



**NORTHEAST INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY
COMMUNITY ACTION**

**NONPROFIT AGENCY
MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE
SELF ASSESSMENT MANUAL**

**Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action
105 Chauncy Street, Boston, MA 02111
Originated September 2003
Revised September 1, 2009
© Copyright MASSCAP, Inc.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



I. NORTHEAST INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY COMMUNITY ACTION.....	3
II. ASSESSMENT TOOL: THE SIX AREAS	
A. GOVERNANCE.....	12
B. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	20
C. PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT.....	27
D. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	33
E. HUMAN RESOURCES.....	38
F. FINANCE AND BUDGET.....	46
III. SUMMARY AGENCY ASSESSMENT SCORING.....	55
IV. AGENCY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING.....	55

© Copyright MASSCAP, Inc. September 1, 2009.

Prepared with financial assistance from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, the Connecticut State Department of Social Services and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Community Assistance

I. Background: Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action.

The Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action (NIQCA) was founded in January, 2005 and is a product of a four year collaborative effort involving representatives of local Community Action Agencies, State Associations and Public Officials located in the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The NIQCA's mission is to promote excellence in the management of nonprofit agencies who are not affiliated with an accreditation body. The NIQCA's Quality Community Action System (QCAS) provides the tools and resources for agencies to organize a cost effective program of continuous quality improvement which will identify both the strengths and weaknesses of agency management and governance. This investment will help agencies protect themselves from risks which could compromise their capacity to effectively meet the needs of the communities and customers they were created to serve.

II. Description of the Self-Assessment Process

A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

Purpose of Self-Assessment

The self-assessment process is the foundation of the Quality Community Action System (QCAS). It is intended to both help participating organizations develop a picture of the quality of their agency management and governance policies and practices and then identify priorities for reforms needed to meet best practice standards over the next 2-3 years. The self-assessment process is structured journey that allows both agency participants and external reviewers (e.g., Peers, Experts, etc) to contribute to the development of a plan to build on agency strengths and address critical deficiencies.

Standards Sections.

The self-assessment instrument is designed to assess the agency's management and governance systems. The Self-Assessment is not designed to review programs. The operating assumption is that well managed agencies will provide effective, high quality community services. Best Practice Assessment standards are divided into the following six functional Sections: Governance; Operational Management and Organizational Structure; Planning and Community Investment; Information Technology; Human Resources; and Finance and Budget. Each Section includes a number of best practice standards presented on a 5 point developmental scale ranging from "#1. At Risk" to #5. "Excellent."

Completing the Self-Assessment Instrument

The participating organization determines who participates in the Self-Assessment process. Experience has demonstrated that a process that creates a cross-functional team with representatives drawn from all levels and units of the organization (e.g., senior managers, staff and board members) produces both a product which more accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and an experience which strengthens commitments to improve performance. Including community representatives, consumers, partner agency

representatives, etc. in the process can further help provide valuable information and support for the agency.

Scoring the Self-Assessment Instrument

The self-assessment instrument is designed so that the organization can score itself. Each Section of the QCAS includes a number of best practice standards. One or more of the agency's Assessment Team should be assigned to assess the degree to which current agency practice and policy complies with the standards benchmarks listed in the 5 point scale. Scoring should only occur following review of required documentation and an interview with a key informant(s) with expertise in the area being reviewed. At the end of each QCAS Section is an Interview and Scoring Summary Section. This Section should be used by the assigned reviewer to structure the interview of informants, record responses/observations, assign a "Reviewer" score from 1-5 and finally document a brief rationale for the assigned score. If the Reviewer is working as part of a Team then, at a Team meeting, the Reviewer should present the scores he/she has assigned and the rationale for the scores. The Team should discuss the Reviewers scoring and then, using an agreed upon process for decision-making (e.g., consensus) assign a Team Score for each area of the assigned Section. Each Team assigned to review a QCAS Content Area will attend a meeting of the full agency Assessment Team and present its scores and the rationale for the scores. Following discussion, the full Assessment Team will vote on assigning an Agency Score to each QCAS section. This Agency Score will represent the final consensus of the Self-Assessment and should be documented in the Scoring Summary section included in the Rating Scale for each Content Area Sub-section. Copies of all Assessment Team Agency Content and Sub-section Area Scores with their associated rationale statements should be forwarded to the Peer Review Team if a site visit is scheduled.

Note:

- 1. To be assigned a score, agency policies, practices and procedures must address all of the requirements identified in the standard description. If anything is missing that is required then the scoring must fall to the level below the standard not fully complied with.***
- 2. If documentation requested by an interviewer assigned to score a Section is not provided within 24 hours of the request then the Reviewer should assume the document does not exist for the purpose of scoring.***
- 3. No fractions can be used in scoring of individual standards (e.g., 2.5). Fractions can and should be used to summarize Section scores (round to highest number).***

Using the Self-Assessment as Preparation for the Site Review

For those organizations that have scheduled an External Team Review site visit, the results of the agency's internal self-assessment set the stage for this external review. Section III contains a description of the Peer site review process. Team Reviewers utilize the identical process the agency used to conduct its self-assessment. While the internal self-assessment may identify areas where management policies and practices could be strengthened the agency should defer taking any action to address these issues until the

Team Review site visit has been completed. The intent of the Team Review is to provide the agency's Assessment Team an independent analysis of agency strengths and weaknesses which can be integrated into the agency's overall Self-Assessment and used to formulate priorities for improvement planning. If a Team Review site visit is not elected or appropriate then the agency should proceed with Step 6 in the QCAS process.

Confidentiality

In consultation with CAPLAW legal counsel, the NIQCA has drafted a strong confidentiality statement to assure the QCAS process respects the privacy and confidentiality rights of each participating agency.

Accessing Technical Assistance

When a participating organization identifies a need for technical assistance the organization should consult the NIQCA or affiliated organization to discuss steps that can be taken to access training or TA. board members.

Using the Self-Assessment: A Continuum of Participation

The self-assessment process is very flexible and allows for the participating organization to determine the level of participation by those inside the agency, (e.g., management, board and staff), and those outside it, (e.g., community representatives, partner agencies, peer review teams, etc.). Every level of participation is designed to provide specific benefits. Therefore, every participation level is a distinct, positive step toward improving the quality of agency operations and the degree to which those operations play a positive role in the community. The level of participation is based partly on the organization's current status and partly on what it hopes to accomplish after the self-assessment. It is important to remember that the self-assessment is only a beginning. The self-assessment is a diagnostic tool, like a routine medical check-up. Every organization should be prepared to use the self-assessment as the opportunity to engage in a process of continuous quality improvement which will strengthen agency productivity, performance and competitiveness.

The Twelve Step QCAS Process

The twelve step QCAS Self-Assessment process represents a flexible, continuous, and sustainable quality monitoring and improvement program which can both promote management excellence and create a culture of teamwork dedicated to achieving the highest standards of professional practice. While assessment is an essential component of the QCAS process, its value is lost if action is not taken to assure that strengths are sustained and deficiencies are corrected. Each sequential step in the process is important and will lead an organization through the conduct of the self-assessment, identification of improvement opportunities, development of an action plan, monitoring of the effect of the action plan, and back to another self-assessment. In most cases, agency's can complete the Self-Assessment and Plan Development process within a period of three to four months. It is important to sustain the momentum of the process since delays can compromise both the quality of the data as well as the level of commitment to complete the assignment. The 12 Steps of the QCAS process are as follows:

Step 1

Action: Determine the organization's current status, benefits of the QCAS Self-Assessment and willingness and ability to commit the resources required to undertake and complete the process.

Purpose: Confirm the organization's commitment and readiness¹ to undertake the QCAS Self-Assessment process. Make decision to proceed or not proceed to Step # 2.

Process: Executive leadership meets with managers and board members to assess the agency's readiness and ability to undertake the QCAS Self-Assessment.

Step 2

Action: Organize an Agency Assessment Team which may include managers, staff, board members, consumers, volunteers, committee members, and representatives of community partners to develop and execute a plan for completing the agency's QCAS Self-Assessment.

Purpose: Develop and operational plan and structure to undertake and complete the agency's QCAS Self-Assessment.

Process: Executive leadership solicits ideas and suggestions for Assessment Team members, appoints members, and identifies a charge and leadership for the Team. An initial Team meeting is held to review its charge, receive an orientation to the QCAS process and finalize a plan for conducting the assessment including timetables for completion of tasks.

Step 3

Action: Assign an individual or team to conduct the assessment of one or more of the QCAS Content Areas.

Purpose: Ensure that assignments for the completion of assessments for each QCAS Content Area are clear and manageable.²

¹ Readiness includes commitment of board and senior managers, other efforts under way, and staff awareness of the value of such a project.

² Content areas include: Governance, Operational Policy and Organizational Structure; Planning and Community Investment; Information Technology; Human Resources and Finance and Budget.

Process: Make assignments, review charge and assessment procedures along with timetables for completion of tasks.

Step 4

Action: Individuals or teams assigned to Content Areas review written and verbal documentation and assign scores using the tools and guidelines contained in the QCAS Self Assessment Manual.

Purpose: Draft a preliminary rating and scoring rationale for each QCAS Content Area by assigned individuals or teams.

Process: Reviewers assigned to assess specific Content Areas review written documentation and conduct interviews with key informants. Based on this information the Reviewer reviews the 5 point rating scale and assigns a score based on the agency's status of compliance with a standard of practice. The Reviewer further documents a rationale for the scoring decision. If a Team is assigned to review an Area then the individual Reviewer reports their scoring assignment to the Team and the Team, through an agreed procedure (e.g., consensus) reviews the individual's score and assigns a Team Score for each Area based on open discussion and deliberation.

Step 5

Action: Meeting of full Assessment Team with individuals or teams which conducted assessments to review and discuss Team or individual scoring decisions and the rationale for these choices. Based on an open discussion, the full Assessment Team assigns an Agency Score for each Content Area.

Purpose: Assignment of final assessment ratings on all QCAS Content Areas by the full agency Assessment Team.

Process: Allow ample time for this activity. This may require a series of meetings or a retreat over a full day or two. During this time Reviewers or Teams of Reviewers report the scores they have assigned to the Self-Assessment Areas they were responsible for reviewing. Once presented, members of the full agency Assessment Team can discuss the rationale for the assigned score and, based on the discussion, confirm or change the Reviewer's or Team's scoring. The score approved by the Assessment Team becomes the 'Agency Score' for each area of the assessment.

Step 5A (Discretionary)

Action: Schedule an External Team Review site visit if feasible.

Purpose: To complete an independent assessment of agency policies and practices using identical tools and procedures used in the agency's internal Review. A Team of seasoned, informed Reviewers will be assigned to conduct the External Team visit. The intent of the Team assessment is to provide agency officials with additional feedback to assess management strengths and weaknesses.

Process: Forward documentation to assigned Team Reviewers per instructions and schedule meetings and interviews during 3 day site visit. Team, based on its independent Review will provide verbal and written scoring feedback to the agency within 15 working days following the site visit.

Step 6

Action: Agency Assessment Team meets to update Agency scoring based on External Team Review feedback and, based on final scoring, identify areas assessed to be at risk (i.e., an area with an average score less than 3 or, with more than 30% of the individual items within a Content Area scoring less than a 3).

Purpose: Before engaging in a systematic review of the results of the entire self-assessment, it is important to both integrate Peer Review data into the agency's assessment scoring (if elected) and seek to immediately identify any areas of serious risk which jeopardize agency operations.

Process: Calculate an average score for each area and the percent of individual items in each area scoring less than 3. An area with an average score **less than 3** or with more than 30 percent of its individual items scoring **3 or less** is considered at risk.

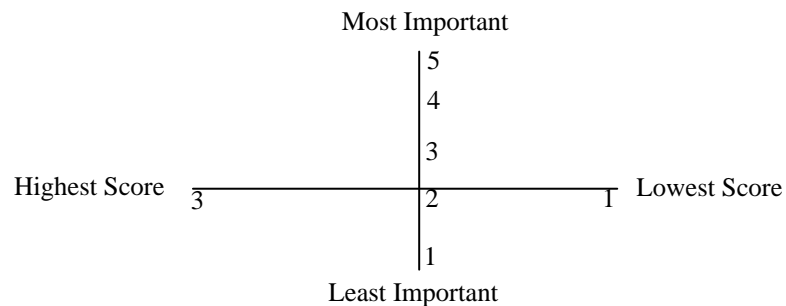
For each area at risk, list the individual items and place the site reviewer's score and any other scores or information next to the self-assessment scores. Even if the agency does not have an outside site review team's scores, there is often additional information from program audits and other assessments that might relate to the scoring of items in a particular area. When you have factored in all of the relevant information, develop a final score for each item in each area. Finally, identify high risk areas based on the calculations defined above.

Step 7

Action: Rate the importance of each of the items for the well being of the agency.

Purpose: The self-assessment, to this point, has considered the various infrastructure areas solely on how each rates relative to the standards expressed in the scales. While it is assumed that all of the items and areas are important to the well being of the agency, some aspects of infrastructure may be more or less important to an agency's health at a particular time. In this step, assess importance to the agency regardless of the rating.

Process: Ignore, for the moment, the rating for each item in the at-risk category. Only think about the item's importance to the agency on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = not very important (it would be nice eventually) and 5 = most important (a live or die issue). Assign an importance score to each at-risk item with a score of **less than 3**. Also, go back to the areas that met best practice standards (**scored 3+**) but represent key strategic opportunities for excellence and assign importance scores to each item identified as a priority. Then plot the items on a quadrant graph like the one below. The items in the upper right quadrant are those with the lowest scores and the highest importance. These items offer the greatest opportunity for improvement.



STEP 8

Action: Determine ease of accomplishment.

Purpose: In order to decide which improvement items to address first, the agency will need a sense of how difficult they will be to accomplish in terms of resources and time.

Process: Review the list of potential improvement items and rate them according to the amount of resources each item will require and the time each will take to complete. Use the same kind of quadrant graph as in Step 7. Plot time

horizontally from long term (left) to short term (right), and plot resource requirements vertically from high (bottom) to low (top). The items in the upper right quadrant will be those that can be accomplished most quickly and with the least expenditure of resources.

Step 9

Action: Choose final action items.

Purpose: Now that the agency has determined which areas and items are most at risk, which items will yield the greatest returns for the agency, and what it will cost in terms of time and resources to address those items, the agency is ready to select the final items for improvement. This requires an in-depth understanding of the internal dynamics of the agency.

Process: In order to determine what kind of improvement projects to select from the final list, the agency will have to determine its capacity to undertake change. This requires an assessment of everything else the agency is facing, the commitment of executive leadership, the resilience of staff and their capacity to absorb more change. Using the matrices developed in Steps 7 and 8, select items for completion in the short term (six months) and the long term (a year or more). If possible, include items that can be accomplished quickly and easily, as well as those that will require greater commitment from the organization. Consider also a mix of improvement projects that can be done by individual units and those that are best worked on by cross-functional teams.

Step 10

Action: Develop an Action Plan for Improvement.

Purpose: A successful quality improvement effort requires the development of an action plan with measurable goals, action steps, milestones, accountability and timetables for accomplishment and review.

Process: The agency's Assessment Team or another vehicle should be charged with the responsibility for approving an Action Plan for Improvement which addresses the needs and priorities identified in Step #9. Again, the Team should be inclusive enough to reflect a diversity of experience and resources without being too large or small to accomplish Plan goals.

Step 11

Action: Monitor progress under the action plan and assess the effects of the improvement efforts.

Purpose: Having identified improvement efforts in some of the agency's most at-risk areas, the agency must ensure that it is making progress in its improvement efforts before it can turn its attention elsewhere. Structured, systematic monitoring is the only means of ensuring that improvement efforts are having the intended effect.

Process: The improvement team should present reports to a management team on the milestones, measures and timelines identified in the action plan. See Step 10.

Step 12

Action: Conduct new self-assessments for at-risk areas every twelve months.
Conduct complete self-assessment reviews every three years.

Purpose: If any areas are still at risk, they should remain a priority until the agency is confident that they no longer jeopardize the health of the organization. When there are no more areas at risk, the self-assessment then focuses on continuous improvement.

Process: When all at risk areas have been brought to the threshold level, the organization should raise the bar for the next full self-assessment. For example, it may define improvement opportunities as any area with an average score of less than 3.5 or more than 25 percent of the individual items scoring less than 3.5. In this way, successive cycles of improvement projects and self-assessment will continue to raise the overall quality of the organization.



II. ASSESSMENT TOOL: THE SIX AREAS.

A. Governance

1. Agency Bylaws

1—at risk	The size of the agency’s Board does not meet the requirements of the agency’s Bylaws and/or the agency’s Bylaws have not been reviewed in over 5 years.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency’s Bylaws have been reviewed and, as needed, updated within the past 5 years but they fail to address four or more of the 14 Best Practices standards listed below.
3—fully meets standard	The agency’s Bylaws have been reviewed and, as needed, updated in the past three years and address at least 11 of the Best Practice Standards listed below and are routinely distributed to all new board members.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency always seeks input from legal counsel in reviewing the agency’s Bylaws.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s Bylaws specify responsibility for periodic Bylaw review and revision.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Best Practice Bylaw Standards:

1. Fiduciary and other critical responsibilities of the board are clearly stated.
2. The purpose and service area of the corporation are clearly stated.
3. The Bylaws prohibit proxy voting by board or committee members.
4. The Bylaws establish a standard that the board will meet at least six (6) times during the year.
5. The Bylaws specify the size of the board and the procedures for the election of new members and corporate officers.
6. Performance standards for board members and officers are clearly stated (e.g., attendance, ethical behavior, etc.) along with procedures for applying sanctions, including the removal of members, for violations of these standards.
7. A reasonable quorum voting standard (e.g., 50% of seated members) is clearly stated.
8. A standard for advance notification of board members (at least 5 days) is stated.
9. A requirement that the board record and maintain minutes of its meetings is stated.
10. Procedures are described for promptly filling board vacancies created by resignation, removal, etc.
11. A requirement that all Committee actions taken on behalf of the board be reported to the board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
12. Term limits for board members and officers are clearly stated.
13. If provision is made for the appointment of standing committees then the authority, roles and responsibilities of these committees are clearly stated.
14. Procedures for considering and voting on “Special Matters” including Bylaw changes and the Dissolution of the Corporation, etc. are clearly stated.

Reviewer Comments: _____

2. Board Member Diversity, Knowledge and Skills

1—at risk	Board membership reflects a very narrow range of experience, expertise, skills and diversity needed to effectively address community needs and oversee the affairs of the agency.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Board membership reflects a reasonable balance of community diversity but exhibits gaps in skills and expertise or, reflects a balance of skills and expertise but fails to reflect the diversity of the communities served.
3—fully meets standard	Board membership reflects a reasonable balance of both skills, expertise and community diversity.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the board regularly assesses its strengths and weaknesses with respect to member skills, expertise and diversity and uses this information to guide member recruitment and election.
5—excellent	4, plus the board utilizes a variety of inventive strategies to identify community leadership and expose them to the agency (e.g., Committee membership) in order to recruit new board members with high priority skills, knowledge or experience.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer

Comments: _____

3. Role of the Board

1—at risk	The board rarely exercises its responsibility to approve strategic plans, agency budgets, major operating policies or, evaluate management performance. The roles of board and management appear confused leading to examples of either micro management by the board or a deferral of agency governance responsibilities to management.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The board occasionally exercises its responsibility to review and approve agency strategic plans, agency budgets, major operating policies, conducts Executive performance appraisals and, individual members assist in agency fundraising efforts.
3—fully meets standard	The board consistently sets policy, approves strategic plans and agency budgets, annually evaluates management performance, collectively supports agency fundraising initiatives and is clear that the only employee the board supervises is the agency’s Executive.

4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the board effectively utilizes its Committees to help shape recommendations for action thereby helping the board to use its time more productively. Board Orientation routinely reviews the roles and responsibilities of board members and violations of these responsibilities are addressed in a fair, uniform and timely manner.
5—excellent	4, plus the board routinely evaluates its effectiveness in carrying out its governance roles and responsibilities and uses this information to improve performance and participation.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer

Comments: _____

4. Keeping the Board Informed

1—at risk	The board rarely receives or reviews any accurate and complete information about agency finances, programs or management performance except in circumstances driven by crisis and/or external demands.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The board receives occasional financial and program reports. Reports are rarely provided in advance of meetings and are rarely reviewed by appropriate board committees.. There is little evidence of board understanding and/or deliberation on the substance of these reports.
3—fully meets standard	The board receives monthly notices, agendas, minutes and financial and program reports in advance of the meetings. As appropriate, board Committees review and comment on information prior to submission to the board. The agency’s IRS 990 Report is made available to Board members and the agency’s annual Audit is presented and reviewed at a scheduled board meeting.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the board receives annual summary performance Reports on the agency’s Strategic Plan Goals, Program Operations, Customer Satisfaction Feedback and Risk Mitigation Control Effectiveness.
5—excellent	4, plus efforts are made to regularly solicit feedback from board members on the clarity, utility and adequacy of information provided for decision-making. Examples exist to demonstrate how reports have been developed or revised based on board feedback or requests.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

5. Board Structure.

1—at risk	The board has not created Standing and/or ad hoc committees to help carry out its responsibilities in the areas of financial and management oversight, policy formulation, planning and agency governance.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The board has created Standing and/or ad hoc committees to help carry out its responsibilities however, the board has not developed clear descriptions of committee roles and responsibilities and many of the committees created appear to be inactive or unproductive.
3—fully meets standard	The board has created and defined the roles and responsibilities of certain Standing and/or ad hoc committees. The committees are active, have staff support and regularly improve the productivity of the board by providing information and recommendations which are based on detailed reviews and deliberations.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus all committee documents (e.g., meeting minutes, reports, correspondence, etc.) are recorded and maintained in safe and secure locations within the agency.
5—excellent	4, plus each committee conducts an annual assessment of its performance in order to improve its productivity and effectiveness.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

6. Board Training and Orientation

1—at risk	The agency does not provide in any formal orientation or training for either existing or new members.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The board has an orientation for new members but does not provide members a Board Manual or Conflict-of-Interest Policy. Little or no ongoing training is offered to new or current board members.
3—fully meets standard	The agency provides all new board members a formal orientation which includes distribution and review of a Board Manual and a Conflict-of-Interest Policy. Agency provides occasional board training as needs are expressed.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus there are regularly scheduled ongoing training workshops or retreats offered to all board members including “Financial Literacy” and a mentoring program exists for new members.
5—excellent	4, plus board orientation and training programs are evaluated to assess effectiveness and selected board members are offered the opportunity to participate in related local, state, regional or national meetings.
Score: _____ (Description of current status)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

7. Executive Director Performance Appraisal

1—at risk	The board does not conduct appraisals of the agency’s Executive Director performance or, a performance appraisal has not been conducted for the past two years.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The board’s annual appraisal of the agency’s Executive Director is 6 months+ overdue.
3—fully meets standard	The Executive Director is evaluated annually and there is evidence of the Executive’s involvement and participation in the evaluation process (e.g., signature, comments, opportunity to develop performance objectives). The content of the last performance appraisal included some reference to objective performance standards and criteria.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3 plus, the board’s evaluation of the Executive is primarily performance based and is used, in part, to develop compensation adjustment recommendations.

5—excellent	4 plus, the board’s annual evaluation of the Executive Director incorporates both written, measurable short (annual) and longer term (2-3 years) goals and objectives.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

8. Code of Ethics

1—at risk	The agency has not adopted a written Code of Ethics which details expectations regarding the behavior, activities and responsibilities of Board members, and staff.
2—approaching achievement of standards	The agency has adopted a written Code of Ethics covering either the board or staff or, the agency has a written Code of Ethics covering both board and staff but it fails to address essential topics such as Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, etc. or it is not routinely distributed to affected parties.
3—fully meets standards	The agency has adopted a written Code of Ethics covering the both board and staff. The Code covers the essential topics of expected behavior and is routinely distributed to all affected parties. Sanctions for violating the agency’s Code of Ethics are explicit and fairly and consistently applied.
4—exceeds standards, approaching excellence	3, plus the agency’s Code of Ethics covers volunteers, interns, consultants and contractors.
5—excellent	4 plus, the agency’s Code of Ethics Policy is periodically reviewed and updated as needs or circumstances require.
Score _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

9. Executive Succession Plan

1—at risk	The agency’s Board has not adopted a written Executive Succession Plan nor is there any consideration being given to the development of a Plan.
2—approaching achievement of standards	The agency’s Board has authorized the development of an Executive Succession Plan and/or is actively involved in developing a Plan with the agency’s Executive Director.
3—fully meets standards	The agency’s Board has adopted an Executive Succession Plan or, is currently reviewing a Plan draft for approval within the next 30-60 days.
4—exceeds standards, approaching excellence	3 plus, the Plan identifies policies and actions in the following circumstances: 1. Short Term Absences (2 – 6 months); 2 Intermediate Term Absences (7 + months); and 3. Permanent Transition (Retirement, Resignation, etc). The Plan has been reviewed with appropriate senior staff and Board members and, training has been provided to assure understanding and smooth administration.
5—excellent	4 plus, the Executive Succession Plan is reviewed and updated as needs or circumstances change.
Score _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

TEAM SCORES: GOVERNANCE

Individual Items	Team Score	Agency Score
1. Agency Bylaws		
2. Board Member Diversity, Knowledge and Skills		
3. Role of the Board		
4. Keeping the Board Informed		
5. Board Structure.		
6. Board Training and Orientation		
7. Executive Director Performance Appraisal		
8. Code of Ethics		
9. Executive Succession Plan.		
<i>Total Score</i>		
<i>Average Score (Total Score divided by 8)</i>		
<i>Range of Scores (Highest to Lowest)</i>		

B. Operational Management and Organizational Structure

1. Customer Intake and Assessment.

1—at risk	The agency has not developed written customer Intake and Assessment policies and procedures either on a program by program or agency-wide basis.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Written customer Intake and Assessment policies procedures and forms exist for some agency programs. Policies may be incomplete, outdated or not routinely distributed to appropriate staff..
3—fully meets standard	Appropriate customer Intake and Assessment policies, procedures and forms, including confidentiality protections, statement of clients rights, etc. exist for all programs. Information and referral support is offered to individuals determined to be ineligible for agency assistance.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus a common client Intake and Assessment system exists for some agency programs and a plan exists to expand the system to include additional programs within the next 12 – 18 months.
5—excellent	The agency has a fully operational integrated common client Intake and Assessment system serving all its consumers regardless of considerations of geography, staff assignment, funding, etc.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

2. Program Operating Policies and Procedures.

1—at risk	The majority of agency programs have no written operating policies and procedures.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There are written operating policies and procedures for some programs but not for others. Existing policies and procedures may be incomplete and not consistently distributed to staff. Little or no training is offered staff to help assure understanding and compliance with agency policies.
3—fully meets standard	There are written operating policies and procedures for all programs which are routinely distributed to staff. All appropriate program staff are trained to ensure they understand and are able to carry out these policies

	and procedures.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus written program operating policies and procedures promote the seamless integration of agency and community services for clients based on a uniform assessment of needs
5—excellent	4, plus policies and procedures for integrated program operations are reviewed regularly and updated to address needs identified through customer feedback and internal or external performance evaluations.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

3. Services Integration.

1—at risk	There are no formal linkages among any of the agency’s major programs and/or service centers (e.g. common client Intake and Assessment, integrated service plans, shared supervision, staffing or team management, joint trainings or staff meetings, case management/tracking/assessment, etc) which promote an customer focused, integrated service delivery system.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There are formal and informal linkages among a few of the agency’s programs and/or service centers which promote communication and collaboration but, from a customer perspective, the agency’s sponsorship of a wide range of services simply is not known or understood by the majority of clients and/or general public.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has developed and implemented a centralized client Intake and Assessment system and is implementing an operational Plan to break down its geographic and program silos to create an integrated, customer focused system of service delivery within 3-5 years.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency has, except for exceptional circumstances (WIC), fully developed an integrated service system which offers clients uniform information, choices and assistance regardless of how or where the client came in contact with the agency.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency pursues the development of strategic community alliances with community groups and organizations designed to extend an integrated, customer focused system of community service to customers with needs that cannot be met by the agency.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

4. Strategic Alliances

1—at risk	The agency does not seek out or respond to opportunities to establish formal or informal strategic alliances with community agencies and groups unless required to do so.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Individual agency programs have developed both formal and informal strategic alliances with community agencies and groups however, agency management has not promoted or encouraged these relationships except in circumstances where alliances were required by a funding source, etc.
3—fully meets standard	Based on the assessment of community and customer needs agency management and program staff has in the past and continues to seek out and promote the development of both formal (written contracts/agreements) and informal strategic alliances which will address needs in a cost effective manner.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency routinely reviews and updates its contracts and agreements to assess their continued appropriateness and performance.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency takes consistent leadership in convening community leaders, groups and agencies to strengthen existing or develop new alliances aimed at addressing emerging community needs.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

5 Program Performance Assessment.

1—at risk	Agency does not routinely review the performance of all of its programs
2—approaching achievement of standard	Agency only assesses the performance of its programs on an annual basis using only inputs and outputs unless mandated to report outcomes. Reporting is restricted to funders and is occasionally delayed or incomplete.
3—fully meets standard	Agency assesses the performance of all of its programs on a semi-annual basis using both output and outcome measures. Reports are distributed to key internal (Staff, Board) and external (e.g., funders) sources.

4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency assesses program performance on at least a quarterly basis using complimentary measures (e.g., Customer Satisfaction data) as well as mandatory performance criteria.
5—excellent	4, plus evidence exists that program performance data is considered in decision-making by management and the agency’s Board.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

6 Customer Satisfaction Assessment.

1—at risk	Customer satisfaction information is only collected for programs where it is mandated and is not reviewed or considered in program assessment and planning.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Customer satisfaction information is collected for some non-mandated programs but in an inconsistent manner, e.g., methodology, content, timing, etc. Reporting and use are also inconsistent.
3—fully meets standard	All agency programs collect some type of Customer Satisfaction data on an annual basis but there is no agency-wide coordination, uniformity or consistency in the methods and timing of data collection.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency has developed an organization wide template for assessing Customer Satisfaction on an annual basis and the data is used to compliment data on program outputs and outcomes. Survey is responsive to non-English speaking customers. Information is routinely reviewed by management and reported to board members.
5—excellent	Evidence exists of actions taken to improve program operations based on customer feedback. Survey tool/process is reviewed to assess need for improvements.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

7 Disaster Recovery Planning

1—at risk	The agency has not taken any steps to develop a disaster recovery plan(s).
2—approaching achievement of standard	Agency board and management are preparing a disaster recovery plan(s).
3—fully meets standard	The agency has prepared a disaster recovery plan(s) and distributed the plan(s) to key staff and training on plan execution is conducted on a periodic basis.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency’s disaster recovery plan(s) are renewed at least every three years and training on plan execution is conducted annually.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency has prepared an organization-wide risk management plan.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

ReviewerComments: _____

8. Confidentiality and Client Privacy

1—at risk	There are no written policies or procedures governing confidentiality and client privacy.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There are some written policies and procedures but they are incomplete, poorly documented, inconsistently applied and not well understood.
3—fully meets standard	Written policies and procedures exist, are compliant with laws and regulations, have been distributed and are being applied within individual programs. Evidence exists that there is awareness and sensitivity to client privacy in day-to-day operations (e.g., private space for client interviews, confidential material not left in view of others, security access to electronic client database, etc).
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus written policies and procedures are integrated and applied agency wide. Evidence of staff being trained on agency policies and procedures. Clients have access to a clear and comfortable procedure to express complaints regarding violations of agency privacy protection policies.
5—excellent	4, plus sensitivity to client confidentiality is considered in staff performance evaluations and policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

TEAM SCORES: B. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Individual Items	Team Score	Agency Score
1. Intake		
2. Program Operating Procedures		
3. Services Integration		
4. Strategic Alliances		
5. Program Performance Assessment		
6. Customer Satisfaction Assessment		
7. Disaster Recovery Planning		
8. Confidentiality and Customer Privacy.		
<i>Total Score</i>		
<i>Average (Total divided by 11)</i>		
<i>Range (the highest – the lowest) Example: 2 - 5</i>		

C. Planning and Community Investment

1. Mission Statement

1—at risk	The agency has no mission statement or, a mission statement exists but has not been reviewed in 5 years +. Key agency staff and board members are universally unfamiliar with the mission statement and never reference the statement in organizational decision-making.
2—approaching achievement of standard	An agency mission statement exists and has been reviewed in the past 4 years but there is little evidence that it is well understood by key internal or external audiences and the statement is not prominently displayed in agency signage, PR materials, etc. There is occasional consideration of the agency mission statement in organizational decision-making.
3—fully meets standard	There is a mission statement that has been reviewed in the past 3 years. Efforts are made to assure that all key internal agency audiences are aware of and understand the statement. The statement is routinely considered in organizational decision-making.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3 plus, the mission statement is reviewed and updated as needed as part of the agency’s Strategic Planning process. The Statement is prominently displayed in agency signage, PR materials, board/staff Manuals, etc.
5—excellent	4 plus, the mission statement is used in developing a agency-wide communications and marketing plan.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

2. Strategic Plan

1—at risk	The agency has not developed a multi-year Strategic Plan for the organization.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has developed a Plan but it has not been updated in 4 + years and it appears to have little impact on organizational decision-making. The agency has a current Plan but it was developed without community input
3—fully meets standard	The agency has an updated (at least every 3 years) Strategic Plan with multi-year goals and timetables. The Plan was developed with participation from both internal (e.g., Board, Staff, Consumers) and external (e.g., community partners, community leaders) audiences and is routinely considered in management and board decision-making.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus progress in Plan implementation is critically reviewed by agency management and board members on an annual basis.

5—excellent	4, plus performance reviews of agency staff incorporate reference to the achievement of goals related to the agency’s Strategic Plan. Plan progress is reviewed on a semi-annual basis.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

3. Community Needs Assessment

1—at risk	The agency has never conducted a Community Needs Assessment or, has not collected any comprehensive updated Community Needs Assessment data in the last 5 + years.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Individual programs within the agency have conducted updated (3 year) Community Needs Assessments in response to funder mandates however, the data collected does not offer a comprehensive picture of community needs and, there is no formal effort to coordinate the storage, reporting or use this data on an organization wide basis. The agency has conducted a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment but it has not been updated in 4 years.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has conducted a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment within the past 3 years either separately or as part of a community research collaboration. Data is analyzed and used to guide agency decision-making.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency regularly (3 year) conducts a broad-based community needs assessment as part of the agency’s Strategic Planning process.
5—excellent	Community Needs Assessment represents an ongoing initiative within the agency.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

4 Program Planning

1—at risk	Programs and projects are designed and developed by a few senior staff and funder requirements are the sole determinant of program design.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Programs and projects are designed and developed by a few senior staff with occasional input from other staff, board committee members, community partners or consumers. Little consideration is given to the agency’s mission, community needs assessment or strategic goals when programs are being developed.
3—fully meets standard	Programs and projects are designed and developed by a team that may include staff from different functional areas and will include feedback from customers and community partners. The agency’s mission, community needs assessment and strategic plan are routinely considered in deciding whether and how to design a new program
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus, key Board and Committee members are provided an opportunity to review a draft of the program design prior to seeking Board approval of the proposal.
5—excellent	4, plus local, state and national program research and evaluation data are used by the agency’s team to help guide the design and development of agency programs.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

5. Marketing.

1—at risk	The agency has not developed any formal or informal strategies to improve its visibility within the community. Existing communication efforts are exclusively program initiatives that are exclusively focused on mandated outreach efforts.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There are some limited agency-wide marketing activities but they are not driven by a plan which assesses needs and identifies goals, messages, branding themes, and communication strategies targeted to diverse audiences.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has developed and implemented a written organizational marketing plan and responsibilities for implementing the plan are clearly defined.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency’s marketing plan is aligned with the agency’s strategic plan and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
5—excellent	4, plus a team approach with central coordination is used to identify and respond to new marketing opportunities, assess plan performance and recommend updates and revisions.

Score: _____ (Rationale)	
-------------------------------------------	--

Reviewer Comments: _____

6 Agency Web Site

1—at risk	The agency does not have a web site at this time or, a website is planned but construction has either not begun or is incomplete.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There is a web site but it contains outdated information, is difficult to navigate and responsibility for management is diffuse or undefined.
3—fully meets standard	There is a website that provides updated information describing the agency and reasonably accessible (3 click) navigation to information on programs and services, employment, volunteer opportunities, donations, events and activities, etc. Responsibility for site management is defined.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	There is a web site which reflects an understanding of user needs and interests and provides easily accessible (2 clicks)navigation and updated information about the agency and its programs. The site allows users to submit employment applications, make donations, register for events and to seek assistance or information with appropriate privacy protections.
5—excellent	4, plus the web site provides information in more than one language and includes an “intranet” capacity to promote communication with internal agency audiences.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

7 Expanding Funding

1—at risk	The agency manages existing contracts to meet contract compliance requirements but demonstrates little initiative in exploring opportunities to broaden financial support for existing or new programs.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency demonstrates some initiative in seeking to expand or diversify funding for existing programs as well as seeking support for new programs.

3—fully meets standard	The agency consistently takes initiative to expand and diversify funding for existing and new programs
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency has a development plan which identifies goals to expand and diversify support for existing and new programs. This plan is partially integrated with the agency’s strategic plan.
5—excellent	The agency’s strategic plan and development plan are fully integrated and both board and staff are actively involved in the implementation of these plans.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

8.Fundraising

1—at risk	The agency does not do any fundraising.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Sporadic fundraising activities are organized by individual programs to address specific program needs.
3—fully meets standard	Fundraising is accepted as an essential responsibility of the agency’s Board and, with staff support, the agency regularly solicits public support through special events, mailings, internet solicitations, sponsorships, product sales, etc.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency has developed a written agency development plan which identifies multi-year revenue goals, timetables and strategies (e.g., organizing an agency signature event, etc). Plan performance is closely monitored and updated.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s development plans may: 1. actively seek to solicit gifts of trusts, etc. to create investment reserves and/or, 2.. outline entrepreneurial strategies designed to generate agency self-support income and/or 4. include other creative fundraising strategies.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

TEAM SCORES: C. PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Individual Items	Team Score	Agency Score
1. Mission Statement		
2. Strategic Plan		
3. Community Needs Assessment		
4. Program Planning.		
5. Marketing		
6. Agency Web Site		
7. Expanding Funding		
8. Fundraising		
<i>Total Score</i>		
<i>Average (Total divided by 8)</i>		
<i>Range (the highest – the lowest) Example: 2 - 5</i>		

1. IT Management and Administration

1—at risk	Responsibility for the management of the agency’s IT function has not been assigned or is assumed by various individuals, departments or programs without any centralized management oversight or direction.
2—approaching achievement of standard	IT administrative responsibilities have been: 1. Assigned to an ad hoc staff team that meets on an “as needed” basis to address agency-wide needs and problems, 2. Assigned to an entry level staff member with limited administrative and/or technical expertise or experience or, 3. Outsourced to a vendor who operates with little or no agency technical or administrative oversight.
3—fully meets standard	IT management responsibilities have been delegated to a senior manager with IT experience and expertise. Manager has responsibility for agency-wide IT administration and technical support (including supervision of vendors).
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus there is a cross-functional agency team that assists the IT Manager develop goals, define operating policies and procedures, identify training needs and promote effective communication and problem-solving.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s IT Manager serves as a member of the agency’s Management Team and participates in agency-wide budget, strategic planning and operational decision-making.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

2. IT Training

1—at risk	The agency does not provide any formal orientation or training for staff related to either software applications or IT operational policies and procedures. Informal IT orientation and training may be offered to appropriate staff by supervisors or colleagues but access, content and effectiveness varies throughout the organization.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Informal IT orientation and periodic training is provided to employees by supervisors or colleagues but access, content, timing and consistency varies depending on the supervisor’s IT knowledge, skills and experience.

3—fully meets standard	Formal IT related Orientation is provided as appropriate to all new staff and training is provided to all appropriate staff when new technology, software applications and/or policies are introduced or in response to a large volume of consistent requests.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus an IT training needs inventory has been developed based on an assessment of staff needs and trainings have been offered to address one or more of the needs identified in the inventory during the past 12 months.
5—excellent	4, plus a 12 month + IT Training Calendar/Schedule has been developed, circulated and implemented during the past 12 months.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

3. IT Asset Inventory.

1—at risk	The agency does not maintain an inventory of owned or leased hardware equipment and software licenses.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has an inventory of its IT hardware and software licenses but it is outdated (12 months+) and/or incomplete (e.g., asset age, location and assignment information).
3—fully meets standard	The agency maintains a complete and updated (within past 12 months) inventory of owned or leased IT hardware and software licenses.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency’s IT Inventory is routinely used to help create a written IT Budget Plan which, along with the Inventory is updated annually.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s IT Inventory is used to help develop and maintain multi-year agency Capital Budget.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

4. IT Policies and Procedures

1—at risk	The agency has not developed any written policies and procedures governing the use, maintenance, support and security of the agency’s IT system.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has some written IT operating policies and procedures but major gaps exist in the documentation (e.g., system documentation, security, technical support, user privacy, etc.).
3—fully meets standard	The agency has developed and maintains updated, written policies and procedures governing the use, support, security, maintenance, disaster recovery, etc. of the organization’s IT system/network.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus IT policies and procedures are routinely updated at least every 3 years and are distributed to appropriate staff with training as needed.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency periodically tests its disaster recovery response plan and security policies and procedures to assess staff understanding and compliance.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

5. Program/Customer Data Management and Reporting

1—at risk	Current agency IT network is unable to collect, store, process or report customer data by program or on an agency-wide basis. If data is collected, stored, etc. it is done on individual computers by program managers or administrative staff.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Current agency IT customer data management system supports some but not all agency programs. Current software applications prevent the integration of program/customer data for purposes of agency-wide reporting.
3—fully meets standard	The agency’s current IT customer data management system supports all agency programs and routinely generates reports responsive to funder demands. Existing software allows for agency-wide, integrated customer service reporting or, the agency plans on acquiring software for this purpose within the next year.

4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency has a plan and a timetable for developing a client data management system which can support the implementation of a centralized agency intake system and the agency can produce, for all agency programs, integrated client and program outcome and demographic data to respond to funder requirements and meet the needs of the internal users including agency managers and board members.
5—excellent	4, plus IT management consistently seeks user feedback on its reporting system and responds to needs and suggestions to improve the quality, timeliness and utility of the data collected and reported.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

6. Agency Web Site Technical Support

1—at risk	There are no efforts at constructing a web site at this time or, a web site is planned but construction has either not begun or is incomplete.
2—approaching achievement of standard	A web site exists, but no written policies governing site access and management exist and responsibilities for site maintenance, upgrade and support are either unclear or assigned to individuals, departments, programs or vendors with little oversight or coordination.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has written policies and procedures governing site access and management and responsibilities for technical site maintenance and support are clearly assigned and regularly evaluated (whether in-house or outsourced).
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus a team has been formed of site users (e.g., IT, programs, management, marketing/development, HR, etc) to promote security, problem-solving and compliance with policies and standards.
5—excellent	4, plus an annual assessment of site maintenance and support needs is undertaken to improve site accessibility and functionality.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

7. Telecommunications

1—at risk	The agency has not carried out an assessment of the adequacy of its current communications capacity, needs or cost efficiencies.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has completed an assessment but it is outdated (5+years) or has not lead to the creation of a plan to improve system capacity, speed, performance or cost efficiency.
3—fully meets standard	There has been an updated assessment, and a plan has been adopted to implement priority findings of the agency’s assessment.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3 plus, the agency’s plan is being or has been fully implemented.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s Telecommunications plan is reviewed and updated as needed on at least every 3-5 years or as need dictates.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

TEAM SCORES: D. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Individual Items	Team Score	Agency Score
1. IT Management and Administration		
2. IT Training		
3. IT Asset Inventory		
4. IT Policies and Procedures		
5. Program/Customer Data Management and Reporting		
6. Agency Web Site Technical Support		
7. Telecommunications.		
<i>Total Score</i>		
<i>Average (Total divided by 9)</i>		
<i>Range (the highest – the lowest) Example: 2 - 5</i>		

E. Human Resources

1. Human Resources Management.

1—at risk	Responsibility for the management of the agency’s HR function is diffuse, fragmented and confusing.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Responsibility of the agency’s HR function has been assigned but the person(s) assuming this responsibility have little HR training or management experience and responsibilities are limited to compliance requirements including documentation and reporting vs policy development and administration, planning, budgeting and problem-solving.
3—fully meets standard	Responsibility for the administration of the agency’s HR function is formally assigned to a senior staff manager with a HR training and experience and the authority to address both policy and technical system demands.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the staff manager responsible for the administration of the agency’s HR function actively participates in agency strategic, budget, IT and policy planning.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s HR manager maintains a membership in a local/regional HR trade association or group in order to access information and training needed to stay abreast of emerging trends and best practices in HR administration.
Score _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

2. Human Resources Policies and Procedures.

1—at risk	The agency has not adopted any written HR policies and procedures.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has adopted written HR policies and procedures but they have not been reviewed or updated in the past 3 years and/or appear to omit critical information or, the information provided is outdated or incorrect.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has adopted an updated (reviewed within the past 3 years) HR Manual with complete written policies and procedures which are routinely disseminated to all staff with sign off documentation.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3 plus, the agency engages legal counsel to assist in the review and update of its HR policies and, training on the administration of key policies (e.g., hiring, performance management, etc) is provided to appropriate managers and supervisors to assure understanding and uniform administration.
5—excellent	4 plus, there is evidence that policies are routinely updated whenever there is a compelling reason based on emerging needs or mandates.
Score_____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

3. Employee Compensation and Benefits.

1—at risk	No formal wage and salary administration plan exists and employees only receive mandated benefits.
2—approaching achievement of standard	A formal wage and salary administration plan exists along with a basic benefit package which includes both mandated (e.g., holiday leave, FMLA, Workers Compensation, etc.) and, voluntary benefits (e.g., health insurance, vacation, sick leave) however, the agency’s wage and salary plan has not been reviewed in the last 3+years.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has a formal wage and salary administration plan which has been reviewed in the past 2 years along with a benefit package that is reasonably competitive based on employee feedback and labor market research.

4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency’s wage and salary administration plan includes some performance-based incentive provisions and the agency’s benefit package appears exceptionally competitive including such elements as an employer matching Retirement Savings Plan, an Employee Assistance Program, Flex-time, Job Sharing, on-site Child Care, “Cafeteria” benefit choice program, etc.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s wage and salary administration plan incorporates performance based incentive provisions for all job classifications; employees opinions reg. benefit needs and priorities are routinely solicited.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

4. Performance Appraisals.

1—at risk	Annual staff performance appraisals are either not routinely conducted within the agency or, are conducted randomly with or without the use of standardized forms, policies and procedures.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Annual performance appraisals are uniformly conducted within the agency but without the guidance of a standardized policies, procedures or forms.
3—fully meets standard	Annual performance appraisals using standardized policies, procedures and forms are uniformly conducted throughout the agency. Agency performance reviews make some effort to incorporate performance measures into the assessment process.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus agency managers have been trained on performance management principles and evidence exists that these principles have been applied.
5—excellent	4, plus the appraisal process incorporates a focus on measurable performance indicators with explicit development goals which are used to instruct agency staff development training priorities.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

5. Job Descriptions

1—at risk	There are no written job descriptions or job descriptions are missing for some positions.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Job descriptions exist for all positions but: 1. Job Titles do not match one or more positions displayed on the agency’s Organization Chart, 2. Descriptions omit essential information (e.g., duties, supervisor, wage/salary grade) or, 3. Descriptions have not been updated to reflect new titles, demands, responsibilities or reporting relationships.
3—fully meets standard	Updated, accurate job descriptions that clearly detail job duties, responsibilities and reporting relationships are routinely provided to staff and candidates interviewed for employment. Position titles are consistent with the agency’s Organization Chart.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus Descriptions describe job competencies that can be linked to performance evaluations and policies exist to manage the creation, update and coding on new and existing positions within the agency.
5—excellent	4, plus as positions become vacant, Descriptions are routinely reviewed with appropriate managers to ensure that they reflect current agency and program needs.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

6. Communication and Information Sharing

1—at risk	Organizational communication is limited, strictly hierarchical, tightly controlled and primarily restricted to written vs. face-to-face communications.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Organizational communication is primarily hierarchical but information is regularly provided to staff through newsletters, emails and staff meetings.
3—fully meets standard	Organization communication is primarily hierarchical but efforts are being made through the formation of teams, conduct of surveys, organization of staff retreats and meetings to promote two-way communication channels between levels of staff to solicit opinions, ideas and suggestions for planning and problem-solving.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	Organization communications are structured to routinely share information with staff and actively solicit their knowledge, experience, ideas and suggestions in helping to improve performance, productivity and staff morale.

5—excellent	The agency has created a vehicle (e.g., Committee) for regularly evaluating needs and opportunities to improve organizational communication and making recommendations to address these matters
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

7. Teamwork.

1—at risk	Cross functional teams are not used within the agency to promote communication or undertake planning and problem-solving.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There are limited, narrow focused efforts at using cross functional teams within the agency to promote communication, planning and problem-solving (e.g. Worker Safety Committee, IT User Committee, Staff Day Planning Committee, etc).
3—fully meets standard	Cross-functional teams are routinely used to perform agency planning, problem-solving, and/or manage and deliver some projects and programs.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency provides training and support for agency managers and supervisors in the principles and practices of team organization, management and support.
5—excellent	The use of cross-functional teams are an integral part of the organizational culture.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

8. Staff Orientation and Training

1—at risk	The agency does not provide a formal, structured Orientation for all new employees nor, does the agency provide training for staff beyond that which is mandated by law or a funding source.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency does provide a formal, structured Orientation for all new employees but does not provide any training for staff beyond that which is mandated by law or a funding source. Training is viewed as a Program responsibility vs. an agency responsibility.
3—fully meets standard	The agency provides a formal, structured Orientation for all new employees and the agency does provide some training opportunities for staff which transcend mandatory requirements.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency has a written staff development and training plan which has been circulated to staff and offers both mandatory and discretionary educational opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills. Decisions on trainings are guided by the results of individual performance evaluations.
5—excellent	A formal staff development plan is in place that is linked to performance evaluations, strategic planning goals and approaches to individual compensation.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

9. Diversity

1—at risk	Workplace diversity issues and considerations do not appear to be acknowledged or addressed by agency managers.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Diversity considerations are acknowledged and addressed in some individual departments or programs but there are no agency-wide initiatives aimed at promoting policies and actions which promote diversity understanding and appreciation within the organization (e.g., staff training, employment plans, holiday recognition, etc).
3—fully meets standard	A consistent, agency-wide commitment to acknowledge the importance and value of workplace diversity is reflected in both hiring and everyday practices. Limited diversity training has been provided to agency staff and the agency has adopted a plan to assure compliance with its EEO goals and responsibilities.

4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3 plus, the organization provides mandatory diversity training for all employees at least once every 3 years
5—excellent	4 plus, the agency has formed a Committee with a cross-section of staff to assist the organization promote diversity awareness and understanding into all aspects of organizational life.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

TEAM SCORES: E. HUMAN RESOURCES

Individual Items	Team Score	Agency Score
1. Human Resources Management		
2. Human Resources Policies and Procedures.		
3. Employee Compensation and Benefits		
4. Performance Appraisals.		
5. Job Descriptions		
6. Communication and Information Sharing.		
7. Teamwork		
8. Staff Orientation and Training.		
9. Diversity		
<i>Total Score</i>		
<i>Average Score (Total divided by 15)</i>		

F. FINANCE AND BUDGET

1. Financial Controls

1—at risk	A written Finance Manual detailing agency fiscal control policies does not exist or, a Manual exists but it has not been updated in 5+years and policies fail to conform to accepted accounting standards.
2—approaching achievement of standard	A written Finance Manual which details fiscal control policies and procedures exists but there has not been a review/update of the policies in 3+ years and/or policies do not conform with accepted accounting standards.
3—fully meets standard	A written Finance Manual detailing an updated (within the last 3 years)set of fiscal control policies which conform to accepted accounting standards exists. Audit reports confirm the integrity of the agency’s control policies and procedures. Control policies appear to be understood and uniformly applied..
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus written policies and procedures exist which mandate periodic testing of the use, effectiveness and integrity of existing control policies. Findings are reviewed by appropriate senior management and changes are made to strengthen controls as needed.
5—excellent	4 plus, agency management makes a visible and consistent effort to establish a culture of ethical behavior within the organization and has a procedure in place to allow for the reporting and investigation of suspicious, illegal or unethical behavior within the workplace.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

2. Involvement in Financial and Budget Report Design.

1—at risk	Only finance department personnel determine the format, content and timing of budget/financial reports or, there no reports have been designed.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Finance department staff determine the format, content and timing of reports but, occasionally will involve selected other administrative or program managers in design deliberations on an informal basis.
3—fully meets standard	Finance department actively and consistently involves senior agency staff and the agency’s Finance Committee in the design of agency financial and budget reports.

4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus Board feedback is occasionally solicited in Report design
5—excellent	3, plus the Finance office periodically seeks feedback from Report users to help assess needs and opportunities to design Reports to more useful and understandable.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

3. Agency Wide Budget and Financial Reporting.

1—at risk	There is little or no distribution of financial or budget reports to either agency managers or Board members. Reports provided are not well understood or used to help manage agency operations and investments.
2—approaching achievement of standard	There is some routine distribution of reports to senior managers and the agency’s Board however, the Reports do not present information in a plan vs. actual format, may not provide current information or may be incomplete. Reports are rarely discussed and used to manage agency affairs.
3—fully meets standard	There is routine and timely distribution of accurate and complete financial reports to senior management and the Board. Evidence exists that reports are understood and used by staff and Board members to manage operations and investments.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus some customized report functions for users (drill-down capability for additional details or alternate data displays) are provided upon request and used to make informed financial management decisions.
5—excellent	4, plus agency-wide reports are measured in accordance with GAAP standards.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

4. Involvement in the Agency Budget Development Process.

1—at risk	The agency does not prepare an organization operating budget for Board approval or, a budget was developed exclusively by the Finance Dept. and was not submitted for Board approval until 30+ days after the start of the agency’s fiscal year.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Finance department and program managers are involved in developing an agency budget but there is no involvement of the agency’s Finance or other Board Committees prior to seeking approval by the Board.
3—fully meets standard	Finance department staff plus key administrative and program managers are involved in developing an agency budget which is shared with a Board Committee for input before seeking Board approval prior to the start of the agency’s fiscal year.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency has developed a schedule with tasks and timetables for budget development and approval.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency’s budget preparation plan and process is reviewed with participants to identify strengths and weaknesses.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

5. Building and Equipment Capital Asset Management

1—at risk	The agency has no inventory of its facilities and equipment and no budget plans for improvements, upgrades, repair, maintenance or replacement of capital items.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has an inventory of its facilities and equipment but it is not routinely updated (2yrs old +) and priorities for expenditures are driven by crisis rather than a plan.
3—fully meets standard	The agency maintains and updated inventory of its facilities and equipment and capital budgets are developed and regularly submitted to the Board for approval which address high priority needs as needed.
	3 plus, the agency has a written multi-year plan for capital expenditures and funding which is aligned with the agency’s strategic plan.
5—excellent	4 plus, the agency consistently seeks to develop strategic community alliances which promote cost savings and the most efficient use of existing or new facilities and equipment.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

6. Accounting Records Management

1—at risk	The agency fails to perform the following reconciliations on a timely basis (by the 20 th day of the following month) each month for 2 or more of the following areas: 1. Reconciliation of the bank statement to the general ledger, with needed adjustments made to the general ledger, 2. Reconciliation of accounts receivable and accounts payable subsidiary records to the general ledger, 3. posting of cash receipts and disbursements and, 4. formal monthly closing process in which all major balance sheet items are reviewed and adjusted as necessary.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency fails to perform one of the above reconciliations on a timely basis.
3—fully meets standard	The agency complies with all 5 standards during the current fiscal year.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency has complied with all 5 standards for the prior fiscal year.
5—excellent	4 plus, the agency has fully complied with standards in all 5 areas for at least 2 full fiscal years.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

7. Program Cost Analysis and Monitoring

1—at risk	The agency has not performed an analysis of the (direct and indirect) costs of its programs or, has performed an analysis but the analysis is outdated (+3yrs).
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has performed an analysis of the costs of its programs but the analysis has not been updated in over 24+ months.
3—fully meets standard	The agency analyzes the cost of its programs at least every 2 years through the documentation of staff time and direct expenses and use of an accepted and appropriate formula for the allocation of indirect management and general and fundraising expenses.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus the agency routinely uses updated cost information as a basis for pricing services, negotiating contracts and strategic planning.
5—excellent	4, plus the agency seeks to analyze its program costs on an annual basis and compare its costs to those of comparable local, regional and national experience and benchmarking standards.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

8. Audit

1—at risk	The agency was not ready for an annual audit within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year and/or the Agency audit was not completed within 180 days after the end of the fiscal year and the audit report and/or management letters identify: a. material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in controls over financial reporting b. weaknesses or deficiencies in other controls and/or c findings of noncompliance that are financial in nature (i.e., not program).
2—approaching achievement of standard	Agency was prepared for the audit and it was completed in a timely manner however, issues related to findings in a. – c. above were identified. The Audit was reviewed by a designated Committee but response to new or prior findings or recommendations has been either delayed or ignored.

3—fully meets standard	Agency’s audit was completed on time with a clean opinion. No material weaknesses, significant deficiencies or significant financial findings were reported. The Audit was reviewed by a designated Board Committee and the Audit findings and recommendations were communicated to the agency’s Board. Timely action has been taken to address any findings or recommendations related to the audit or the Committee’s review.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus a specialized Audit Committee composed of individuals with accounting expertise has been created and designated by the Board to review the plan/timetable for the audit, review a draft and final agency audit including meeting with the auditors separate from management and assuring presentation of the audit report to the agency’s Board.
5—excellent	4, plus the Audit Committee is charged with responsibility to review the auditors performance and assure that, if possible, auditors rotate in-firm assignments (Senior, Partners, etc.) and at least every 3-5 years re-bid the auditing contract to assure independence and cost effectiveness.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

9. Training in Financial Matters

1—at risk	No training in financial matters is provided to either agency managers, supervisors, Finance Dept. staff or Board members.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Informal training on budgeting and financial management is occasionally provided to staff and Board members by senior Finance Dept. staff.
3—fully meets standard	A limited but structured training program using agency staff and/or outside consultants is provided which addresses identified high priority needs (e.g., financial software applications, Board member financial literacy, program manager/supervisor budgeting and tracking skills ,etc). is provided throughout the year.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3, plus an inventory of financial management staff and Board training needs has been developed and maintained utilizing staff performance evaluations and Board assessments.
5—excellent	4 plus, financial management trainings are included in an overall agency Staff Development Plan and training calendar.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

10. Fundraising Revenue.

1—at risk	Net agency fundraising revenue amounts to less than 1% of the agency’s total budgeted revenue.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Net agency fundraising revenue amounts to between 1% - 3% of the agency’s total budgeted revenue.
3—fully meets standard	Net agency fundraising revenue amounts to between 3+% - 5% of the agency’s total budgeted revenue.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	Net agency fundraising revenue amounts to between 5% - 6% of the agency’s total budgeted revenue.
5—excellent	Net agency fundraising revenue amounts to more than 6%+ of the agency’s total budgeted revenue.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

11. Operating Reserves

1—at risk	The agency has no reserves which could be used to cover operating expenses or, a reserve exists but would cover less than 4 weeks of operating expenses.
2—approaching achievement of standard	The agency has an operating reserve which could be used to cover 4-7 weeks of operating expenses.
3—fully meets standard	The agency has an operating reserve which could be used to cover 8-12 weeks of operating expenses.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	The agency has an operating reserve which could be used to cover up 13 – 15 weeks of operating expenses.
5—excellent	The agency has an operating reserve which could be used to cover 16+weeks of operating expenses.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

12. Purchasing Policies

1—at risk	The agency has not developed any written purchasing or procurement policies or procedures.
2—approaching achievement of standard	Written purchasing or procurement policies and procedures exist but are incomplete (e.g., no definition of approval or competitive bidding thresholds) exhibit contradictions with related policies , have not been distributed or reviewed with responsible staff and adherence appears inconsistent.
3—fully meets standard	Written purchasing or procurement policies and procedures exist and are complete, consistently distributed to responsible staff, reviewed and applied.
4—exceeds standard; approaching excellence	3 plus, compliance with agency purchasing or procurement policies is internally audited by senior management staff.
5—excellent	4 plus, based on experience, changing standards or improved risk mitigation controls the agency reviews and updates its purchasing and procurement policies on an “as-needed” basis.
Score: _____ (Rationale)	

Reviewer Comments: _____

TEAM SCORES: F. FINANCE AND BUDGET SCORES

Individual Items	Team Score	Agency Score
1. Financial Controls		
2. Involvement in Financial and Budget Report Design.		
3. Agency Wide Budget and Financial Reporting		
4. Involvement in the Agency Budget Development Process.		
5. Building and Equipment Capital Asset Management		
6. Accounting Records Management		
7. Program Cost Analysis and Monitoring		
8. Audit.		
9. Training in Financial Matters		
10. Fundraising Revenue		
11. Operating Reserves.		
12. Purchasing Policies.		
<i>Total Score</i>		
<i>Average (Total divided by 12)</i>		



III. SUMMARY AGENCY ASSESSMENT SCORES

<i>NIQCA Assessment Standards Sections.</i>	<i>Agency Team Scores</i>	<i>External Team Scores</i>
Governance		
Operational Management and Organizational Structure		
Planning and Community Investment		
Information Technology		
Human Resources		
Finance and Budget		
Overall Agency Score		

Agency Improvement Planning.

With the completion of the agency assessment, data is now available to identify overall agency strengths and weaknesses in the areas of management and governance. A process for identifying priorities for improvement is described in the opening Chapter of this Manual (Section II. “Description of the Self-Assessment Process”...Steps # 7 - #11). How priorities for improvement are identified and adopted is entirely decided by agency officials. Experience has demonstrated that it is productive to have a cross section of staff and Board members involved in these decisions in order to build understanding and commitment to the changes needed to strengthen policies and practices. Once priorities have been identified, a Plan should be developed which identifies goals, timetables and assignments for making needed improvements. This Plan should be reviewed on a regular basis assess progress and performance. A complete re-assessment of the agency should be undertaken at least once every 3 years.

The NIQCA is available to assist in agency planning and helping to ID TA/Training needed to help implement the agency’s Plan for Improvement. The NIQCA’s web site (www.niqca.org) provides a TA “Toolkit” to help agency managers access policy templates, etc.

