



TCC GROUP'S CORE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL



**CCAT** | tcc group

**Report and  
Recommendations**

Sample Organization Report

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# Welcome

The Core Capacity  
Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report for:  
Sample Organization Report



foster staff unity

Welcome to the Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report.

This CCAT report provides an analysis of where your organization stands in terms of the four core capacities TCC believes to be crucial for organizational success:

- **Adaptive Capacity:** the ability of a nonprofit organization to monitor, assess and respond to and create internal and external changes.
- **Leadership Capacity:** the ability of all organizational leaders to create and sustain the vision, inspire, model, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction and innovate, all in an effort to achieve the organizational mission.
- **Management Capacity:** the ability of a nonprofit organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.
- **Technical Capacity:** the ability of a nonprofit organization to implement all of the key organizational and programmatic functions.

The CCAT also includes a measure of organizational culture since it has a significant impact on each of the above core capacities. Each organization has a unique history, language, organizational structure, and set of values and beliefs. These cultural elements foster staff unity and provide opportunities to re-energize staff.

The CCAT Final Report is intended to help your organization determine its strengths and opportunities for improvement. Based on anonymous responses from organizational leaders including senior management and board members, the report is a snapshot of how the organization is progressing, based on the perceptions and experiences of insiders. The CCAT provides a confirmation of the organization's strengths and suggestions for strengthening its capacities. The attached Lifecycle Score and Capacity-Building Plan provide a computer-generated set of priorities for strengthening the organization and growing it to the next level.

The CCAT report can be used as a:

- Starting point for discussions
- Suggested checklist for changes
- Barometer for comparison to similar organizations
- Way to track organization growth and development
- Method for involving select board members in discussing organizational capacities

For those organizations requiring assistance in interpreting their report, telephone assistance is available for an additional fee. Please contact the CCAT Sales & Support Dept., toll-free, at 1-866-470-2258 or via email at [CCATHelp@tccgrp.com](mailto:CCATHelp@tccgrp.com). Additional information, including a list of frequently asked questions, is also available on the CCAT website at [www.tccCCAT.com](http://www.tccCCAT.com)

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**strategies to achieve  
social impact**

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# Reading Your CCAT Report

The Core Capacity  
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learning more

Your organization's score in each of the four capacity areas and Organizational Culture are noted in specific, dedicated sections. Each Core Capacity area (Adaptive, Leadership, Management and Technical) and Organizational Culture are broken into multiple sub-categories to provide the most accurate depiction possible. Due to the assessing nature of the CCAT, the tool measures how well your organization fulfills the various sub-categories, as defined on the following pages.

Scores are based on a 300-point scale. To better understand this scale, refer below:

- 230 and greater.....Strong
- 190–229 .....Satisfactory
- Less than 190.....Challenging

A score lower than 190 is seen as an area that needs to be strengthened. If your organization scores below 190, it does not mean that your organization is in distress. However, it does mean that working on strengthening those capacities is crucial for your organization's growth and/or improvement. Very few organizations score above 270. Low scores should be used to identify capacities that require attention or skills needing improvement.

Please note: We do not require your CCAT respondents to answer every question. This ensures that when a question is answered, it has been answered by members of your organization who felt they could speak to that issue. However, this means that you may find some scores are missing in your report because we do not include scores in your report when there are too few responses.

## COMPARATIVE RESULTS

Each organization has access to a free comparison to similar organizations. This comparative data is provided to give organizations perspective on their scores.

For more information, please contact the TCC CCAT Sales & Support hotline at 1-866-470-2258 or via email at [CCATHelp@tccgrp.com](mailto:CCATHelp@tccgrp.com) or visit the CCAT Help Center at [www.tccCCAT.com](http://www.tccCCAT.com)

# Core Capacities Sub-Capacities & Organizational Culture

The Core Capacity  
Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report for:  
Sample Organization Report



empowering  
through knowledge

Each Core Capacity is broken into multiple sub-categories to provide the most accurate depiction possible. Due to the assessing nature of the CCAT, the tool measures how well your organization fulfills the various sub-capacities, as defined below.

## ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

- **Decision-Making Tools:** Using important tools, resources and inputs to make decisions (i.e., outside technical assistance, in-house data, staff input, client input, a written strategic plan)
- **Environmental Learning:** Using collaboration and networking with community leaders and funders to learn about what's going on in the community, and stay current with what is going on in the field
- **Organizational Learning:** Self-assessing, using assessment data/findings to conduct strategic planning, and following through on strategic plans
- **Organizational Resource Sustainability:** Maintaining financial stability in order to adapt to changing environments
- **Program Resource Adaptability:** Easily adapting to changes in program resources, including funding and staff  
Please note that this sub-capacity score may report as zero if no recent staff or money loss has occurred. A score of zero does not affect any other capacity or sub-capacity scores.
- **Programmatic Learning:** Assessing the needs of clients and using program evaluation as a learning tool

## LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

- **Board Leadership:** Board functioning with respect to:
  1. **Empowering** through connecting people with the mission and vision of the organization
  2. **Holding** organizational leaders accountable for progress toward achieving the mission and vision
  3. **Conducting** community outreach to educate and garner resources
  4. **Meeting** regularly and providing fiscal oversight
- **Internal Leadership:** Organizational leaders apply a mission-centered, focused, and inclusive approach to making decisions, as well as inspiring and motivating people to act upon them
- **Leader Influence:** Ability of organizational leaders to persuade their board, staff and community leaders/decision-makers to take action)
- **Leader Vision:** Organizational leaders formulate and motivate others to pursue a clear vision
- **Leadership Sustainability:** Cultivating organizational leaders, avoiding an over-reliance on one leader and planning for leadership transition (including having a succession plan)

# Core Capacities Sub-Capacities & Organizational Culture

The Core Capacity  
Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report for:  
Sample Organization Report



constructive  
feedback

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## MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- **Assessing Staff Performance:** Detailing clear roles and responsibilities and assessing staff performance against those roles and responsibilities
- **Conveying Unique Value of Staff:** Providing positive feedback, rewards, and time for reflection
- **Financial Management:** Managing organizational finances, including staff compensation
- **Manager-to-Staff Communication:** Open channels of communication between managers and staff, including how open managers are to constructive feedback
- **Managing Performance Expectations:** Facilitating clear and realistic expectations among staff.
- **Managing Program Staff:** Managing to ensure that program staff have the knowledge, skills, and cultural sensitivity to effectively deliver services
- **Problem Solving:** Organizational managers effectively, judiciously and consistently resolve human resource problems and interpersonal conflicts, including how well they engage staff in the problem-solving process
- **Program Staffing:** Staffing changes as needed to increase and/or improve programs and service delivery  
Please note that this sub-capacity score may report as zero if no recent staff changes have occurred. A score of zero does not affect any other capacity or sub-capacity scores.
- **Staff Development:** Coaching, mentoring, training, and empowering staff to improve their skills and innovate
- **Supporting Staff Resource Needs:** Providing the technical resources, tools, systems, and people needed to carry out the work
- **Volunteer Management:** Recruiting, retaining, providing role clarity and direction, developing, valuing and rewarding volunteers

# Core Capacities Sub-Capacities & Organizational Culture

The Core Capacity  
Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report for:  
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ensure efficient  
financial operations

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## TECHNICAL CAPACITY

- **Facilities:** The proper facilities (space, equipment, amenities, etc.) to run efficient operations
- **Facility Management Skills:** Ability to operate an efficient facility
- **Financial Management Skills:** Ability to ensure efficient financial operations
- **Fundraising Skills:** Ability to develop necessary resources for efficient operations, including management of donor relations
- **Legal Skill:** Ability to engage proper legal engagement and coverage
- **Marketing Skills:** Ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders, internal and external
- **Outreach Skills:** Ability to do outreach, organizing and advocacy
- **Program Evaluation Skills:** Ability to design and implement an effective evaluation
- **Service Delivery Skills:** Ability to ensure efficient and quality services
- **Technology:** Resources (equipment, systems, software, etc.) to run efficient operations
- **Technology Skills:** Ability to run efficient operations

Organizational Culture is separate from the four core capacities; it is a context in which the core capacities operate. Each organization has a unique history, language, organizational structure, and set of values and beliefs that affect staff unity and engagement.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- **Empowering:** Promoting proactivity, learning, and a belief in the value and ability of staff and clients
- **Re-energizing:** Supporting time for staff to reflect on their work, socialize, and reconnect with why they are doing the work
- **Unifying:** Engendering open and honest communication across all levels in the organization, leading to a sense of a cohesive “group identity”

# Lifecycle Score & Recommendations

The Core Capacity  
Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report for:  
Sample Organization Report



**prioritized set of  
recommendations**

## LIFECYCLE SCORE

In the following pages, the lifecycle score and capacity-building plan are described in depth. These two important findings areas are listed first to help leaders best interpret the whole report.

Each nonprofit receives a lifecycle score. The lifecycle score is based on the idea that much like people go through the lifecycle stages of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, nonprofits also experience a lifecycle. For the purposes of the CCAT, TCC describes the five nonprofit lifecycle stages as Core Program Development, Infrastructure Development, Impact Expansion, Stagnation, Dissolving/Merging.

We chose these labels because they allow the flexibility to draw an established, or “mature,” organization’s attention to improving its core programs. Although an established organization might have a large operating budget, it may have lost touch with Core Program Development. Labeling this organization as mature would overlook the established nonprofit’s need to increase its organizational effectiveness. Also, some nonprofit organizations may not aim to grow to later stages of development. Labeling small, successful and established organizations as “start-up” when they are efficiently and effectively delivering their core programs on a smaller scale would also miss the mark. For all of these reasons, we use these labels to more appropriately encompass the capacity stage of different organizations.

Based on TCC Group’s experience with using the CCAT as an assessment tool, we have found that the first and most critical finding in the report is the determination and reporting of where your organization falls along the lifecycle continuum. Organizational leaders will need to start with their lifecycle score because it will provide the “starting place” for putting all other findings in context because all organizational planning and/or capacity building efforts must necessarily begin where an organization is, developmentally.

Your lifecycle score will clarify the stage your organization is in and will serve as the basis of our computer generated capacity-building plan. In-depth explanations of the five stages are available at the end of this report.

## COMPUTER GENERATED CAPACITY-BUILDING PLAN

The capacity-building plan highlights the top priorities for improving your organization’s effectiveness. Your organization’s computer generated capacity-building plan is based on its scores in the four core capacities and organizational culture, and its lifecycle stage. Later in the report, capacity building recommendations are listed that you could use on your own or with help to increase and improve your growth. These strategies correspond to the prioritized capacity building plan listed on page 11.



# Lifecycle Score & Recommendations

The Core Capacity  
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**prioritized set of  
recommendations**

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The capacity-building plan features a prioritized set of recommendations that is based on what is important for advancing an organization's effectiveness. The report presents these recommendations in order of importance in relation to what research tells us are "critical" to advancing along the development continuum. Some capacities are critically important to the successful advancement of a lifecycle, while others are somewhat less important. If your organization needs improvement in the "critical" capacities, the recommendations and capacity-building strategies associated with these weaker capacities will be listed first. Your plan is prioritized based on what will help the most and should be done first.

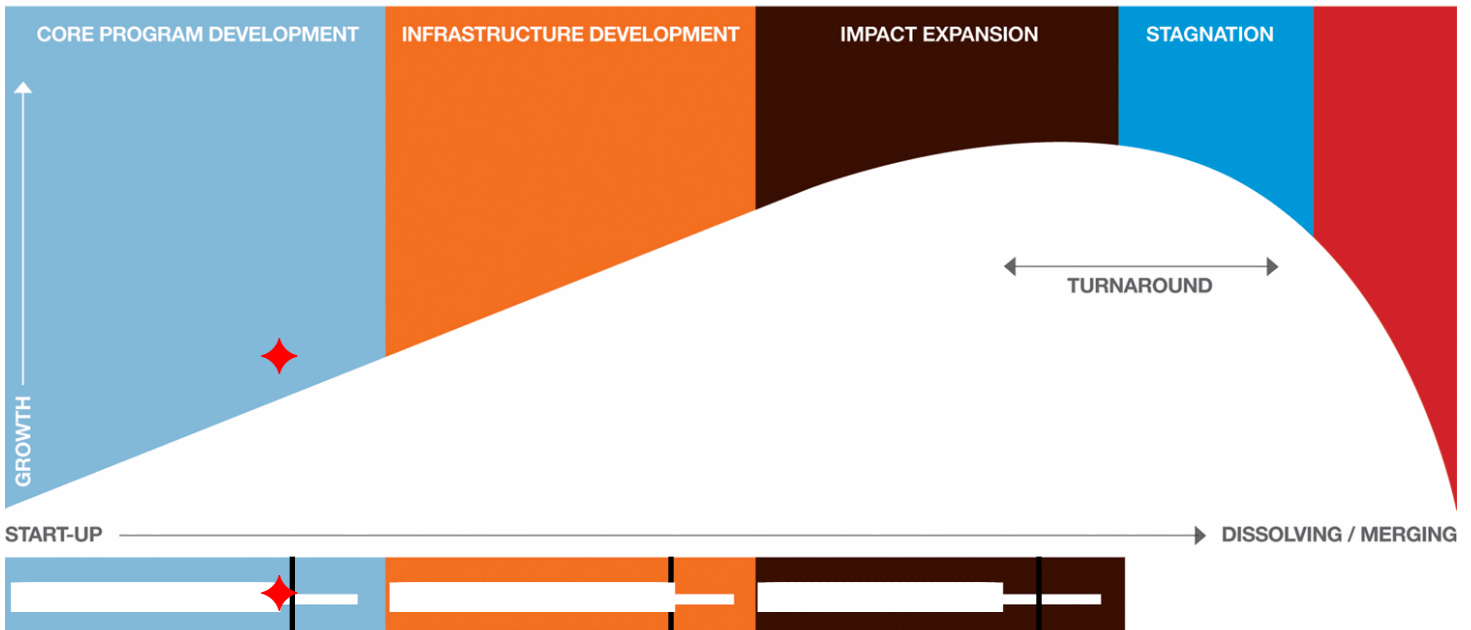
When you and other organizational leaders review this list it should serve as a priority guide for all planning and capacity building efforts your organization engages in moving forward. It is important NOT to read this set of priority recommendations literally, but rather look at the whole list and deliberate with organizational leaders to determine the top two to three priority "areas" that must be addressed if the organization is to become more "effective". Then, the remainder of the report should be reviewed through the lenses of the organization's current developmental stage and top two or three priority areas in order to better ensure that detailed findings get filtered through the context of developmental advancement, which in turn is anchored in mission advancement and vision achievement.

# Lifecycle Score

## MEANING OF PLACEMENT

TCC considers the development of an organization's effectiveness to be an additive process where each successive stage requires more growth from prior stages. Although scores for each of the three stages are represented below, the marker indicates your organization's primary stage.

Additionally, while the lifecycle diagram includes stages reflecting stagnation and dissolution/merger, placement in these stages can only be determined through multiple CCAT administrations.



### Core Program Development

Based on responses from people in your organization we encourage you to consider your Core Program Development. Close alignment between your programs and your mission/vision – and clarity in your organization as to how they relate – are critical to the foundation of your organization's effectiveness. If your organization is just starting out, you may want to think more about how to clearly articulate your mission and vision, and apply it to developing your programs. If you are an established organization you may want to go back and ensure that there is a strong connection between your programs and your mission/vision in order to build the capacity of your organization. The prioritized set of recommendations below are some strategies for enhancing your core program development, based on the results of your organization's CCAT participation and our research on which areas are most critical for organizations at your stage of capacity building. Consider the full list, but focus your attention on the first few areas as high priority items, then select a few specific strategies to actively work on in the immediate future.

# Prioritized Capacity Building Plan

## **Adaptive: Environmental Learning**

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- 1) Increase the quantity and quality of client referrals you make to other organizations.

## **Leadership: Internal Leadership**

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- 2) Increase staff motivation.
- 3) Increase your leaders' willingness to seek outside counsel when needed.
- 4) Increase the amount of interaction between leaders and the staff and strengthen their working relationships.
- 5) Make sure that the decisions you make closely reflect the organization's mission and vision.

## **Leadership: Leader Vision**

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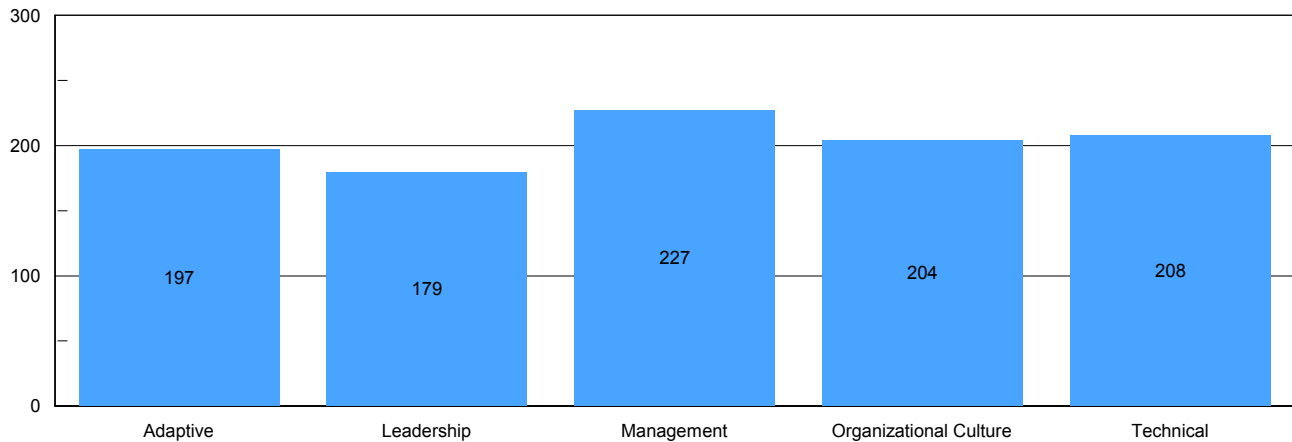
- 6) Help your leaders develop a clearer vision for the organization.
- 7) Increase your leaders' ability to motivate others.

## **Management: Problem Solving**

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- 8) Help your leaders consistently follow-through on decisions that they make.

## Summary of Core Capacity Scores



### 197 Adaptive

#### Strengths

- Decision-Making Tools

#### Challenges

- Organizational Resource Sustainability
- Program Resource Adaptability

### 179 Leadership

#### Strengths

#### Challenges

- Leadership Sustainability
- Board Leadership

### 227 Management

#### Strengths

- Assessing Staff Performance
- Managing Program Staff
- Staff Development
- Supporting Staff Resource Needs
- Financial Management

#### Challenges

- Managing Performance Expectations

## 208 Technical

### Strengths

- Technology
- Program Evaluation Skills
- Legal Skills
- Financial Management Skills
- Facilities

### Challenges

- Outreach Skills
- Fundraising Skills

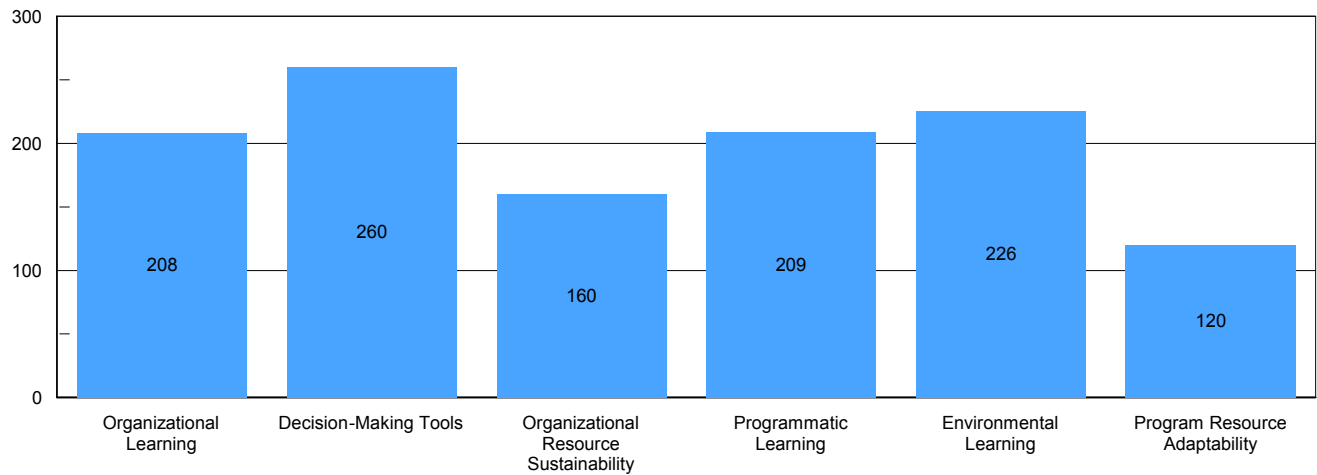
## 204 Organizational Culture

### Strengths

### Challenges

- Unifying

## Adaptive Capacity



# 208

### Organizational Learning

- Conduct organizational assessments on a more frequent and regular basis.
- Share the results of your organizational assessments with staff more often.

# 160

### Organizational Resource Sustainability

- Diversify your funding streams.

# 209

### Programmatic Learning

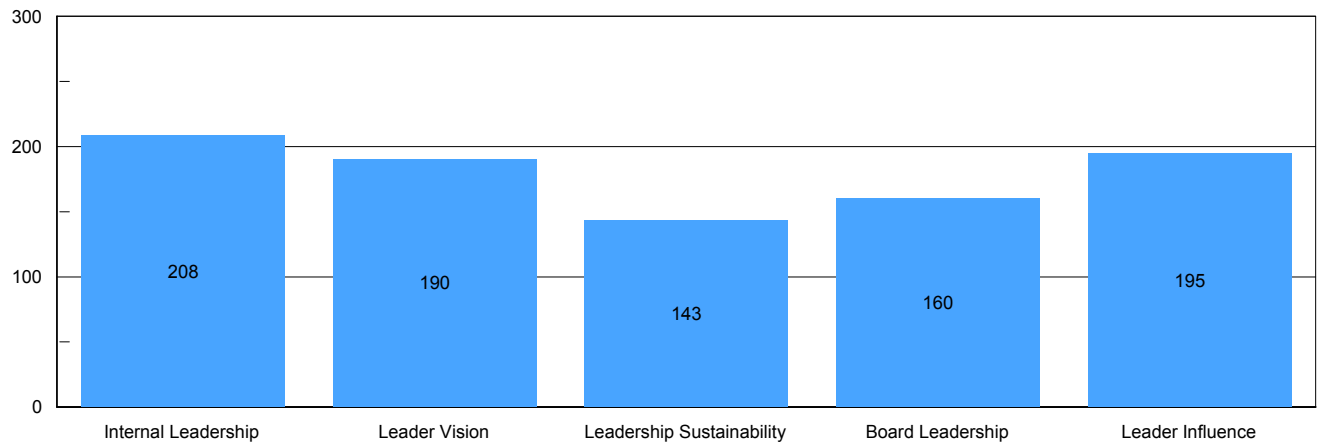
- Create clearer criteria and measurement tools to use to determine the effectiveness of your programs.

# 120

### Program Resource Adaptability

- Make workloads more manageable by hiring more staff.
- Increase your willingness to scale back programs when money or staff is lost.

## Leadership Capacity



# 208

## Internal Leadership

- Increase your leaders' willingness to seek outside counsel when needed.
- Ensure that leaders (including board members) solicit input from program staff before they make program decisions.
- Increase the amount of interaction between the board and the staff and strengthen their working relationship.
- Increase staff involvement in decision-making.

# 143

## Leadership Sustainability

- Clearly articulate your succession plan.
- Reduce your organization's reliance on one leader enough so that his/her leaving wouldn't slow the organization.

# 160

## Board Leadership

- Increase the board's passion for the mission.
- Increase your board members' ability to clearly describe the organization's mission, vision and goals.
- Improve board member's attendance and follow-through.
- Use your Board to increase the community's investment in your organization.
- Increase board members' knowledge about the organization and its cause so that they can make effective policy decisions.
- Increase the extent to which your board fulfills its responsibilities for such things as planning, evaluating the Executive Director, ensuring financial accountability, etc.
- Increase the board's ability to reach out to and inspire the community.

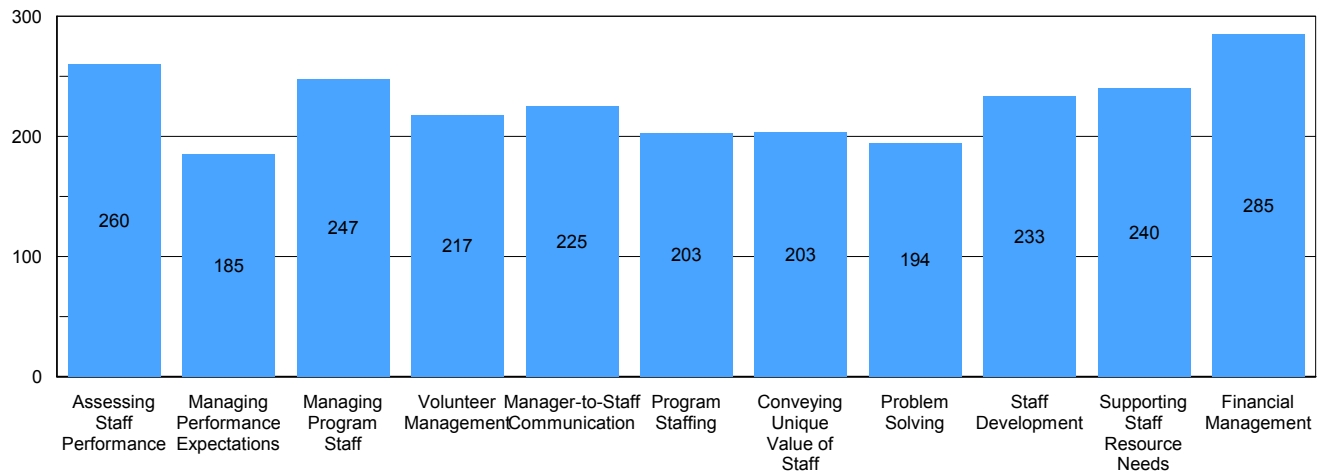
# 195

## Leader Influence

- Increase leaders' ability to persuade board members to change their attitudes and/or behaviors.

# 15

## Management Capacity



### 185 Managing Performance Expectations

- Help your managers set more realistic expectations for employees.

### 218 Volunteer Management

- Increase the effectiveness of your volunteer recruitment strategies.
- Ensure that you have the right mix of volunteers you need to do the work.

### 225 Manager-to-Staff Communication

- Encourage your leaders and managers to be more open to negative staff feedback.

### 203 Program Staffing

- Increase your willingness to make staff changes in order to increase the quantity of programs and services you provide.

### 203 Conveying Unique Value of Staff

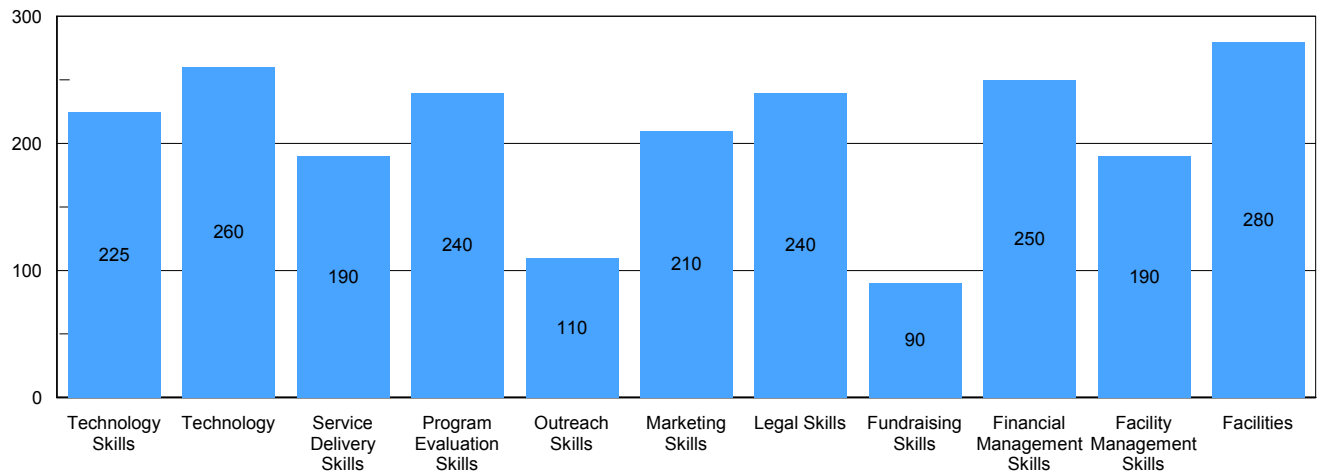
- Encourage staff to reflect on their work and the processes they use to perform their jobs.

### 194 Problem Solving

- Decrease the number of times your leaders-managers contradict one another in front of staff.
- Provide staff with more time to meet together, coordinate their work, and brainstorm ideas and solutions.



## Technical Capacity



# 110

## Outreach Skills

- Increase the number of staff/volunteers you have doing outreach, community organizing and advocacy.

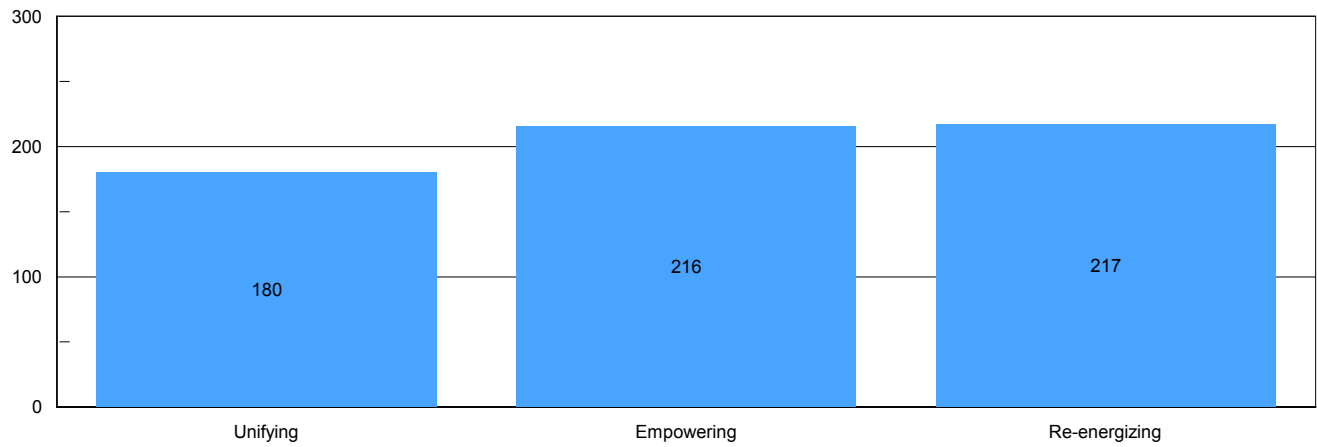
# 90

## Fundraising Skills

- Increase the number of staff/volunteers you have with the skills needed to raise funds from the government, corporations and foundations.
- Increase the number of staff/volunteers you have with the skills needed to raise funds from individuals.

# 17

## Organizational Culture Capacity



# 180

## Unifying

- Address the perception that there are some exclusive staff sub-groups.
- Ensure that staff feel power sharing within the organization is fair.
- Address the perception that some staff don't speak to each other except for work.
- Encourage staff to share information more often.

# 216

## Empowering

- Improve your leaders' and board members' ability to handle disagreements.

# 18

# Prioritized Capacity Building Plan Recommendations

## Leadership: Internal Leadership

**RECOMMENDATION:**  
**Increase staff motivation.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

### ON YOUR OWN

- Talk with each staff member individually about their understanding of the mission and vision.
- Work with each staff member to outline how their specific role contributes to achieving the organizational vision and mission. Do NOT exclude administrative or other non-program staff members.
- Using a ball of string, have staff stand in a circle. Holding onto the end of the string, toss the ball to another staff member and say what you need from that person in order to do your job most effectively. That person, holding onto the string, tosses it to another staff member indicating what they need from that person in order to do their job most effectively. Continue doing this as long as there are solid needs. The same person can receive the string from multiple different people. The idea of the activity is so that all staff members understand how they are intertwined in achieving the mission of the organization. Conduct a short debrief after the activity to summarize ideas and any necessary next steps.
- Create incentives specific to each staff member for achieving certain benchmarks in their work, ensuring that benchmarks are directly relevant to the mission and vision of the organization.
- Set a benchmark/goal for the organization that would indicate a milestone in achieving the mission of the organization and plan a celebration for when it is reached. This might be a certain number of clients served, a certain big task accomplished, or certain targets reached.

### WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- Do a staff retreat to discuss the vision for the organization and each staff member's role in achieving that vision. Often, a change of setting from the everyday organization can help refocus staff members on the bigger picture.

**RECOMMENDATION:**  
**Increase your leaders' willingness to seek outside counsel when needed.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

### ON YOUR OWN

### WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- Review job descriptions of all staff to make sure that roles are clear within the organization so that everyone understands who makes what decisions.
- Establish an organizational policy that commits organizational leaders to ask the question, “Is there another perspective I would benefit from in making this decision?” and to seek out those other perspectives. Consider doing this in conjunction with an “open door” policy.
- In a staff meeting, brainstorm a list of various community members whose advice has been or could be beneficial and identify specific topics where each person’s counsel would be particularly relevant. Do the same exercise with board members. Refer to these lists on a regular basis and keep them updated.
- Have organizational leaders reflect on their leadership style as part of their annual review, paying specific attention to how they gather information for decision-making, and consider areas where the leader might benefit from seeking additional information.
- Every week, have organizational leaders pick at least one topic, pending decision or other type of relevant issue on which to solicit counsel from another person, internally or externally, and then follow-through on doing so.

- Engage a leadership coach to help reflect on leadership styles and help leaders open up more to outside counsel.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Increase the amount of interaction between leaders and the staff and strengthen their working relationships.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

ON YOUR OWN

WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- Have organizational leaders do “direct” service work on a regular basis within the organization.
- Implement regular staff meetings. Ask different staff members to prepare the agenda and facilitate the meeting on a rotating basis.
- Informally sketch out how various staff members depend on each other. Consider the following activity for a hands-on staff activity: Using a ball of string, have staff stand in a circle. Holding onto the end of the string, toss the ball to another staff member and say what you need from that person in order to do your job most effectively. That person, holding onto the string, tosses it to another staff member indicating what they need from that person in order to do their job most effectively. Continue doing this as long as there are solid needs. The same person can receive the string from multiple different people. The idea of the activity is so that all staff members understand how they are intertwined in achieving the mission of the organization. Conduct a short debrief after the activity to summarize ideas and any necessary next steps.

- Do a personality assessment as a staff, such as StrengthsFinder or Meyers-Briggs, and reflect as a staff on the implications for working together.
- Have a staff retreat to discuss how to work together more effectively. Often an outside facilitator can be helpful in navigating this discussion.
- Have an external source conduct a “network analysis” to understand workflow patterns in your organization.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**Make sure that the decisions you make closely reflect the organization's mission and vision.**

#### *Strategies for accomplishing this:*

##### ON YOUR OWN

- Encourage all staff members to reflect on how each decision they make relates to better achieving the organization’s mission and vision. As a practice run, ask staff to reflect on a recent decision that they made and think through the implications as they relate to the mission and vision. Then have a trial run for a week where staff are asked to focus on relating decisions to the mission and vision and are continually reminded of the experiment. At the end of the week, discuss how it went. Improving in this area is about creating a good habit, which occurs through constant practice and repetition. The leaders of the organization need to be setting a constant example, by frequently referencing the mission and vision and how various activities contribute to reaching the mission and vision.

##### WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- Get an external assessment of your organization’s decision-making process and how to improve decision-making.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Leader to Leader Institute (Formerly the Drucker Foundation). "Leader to Leader." Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Gilbertsen, Beth C., and Vijit Ramchandani. "Fieldstone Alliance Nonprofit Guide to Developing Effective Teams." Fieldstone Alliance.
- Brinkerhoff, Peter C. "Nonprofit Stewardship: A Better Way to Lead Your Mission-Based Organization." Fieldstone Alliance.
- Riggio, Ronald E. and Sarah Smith Orr, editors. "Improving Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations." Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Welbourne, Theresa M. "Employee Engagement: Beyond the Fad and into the Executive Suite." Leader to Leader. Available at: [www.leadertoleader.org/knowledgecenter/L2L/spring2007/welbourne.html](http://www.leadertoleader.org/knowledgecenter/L2L/spring2007/welbourne.html)

# Leadership: Leader Vision

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Help your leaders develop a clearer vision for the organization.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

**ON YOUR OWN**

- Facilitate regular "in-house" meetings to reflect on and discuss the organizational vision (as well as how the organization is doing with respect to strategic plan implementation, if a strategic plan exists).
- Facilitate regular meetings to discuss program evaluation findings (if some form of evaluation data exists) and reflect on what the findings are saying with respect to vision relevance and achievement.

**WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE**

- Hire a consultant to facilitate a visioning exercise/meeting (perhaps as part of a larger engagement to conduct strategic planning).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Increase your leaders' ability to motivate others.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

**ON YOUR OWN**

- Identify, meet with and/or "shadow" other leaders (outside of the organization) who are particularly effective at motivating others.

**WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE**

- Hire an executive coach to work with staff leaders and managers who struggle with respect to motivating others.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Angelica, Emil. "Fieldstone Nonprofit Guide to Crafting Effective Mission and Vision Statements." Fieldstone Alliance.
- Korngold, Alice. "Developing Visionary Leaders." Leader to Leader. Available at: [www.leadertoleader.org/knowledgecenter/L2L/spring2006/korngold.html](http://www.leadertoleader.org/knowledgecenter/L2L/spring2006/korngold.html)
- Lipon, Mark. "Guiding Growth: How Vision Keeps Companies on Course." Harvard Business School Press.

## Adaptive: Environmental Learning

### RECOMMENDATION:

**Increase the quantity and quality of client referrals you make to other organizations.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

#### ON YOUR OWN

- Create a ready-reference referral list of known, respected, high quality organizations
- Widely distribute a ready-reference referral list to staff and conduct orientations/trainings around the use of the list and the organizations represented
- Track referrals and report quantity
- Gather feedback from clients about the referral e.g., satisfaction, value, results, etc.
- Add reflection on client referrals as a reoccurring agenda item on regularly scheduled meetings

#### WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- Use a consultant to assess referral system, from mechanisms to quality processing, and provide recommendations for improving this system.
- Hire a consultant to develop a formal system of providing and tracking client referrals.
- Hire a consultant to provide technical assistance and training to staff to ensure the referral process is being implemented well and providing high quality service to clients.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Winer, Michael Barry, and Karen Louise Ray. "Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey." Wilder Foundation.
- Plastrik, Peter, and Madeleine Taylor. "NET GAINS: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change." Innovation Network for Communities. Available at: [www.in4c.net/index.asp?It=net\\_gains\\_download](http://www.in4c.net/index.asp?It=net_gains_download) (free registration required)
- Mattessich, Paul W.; Murray-Close, M; Monsey, B.R. "Collaboration: What Makes it Work." 2nd ed. Fieldstone Alliance.
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## Management: Problem Solving

### RECOMMENDATION:

**Help your leaders consistently follow-through on decisions that they make.**

*Strategies for accomplishing this:*

#### ON YOUR OWN

- Hold leaders accountable by creating a “to-do” list specifying an expected time line for each task at the end of staff meeting.
- Institute a transparent process by holding a “status check-in” conversation on issues/decisions leaders had agreed to follow-through in previous meetings at every staff meeting.
- Provide necessary staff support to leaders in following-through on decisions they had made.
- Create task forces or working groups to support leaders in carrying out their decisions.
- Assess the extent to which leaders have been able to follow through on decisions they make in their performance appraisal.

#### WITH OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- Send leaders and managers to attend workshops and trainings that improve their ability to follow-through on decisions they make.
- Seek coaching and consultation (volunteer or paid) on this aspect of problem solving.
- Hire an external trainer to provide a half-day or full-day session on best practices in problem solving.
- Seek targeted funding to support professional development training in this area.
- Network and learn from peers from other nonprofit organizations who have had successful experiences in following-through on decisions they make with their staff.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Schwartz, Howard, Szeto, MayPing, Stewart, Carol. "Conflict Resolution." Excerpted from a workshop held at the New York Nonprofit Coordinating Committee. Available at: [www.npccny.org/info/pmei7.htm](http://www.npccny.org/info/pmei7.htm)
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#### Summary

After the elements of Core Program Development in your organization are firmly in place, the likely next steps for your organization's development will focus on Infrastructure Development. These aspects of capacity building address the systems needed for an organization to operate smoothly, including having policies in place, good communication between staff, and initial evaluation efforts in order to improve programs. It is important to note, however, that the development of an organization's effectiveness is an additive process, so a continued focus on more effective and efficient Core Program Development will be important to consider throughout your lifecycle.



# The Theory Behind the CCAT: What Is Organizational Effectiveness?



organizational  
effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness means different things to different people. For some, an effective organization *has clear functional goals and objectives* in such areas as fundraising, board development, staff retention, and effective use of technology. Others simply define organizational effectiveness by *how well an organization achieves its mission*. Finally, some argue that the real issue is *how nonprofits set, and effectively achieve, their priorities*.

TCC Group has conducted many large-scale evaluations of capacity-building initiatives around the country. As a result of this work, TCC has identified four core capacities that all organizations need to be effective:

1. **adaptive**
2. **leadership**
3. **management**
4. **technical**

Due to the very different contexts within which any one nonprofit organization functions (e.g., budget, lifecycle stage, types of program and services, client population differences, etc.), it may be impossible to understand how these capacities are expressed. However, even though an organization may look unique due to specific environmental context -- as well as differences with respect to mission and vision -- we can still find a set of broad and generalizable measures of organizational effectiveness. For example, while it is critical that organizational leaders at a policy and advocacy organization take a strong leadership role in the community, all nonprofit organizations need effective community leadership in order to be successful.

Community leadership -- defined by organizational leaders engaging with community stakeholders for the purposes of achieving a larger community impact -- is a generalizable measure of nonprofit effectiveness. How community leadership gets expressed by any individual organization may be different, but overall, community leadership entails engaging community stakeholders for some greater end. In this way, a generalizable measure has been developed without getting into such specific detail that one could argue it "doesn't relate to what we do or how we function." In developing the CCAT, TCC Group seeks to put forth a set of generalizable measures of all of the various types of organizational capacities, grounded in the four core capacity model.

# Nonprofit Lifecycle Score

The Core Capacity  
Assessment Tool (CCAT) Final report for:  
Sample Organization Report



mission-centered  
programs

## NONPROFIT LIFECYCLE SCORE

Nonprofit organizations, like people, experience a lifecycle of progressive stages and developmental milestones. TCC labels the growth stages according to the following organizational development milestones:

- **Core Program Development** - development of a set of programs that are central to mission success and have begun achieving a consistent level of desired results for those being served
- **Infrastructure Development** - development of an organizational infrastructure necessary for supporting core programs and increasing the number of clients or service recipients
- **Impact Expansion** - achieving impact expansion through activities bringing together an organization's programs and leadership with other community resources. This often involves engaging in activities like collaboration, strategic alliances, partnerships, and joint policy and advocacy efforts, in order to create a greater change

We see an organization's lifecycle as an additive process where each successive stage requires more growth from the prior stages. This means more sophisticated core program development is required in each of the later stages and more sophisticated infrastructure development is required during Impact Expansion.

These growth stages have much in common with the perhaps more familiar terms of "start-up," "growth," and "maturity". However, we chose not to use those labels as they do not allow the flexibility to draw an established, or "mature," organization's attention to improving their Core Program Development.

Finally, as you have chosen to examine your organization's effectiveness by taking the CCAT, we believe that even if your organization has fallen into a state of decline, you are embarking on a process of renewal. Further, in terms of improving your organization's effectiveness, you want to be in a growth state. Therefore, the CCAT only places organizations into one of the growth stages. Even though your organization cannot appear in the decline stages, we include their definitions for completeness:

- **Stagnation** - not adapting to an organization's contextual factors
- **Dissolving / Merging** - due to mission drift, or becoming irrelevant in their current context, organizations may become ready to dissolve. Alternatively, they may be better served by merging with another, healthier organization in order to make better use of their resources together.