



**Northeast Institute for Quality
Community Action
Best Practice Chalk Board**



Who Selects and Elects Your Public Sector Directors?

The “Your Town” Community Action Agency has been waiting for over a year for the Mayor to appoint a representative(s) to serve on the Board. The agency’s Bylaws specify that one or more seats on the Board will be filled by the Mayor. Repeated efforts to contact the Mayor about the appointment have only produced frustration and resignation. The long standing vacancy is jeopardizing “Your Town’s” compliance with the CSBG tripartite Board requirement and a State monitoring visit is scheduled next month.

What can be done to address or, more importantly prevent, situations where Community Action Agency Boards are dependent on external parties to fill Board vacancies?

1. Remember that the federal CSBG statute clearly states that CAA Board members “shall be selected by the entity.” The “Your Town” CAA Bylaws should specify that the agency’s Board elects each prospective Director after s/he is chosen through the selection process appropriate for his/her sector of the Board and, if prospective Directors do not meet certain basic selection criteria, the Board reserves the right not to elect the person to serve of the Board. This makes the Board ultimately responsible for the selection and election of its members.
2. Agency Bylaw language may be changed to provide more flexibility in recruiting Elected Public Officials representatives. Instead of specifying that Public Sector Director members must be designated or filled by specific public officials, simply state that....”That one-third of the Directors shall be elected public officials, selected by the (agency’s) Board and currently holding public office, or representatives of such elected officials, except that if the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the membership of the Board, the (agency) may select appointed public officials who may in turn select representatives in order to meet this on-third requirement.
3. Finally, establish a transparent screening/vetting process for all new Board members to assure compliance with CSBG requirements as well as legal and ethical standards of behavior.

Community Action Agencies have both the authority and responsibility to select and maintain diverse, active and knowledgeable governing Board’s that both meet CSBG requirements and are dedicated to achieving the mission of community action.