

Transforming Virginia’s Community Action Network

Virginia’s **9 Transforming Goals** are designed to shift the focus of community action agencies from traditional, service-oriented models to broader, community driven solutions for poverty elimination.

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The nine transforming Virginia goals developed by the Virginia CSBG Office and the Virginia Community Action Agencies (CAA) in 2019 aim to shift the focus of community action agencies (CAAs) from traditional, service-oriented models to broader, community-driven solutions for poverty elimination. Here's a breakdown of the goals and the changes they promote:

1. **One more nonprofit in the community → CAA’s as the recognized, go-to poverty-elimination leaders in the community** - This goal emphasizes that CAAs should be seen as primary leaders in the community's efforts to eliminate poverty, moving beyond just being another nonprofit.
2. **Inward focus; CAA is knowledgeable about its own agency and services → CAA’s as experts and resources on poverty, poverty resources in the community, and solutions to poverty** - CAAs are encouraged to position themselves as experts in both the realities of poverty and the resources available to combat it, becoming go-to resources for solutions.
3. **Focused on day-to-day service delivery and agency survival → Focused externally on collaborative partners to reach mutual community goals** - This transition encourages CAAs to collaborate with other organizations and stakeholders in the community, rather than focusing solely on day-to-day operations and survival.
4. **CAA plays no role in development of the broader community → CAA’s have an active role in community and economic development as a solution to poverty** - CAAs are expected to take an active role in driving community and economic development, addressing the systemic causes of poverty rather than just its immediate effects.
5. **Little or no community voice → CAA's are recognized and acting as the community’s voice (advocate) for people in poverty** - This shift highlights the importance of CAAs acting as advocates, ensuring that the voices of those affected by poverty are heard in decision-making processes.
6. **CAA staff are skilled at service delivery in specific program areas → CAA includes staff with strong expertise in community problem-solving, collective impact models, convening, and leadership** - The focus is on building staff capacity not only in specific service areas but also in areas like leadership, collective impact, and community problem-solving to address systemic issues.
7. **Most agency focus is on addressing the conditions of poverty → Major focus is on eliminating the causes of poverty** - CAAs are encouraged to focus on the root causes of poverty, not just the symptoms, aiming for sustainable change.
8. **Primary focus and most outcomes are at the client level → A major focus is on community-level problem solving and systemic change** - This shift calls for a broader focus on changing systems and policies at the community level rather than just addressing individual needs.
9. **People with limited income are primarily recipients of agency services → People with limited income are also engaged in meaningful ways supporting the agency mission and community change efforts** - People with limited income should not just be recipients of services but also active participants in the work of the agency and in broader community change efforts.

These goals are part of a transformative approach to poverty elimination, focusing not just on immediate relief but also on long-term systemic change and community empowerment.

**Activity: Rating the Agency's Progress on Transforming Virginia Goals**

**Objective:**  
This activity helps board members and staff assess the current state of the agency’s operations and identify areas for growth in alignment with the nine transforming Virginia goals.

**Materials Needed:**

* Copies of the nine transforming Virginia goals (printed or displayed on a screen)
* A rating scale for each goal (e.g., 1 to 5 scale, with 1 = “Not at all” and 5 = “Fully aligned”)
* Markers, pens, and notepads for discussion

**Instructions:**

1. **Introduction (5-10 minutes):**  
   Begin by reviewing the nine transforming Virginia goals with the board and staff. Emphasize the focus on shifting from a service-delivery model to a more community-driven, systemic change approach. Discuss the importance of this transformation for the agency's role in poverty elimination.
2. **Individual Rating (10-15 minutes):**  
   Provide each participant with a copy of the nine goals (worksheet below) and ask them to rate the agency on each goal using a scale from 1 to 5:
   * **1 = Not at all** (The agency is not aligned with this goal at all.)
   * **2 = Slightly aligned** (The agency has taken minimal steps toward aligning with this goal.)
   * **3 = Moderately aligned** (The agency is somewhat aligned but has room for improvement.)
   * **4 = Mostly aligned** (The agency is largely aligned with this goal, but there are some gaps.)
   * **5 = Fully aligned** (The agency fully embodies this goal in its operations.)

Ask participants to rate each goal individually, reflecting on their personal knowledge of the agency's work and the community context.

1. **Group Discussion (30-40 minutes):**  
   After everyone has completed their individual ratings, gather the group for a facilitated discussion. For each goal:
   * Ask participants to share their reasoning behind their ratings (both high and low scores).
   * Explore where there are significant discrepancies in ratings and discuss what factors may be influencing the differences.
   * Identify areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed.

For example, for **Goal 1 (One more nonprofit in the community → CAA’s as the recognized, go-to poverty-elimination leaders in the community)**, discuss:

* + How is the agency perceived in the community?
  + What efforts have been made to position the agency as a leader in poverty elimination?
  + What could be done to strengthen the agency's leadership role in the community?

1. **Action Planning (20-30 minutes):**  
   Based on the discussion, create an action plan with concrete steps for the agency to strengthen its alignment with the goals. For each goal:
   * Identify specific actions the agency can take to improve or sustain its progress.
   * Assign responsibility for each action item (e.g., board members, staff, or committees).
   * Set timelines for achieving these actions.

For example, for **Goal 3 (Focused on day-to-day service delivery → Focused externally on collaborative partners to reach mutual community goals)**:

* + Action could include identifying potential collaborative partners and hosting a community roundtable to explore shared goals.

1. **Follow-up and Accountability:**  
   Plan a follow-up meeting or check-in (e.g., quarterly or bi-annually) to review progress on the action plan. Assess how the agency is progressing on the goals and adjust strategies as necessary.

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **One more nonprofit in the community** |  | **CAA’s are the recognized, go-to poverty-elimination leaders in the community** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **Inward focus; the CAA is knowledgeable about its own agency and services** |  | **CAA’s are recognized as experts and resources on poverty, poverty resources in the community and solutions to poverty** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **Focused on day to day service delivery and agency survival** |  | **Focused externally on collaborative partners to reach mutual community goals** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **CAA plays no role in development of the broader community** |  | **CAA’s have an active role in community and economic development as a solution to poverty** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **Little or no community voice** |  | **CAA's are recognized and acting as the community’s voice (advocate) for people in poverty** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **CAA staff are skilled at service delivery in specific program areas** |  | **CAA includes staff with strong expertise in community problem solving, collective impact models, convening and leadership** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **Most agency focus is on addressing the *conditions* of poverty** |  | **Major focus is on *eliminating the causes* of poverty** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **Primary focus and most outcomes are at the *client* level** |  | **A major focus is on *community-level* problem solving and systemic change** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating:

**Activity Sheet:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM THIS:** |  | **TO THIS:** |
| **People with limited income are**  **primarily recipients of agency services** |  | **People with limited income are also engaged in meaningful ways supporting the agency mission and community change efforts** |

Rate on a scale of 1-5

# **1 2 3 4 5**

Examples of agency activities to explain rating: