

Times are Changing – Understanding the Theory of Change

Presented by John W. Edwards, Jr. MPA, CCAP
Developed in conjunction with Barbara Mooney,
Ed. D.

About Theory of Change (TOC)

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It is important, as we look to greater standardization of ROMA and other performance measurement and management systems, that we...

- ✓ Clearly understand **HOW** the Community Action Network (as a whole) is engaged in producing change for families and communities.
- ✓ Have a common understanding of **WHAT** that change will be.

The Theory of Change

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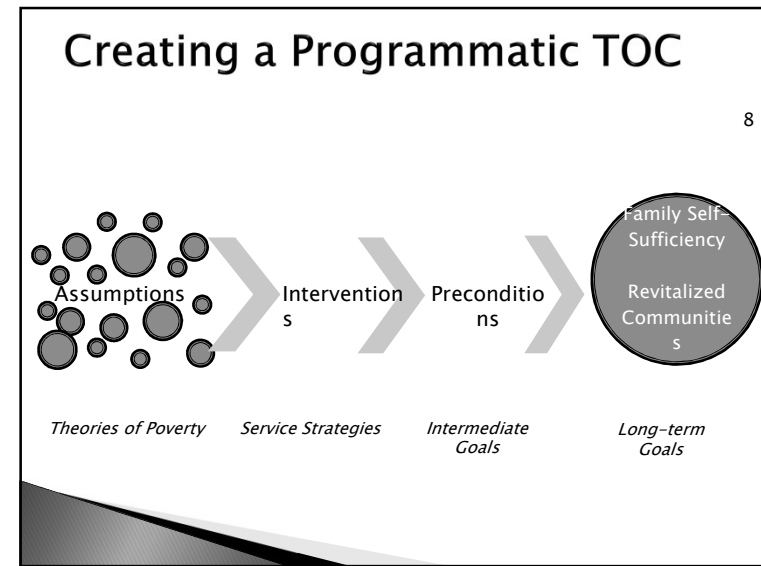
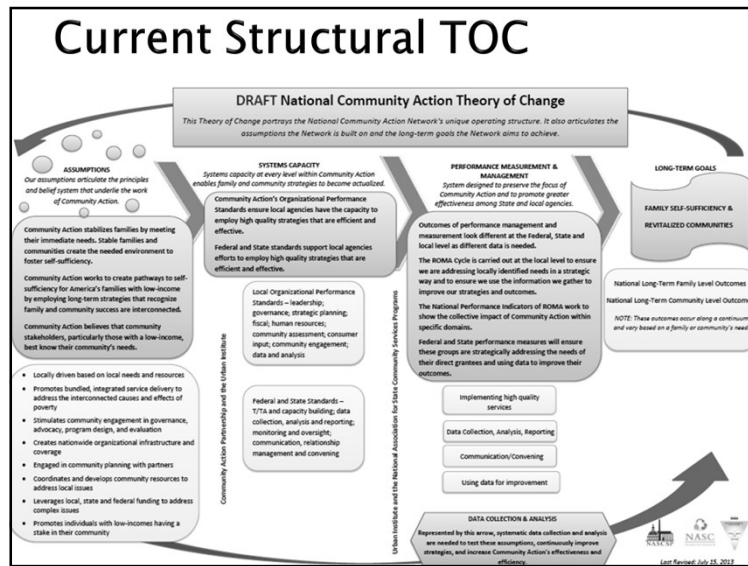
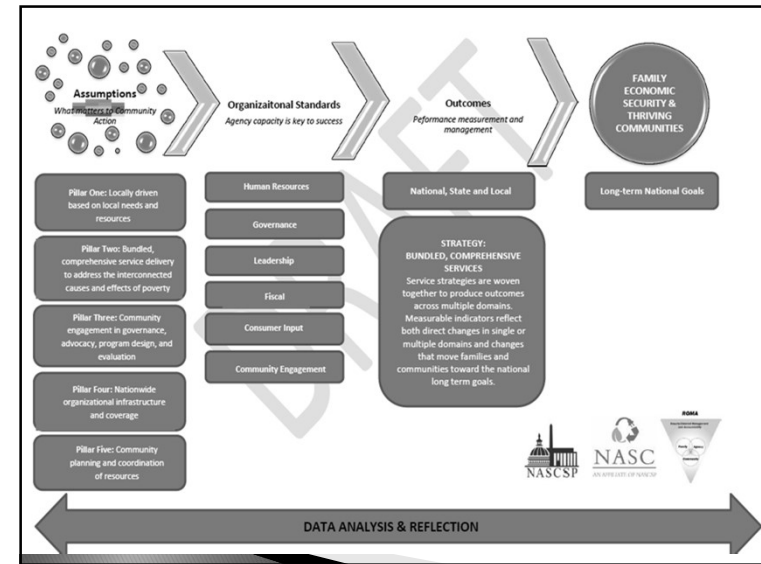
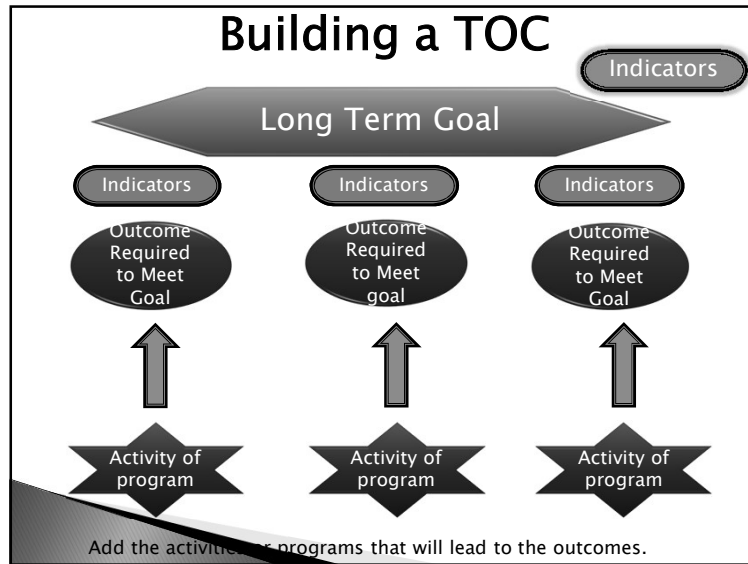
- ▶ Describes a process of social change from the **ASSUMPTIONS** that guide its design to the **LONG-TERM GOALS** it hopes to achieve.
- ▶ Shows the **CONNECTIONS** between activities and outcomes.
- ▶ Helps explain the **RELATIONSHIP** between the problems you are addressing and the strategies you use to get the work done.

We need a TOC to unify the network

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A Theory of Change will answer these questions:

1. Who are you seeking to influence or benefit?
2. What benefits are you seeking to achieve?
3. When will you achieve them?
4. How will you and others make this happen?
5. Where and under what circumstances will this get done?
6. Why do you believe your theory will work?



STEP ONE: Assumptions

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Theories on the causes of poverty are the foundation upon which poverty reduction strategies are based.

- **Poverty Caused by Individual Deficiencies:** a large and multifaceted set of explanations that focus on the individual as responsible for their poverty situation; with harder work and better choices the poor could have avoided their problems; ascribing to a view of poverty as a lack of genetic qualities, such as intelligence, which are not easily reversed
- **Poverty Caused by Cultural Belief Systems that Support Sub-Cultures of Poverty:** suggests that poverty is created by the transmission over generations of a set of beliefs, values and skills that are socially generated but individually held; individuals are not necessarily to blame because they are victims of their dysfunctional subculture

Source: *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development*, Ted K. Bradshaw, RPRC Working Paper No. 06-05, 2006 (<http://www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf>)

STEP ONE: Assumptions, cont.

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- **Poverty Caused by Economic, Political, and Social Distortions or Discrimination:** looking not to the individual but to the economic, political and social systems which cause people to have limited opportunities and resources with which to achieve income and well being
- **Poverty Caused by Geographical Disparities:** people, institutions and cultures in certain areas lack the objective resources needed to generate well being and income; what's more, they lack the power to claim redistribution

Source: *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development*, Ted K. Bradshaw, RPRC Working Paper No. 06-05, 2006 (<http://www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf>)

STEP ONE: Assumptions, cont.

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- **Poverty Caused by Cumulative and Cyclical Interdependencies:** looking at individual situations and community resources as mutually dependent; with a faltering economy, for example, creating individuals who lack resources to participate in the economy, which makes economic survival even harder for the community since people pay fewer taxes

Source: *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development*, Ted K. Bradshaw, RPRC Working Paper No. 06-05, 2006 (<http://www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf>)

STEP ONE: Assumptions, cont.

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- Recent Washington Post Article, Social Immobility Erodes the American Dream:
 - Lack of social capital
 - Lack of education and healthcare
 - The design of cities/public disinvestment in poor cities and neighborhoods

Sources: *The Washington Post*, click [here](#): Harvard Equality of Opportunity Project (<http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/>)

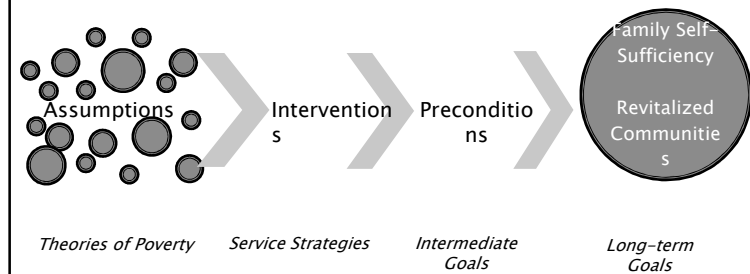
DRAFT Programmatic TOC Assumptions

Community Action bases its work on many of these theories of poverty and beliefs ...

- Movement out of poverty is impeded by crisis and a lack of stability
- Anti-poverty interventions are most successful when the target audience is included in shaping the intervention
- Anti-poverty interventions are most successful when grounded in a local community needs assessment

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Creating a Programmatic TOC



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STEP TWO: Preconditions

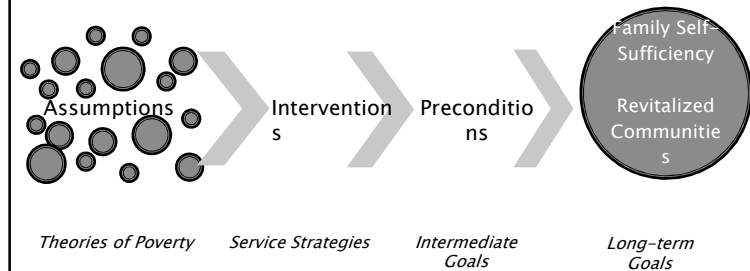
The intermediate goals or **MAJOR MILESTONES** Community Action believes come before achievement of its long-term goals...

Family	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to meet family basic needs • The ability to meet family basic needs without public or private assistance • The ability to meet family basic needs without public or private assistance, and to have sufficient discretionary income for savings and emergency expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Community services and resources are accessible and affordable for populations with low incomes or other barriers ▶ The communities in which people live are improved ▶ Communities are supportive of family self-sufficiency for people with low incomes

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Creating a Programmatic TOC



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STEP THREE: Interventions

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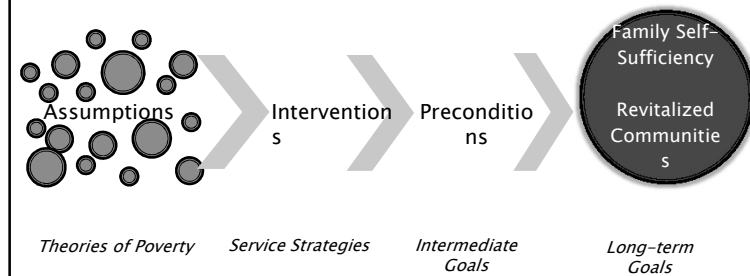
The approach Community Action uses to reach its long-term goals...

Community Action designs a range of “light touch” single service interventions and “deep touch” intensive, comprehensive and bundled service interventions to move families toward self-sufficiency and communities toward revitalization.

Community Actions “light touch” and “deep touch” service interventions cover the nine CSBG Service Categories included in the CSBG Statute (employment, education, income management, housing, emergency service, nutrition, linkages, self-sufficiency and health).

Creating a Programmatic TOC

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Programmatic Theory of Change

Who will develop?

For additional information, visit
www.nascsp.org – CSBG –
 ROMA

Tabitha Beck, Project Lead,
tbeck@nascsp.org
 Barbara Mooney, bmooney@nascsp.org
 Jovita Tolbert, jtolbert@nasc4us.org
 Mary Virtue, mvirtue@nasc4us.org