for domestic social programs. They proposed to consolidate most federally funded human needs programs into several large, general purpose block grants; to reduce the total amount of funding by 25 percent; and to delegate the responsibility for administering these block grants to the states.

The proposal was partially successful. Congress created eight new block grants, consolidated over 200 federal programs, reduced the core funding, and turned administrative authority over to the states. However, it did not accept the elimination of federal funding for CAAs.

In September 30, 1981, the CSA was abolished and the Economic Opportunity Act was rescinded. Approximately 1,000 CSA staff were fired. The Community Services Block Grant ensured the continued funding of the "eligible entitles" i.e. the CAAs migrant programs and certain other organizations that had been financed through local initiative funds by CSA.

Even with reduced core funding, CAAs have been able to leverage additional funds. One survey showed that with a CSBG budget over $300.000, the average CAA was able to leverage more than $2.9 million, a

ratio of $9.50 for every dollar of core funding. Agencies also recruited an average of eight volunteers for every paid staff person.

Whatever the specific approach taken by individual states and the block grant, the number of CAAs has increased since 1981 from about 2,300 to 2,700 of the nation's 3,300 counties: and the number of dollars administered by CAAs has increased from about $1.9 billion in 1981 to about $3.5 billion in 1992.

Budget cuts in poverty programs continue, but CAAs still provide a "hand up, not a hand out." The philosophy of eliminating "the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty" remains the key concept that motivates CAAs today.

The year 2014, marked the 50th Anniversary of the Community Action.

This paper originally was published by NACAA (now the Community Action Partnership) for the 25th Anniversary of Community Action in 1989.