

## **Defining the Scope of the Community Assessment**

### **Board Planning Session**

**Purpose:** This exercise will re-examine the way our agency approaches planning and preparing the Community Needs Assessment. It gives the Board all the information required to establish a plan to make the residents of our community more economically secure.

**Expectations of Exercise:** This exercise should allow the Board to:

- Understand the full scope of emerging and constant needs of economically insecure residents of the community it serves;
- Educate the community and its leaders about the needs;
- Choose the role the organization will play in meeting some of those needs and in lowering current and future barriers to community residents' economic security;
- Identify partnerships with others in the community that can help fulfill the CAA mission;
- Identify public policy issues to which the CAA should provide input; and
- Demonstrate to the community that the CAA has strategically chosen the most important issues to address, alone or with partners, and that is using its resources most effectively.

### **Discussion Areas & Considerations**

#### **A. How do we define the "community" our CAA serves?**

- Is our "community" the low-income residents of the legally defined service area? Or is it everyone and every organization, including private sector enterprises in the entire area, or in a set of areas or institutions, or somewhere in between?
- Does "low-income" mean only those eligible for one of our programs or at risk of being eligible soon?

#### **B. Thinking about the community we defined, what do you, as one of the CAA's leaders, want to know about?**

- Economic and social conditions that affect families, individuals, and their neighborhoods
- Trends in those family conditions that will affect employment, security, and well-being
- Ways our agency meets today's needs
- Indications of how well our strategic plan is working
- Our impact on the community and the degree to which our mission is being achieved

#### **C. What information about future opportunities do you need so that you can identify and tap into resources for our CAA to improve community conditions?**

- What is changing in our community that affects the extent of economic insecurity for some and actual poverty for others?
- What is changing that affects the opportunities that will be available in the future?
- What do we need to know about trends today?
- What do we need to know about conditions we have not fully researched in past assessments?

#### **D. What types of information not already listed above should be included in our assessment?**