



ALLIANCE OF
COMMUNITY
ASSISTANCE
MINISTRIES

SM

NINE ELEMENTS ASSESSMENT TOOL

NEAT[©]

A SYSTEM FOR ASSESSING AND
DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL
CAPACITY

Developed by the
Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
in collaboration with
Paula F. Pipes, Pipes Research Services

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ACAM PROGRAMS

Capacity Building: ACAM promotes sound practices in nonprofit operations and programming. Organizational assessments inform members on areas of strength and weakness and are used to develop capacity building plans. ACAM supports plan implementation through stipends for training and consulting and direct grants to develop organizational infrastructure.

Networking and Training: ACAM convenes five groups, each with a different focus, for the purpose of networking, training and collaboration to empower its members to learn from each other and grow together to coordinate services, to better plan for services and to allow organizations to focus on their core competencies.

Collaborative Initiatives: ACAM garners resources to help members leverage their collective strength to address emergency situations that affect the community.

Advocacy and Outreach: ACAM increases membership, highlights the role of ministries as service hubs in their communities and raises awareness around the issues affecting the people served by the ministries.

CURRENT MEMBERS

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry
Emergency Aid Coalition
Epiphany Community Health Outreach Services
Humble Area Assistance Ministries
Interfaith Caring Ministries

Katy Christian Ministries
Memorial Assistance Ministries
My Brother's Keeper Outreach
St. Vincent's House
Wesley Community Center
West Houston Assistance Ministries

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since 2004, the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM) has worked to create a high-performing network linking its members, who are basic needs providers, with funders and other community partners in the Greater Houston area. The heart of ACAM's service strategy is helping its member organizations increase their capacity to serve those in need.

To guide this program, ACAM initially obtained permission from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to utilize four modules of CapMap[®], a capacity building tool developed by LISC for community development organizations. Working with CapMap[®] helped establish and confirm ACAM's capacity building program model: Provide member organizations with a rigorous, external evaluation of their organizational capacity; assist them in establishing capacity building plans with substantive, measurable goals; and award grants for implementing these plans.

ACAM and its members realized that they needed a capacity building tool designed specifically for Community Assistance Ministries (CAMs). In 2010, a committee of CAM Executive Directors and ACAM staff members began work to develop the assessment model, instruments, and procedural guidelines that form NEAT[®]. This development process was facilitated by Paula F. Pipes of Pipes Research Services, who also provided the committee with initial drafts of these tools, as well as research on capacity building, organizational effectiveness, and compliance issues.

NEAT[®] Development Committee 2010-2011

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The NEAT[®] system is the result of years of collaboration between CAMs serving the Greater Houston area, ACAM staff members, and funders. These stakeholders recognized that they lacked a common language for discussing organizational development and began researching nonprofit capacity building. Through this process, they agreed upon a list of nine elements that they considered important to developing sound practices and programming. This list provided the framework used to develop the NEAT[®] system. The following individuals were instrumental in helping craft the original Nine Elements of Organizational Capacity: Tina Cheplick, Senior Consultant, BTW informing change; Carolyn Watson, Vice President of Global Philanthropy, JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the Founder and Former Chair of the ACAM pilot project, the Zip Code Assistance Ministries Organizational Development Program (ZCAM-ODP); and Quynh-Anh McMahan, Research & Planning Officer, Rockwell Fund, Inc. and Former Coordinator, ZCAM-ODP.

In 2011, the Nine Elements Development Committee sought input from subject-matter experts to ensure that the NEAT[®] system would include rigorous indicators of capacity across all nine elements. These professionals reviewed and provided helpful comments on early drafts of the NEAT[®] instruments. The committee gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their contributions in the development of the NEAT[®] system:

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INTRODUCTION

This guide includes details on the structure, content, and application of the Nine Elements Assessment Tool (NEAT © 2011 ACAM, Inc.), an evidence-based system for evaluating organizational capacity. The NEAT[®] system was implemented in 2011 by the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc., and its members.

ACAM is a 501(c)(3) member services organization committed to supporting excellence in social services and organizational development for its members, Community Assistance Ministries (CAMs). CAMs are faith-based nonprofits that provide basic needs such as rent and utility assistance, food, and clothing. In short, CAMs are a vital safety net for preventing homelessness in their communities.

ACAM and its members are committed to capacity building activities that help build and sustain effective programs for those in need. The CAMs are active partners in shaping ACAM's programs and in their own organizational development. Members develop capacity building plans within the structure of ACAM's programs but in an individualized way that fits their strategic goals. Members have ownership of the ACAM-sponsored networking groups and trainings to help ensure that these programs meet their needs. Most importantly, the CAMs are stakeholders in ACAM's goals as demonstrated below in the members' vision statement. The NEAT[®] system described in this guide was developed with their participation to support and guide their vision for the alliance.

Members' Vision Statement

ACAM members envision ACAM to be:

- A measurably successful and replicable model of collaborative action.
- Nationally-recognized for providing models, resources and collaborative solution to local faith initiative to help them address basic needs, self-sufficiency and homeless prevention in communities of various sizes.
- A significant, positive and valuable brand.
- A strong educational/advocacy group.
- A growing network of strong organizations.
- A pace-setter for basic needs, self-sufficiency and homeless prevention ministries.
- Known for providing high-impact training and development opportunities for all members.
- A convening group that can help identify underserved areas and assist local members or other nonprofit collaborations to meet needs there.

NEAT[©]: OVERVIEW

The Nine Elements Assessment Tool (NEAT[©]) is an evidence-based system that helps organizations assess and develop their organizational capacity. NEAT[©] enables leaders to identify the organization’s developmental needs and to establish realistic goals. Organizational leaders can then use this information to cultivate the resources they need to achieve these goals.

As an evidence-based system, NEAT[©] utilizes trained consultants who conduct an assessment of the organization. This process involves a review of documents, as well as a site visit during which the consultant interviews the organization’s Executive Director and appropriate staff members.

A set of indicators defines competency across Nine Elements of Organizational Capacity identified by CAMs as essential to their mission (Figure 1). These indicators guide the assessment process for all but the Executive Director Leadership element. The indicators listed for the Executive Director Leadership element are not measures and they are not used to assess capacity or performance. Instead, the indicators are designed to help the Executive Director think about leadership qualities in terms of their own professional goals. The Executive Director is then provided an opportunity to work with the consultant to develop a goal plan.

Nine Elements of Organizational Capacity

- Board Leadership
- Human Resources
(Paid Staff and Volunteer)
- Financial Management
- Fund Development
- Program Strategies and Outcomes
- Community Relationships
- Technology
- Facilities
- Executive Director Leadership

Figure 1

Development of the NEAT[©] System

The NEAT[©] system was developed specifically for Community Assistance Ministries (CAM) by a committee of CAM Executive Directors.

The NEAT[©] system was developed specifically for Community Assistance Ministries (CAM) by a committee of CAM Executive Directors. Before developing the system, the Nine Elements Development Committee agreed to a set of principles that would guide the design process. These design principles (listed below) established common goals and expectations that the committee used to develop the NEAT[©] model, identify appropriate indicators and measures, and evaluate drafts of the NEAT[©] instruments.

Nine Elements Assessment Tool: Principles and Design Guidelines

1. The Nine Elements assessment tool must be appropriate and relevant for ACAM members and sensitive to variations in member organizations' age, budget, structure, and/or programs.
2. The Nine Elements assessment system will be evidence-based and encourage CAMs to identify organizational improvements that will help expand their ability to fulfill their mission.
3. The Nine Elements system will define a method of identifying levels of and demonstrating achievements in organizational capacity.
4. The Nine Elements system will draw upon capacity building research, and where it is appropriate and beneficial, the Nine Element Development Committee will seek necessary approvals to borrow from existing Capacity Building tools, including relevant CapMap[®] stages and indicators.
5. The Nine Elements system will include performance criteria for Affiliate and Collaborating membership categories.
6. The Nine Elements system should encourage CAM leaders to think of capacity building as a long-term, ongoing process and include educational tools that will help leaders avoid unrealistic expectations.
7. The Nine Elements assessment process must utilize efficient measurements and methods to assess a CAM's initial capacity level and subsequent changes.
8. The language used to describe the Nine Elements, explain verification tests, and identify indicators should be sufficiently broad to allow the evaluator to consider the organizational context of the CAM being evaluated.
9. The Nine Elements system should include a companion document that will help CAMs prepare for initial and follow-up assessments.
10. The Nine Elements system will include forms and processes that promote efficiency, demonstrate professionalism, and help communicate results to stakeholders.

THE NEAT[©] EVALUATION MODEL

The Nine Elements Evaluation Model is designed to help each ACAM member achieve its strategic goals, as well as assess its organizational capacity. Rather than successive stages of development, the model encourages organizations to focus on capacity building goals that are relevant to their specific needs. To achieve this, the model provides an evaluation tool for each Element that is composed of two components: 1) Dimensions, which summarize the core competencies for that Element; and 2) Organizational Development Phases that identify levels of capacity. These two components, discussed below, are the framework for the Nine Elements Evaluation Model.

Dimensions

The model for each of the Nine Elements is composed of three Dimensions. These Dimensions summarize the critical competencies organizations should develop to excel in that Element. For example, the three Dimensions that demonstrate competency for the Technology element are: Technical Resources, Technology Management, and Information Management (Figure 2).

The Dimensions that comprise an Element are each equally important. In other words, Dimensions are not hierarchical and they do not represent progressive steps toward building organizational capacity. An organization may choose to focus on building capacity in any Dimension, or work on multiple Dimensions simultaneously.

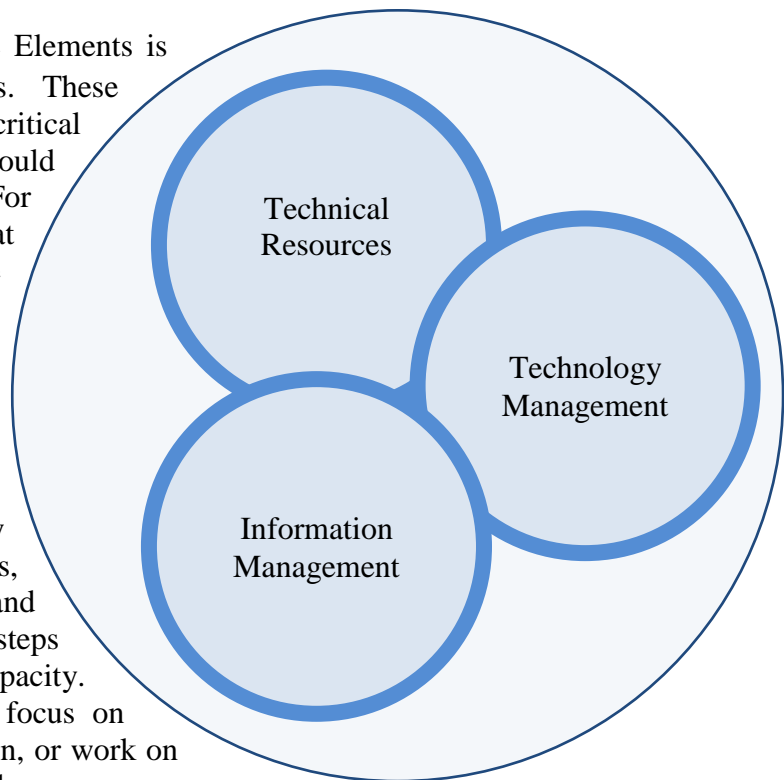


Figure 2. Technology Dimensions

Organizational Development Phases

The instruments for each of the Nine Elements include specific indicators that assess, and identify goals for improving, organizational capacity in each Dimension. These

indicators define performance levels for each Dimension based on three Organizational Development Phases (Figure 3):

- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** This phase helps build the organization’s foundation, the fundamental structure and processes needed to be legally compliant and to operate its programs.
- **GROWTH:** This is an expansion phase in which the organization continues to develop and build on the foundation established during the Infrastructure phase.
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** This phase defines the ideal, a high-performing organization that responds to opportunities and challenges.

Within each Element, an organization may achieve different phases across the three Dimensions. For example, an organization may be operating at the Infrastructure phase in one dimension, but the Growth phase in another.

Figure 3. Nine Elements Assessment Model

Development Phase	Dimension I Indicators	Dimension II Indicators	Dimension III Indicators
Infrastructure			
Growth			
Sustainability			

ACAM Membership Requirements

With over seven years of capacity building experience, ACAM has learned that organizations must achieve a minimum level of capacity before they can successfully engage in sophisticated capacity building strategies. As the foundation of ACAM’s Capacity Building Program, the NEAT[®] system includes criteria that helps define 1) an organization’s eligibility to join ACAM and 2) the requirements for ACAM’s two membership categories, Affiliate and Collaborating (Figure 4).

- **AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP:** Eligible organizations join ACAM as Affiliate Members. One prerequisite for joining is that organizations meet all criteria in the Infrastructure Development Phase that are identified as a Membership Requirement. These

indicators are designed to ensure that new members have the organizational resources and support they will need to participate in and benefit from ACAM’s programs. To remain an ACAM member, an organization must maintain all Membership Requirements defined by NEAT.

- **COLLABORATING MEMBERSHIP:** To become a collaborating member, an organization must complete 100% of the Infrastructure Development Phase indicators defined in the NEAT[®] system. To retain Collaborating Member status, an organization must continue to fulfill all indicators of the Infrastructure Development Phase in subsequent NEAT[®] reviews.

Collaborating Members Prior to 2012

Prior to 2012, requirements for becoming a Collaborating Member included completing stages 1-3 in four modules of the organizational capacity assessment tool, CapMap[®]. NEAT[®] includes some indicators that are in stages 1-3 of CapMap[®], but there are many new indicators as well. Therefore, CAMs listed as Collaborating Members at the time of their first NEAT[®] review will be given one year to complete items in the Infrastructure Development Phase that are not outlined in CapMap[®] stages 1-3 before their Collaborating Member status will be affected.

Figure 4. Nine Elements Assessment Model and Membership Status

Membership Status	Organizational Development Phase	Dimension 1 Indicators	Dimension 2 Indicators	Dimension 3 Indicators
Affiliate	Infrastructure (Membership Requirement)			
	Infrastructure			
Collaborating	Growth			
	Sustainability			

THE NINE ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

This summary provides an overview of the Nine Elements and their Dimensions. For each of the Nine Elements, an introductory statement describes the overarching goals for achieving capacity in that area. A brief summary of the Dimensions and the competencies that organizations should develop to excel in that area are then discussed.

Board Leadership

The capacity indicators for this element outline characteristics of effective boards and strategies for developing these qualities.

COMPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The board adheres to an up-to-date set of bylaws and governance policies so that it is in compliance with legal and ethical requirements. Targeted recruitment of new board members and board development strategies ensure that the board continually enhances its effectiveness.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The board actively pursues its responsibilities including overseeing the organization's financial status, supporting its fund development efforts, and working to enhance the organization's public image.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The board is familiar with the organization's mission and reviews the nonprofit's progress against established goals.

Human Resources

Volunteers are vital to nonprofits; therefore this element has two distinct sets of indicators, one related to managing and developing Paid Staff and another set for operating a Volunteer program that furthers the organization's mission. Both sets of indicators identify critical policies for reducing risk and strategies for developing and sustaining an effective team.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Paid staff and volunteers are familiar with organizational policies that protect the nonprofit's legal standing and assets.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Paid staff and volunteers receive the training and guidance they need to perform their responsibilities. Responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated. Compensation strategies are designed to help recruit and retain paid staff, and the organization uses a variety of strategies to recruit and recognize volunteers.

HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

The organization prepares for unplanned vacancies and manages staff transitions to ensure that the organization is able to fulfill its mission and strategic initiatives. The nonprofit also effectively utilizes its volunteer program to strengthen relationships with the community and partnering organizations.

Financial Management

This element identifies requirements for a financial management system that is legally compliant and one that ensures leaders are able to monitor and plan for the organization's long-term financial health.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The organization complies with policies for tax-exempt organizations. Financial audits and internal controls guard against risks to the organization's legal standing and financial stability.

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

The organization's financial management system is able to produce the reports and analyses needed to monitor financial performance and support decision-making. The leadership uses these tools to review revenues and expenses, program budgets, cost allocations, and future financial needs.

PERFORMANCE

Leadership oversees the organization's financial performance to ensure that 1) its overhead and service costs are reasonable, 2) it has adequate operating funds, and 3) it adequately plans for future capital expenses.

Fund Development

This element outlines components of an effective fund development plan that ensures a diversified funding base, targeted fund raising strategies, and ethical practices.

STABILITY

The organization is not overly dependent on any one funding source and obtains funding from multiple categories, such as private foundations, government grants, corporations, and individual donors.

PLANNING

The organization maintains a formal Fund Development Plan that outlines its goals and

strategies. Organizational leaders use this plan to develop and maintain a strong donor base.

ETHICS

The organization's leadership articulates a clear and authentic vision of its mission and programs. Fundraising is conducted in an ethical manner that protects the rights and privacy of both donors and clients.

Program Strategies and Outcomes

Indicators for this element outline practices that ensure an organization continues to monitor its programs and adapt to community needs. The element emphasizes evaluating client outcomes and using this data to improve internal programs and to disseminate information that can help improve the service sector.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The organization's programs are consistent with its mission and resources. Leaders review and successfully adapt the organization's mission and/or programs to increase its social impact, address internal and external challenges, respond to opportunities, and meet emerging needs.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

The organization develops resources and strategies that ensure its ability to effectively reach and serve its targeted population.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Leadership supports and is knowledgeable about program evaluation. Evaluation tools and methods are used to assess the efficiency of its programs and to determine client outcomes. This information is used to modify its program services, processes, and policies as necessary.

Community Relationships

This element outlines criteria to ensure the organization is a prominent stakeholder in the community and that it expands its impact through collaborative relationships and education on issues that impact clients.

COMMUNICATION

The organization uses effective marketing strategies to establish its identity and increase its visibility. A formal Communication Plan defines methods and responsibilities for ongoing communication needs, key initiatives, and managing the flow of information during a crisis.

COLLABORATION

The organization develops collaborative relationships to expand its capacity to fulfill its mission. The parameters of these collaborations are formally defined and their

effectiveness is reviewed to verify and communicate their impact.

EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The organization uses its resources and expertise to inform stakeholders about clients' needs and issues that impact the community.

Technology

The capacity indicators for this element ensure that the organization obtains and manages the technical resources it needs and that it uses these resources to disseminate information and facilitate decision-making.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

The organization's technical resources, such as its phone system and computer system, ensure that staff is able to effectively carry out the daily mission of the organization. The organization periodically analyzes its needs and technical infrastructure to secure necessary equipment and software.

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

The organization utilizes staff training, procedures, and policies to ensure its technical systems and data are secure.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Procedures and policies promote data integrity and protect the confidentiality of client and employee data. The information system is sufficiently flexible to generate client service statistics. Leaders utilize customized reports to monitor organizational goals and support strategic planning.

Facilities

This element outlines criteria for ensuring that the organization's facilities support the nonprofit's mission and programs and offer a safe, professional, and inviting environment for staff and clients.

WORKSPACE

The organization operates in a space that is sufficient and appropriate for its programs and that can accommodate collaborative activities. Organizational leaders monitor accessibility issues and changing workspace requirements.

SAFETY

The organization has an emergency evacuation plan and utilizes policies and procedures to prevent workplace violence. The organization assesses hazards and risk factors and implements appropriate measures.

ENVIRONMENT

The facilities are clean, orderly, and well-maintained, and the public spaces are designed to accommodate the needs of clients and visitors.

Executive Director Leadership

The Executive Director leads the organization to 1) sustain a positive work environment with high performance standards, 2) establish and achieve measurable objectives, and 3) secure the resources necessary to achieve its long-term vision.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The Executive Director manages workplace conflicts and maintains open lines of communication with staff. There is an esprit de corps among paid and volunteer staff members.

MANAGEMENT

The Executive Director is appropriately familiar with day-to-day operations and provides the leadership necessary for the organization to establish and achieve performance goals. The Executive Director surrounds him/herself with a strong team and encourages employees to pursue professional goals.

COMPETENCIES

The Executive Director is well-informed about the financial status of the organization, knowledgeable about the community that the nonprofit serves, and familiar with best practices related to the organization's core services. The Executive Director is not risk averse and articulates a clear vision for the organization.

The following table provides a condensed view of the Nine Elements of Organizational Capacity. For a complete list of the competency indicators used to assess organizational capacity see the *NEAT[®] Site Visit Checklist*.

Table 1. Nine Elements: Dimensions and Competencies

ELEMENT	DIMENSIONS AND COMPETENCIES		
Board Leadership	Composition and Development	Roles and Responsibilities	Strategic Direction
The organization has a capable, well-organized board continually engaged in leadership development. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities ensure that board members actively support the organization’s mission and oversee its strategic direction.			
Human Resources	Policies and Procedures	HR Management	HR Planning
The organization’s Human Resource policies and strategies: 1) are fair and legally compliant, 2) ensure that the nonprofit has a professional, highly motivated paid and volunteer staff, and 3) systematically support the organization’s mission and strategic plan.			
Financial Management	Policies and Procedures	Reporting and Analysis	Performance
The organization’s financial management system is legally compliant and provides leaders with the information they need to monitor and plan for the nonprofit’s long-term financial health.			
Fund Development	Stability	Planning	Ethics
The organization has a long-term development plan that is based on truthfulness and responsible stewardship, measurable goals, and a diversified funding base.			
Program Strategies & Outcomes	Program Development	Program Delivery	Program Evaluation
The organization continually reviews and evaluates its programs to ensure that they are mission-focused, efficient, and effective.			
Community Relationships	Communication	Collaboration	Education and Involvement
The organization is a prominent stakeholder in the community that expands its social impact through collaborative relationships and continued involvement in issues that affect the clients it serves.			
Technology	Technical Resources	Technology Management	Information Management
The organization manages its technical resources to maximize their value and uses these resources to disseminate information and facilitate decision-making.			
Facilities	Workspace	Safety	Environment
The organization’s facilities support the nonprofit’s mission and programs and offer a safe, professional, and inviting environment for its staff and clients.			
Executive Director Leadership	Organizational Culture	Performance Management	Competencies
The Executive Director leads the organization to: 1) sustain a positive work environment with high performance standards, 2) establish and achieve measurable objectives, and 3) secure the resources necessary to achieve its long-term vision.			

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING NEAT[®]

The following information guides consultants and nonprofits in using the NEAT[®] system to assess organizational capacity. These instructions describe the following steps in the process:

- 1) How organizations prepare for the document review and the consultant's site visit
- 2) What takes place during the site visit
- 3) The final report provided to the Executive Director and ACAM after the assessment is completed
- 4) The Executive Director goal planning process

Site Visit Preparation

A significant portion of the capacity assessment actually takes place prior to the consultant's visit. This is done through a review of documents that the organization provides the consultant beforehand. By reviewing these materials in advance, the consultant will be familiar with the organization and the site visit will be efficient and focused.

The NEAT[®] system includes the **SITE VISIT CHECKLIST**, a worksheet that outlines the documents used in the assessment as well as other helpful information related to the site visit.

The **SITE VISIT CHECKLIST** includes:

- 1) **The indicators the consultant will use to assess the organization's capacity in eight of the nine elements.** As previously mentioned, the Executive Director Leadership element uses a different process that is discussed below in the *Executive Director Leadership Element* section.
- 2) **The documents that are required to fulfill an indicator.** *It is not necessary to provide the consultants with duplicate copies of any document.* For example, a set of Board Meeting Minutes is listed as a required document in several places, but organizations should only provide one set.
- 3) **An explanation for how each required document is to be prepared and reviewed.** Required documents are categorized based on how they are provided to the consultant. The following four codes on the checklist indicate the preparation and review category for each document:

PRIOR: Required documents with this code are provided to the consultant in advance of the site visit. These documents may be submitted to the consultant electronically or as hard-copies, whichever is most convenient for the organization. The consultant and organization should arrange the schedule and manner of delivery.

ON-SITE: Some required documents can only be reviewed on-site due to their size, format, or confidential nature. Employee records are an example of an on-site document. These documents and materials should be available during the site visit.

PRIOR/ON-SITE: These documents may be provided either prior to or at the site visit, whichever the organization prefers.

ON FILE: These required documents are provided during the organization's first Nine Elements assessment. For subsequent assessments, the organization will only be asked to provide the document again if it has been revised.

- 4) **Examples of alternative documents your organization might use to demonstrate capacity for some indicators.** These materials are not required and should not be used in place of required documents.
- 5) **A suggested list of staff members to be interviewed by the consultant.** Some capacity indicators do not require documents and are generally assessed through an interview. For these indicators, the Site Visit Checklist provides suggestions of who might be appropriate for the interview but the Executive Director may select interviewees based on organizational structure.
- 6) **A place for comments.** The checklist provides a column for Executive Directors to provide information to staff who assist with site visit preparations or to the consultant.

Site Visit

Dialogue is the primary objective of the site visit. The process provides an opportunity for organizational leaders and the consultant to explore what the organization is doing and discuss what challenges lie ahead.

Dialogue is the primary objective of the site visit. The process provides an opportunity for organizational leaders and the consultant to explore what the organization is doing and discuss what challenges lie ahead.

Two overarching questions should guide the discussion of each element:

- 1) Where does your organization need to build capacity now?
- 2) What re-engineering do you anticipate your organization will need to maintain capacity?

The NEAT[®] system provides a framework

for assessing organizational capacity, but the site visit is also an opportunity to discuss strategies and capacity gaps that NEAT[®] does not explicitly address. This ensures that new and promising strategies are shared, rather than just relying on what has been done in the past. It also provides an opportunity for organizations to highlight capacity needs not covered by NEAT.

The site visit includes interviews with the Executive Director and appropriate staff members. Prior to the site visit the consultant will contact the Executive Director to discuss who among the staff should be included in these interviews and to coordinate a schedule that is convenient for the organization.

It is estimated that approximately 45 minutes per element will be needed to complete the interviews and on-site document review.

Final Report

After the document review and site visit, the consultant prepares the Nine Elements Final Report. This report is submitted to the Executive Director and ACAM. The consultant also meets with the Executive Director to discuss the report.

The Final Report has four components (described below): Executive Summary, Summary Notes, Detail Assessment Results, and Final Report Statistics. The report is formatted in a way that allows Executive Directors to distribute summary sections to stakeholders, such as board members and funders, without disclosing sensitive information.

Executive Summary

This is a one-page, overall summary that includes a discussion of the organization's strengths, as well as recommendations for the leadership to consider regarding capacity building needs and goals.

Summary Notes

In this section, the consultant provides greater detail about the site visit with a brief discussion for each element of the organization's current capacity and developmental goals. The summary notes may also provide information about important factors, such as documents or interview materials that were used in the verification process.

Detail Assessment Results

This section is composed of a series of tables that include the indicators for each element. The consultant reports whether or not the organization has completed each indicator based on four response options:

- **YES** (The indicator is complete)
- **NO** (The organization has not completed the indicator)
- **NOT APPLICABLE** (The indicator does not apply to the organization. This determination is made through evidence provided at the site visit.)
- **TO BE DETERMINED** (The verification process has not been finalized)

A summary tally of these responses is provided for each element.

Final Report Statistics

The NEAT[®] system provides a means for quantifying changes to an organization’s capacity. These statistics are *not* interpreted as scores. Their primary use is to help ACAM demonstrate results to the funding community. The Final Report Statistics section includes 1) statistics for each element and 2) an overall total for the eight elements included in the analysis. (No statistics are computed for the Executive Director Leadership element.)

Executive Director Leadership Element

The assessment and management of an Executive Director’s performance is, and should remain, a confidential process between the Executive Director and the organization’s Board of Directors. Therefore, the Executive Director Leadership instrument is designed to facilitate discussion

...the Executive Director Leadership instrument is designed to facilitate discussion between the Executive Director and the consultant, not as an assessment tool.

between the Executive Director and the consultant, not as an assessment tool.

This consulting time is offered as a benefit to the Executive Director to help identify his or her professional goals and to develop a realistic plan for achieving them. The NEAT[®] system includes a brief Leadership Discussion Guide to help facilitate this process; however, the Executive Director may choose to focus the discussion around other resources, such as his or her own performance review or the organization’s strategic plan.

During the initial site visit, the consultant will offer to meet on a future date with the Executive Director to discuss his or her goals. This consulting session will most likely take place at the same time that the Final Report is discussed.

The consulting session is optional for the Executive Director. If scheduled, the meeting should last no more than 90 minutes. After the discussion, the consultant will produce a copy of the Executive Director’s goal plan for his or her use. The consultant will also submit a copy of the goal plan to ACAM, which will be used to help develop training resources and programs.

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Organizational Capacity Assessment Tools and Other Helpful Resources

Alliance for Nonprofit Management, www.allianceonline.org

Capacity and Performance Standards for Community Development Corporations
Available at <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/housingdevelopment/>

CapMap[®]: A Capacity Mapping Resource developed by Local Initiative Support Corps (LISC), www.lisc.org

Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool. Available at http://www.caseygrants.org/pages/resources/resources_downloadassessment.asp

Free Management LibrarySM, www.managementhelp.org

Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) developed by McKinsey & Company
The Capacity Assessment Grid is available at <http://www.vppartners.org/sites/default/files/reports/assessment.pdf>

Social Venture Partners Seattle Capacity Assessment Tool. Available at <http://www.svpseattle.org/what-we-do/news-events/reports-research-and-tools-1/organization-capacity-assessment-tool/view>

United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast, Agency Self-Assessment, a program of the United Way Management Assistance Program, www.unitedwayhouston.org