

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Ohio CAA Executive Directors and Board Chairs**

**FROM: Phil Cole, Executive Director  
Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies**

**RE: The 2011 OACAA/John Glenn School Best Practices Awards**

**DATE: August 27, 2010**

Enclosed you'll find instructions and an application form for the Eleventh Annual Best Practices in Community Action.

The purpose of this annual award is to recognize and honor innovative and effective programs that you're operating and demonstrating to political leaders and the media the power of the work you do.

OACAA is pleased to continue to collaborate on this project with The Ohio State University's John Glenn School of Public Affairs. Faculty and staff associated with the School will review and judge your applications. Together, OACAA and the Glenn School will publish an abstract description of all nominated programs and publicize the results through press releases and announcements. The Ohio Community Action network is fortunate to have developed this unique working relationship with such a highly respected organization. Their recognition of your good work will carry a lot of weight and be fully appreciated by your local political leaders, the media and your program funders.

***We strongly hope that each and every CAA in Ohio will nominate one or more of its programs as a Best Practice.***

**Here's how the Best Practices will work:**

- Complete one of the enclosed nomination forms for the programs you wish to nominate.
- You will nominate your program and/or management practices to compete in one of the areas identified on the Application.
- Nominations must be postmarked no later than November 9<sup>th</sup> and received by the John Glenn School no later than November 19, 2010.
- Representatives of the School may contact you for further information.
- OACAA and The John Glenn School will invite all awardees to a special ceremony to be held in conjunction with the 2011 OACAA Winter Conference.
- Press announcements will be sent to awardees' local media outlets advising them of your award.
- OACAA will make abstracts of all nominated programs available on its website following the awards. This will provide a resource for all Ohio CAAs looking for innovative program models and proven successes.

**We look forward to receiving your nominations. If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to call.**

# The OACAA/John Glenn School of Public Affairs Best Practice Awards

with support from the

Ohio Department of Development Office of Community Services

OACAA/John Glenn School of Public Affairs Best Practices designation can be awarded to programs and practices that show outstanding results in programs or management. New to the competition in 2009 is recognition of best management practices. This category recognizes agencies with outstanding in-service training, personnel policies, budgeting practices or other practices that increase the agency's capacity to achieve results.

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, Ohio Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Director \_\_\_\_\_ Board Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person for this Nomination \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominated Program or Management Practice**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Program Best Described by ROMA Goal (Circle One):**

- 1 – Low income people become more self-sufficient (family level)
- 2 – The conditions in which low income people live are improved (community level)
- 3 – Low income people own a stake in their community (community level)
- 4 – Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low income people are achieved (agency level)
- 5 – Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results (agency level)
- 6 – Low income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems (family level)

Agency best management practices are typically best nominated in category 5. As stated above, examples include strategic plans, in-service training, agency insurance plans, personnel practices, accounting practices, etc.

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We certify that the attached information in support of our nomination for an OACAA/John Glenn School Best Practices Award is true and understand that a representative of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs may contact our agency for further information and clarification.

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Executive Director

Date

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Board Chair

Date

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

A Best Practice in Community Action is a program, process, procedure, strategy or management practice that has produced a positive change in one or more of the agency's core operations, and which:

- Measurably impacts the lives of people served
- Measurably improves the efficiency or effectiveness of customer service or support systems
- Is replicable, with or without modification, in other community action agencies
- Is an innovative or creative solution to the problem addressed by the practice

Ohio CAA Executive Directors and Board Chairs may nominate one or more programs carried out by their agencies during calendar year 2009. CAA's may nominate any program, project, process, procedure, strategy or management practice that meets the definition of a Best Practice.

The nominated program/practice must have been in existence for enough time to allow the nomination to document outcomes and results. Typically, this is at least one year.

Ohio CAAs may nominate as many of their programs/practices as they like in **separate applications**.

An agency awarded Best Practice can publicize the program/practice as receiving a best practice, noting the year. Only programs or practices are awarded this recognition, not full agencies. Agencies may not include the Best Practice moniker on their letterhead or logos.

Please address the following questions/items in your application.

**1. How long has this program been in operation?**

**2. Was this program previously recognized as a best practice? If so, when? Have there been any changes or improvements?**

**3. Problem or Need**

- Please describe the problem or need in your community that led the CAA to offer this program or incorporate this practice.
- Provide the local social, political, or economic background information needed to understand the context of the need or problem.
- Please document the need that existed by showing any data that confirms the need, any evidence you can present, any needs assessment that substantiates the problem or need. Quantifying the need helps substantiate your nomination.

**4. Options to Solve the Problem or Address the Need**

- Who is the target population served?
- Please describe the options the CAA considered for solving the problem/addressing this need.
- How did you arrive at the solution being nominated for a best practice? What evidence led you to this as the best solution? How does this solution correlate with your agency's mission? What were the innovative or creative aspects of the solution, if any?

## 5. Program/Practice Development and Implementation

A. Describe how you implemented the solution and the level of effort required. Consider:

- Resources: Was the effort to change labor intensive? How many staff members were involved? What did they do to help implement your solution? Were volunteers used? How many? Did you hire consultants? What did they do? What was the cost of implementing the program? What were/are your funding sources for this program or process? What new technology did you have to buy and apply to implement the program, if any?
- Collaboration: If there was collaboration, who did you work with, how, and why?
- Steps taken: What activities, steps, or tasks were needed to develop the program or make the necessary changes?

B. Describe how the program (or practice, or project, or strategy) works or operates. What are the important processes or steps? What quality control processes do you have in place to ensure/verify the program/practice is operating as intended?

Please provide enough detail for another agency to consider replication of your program or project.

## 6. Program/Practice Strengths

What are the best attributes of this program/practice? What would you change?

## 7. Program/Practice Outcomes

Based on the ROMA category in which this program is nominated:

- 1 – What evidence can you provide that low income people served are more self-sufficient?
- 2 – What evidence can you provide that conditions in which low income people live are improved?
- 3 – What evidence can you provide that low income people own a stake in their community?
- 4 – What evidence can you provide that partnerships of services to low income people are achieved?
- 5 – What proof is there that your agency has increased its capacity to achieve results?
- 6 – What proof is there that families and other support systems are strengthened?

- What are the outcomes of this program/practice?
- How do you define program/practice success? Why do you consider this program/practice a success?
- Document about how the program/practice measurably improves the lives of low income people. Describe outcomes numerically, if possible. Can you provide any measures demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness? In addition, you may provide qualitative assessments of program/practice outcomes.

## 8. Replicability

- What have you learned from doing this program?
- What advice or recommendations would you have for others considering your program?

### Verification

Representatives of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs may call officials of nominating CAA's for follow-up questions and clarification. They may ask to be put in contact with clients who participated in the program or staff and volunteers involved with the program.

Nomination forms and all supporting documentation should be sent to:  
Cindy Holodnak, Associate Director, Outreach and Engagement  
John Glenn School of Public Affairs, The Ohio State University  
150 Page Hall, 1810 College Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Nomination forms must be postmarked no later than November 6, 2009.

Awards will be presented at a ceremony during the OACAA Winter Conference in February 2010. While we would like to present the awards to the full winning team, including staff, volunteers, board members, successful clients, and persons representing collaborating organizations, we ask that no more than three individuals offer remarks.

For further information, please contact:

**Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies**

50 West Broad Street, Suite 1616

Columbus, Ohio 43215

614-224-8500 Office

614-224-2587 Fax

[info@oacaa.org](mailto:info@oacaa.org)