

2022/2023  
Community Needs Assessment and Community  
Action Plan

**DRAFT MAY 22, 2021**

California Department of  
Community Services and Development

Community Services Block Grant



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## Checklist

- Cover Page and Certification**
- Public Hearing(s)**

### Part I: Community Needs Assessment

- Narrative**
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## Cover Page and Certification

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>North Coast Opportunities, Inc. (NCO)</b>
<b>Name of CAP Contact</b>	<b>Patty Bruder</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>
<b>Phone</b>	<b>707-462-1956</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>pbruder@ncoinc.org</b>

**CNA Completed MM/DD/YYYY:**  
(Organizational Standard 3.1)

2/28/2021

### Board and Agency Certification

The undersigned hereby certifies that this agency complies with the Federal CSBG Programmatic and State Assurances as outlined in the CSBG Act and California Government Code, respectively for services provided under the Federal Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Community Action Plan. The undersigned further certifies the information in this Community Needs Assessment and the Community Action Plan is correct and has been authorized by the governing body of this organization. (Organizational Standard 3.5)

<b>Tami Bartolomei</b>		
<b>Board Chair (printed name)</b>	<b>Board Chair (signature)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Patty Bruder</b>		
<b>Executive Director (printed name)</b>	<b>Executive Director (signature)</b>	<b>Date</b>

### Certification of ROMA Trainer/Implementer (If applicable)

The undersigned hereby certifies that this agency's Community Action Plan and strategic plan documents the continuous use of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation).

<b>NCO does not have a certified ROMA trainer at this time.</b>		
<b>NCRT/NCRI (printed name)</b>	<b>NCRT/NCRI (signature)</b>	<b>Date</b>

### CSD Use Only

Dates CAP (Parts I & II)		Accepted By
Received	Accepted	

## Public Hearing

### State Statute Requirements

As required by California Government Code Section 12747(b)-(d), agencies are required to conduct a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing the draft CAP. All testimony presented by low-income individuals and families during the public hearing shall be identified in the final CAP. Agencies shall indicate whether or not the concerns expressed by low-income individuals and families have been addressed. If an agency determines that any of the concerns have not been addressed in the CAP, the agency shall include in its response document, information about the concerns and comment as to their validity.

### Public Hearing Report

Date(s) of Public Hearing(s)	
Location(s) of Public Hearing(s)	
Dates of the Comment Period(s)	
Where was the Notice of Public Hearing published? (agency website, newspaper, social media channels)	
Date the Notice(s) of Public Hearing(s) was published	
Number of Attendees at the Public Hearing(s) (Approximately)	

## Part I: Community Needs Assessment

### Community Needs Assessment Narrative

CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(3)(C), 676(b)(9)

Organizational Standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 State Plan

<p>1. How did the agency share the CAP, including the CNA, with the community, stakeholders, partner organizations? (Check all that apply.)</p>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The agency’s website</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic reports were sent on request</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social media channels</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Posted on the agency’s Facebook page</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Printed copies were distributed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>
<p>2. Describe how your agency collected and included current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for your service area. (Organizational Standard 3.2, State Plan)</p>	
<p>NCO worked in collaboration with community partners to complete Community Health Needs Assessments using the following strategies:</p> <p><b>Focus Groups.</b> In Lake County, five focus groups were held with a total of 31 low-income participants. Each focus group was recorded, transcribed to capture the verbatim conversation, and analyzed using a qualitative analysis program. In Mendocino County, NCO also identified needs through its disaster case management process, which served hundreds of fire survivors and families experiencing hardships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>Surveys.</b> Healthy Mendocino worked with community partners to collect 1,324 surveys (1,276 in English and 48 in Spanish). In Lake County, 674 individuals responded to community surveys, which were also available in both Spanish and English.</p> <p><b>Community Forums.</b> Five community forums were held in communities throughout Lake County as part of the assessment process, while Healthy Mendocino held 23 listening tours with agencies and groups in Mendocino County to inform the assessment process. At each site, participants were asked to describe major barriers to health and wellness, gaps in care and prevention, and support needed to address the barriers, as well as questions about resources and programs that are working well. In 2020, virtual forums organized by Healthy Mendocino were convened to assess needs related to specific topics, including: Social Services and Vulnerable Populations (June 2020, 43 participants); Workforce and Economy (June 2020, 40 participants); Community Connection and Resiliency (July 2020, 48 participants); and Diversity, Equity, and</p>	

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Inclusion (December 2020, 64 participants). In addition, the Healthy Mendocino Roundtable met three times (September 2020, December 2020, and March 2021), with discussions focused on social determinants of health, structural racism, shelter-in-place burnout, and recovery from the pandemic.

**Community Conversations.** NCO's Leadership Mendocino hosted 16 informal conversations with a range of community sectors (e.g., first responders, local business, local government, youth, social support, employment development, hospitality, education). This assessment effort was initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which precluded NCO from carrying out the 2020 in-person Leadership Program. In all, 65 individuals participated in the conversations, which were streamed live on Facebook and rebroadcast on local public radio station KZYX&Z.

**Interviews.** Lake County conducted 10 interviews with key stakeholders with expertise in public health or special knowledge of community health needs. In Mendocino County, interviews were conducted with 90 key stakeholders representing community-based organizations, nonprofits, local government, tribal entities, education, health care, law enforcement, private business, agriculture, health and human services, and community members.

**People Helping People Case Management.** Throughout 2020, NCO case managers provided assessment and support to families experiencing economic and other challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The case management process enabled NCO to identify emerging needs and develop responsive programming. For example, NCO's MendoLake Food Hub contracted with USDA and other entities to pack and distribute food boxes to families who were going hungry and/or feared going grocery shopping because of their at-risk status.

**Public Records.** Data on a wide range of topics were extracted from public databases, reports, and other records, as detailed in the response to Question 4 below.

3. Describe the geographic location(s) that your agency is funded to serve. If applicable, include a description of the various pockets, high-need areas, or neighborhoods of poverty that are being served by your agency.

North Coast Opportunities (NCO) is the Community Action Agency for Lake and Mendocino Counties in rural Northern California. The two-county area is home to 151,135<sup>1</sup> people and covers 4,763 square miles of

<sup>1</sup> US Census, American Community Survey One-Year Estimates 2019.

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mostly mountainous terrain. In terms of geographical size, the area is nearly as large as the state of Connecticut, although in population density it is closer to the state of Nevada. The California Department of Finance projects minimal growth over the next twenty years, with an anticipated population of 153,503 in 2041.<sup>2</sup>

Lake County's 64,386 residents occupy an area of 1,257 square miles, with a population density of 51 persons per square mile. Approximately 30% of Lake County residents live in the cities of Clearlake and Lakeport, while the remainder live in unincorporated communities and other parts of the county. The county is about 100 miles long by about 50 miles wide, with Clear Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake in California, at its center. The county is surrounded by mountain ranges and bordered by Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa, and Colusa counties. Lake County's rugged rural geography, winding two-lane roads, and widely-separated towns limit access to services, including health care, social support, employment, and recreation.

Mendocino County lies on the Pacific coast 100 miles north of San Francisco. Humboldt, Trinity, Tehama, Glenn, Lake, and Sonoma Counties encircle the county to the north, east, and south. Mendocino County's vineyard-covered hillsides, towering redwoods, deep fertile valleys, and rugged mountains cover 3,506 square miles, only 3% of which is flat. Although Mendocino County is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest of California's 58 counties, its 86,749 residents represent less than one-quarter of one percent of the state population. Mendocino County is equal in size to the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined but has a population density of only 25 persons/square mile, compared with the statewide population density of 249 persons per square mile.

The area continues to grow increasingly diverse. While both counties are primarily white/non-Hispanic, Hispanics represent 20.6% of the Lake County population and 25.8% of Mendocino County residents. Both counties also have significant American Indian populations—5.6% in Lake County and 7.7% in Mendocino County.<sup>3</sup> The area's increasing diversity is reflected in local kindergarten classes, where 41.5% of 2020-2021 Lake County and 45.8% of Mendocino County students are Hispanic.<sup>4</sup> Lake County's Hispanic population is

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<sup>2</sup> California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit Estimates, Table P2A.

<sup>3</sup> US Census, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019.

<sup>4</sup> California Department of Education (<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>).

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projected to reach 15,781 (24%) by 2041; in Mendocino County, the Hispanic population is projected to rise to 26,091 (29%) by 2040.<sup>5</sup>

In Lake County, 22.3% of residents are age 65 or older and 21.2% of Mendocino County residents are in the senior age group, compared with 14.8% statewide. The California Department of Finance has projected that the older age population will increase slightly over the next 20 years—by 2041, seniors age 65 and up will number 35,247, almost one-quarter of the population.<sup>6</sup>

The scenic beauty of the area belies the realities of life faced by many residents. According to the US Census, the poverty rate is 18.6% in Lake County and 13.4% in Mendocino County, compared with 13.4% statewide. Among Lake County's female-headed families with children of any age, the poverty rate is 43.1% and it is 42.8% in female-headed families where the children are under the age of 5 (compared with 35.6% statewide). In Mendocino County, the rates are 33.5% for female-headed families with children of any age and 37.6% for female-headed families with children under the age of 5. Lake County's median household income is \$47,044 (62.5% of the statewide median of \$75,235) and Mendocino County's median is \$62,483 (83.1%).<sup>7</sup>

On the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Rankings website for 2021,<sup>8</sup> Lake County is ranked among the least healthy counties in California (lowest quartile in terms of both health outcomes), lower than all but one of the state's 58 counties, and health factors (lower than all but 11 counties). In Mendocino County, health outcome rankings are higher, but far from stellar. Mendocino County's ranking of 41 in overall health outcomes places it lower than 40 counties.

Lake and Mendocino County have experienced changes over decades that have impacted local poverty, including devastating wildfires that have occurred over the past five years. Since the summer of 2015, ten major wildfires have devastated more than half of Lake County's 1,256 square miles as well as significant portions of Mendocino County, destroying some 3,000 homes and other structures and wreaking havoc on individuals, families, businesses, and communities. Over the past five years, more than half of Lake County's land area has been scorched by wildfires.

<sup>5</sup> California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit Projections, Table P2A and P2D.

<sup>6</sup> California Dept. of Finance, Demographic Research Unit Projections, Table P2B.

<sup>7</sup> US Census, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings, 2021 ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)).

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Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic early last year, Lake County has reported 3,481 positive COVID-19 cases of which 1,287 (41.8%) were Hispanic and 166 (5.4%) were Native American. The ethnicity of an additional 11% of positive cases is unknown. It has been well documented statewide and nationally that COVID-19 testing methodologies have failed to accurately capture data that would accurately identify tribal affiliations for Native Americans. To date, Mendocino County has reported 4,147 positive COVID-19 cases of which 2,026 (48.8%) were Hispanic and 282 (6.8%) were Native American. The ethnicity of an additional 9.7% of positive cases is unknown. Beyond the impact experienced by those infected with the disease, the pandemic has impacted low-income families economically and socially, with many experiencing job losses, food shortages, and other losses.

4. Indicate from which sources your agency collected and analyzed quantitative data for the CNA. (Check all that apply.) (Organizational Standard 3.3)

#### Federal Government/National Data Sets

- Census Bureau
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Department of Housing & Urban Development
- Department of Health & Human Services
- National Low-Income Housing Coalition
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Other online data resources
- Other

#### California State Data Sets

- Employment Development Department
- Department of Education
- Department of Public Health
- Attorney General
- Department of Finance
- State Covid-19 Data
- Other

#### Surveys

- Clients
- Partners and other service providers
- General public
- Staff
- Board members

#### Local Data Sets

- Local crime statistics
- High school graduation rate
- School district school readiness
- Local employers
- Local labor market
- Childcare providers
- Public benefits usage
- County Public Health Department
- Other

#### Agency Data Sets

- Client demographics
- Service data
- CSBG Annual Report
- Client satisfaction data
- Other

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- Private sector
- Public sector
- Educational institutions

5. If you selected "Other" in any of the data sets in Question 4, list the additional sources.

NOT APPLICABLE

6. Indicate the approaches your agency took to gather qualitative data for the CNA. (Check all that apply.) (Organizational Standard 3.3)

**Surveys**

- Clients
- Partners and other service providers
- General public
- Staff
- Board members
- Private sector
- Public sector
- Educational institutions

**Focus Groups**

- Local leaders
- Elected officials
- Partner organizations' leadership
- Board members
- New and potential partners
- Clients
- Staff

**Interviews**

- Local leaders
- Elected officials
- Partner organizations' leadership
- Board members
- New and potential partners
- Clients

**Community Forums**

**Asset Mapping**

**Other**

7. If you selected "Other" in Question 6, please list the additional approaches your agency took to gather qualitative data.

NOT APPLICABLE

8. Describe your agency's analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected from low-income individuals and families. Include a description of the data collected. (Organizational Standards 1.1, 1.2, 3.3; State Plan)

Each NCO programs develops its own systems and processes to ensure that programs are informed by customer input. For example, some programs conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys, while others gather input from a consumer advisory board. Data collected from low-income individuals are not managed

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differently from data collected from the general public. For example, community surveys are collected from the broadest possible audience, including low-income individuals, and low-income individuals participated in all CNA data collection activities (e.g., surveys, focus groups, community forums, interviews). Efforts to ensure the participation of low-income individuals in these processes include broad outreach through newspaper and radio PSAs, email blasts, social media posts, and direct outreach by partners to their constituents. On the community surveys, respondents were asked for their income levels, which enabled data disaggregation. However, the data analysis did not find significant differences in the needs identified by low-income people compared to needs identified by the general population.

9. Summarize the data gathered from each sector of the community listed below and detail how your agency used the information to assess needs and resources in your agency's service area(s). Your agency must demonstrate that each sector was included in the needs assessment; A response for each sector is required. (CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(3)(C), 676(b)(9); Organizational Standard 2.2; State Plan)

#### **ALL SECTORS:**

NCO worked with partners to conduct the community assessment process through a variety of strategies. While the assessment strategies reached all sectors of the community, partners did not seek to collect data separately by sector. For example, assessments did not isolate data from the public sector from data collected from faith-based organizations, although both were included in the process. The assessment used as large a net as possible, so that information was gathered from all sectors, and specific sectors were not targeted by sector. Representatives of each sector assisted by distributing and collecting surveys from members of their sector, and members of each sector also participated in key informant interviews, community forums, and focus groups.

Examples include the community surveys conducted in each county, and the community forums held as part of the community needs assessment process. Partners representing specific sectors of the community were tasked with reaching out to their clients and constituents to ensure that their input was included in the process. The collaborative groups in which NCO participates have been developed to include broad community representation.

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10. “Causes of poverty” are the negative factors that create or foster barriers to self-sufficiency and/or reduce access to resources in communities in which low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the causes of poverty in your agency’s service area(s). (Organizational Standard 3.4, State Plan)

In general, causes of poverty in Lake and Mendocino Counties are similar to conditions associated with poverty in other communities (e.g., multi-generational drug and alcohol use, unemployment, housing instability and homelessness, inadequate access to health services, domestic abuse, mental illness, inadequate access to nutritious food, inadequate availability of early education, youth development, and higher education opportunities). NCO works tirelessly to address and alleviate poverty, but does not anticipate that its efforts will resolve structural causes of poverty during the coming year. Please see attached Lake and Mendocino Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) for further discussion (Appendix B and Appendix C).

From the beginning of the pandemic through May 20, 2021, Lake and Mendocino Counties have reported 7,618 positive COVID cases and 92 deaths from the disease. Mendocino County reported 4,147 positive COVID-19 cases of which 2,026 (48.8%) were Hispanic and 282 (6.8%) were Native American. The ethnicity of an additional 9.7% of positive cases are unknown. Lake County has reported 3,481 positive COVID-19 cases of which 1,287 (41.8%) were Hispanic and 166 (5.4%) were Native American. The ethnicity of an additional 11% are unknown. It has been well documented statewide and nationally that COVID-19 testing methodologies have failed to accurately capture data that would accurately identify tribal affiliations for Native Americans. See Appendix E, Additional Assessment Data for COVID-Related Needs, for qualitative data related to COVID needs.

11. “Conditions of poverty” are the negative environmental, safety, health and/or economic conditions that may reduce investment or growth in communities where low-income individuals live. After review and analysis of the data, describe the conditions of poverty in your agency’s service area(s). (Organizational Standard 3.4, State Plan)

Conditions of poverty in Lake and Mendocino Counties are similar to conditions associated with poverty in other communities (e.g., systemic inequality, institutional racism, globalization, economic downturns, rising healthcare costs, climate change, housing shortages). Conditions relevant to Lake and Mendocino County in recent years include a series of devastating wildfires and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Since the summer of 2015, ten major wildfires have devastated more than half of Lake County's 1,256 square miles as well as significant portions of Mendocino County, destroying some 3,000 homes and other structures and wreaking havoc on individuals, families, businesses, communities, and the environment. In the summer of 2018, the Mendocino Complex Fire blazed through both counties to become the largest fire in California history, burning 459,000 acres.

The county CHNAs are framed around the social determinants of health and highlight many of the disparities that local Latinx and Native American populations face in terms of education, income, and related conditions that contribute to disproportionate harm from COVID-19.

12. Describe your agency's approach or system for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the governing board. (Organizational Standard 6.4, State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

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Each NCO program has developed its own systems and processes to ensure that programs are informed by customer input. For example, some programs conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys, while others gather input from a consumer advisory board. Data collected through these processes are compiled by program staff and presented to Board members during their regularly scheduled meetings.

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Community Needs Assessment Results

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(11)

California Government Code Section 12747(a)

**Table 1: Needs Table**

Needs Identified	Level	Integral to Agency Mission (Y/N)	Currently Addressing (Y/N)	Agency Priority (Y/N)
Collaboration and alignment of services	Community	YES	YES	YES
Health and nutrition	Family and individual	YES	YES	YES
Community engagement	Community, family, and individual	YES	YES	YES
Housing and homelessness	Family and community	YES	YES	YES
Economic	Community, family, and individual	YES	YES	YES
Employment	Community, family, and individual	YES	YES	YES
Mental health and substance use	Family and individual	YES	YES	YES

**Needs Identified:** List the needs identified in your most recent CNA.

**Level:** List the need level, i.e. community or family. Community Level: Does the issue impact the community, not just clients or potential clients of the agency? For example, a community level employment need is: There is a lack of good paying jobs in our community. Family Level: Does the need concern individuals/families who have identified things in their own life that are lacking? An example of a family level employment need would be: Individuals do not have good paying jobs.

**Integral to Agency Mission:** Indicate if the identified need aligns with your agency’s mission.

**Currently Addressing:** Indicate if your agency is already addressing the identified need.

**Agency Priority:** Indicate if the identified need will be addressed either directly or indirectly.

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**Table 2: Priority Ranking Table**

Agency Priorities	Description of programs, services, activities	Indicator(s)/Service(s) Category (CNPI, FNPI, SRV)
1. Collaboration and alignment of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope Rising</li> <li>• Healthy Mendocino</li> <li>• Continuums of Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Building: Module 2, Section B5</li> <li>• Allocated Resources: Module 2, Section C3</li> </ul>
2. Housing and homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Digs case management and financial support for rapid rehousing</li> <li>• Building Homes, Building Lives Workforce Accelerator Program to renovate and build affordable housing to increase rental housing stock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing: Module 4, Section A: FNPI4a-4e and Section B: SRV 4c, 4d, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4k, 4m, 4n, 4o, 4p (Housing Indicators)</li> </ul>
3. Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPIC program, providing emergency preparedness information and trainings</li> <li>• Volunteer Network</li> <li>• COVID outreach and education</li> <li>• Caring Kitchen</li> <li>• Leadership Mendocino</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic Engagement: Module 4, Section A FNPI 6a, 6a1 and 6a3 for all 5 programs.</li> <li>• Volunteers Trained: Module 4, Section B SRV 6f</li> <li>• Health: COVID Outreach: SRV 5a and Incentives distributed 5hh</li> <li>• Health: Volunteers trained by Caring Kitchen: Module 4, Section A FNPI 5a</li> <li>• Leadership Training: Leadership Mendocino Module 4, Section B SRV6b</li> </ul>
4. Health and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gardens Project for community gardens, food production workshops</li> <li>• Caring Kitchen</li> <li>• Walk and Bike Mendocino</li> <li>• Food Hub and COVID box distribution</li> <li>• Lakeport Community Kitchen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health: Module 4, Section A FNPI 5a-5f</li> <li>• Health: Gardens Project gardening activities and skills classes: Module 4 Section B: SRV 5ff and 5gg</li> <li>• Walk and Bike: Module 4, Section B SRV 5p (Wellness Classes) and Section A FNPI 5b and 5c</li> <li>• Health: Food Hub and COVID Box (Food Distribution) Module 4 Section B: SRV 5jj</li> <li>• Health: Lakeport Community Kitchen Module 4 Section B: SRV 5ii (Prepared Meals)</li> </ul>
5. Economic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Hub, to support farmers in building capacity to access local markets</li> <li>• VITA tax preparation assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income: Module 4, Section A FNPI 3h, 3e, 3z for Food Hub</li> <li>• VITA tax preparation assistance: Module 4, Section A FNPI 3d and 3h and Module 4 Section B: SRV 3o</li> </ul>

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Agency Priorities	Description of programs, services, activities	Indicator(s)/Service(s) Category (CNPI, FNPI, SRV)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Helping People Project case management to provide COVID economic crisis relief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Helping People: Mod 4, Section A FNPI 4c-4e (Housing) and Section B: SRV 4c, 4d, 4k (Rent Payments, Mortgage Payments, Utility Payments)</li> </ul>
6. Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring Kitchen, training at-risk youth to prepare meals for cancer patients</li> <li>• Building Homes, Building Lives Workforce Accelerator program to provide construction training and employment options</li> <li>• Head Start and Rural Communities Child Care: explore opportunities to build agency capacity through improved outreach and recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment: Module 4, Section A FNPI 1a and SRV 1a</li> <li>• Employment: Module 4, Section A FNPI 1b, 1c, 1d Section B: SRV 1a (Employment Indicators)</li> <li>• Employment: Module 2, Section B4d: Number of staff with a child development certification</li> </ul>
7. Mental health and substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life skills training for homeless families</li> <li>• ACEs training for childcare providers and Head Start staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module 4, Section A FNPI 5C and 5f (seniors) SRV 5II Life skills coaching sessions</li> <li>• Staff Training: Module 2, Section B2b</li> </ul>

**Agency Priorities:** Rank your agency priorities.

**Description of programs, services, activities:** Briefly describe the program, services or activities that your agency will provide to address the need. Identify the number of clients to be served or the number of units offered, including timeframes for each.

**Indicator/Service Category (CNPI, FNPI, SRV):** List the indicator(s) or service(s) that will be reported in annual report.

## Part II: Community Action Plan

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(11)

California Government Code Sections 12745(e), 12747(a)

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 11, Chapter 1, Sections 100651 and 100655

### Vision and Mission Statement

#### 1. Provide your agency's Vision Statement.

At NCO, we envision healthy, vibrant, compassionate, and strong communities.

#### 2. Provide your agency's Mission Statement.

NCO strengthens our communities through responsive advocacy, engagement, and services.

#### **NCO VALUES**

*Focus our energy for greatest impact:* We collaborate to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

*Learn from challenge and change:* We look for opportunities to work differently and forge new paths.

*Demonstrate respect and integrity:* We treat individuals, their ideas and expressions, with dignity, honesty, and fairness.

*Embrace excellence:* We provide high quality service through the dedicated efforts of our team.

*Honor diversity:* We welcome every opportunity to enrich our organization and our work with the experiences and perspectives that are expressed through each person's race, culture, religion, mental or physical abilities, heritage, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

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Tripartite Board of Directors

CSBG Act Sections 676B(a); 676(b)(10)

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 11, Chapter 1, Section 100605

State Plan

1. Describe how your Advisory or Governing Board is involved in the decision-making process and participates in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of programs to serve low-income communities. (CSBG Act Section 676B(a))

- No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

NCO Board members are fully involved in the organization’s decision-making processes throughout program design, planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. Through a scheduled rotation, NCO Program Directors make regular presentations at monthly Board meetings and submit monthly reports on the status of their programs as well as challenges, future plans, and evaluation data demonstrating progress and accomplishments. Board members respond to the presentations with questions and suggestions that may then be incorporated for program improvement. The Board Finance Committee reviews monthly financial statements and reports back to the full Board.

2. Describe your agency’s procedures under which a low-income individual, community organization, religious organization, or representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization or low-income individuals to be inadequately represented on your agency’s board to petition for adequate representation. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(10), State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

NCO embraces the tripartite Board requirement. When a member vacancy occurs, the Board Membership Committee encourages members to personally recruit individuals meeting the vacancy criteria. Board policies provide a process for organizations or individuals to petition if they feel their group or community is not adequately represented on the Board.

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3. Describe your Advisory or Governing Board’s policy for filling board vacancies in accordance with established bylaws. Include the recruiting process, democratic selections process for low-income board members, and the timeframe established by your agency to fill vacancies. (State Plan)

No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.

Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

When a member vacancy occurs, the Board Membership Committee encourages members to personally recruit individuals meeting the vacancy criteria; notifications of the vacancy are also sent to eligible government officials, NCO staff members, community organizations, and newspapers and Facebook. If no applicants meet the criteria for the vacant membership slot, an applicant is required to present 20 signatures as evidence that they are working with or affiliated with a group or community that meets the criteria. Vacancies are normally filled within three to six months.

## Service Delivery System

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(A)

State Plan

1. Describe your agency's service delivery system. Include a description of your client intake process or system and specify whether services are delivered via direct services or subcontractors, or a combination of both. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(A), State Plan)

Direct services provided by NCO with CSBG funds include disaster case management, rapid rehousing support, Head Start programming, youth development and food distribution, food production training and nutrition education, tax preparation assistance, and volunteer coordination. In addition to direct services, CSBG funding supports NCO's collaborative efforts. For example, in each county NCO plays a leading role in collaborative groups that seek to identify needs and determine the best ways in which they can be addressed while minimizing duplication of services.

Most of the direct service programs operated by NCO are delivered directly by agency staff, rather than through subcontracts. When the intake process has been completed, staff enter the information into CAP60, the database used to track numbers served and client demographics, quantity and type of services delivered, and client needs and outcomes.

2. List your agency's proposed programs/services/activities that will be funded by CSBG. Include a brief explanation as to why these were chosen and how they relate to the CNA. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(A), State Plan)

For the following programs, CSBG funds will be used for leveraging resources; program planning, development, and administration; securing funding; and staffing and occupancy costs.

### **COLLABORATION AND ALIGNMENT OF SERVICES**

**Hope Rising, Healthy Mendocino, Continuums of Care for the Homeless.** Development of collaborative partnerships to build community capacity to address issues related to poverty is a primary focus of NCO activities and of these collaborative bodies.

### **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

**New Digs.** NCO has developed a broad portfolio of housing-related services, ranging from case management for fire survivors, to financial support to prevent homelessness, to rebuilding homes for fire

survivors and development of permanent supportive housing. A Housing Navigator works with landlords and local jurisdictions to develop housing resources, and Case Managers work with clients to address social and medical barriers to securing and retaining housing. Strategies focused on this result include relationship restoration, tenancy care, and landlord support, including covering home repair costs (in order to make a home suitable for renting), security deposits, or reimbursement for damages.

**Building Homes, Building Lives Workforce Accelerator Program.** Through this program NCO works with community partners to renovate and/or build new housing that is designated for the homeless and other low-income families.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Emergency Preparedness In Communities.** NCO is partnering with County Offices of Emergency Services and community-based organizations to deliver emergency preparedness information and training to a wide range of residents using the CalOES English/Spanish curricula, and to offer CERT trainings.

**Volunteer Network.** Through the Volunteer Network, NCO builds community capacity by working with a wide range of community partners to promote volunteer opportunities, recruit and place volunteers, and provide general volunteer trainings to people who would like to become volunteers.

**COVID Outreach and Education.** NCO works with community partners to bring COVID prevention information to low-income families and other vulnerable groups.

**Caring Kitchen.** Volunteers contribute their time to help with cooking, meal delivery, and follow-up to support healthy nutrition for persons with chronic diseases.

**Leadership Mendocino.** Founded in 1992, Leadership Mendocino was created to prepare community members from diverse occupations and backgrounds for leadership roles. The program informs current and emerging leaders on county issues, opportunities, and challenges and provides a forum for each participant to create a project that gives back to the community. Each year, 30 individuals from diverse professions, nationalities, ages, and regions of the county participate in the program, and the program now has more than 700 alumni.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

**Gardens Project.** The Gardens Project works with schools, communities, and neighborhoods to develop community and school gardens; the project also offers food production workshops on a wide range of topics.

**Caring Kitchen.** The Caring Kitchen provides weekly delivery of wholesome foods for people who are undergoing treatment for cancer and for their family members. Nutrient-dense meals are primarily plant-based and families receive enough prepared food for 3-5 meals per week.

**Walk and Bike Mendocino.** Walk and Bike Mendocino promotes walking and biking as primary transportation choices and advocates for economic equity and improved safety in transportation infrastructure. This program also provides traffic safety education to children and adults at events such as bike rodeos.

**MendoLake Food Hub.** The Food Hub uses a web-based ordering portal to aggregate and distribute foods produced by local farmers and ranchers. To better respond to the pandemic, NCO developed strategies that increased access to healthy food for low-income people who were struggling with economic and social losses.

**Lakeport Community Kitchen.** NCO is working with the City of Lakeport and other community partners to develop a new project, the Lakeport Community Kitchen, to prepare meals for those experiencing homelessness and other low-income people.

## ECONOMIC ISSUES

**MendoLake Food Hub.** NCO provides extensive support and technical assistance to farmers to ensure their ability to participate in the Food Hub and access local markets.

**VITA Tax Assistance.** This program supports low-income families by providing no-cost assistance with preparing and filing tax returns.

**People Helping People Project.** NCO initially developed People Helping People to provide disaster case management for people who had lost their homes in wildfires. In 2020, the program expanded to support community members struggling through the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order, including those who had lost

jobs and income. The program supports community residents by helping to fill gaps for those who do not qualify for unemployment or federal stimulus packages, have been laid off and are not able to produce income, or are otherwise experiencing food or housing crises as a direct result of COVID-19.

#### **EMPLOYMENT**

**Caring Kitchen.** NCO recruits and trains at-risk youth to assist with food preparation, giving them the opportunity to learn soft and hard job skills.

**Building Homes, Building Lives Workforce Accelerator Program.** This construction program recruits homeless people and those nearing the end of temporary housing stays and trains them in construction skills. Upon completion of the training program, participants receive a certificate and assistance with job placement.

**Head Start and Rural Communities Child Care.** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need to develop more effective recruitment strategies to fill openings in child care and Head Start programs.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE**

**Life Skills Trainings.** NCO works with its partners to offer life skills trainings to homeless clients and to people who are experiencing challenges related to mental health and/or substance use.

**ACEs Trainings and Trauma-Informed Services.** NCO programs such as Head Start and Rural Communities Child Care ensure that teachers, staff, and child care providers are informed about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), understand how ACEs can affect the children in their care, and are able to provide trauma-informed services and support.

## Linkages and Funding Coordination

CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(1)(B) and (C), (3)(C) and (D), 676(b)(4), (5), (6), and (9)

California Government Code Sections 12747, 12760

Organizational Standards 2.1, 2.4

State Plan

1. Describe how your agency coordinates funding with other providers in your service area. If there is a formalized coalition of social service providers in your service area, list the coalition(s) by name and methods used to coordinate services/funding. (CSBG Act Sections 676(b)(1)(C), 676(b)(3)(C); Organizational Standard 2.1; State Plan)

NCO plans and coordinates programs with a wide number of organizations, community groups, businesses, and governmental agencies that deal with the reduction of poverty. Community linkages are developed through a continuum of collaboration and referral efforts with partner agencies who work together to identify and address gaps in services and coordinate service delivery. Two of the collaboratives with which NCO works are described below.

**Hope Rising** is an Accountable Community for Health collaborative focused on improving the health and wellness of Lake County. The organization's Governing Board and Leadership Team consist of CEO-level executives and program directors and coordinators from health systems, Medicaid payer organizations, behavioral health organizations, criminal justice, education, elected officials, housing, long term care, payers, public health department, providers, philanthropy, county agencies, non-profit organizations, elected officials, workforce development, and community members. Hope Rising operates through four program areas, identified through the Community Health Needs Assessment: health and prevention, community engagement, housing and homelessness, and alcohol and drug misuse.

**Healthy Mendocino** works to improve quality of life in Mendocino County by encouraging informed dialogue about the actions local residents and organizations can take to improve community health. The Healthy Mendocino initiative was launched in 2013, bringing together a coalition of 20 founding partners to create and fund the project. Healthy Mendocino develops and maintains HealthyMendocino.org, a data source providing current information on a broad range of factors that affect health and well-being—from air quality, to student achievement, to poverty. Healthy Mendocino is an NCO program as well as a collaborative body.

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2. Provide information on any memorandums of understanding and/or service agreements your agency has with other entities regarding coordination of services/funding. (Organizational Standard 2.1, State Plan)

NCO and its programs enter into MOUs with a wide range of organizations and other entities. For example, NCO's Head Start program alone has MOUs with 44 entities in Mendocino County, ranging from tribal agencies, to school districts, to volunteer organizations such as Foster Grandparents. Also in Mendocino County, Healthy Mendocino partners have demonstrated their commitment to supporting informed dialogue about the actions local residents and organizations can take to improve community health in their MOU. In Lake County, the members of the Hope Rising Collaborative have entered into an MOU demonstrating their commitment to working together to address local needs.

3. Describe how services are targeted to low-income individuals and families and indicate how staff is involved, i.e. attend community meetings, provide information, make referrals, etc. Include how you ensure that funds are not used to duplicate services. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(9), California Government Code Section 12760, State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

All NCO programs and services are developed in alignment with the organization's mission of serving low-income individuals, families, and communities. Programs are designed in response to needs observed in the community and those revealed through the community assessment process. NCO staff participate in a wide range of groups that include other organizations and agencies whose work is focused on low-income communities, ensuring that NCO is informed about other efforts and opportunities for collaboration to avoid duplication of services. NCO communicates its activities, progress, challenges, and accomplishments to the community through a variety of media and outreach strategies and has created a Director of Communications and Administration position to coordinate these activities. Strategies include: social media posts, radio PSAs and newspaper articles; reports to partners through collaborative groups; and tabling at community events.

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#### 4. Describe how your agency will leverage other funding sources and increase programmatic and/or organizational capacity. (California Government Code Section 12747, State Plan)

NCO is currently administering a \$563,388 Community Service Block Grant (CSBG), which has been supplemented with \$32,000 in Discretionary Funds for website update, client database upgrade, and technology training for staff. Selected current grants listed below demonstrate NCO's ability to use CSBG funds to leverage other resources.

**Building Homes, Building Lives (\$212,260)** Funding from the State of California's Workforce Accelerator Program supports a workforce development program that employs people experiencing homelessness. Under the direction of a licensed contractor and NCO staff, new homes are built and dilapidated homes are remodeled and made available as affordable rentals through NCO's New Digs Program. The program is increasing the affordable housing pool while helping homeless people earn skills and a wage as they work toward achieving permanent housing and stable employment.

**CalFresh (\$50,000).** Provides funding for CalFresh outreach and enrollment assistance.

**Emergency Preparedness In Communities (\$1,023,694).** Funding from the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) enables NCO to deliver emergency preparedness training to vulnerable groups in Lake and Mendocino Counties. NCO anticipates that this funding will be available again in the coming year.

**California for All CERT/LISTOS Target County Support (\$50,000).** Funding from California Volunteers supports the training of Community Emergency Response Teams, as well as providing Spanish-language LISTOS emergency-preparedness trainings.

**COVID Awareness and Education (\$150,000).** Funding from the County of Mendocino supports targeted outreach and education efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Farm to School (\$250,000).** NCO's Farm to School programming supports a range of activities focused on increasing the use of local foods in school meals and increasing access to local markets for local farmers.

**New Digs Rapid ReHousing Project (\$1,431,731).** NCO is providing a range of support and services to homeless people throughout Lake County with funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development's Emergency Solution Grants (ESG) Program, California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) Program, and the Lake County Department of Social Services. Program goals are to help

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people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to quickly move into and/or retain stable housing by providing assistance ranging from help with utility payments to six months of rental assistance and 12 months of intensive case management.

**Redwood Credit Union** (\$25,000). This funding provides partial support for three NCO programs: Gardens Project, Mendolake Food Hub, and Lakeport Community Kitchen.

**USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Project** (\$60,000). NCO partners with the Ecology Center California Market Match Program to expand food stamp match at farmers markets.

**COVID Volunteer Recruitment** (\$50,000). NCO received \$50,000 from the County of Mendocino to expand volunteer outreach and recruitment efforts in response to the pandemic.

**People Helping People Program** (\$70,000). NCO has received funding from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County to continue providing case management and direct assistance relief for people who have lost income as a result of the pandemic and/or are unable to return to their previous jobs.

**Emergency Rental Assistance Program** (\$105,600). This programs complements NCO's case management support services by connecting eligible clients to emergency rental assistance. NCO also receives state funding for outreach and promotion of rental support available through the State of California.

**Disaster Case Management Program** (\$1,000,000). Catholic Charities provided funding for case management for survivors of Mendocino and Lake County fires in 2021.

#### 5. Describe your agency's contingency plan for potential funding reductions. (California Government Code Section 12747, State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

During the project period, NCO will continue to use CSBG dollars to leverage major grants from federal, state, and foundation funders. NCO's contingency plan for potential funding reductions includes a tighter focus on priority issues, and the development of stronger collaborative partnerships. NCO emphasizes using federal funds to support indirect services to community-based collaborative projects and programs. To the extent that NCO funnels its CSBG funding into indirect services and capacity building, it enables beneficiary agencies to secure funds to operate services. Should CSBG funds be reduced, NCO will convene to review all

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affected projects and programs. Other appropriate groups (e.g., agency advisory boards and community focus groups) will be invited to assist in this process, with NCO’s Governing Board making final decisions.

6. Describe how your agency documents the number of volunteers and hours mobilized to support your activities. (Organizational Standard 2.4)

- No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

NCO’s Volunteer Network uses the Volgistics database to track volunteers and the time they contribute to NCO programs and other programs throughout the community. During 2020, almost 1,450 volunteers contributed their time through NCO programs: Caring Kitchen (2,093 hours); Gardens Project (37,920 hours); Head Start (28,771 hours); Healthy Mendocino (512 hours); Mendolake Food Hub (792 hours); Walk & Bike Mendocino (232 hours); and Volunteer Network (75,550 hours). In all, volunteers contributed 145,870 hours in 2020. Calculated at the 2020 hourly rate for California of \$33.61, the hours donated by volunteers represent a contribution valued at \$4,902,690 (<https://independentsector.org>).

7. Describe how your agency will address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(1)(B), State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

NCO involves youth in violence-free, positive alternative activities through programs that teach life skills and develop youth assets and resiliency. Such programming includes teen cooking and nutrition classes delivered through the Caring Kitchen Project. Through NCO’s Rural Communities Child Care program, NCO supports parents in need of child care and provides training to child care providers.

8. Describe how your agency will promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth, and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs such as the establishment of violence-free zones, youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, entrepreneurship programs, after after-school child care. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(1)(B), State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

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NCO will work with partner agencies to develop and enhance after school programs that incorporate nutrition, gardening, and cooking skills. Through partnerships with other youth-serving agencies, youth will have access to recreation, sports, homework help, computer access, cultural enrichment, and mentoring during after school hours.

9. If your agency uses CSBG funding to provide employment and training services, describe the coordination of employment and training activities as defined in Section 3 of the Workforce and Innovation and Opportunity Act [29 U.S.C. 3102]. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(5), State Plan)

NCO is working with Hope Rising to identify opportunities to strengthen workforce development for disenfranchised groups. To develop workforce skills among clients served through the New Digs Rapid Rehousing Program, NCO operates the Building Homes, Building Lives Workforce Accelerator Project that provides construction training and creates affordable housing options for the unhoused. Youth working with Caring Kitchen gain hands-on experience in the kitchen, an opportunity to make a difference, and opportunities to learn healthy eating, leadership, and job-readiness skills.

10. Describe how your agency will provide emergency supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary, to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(4), State Plan)

No change to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP.

Adaptations to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

NCO collaborates with agencies that provide emergency support services and coordinates with food policy councils, food advocacy groups, and community gleaner groups that provide food to low-income people. NCO has established multiple community gardens and has also been a key player in making food stamp purchases possible at local farmers markets and offering food stamp match. NCO's Caring Kitchen project brings nutritious, organic meals and a community of caring to low-income people with cancer or other chronic diseases, while at-risk youth gain hands-on experience and develop new skills as they work to prepare the meals that are then delivered to their clients. Through the CalOES Emergency Preparedness Campaign grants, NCO provides mini-grants to community-based organizations, who then conduct outreach and trainings for the vulnerable groups that they serve. NCO also coordinates CERT and LISTOS trainings to strengthen community emergency response capacity. The Lakeport Community Kitchen will serve up to 200

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meals per week to homeless and other low-income community residents as well as preparing ready-made meals for partner organizations offering transitional housing to those experiencing homelessness.

11. Describe how your agency coordinates with other antipoverty programs in your area, including the emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XVI (relating to low-income home energy assistance) that are conducted in the community. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(6), State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

NCO coordinates with other communities through its participation in the statewide California Community Action Partnership Association and other statewide and regional bodies, such as the Partnership HealthPlan of California. NCO also coordinates with and refers clients to North Coast Energy Services, which is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) agency for seven northern California counties (Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, Sonoma, and Yolo). NCO continues to be an active member of the Lake County Continuum of Care, which provides resources and creates policy to support the unhoused population.

12. Describe how your agency will use funds to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives, which may include fatherhood and other initiatives, with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging effective parenting. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(3)(D), State Plan)

- No change to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency's 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

CSBG funds will be used to support projects that have the greatest potential to maximize impact and leverage resources. Family strengthening is broadly defined to include programs that support family economy and build family self-reliance. Programs meeting this description that will be supported through CSBG funding trainings provided to parents and child care providers through NCO's Head Start and Rural Communities Child Care programs.

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Monitoring

CSBG Act Section 678D(a)(1)(A) and (B)

1. Describe how your agency’s monitoring activities are related to establishing and maintaining the integrity of the CSBG program. Include your process for maintaining high standards of program and fiscal performance.

NCO conducts program evaluations, including periodic client surveys, partner surveys, and surveys of other community members, to inform program planning and development. NCO’s Director of Communications and Administration works with NCO Program Directors to develop monitoring and data collection processes and collect data to document all work supported by CSBG dollars, including participant numbers and demographics, services provided and units of service, and client satisfaction. Data collected by each project or program is compiled by the Project Director or Coordinator, summarized for comparison with target goals and objectives, and shared with appropriate staff, as well as entered in the CAP60 database. This process provides staff with data for completion of required reports to CSD and other funders and enables them to understand and address any barriers.

2. If your agency utilizes subcontractors, please describe your process for monitoring the subcontractors. Include the frequency, type of monitoring, i.e., onsite, desk review, or both, follow-up on corrective action, and issuance of formal monitoring reports.

NCO does not use CSBG funds for subcontracting.

Data Analysis and Evaluation

CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12)

Organizational Standards 4.2, 4.3

1. Describe your agency’s method for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and services. Include information about the types of measurement tools, the data sources and collection procedures, and the frequency of data collection and reporting. (Organizational Standard 4.3)

Evaluation methods vary from project to project, depending on funder requirements and project needs. Data collection methods may include: pre/post surveys for assessment of changes in knowledge and behavior; workshop and training assessments; client satisfaction surveys; and/or staff surveys. Evaluation strategies include trend analysis of changes in data indicators over time; counts of activities, units of service, and number of people served; demographics; etc. Evaluation reporting varies from project to project, depending on funder requirements and project needs, but customarily includes an annual report of evaluation activities and findings.

2. Applying the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation, describe one change your agency made to improve low-income individuals’ and families’ capacity for self-sufficiency. (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12), Organizational Standard 4.2)

- No change to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP.
- Adaptations to the response in your agency’s 2020-2021 CAP are described below.

Examples of NCO’s use of program data to plan and guide program improvement are provided below.

As NCO struggled to establish and implement case management protocols in the midst of responding to the wildfire disasters of the past four years, it became clear that a better data collection system would be essential to understanding what was working and what needed to be changed to ensure high quality program services. As a result, NCO has developed and standardized data collection and reporting systems.

A review and evaluation of data collected from families through the People Helping People Program made it clear that while many families did have some resources, most were uninsured or underinsured and many were not eligible for single programs that would be sufficient to fund their rebuilding processes. Accordingly, NCO has worked to identify and access additional sources of funding that can be combined in

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resource packages to meet family needs. This process also resulted in requesting and receiving permission to raise the ceiling amount that families could receive through specific funding programs.

3. Applying the full ROMA cycle, describe one change your agency facilitated to help revitalize the low-income communities in your agency's service area(s). (CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12), Organizational Standard 4.2) (Optional)

Review and evaluation of data collected during implementation of NCO's Mendolake Food Hub made it clear that the program could only reach the stage of self-sufficiency if it expanded its operations to include a wider range of products and services. During the past year, the program demonstrated its flexibility by securing contracts to distribute food boxes to low-income families impacted by the pandemic.

Additional Information (Optional)

**Disaster Preparedness**

1. Does your agency have a disaster plan in place that includes strategies on how to remain operational and continue providing services to low-income individuals and families during and following a disaster?

Yes

No

2. If so, when was the disaster plan last updated?

NCO has completed several components of a comprehensive disaster plan, but is still working to finalize and compile a consolidated Agency Emergency Plan for Continuity of Operations.

3. Briefly describe your agency’s main strategies to remain operational during and after a disaster.

NCO’s offices are configured to provide permanent, centrally-located homes for NCO’s disaster preparedness and response work in each county, including a Disaster Recovery Room where NCO staff and partners can work together on disaster readiness and disaster response efforts, survivors can access services and support, and staff can carry out case management and other activities focused on housing and homelessness. In both counties, NCO works closely with the Office of Emergency Services and Red Cross on prevention advocacy, and NCO staff are available for deployment during disasters to support emergency services. In addition, NCO is in the process of implementing an automated Alert Media system to notify appropriate staff when they are needed to work in person or from home.

**Agency Capacity Building**

1. Although the CNA focused on Community and Family Level needs, if your agency identified Agency Level need(s) during the CNA process, list them here.

NCO has identified three capacity-building needs: development of an agency-wide Disaster Plan, increased training in and focus on equity issues, and development of more effective recruitment strategies for Head Start and Rural Communities Child Care providers.

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#### 2. Describe the steps your agency is planning to take to address the Agency Level need(s).

NCO will work with appropriate staff and/external consultants to develop the Disaster Plan. The Board of Directors has already established an ad hoc committee to focus on equity issues, and the agency will be embarking on an organizational assessment of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This will be a year-long assessment process intended to support and foster organizational learning and changes that strengthen equity-centered practices. NCO will work with state and federal agencies to develop solutions to the shortage of applicants for jobs in child care and Head Start classrooms.

## Federal CSBG Programmatic Assurances and Certification

CSBG Act 676(b)

### Use of CSBG Funds Supporting Local Activities

**676(b)(1)(A):** The state will assure “that funds made available through grant or allotment will be used – (A) to support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals, including families and individuals receiving assistance under title IV of the Social Security Act, homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farmworkers, and elderly low-income individuals and families, and a description of how such activities will enable the families and individuals--

- i. to remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency (particularly for families and individuals who are attempting to transition off a State program carried out under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act);
  - ii. to secure and retain meaningful employment;
  - iii. to attain an adequate education with particular attention toward improving literacy skills of the low-income families in the community, which may include family literacy initiatives;
  - iv. to make better use of available income;
  - v. to obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment;
  - vi. to obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants, or other means to meet immediate and urgent individual and family needs;
  - vii. to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the communities involved, including the development of public and private grassroots
  - viii. partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, private foundations, and other public and private partners to
- 
- I. document best practices based on successful grassroots intervention in urban areas, to develop methodologies for wide-spread replication; and
  - II. strengthen and improve relationships with local law enforcement agencies, which may include participation in activities such as neighborhood or community policing efforts;

### Needs of Youth

**676(b)(1)(B)** The state will assure “that funds made available through grant or allotment will be used – (B) to address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth, and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs that have demonstrated success in preventing or reducing youth crime, such as--

- I. programs for the establishment of violence-free zones that would involve youth development and intervention models (such as models involving youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs); and
- II. after-school childcare programs.

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#### **Coordination of Other Programs**

**676(b)(1)(C)** The state will assure “that funds made available through grant or allotment will be used – (C) to make more effective use of, and to coordinate with, other programs related to the purposes of this subtitle (including state welfare reform efforts)

#### **Eligible Entity Service Delivery System**

**676(b)(3)(A)** Eligible entities will describe “the service delivery system, for services provided or coordinated with funds made available through grants made under 675C(a), targeted to low-income individuals and families in communities within the state;

#### **Eligible Entity Linkages – Approach to Filling Service Gaps**

**676(b)(3)(B)** Eligible entities will describe “how linkages will be developed to fill identified gaps in the services, through the provision of information, referrals, case management, and follow-up consultations.”

#### **Coordination of Eligible Entity Allocation 90 Percent Funds with Public/Private Resources**

**676(b)(3)(C)** Eligible entities will describe how funds made available through grants made under 675C(a) will be coordinated with other public and private resources.”

#### **Eligible Entity Innovative Community and Neighborhood Initiatives, Including Fatherhood/Parental Responsibility**

**676(b)(3)(D)** Eligible entities will describe “how the local entity will use the funds [made available under 675C(a)] to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of this subtitle, which may include fatherhood initiatives and other initiatives with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging parenting.”

#### **Eligible Entity Emergency Food and Nutrition Services**

**676(b)(4)** An assurance “that eligible entities in the state will provide, on an emergency basis, for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals.”

#### **State and Eligible Entity Coordination/linkages and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Employment and Training Activities**

**676(b)(5)** An assurance “that the State and eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services, and [describe] how the State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities, as defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in the State and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce development systems under such Act.”

#### **State Coordination/Linkages and Low-income Home Energy Assistance**

**676(b)(6)** “[A]n assurance that the State will ensure coordination between antipoverty programs in each community in the State, and ensure, where appropriate, that emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XXVI (relating to low-income home energy assistance) are conducted in such community.”

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#### **Community Organizations**

**676(b)(9)** An assurance “that the State and eligible entities in the state will, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate programs with and form partnerships with other organizations serving low-income residents of the communities and members of the groups served by the State, including religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations.”

#### **Eligible Entity Tripartite Board Representation**

**676(b)(10)** “[T]he State will require each eligible entity in the State to establish procedures under which a low-income individual, community organization, or religious organization, or representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization, or low-income individuals, to be inadequately represented on the board (or other mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation.”

#### **Eligible Entity Community Action Plans and Community Needs Assessments**

**676(b)(11)** “[A]n assurance that the State will secure from each eligible entity in the State, as a condition to receipt of funding by the entity through a community service block grant made under this subtitle for a program, a community action plan (which shall be submitted to the Secretary, at the request of the Secretary, with the State Plan) that includes a community needs assessment for the community serviced, which may be coordinated with the community needs assessment conducted for other programs.”

#### **State and Eligible Entity Performance Measurement: ROMA or Alternate System**

**676(b)(12)** “[A]n assurance that the State and all eligible entities in the State will, not later than fiscal year 2001, participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System, another performance measure system for which the Secretary facilitated development pursuant to section 678E(b), or an alternative system for measuring performance and results that meets the requirements of that section, and [describe] outcome measures to be used to measure eligible entity performance in promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.”

#### **Fiscal Controls, Audits, and Withholding**

**678D(a)(1)(B)** An assurance that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are maintained.

**By checking this box and signing the Cover Page and Certification, the agency’s Executive Director and Board Chair are certifying that the agency meets the assurances set out above.**

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State Assurances and Certification

California Government Code Sections 12747(a), 12760, 12768

[California Government Code § 12747\(a\)](#): Community action plans shall provide for the contingency of reduced federal funding.

[California Government Code § 12760](#): CSBG agencies funded under this article shall coordinate their plans and activities with other agencies funded under Articles 7 (commencing with Section 12765) and 8 (commencing with Section 12770) that serve any part of their communities, so that funds are not used to duplicate particular services to the same beneficiaries and plans and policies affecting all grantees under this chapter are shaped, to the extent possible, so as to be equitable and beneficial to all community agencies and the populations they serve.

**For MSFW Agencies Only**

[California Government Code § 12768](#): Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) entities funded by the department shall coordinate their plans and activities with other agencies funded by the department to avoid duplication of services and to maximize services for all eligible beneficiaries.

- By checking this box and signing the Cover Page and Certification, the agency's Executive Director and Board Chair are certifying the agency meets assurances set out above.**

## Organizational Standards

### MAXIMUM FEASIBLE PARTICIPATION

#### Category One: Consumer Input and Involvement

**Standard 1.1** The organization/department demonstrates low-income individuals' participation in its activities.

**Standard 1.2** The organization/department analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the community assessment.

#### Category Two: Community Engagement

**Standard 2.1** The organization/department has documented or demonstrated partnerships across the community, for specifically identified purposes; partnerships include other anti-poverty organizations in the area.

**Standard 2.2** The organization/department utilizes information gathered from key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources, during the community assessment process or other times. These sectors would include at minimum: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector, and educational institutions.

**Standard 2.4** The organization/department documents the number of volunteers and hours mobilized in support of its activities.

#### Category Three: Community Assessment

**Private Agency - Standard 3.1** Organization conducted a community assessment and issued a report within the past 3 years.

**Public Agency - Standard 3.1** The department conducted or was engaged in a community assessment and issued a report within the past 3-year period, if no other report exists.

**Standard 3.2** As part of the community assessment, the organization/department collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).

**Standard 3.3** The organization/department collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the community assessment.

**Standard 3.4** The community assessment includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.

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**Standard 3.5** The governing board or tripartite board/advisory body formally accepts the completed community assessment.

## VISION AND DIRECTION

### Category Four: Organizational Leadership

**Private Agency - Standard 4.1** The governing board has reviewed the organization's mission statement within the past 5 years and assured that:

- 1.The mission addresses poverty; and
- 2.The organization's programs and services are in alignment with the mission.

**Public Agency - Standard 4.1** The tripartite board/advisory body has reviewed the department's mission statement within the past 5 years and assured that:

- 1.The mission addresses poverty; and
- 2.The CSBG programs and services are in alignment with the mission.

**Standard 4.2** The organization's/department's Community Action Plan is outcome-based, anti-poverty focused, and ties directly to the community assessment.

**Standard 4.3** The organization's/department's Community Action Plan and strategic plan document the continuous use of the full Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle or comparable system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation). In addition, the organization documents having used the services of a ROMA-certified trainer (or equivalent) to assist in implementation.

### Category Six: Strategic Planning

**Standard 6.4** Customer satisfaction data and customer input, collected as part of the community assessment, is included in the strategic planning process, or comparable planning process.

## Appendices

Please complete the table below by entering the title of the document and its assigned appendix letter. Agencies must provide a copy of the Notice(s) of Public Hearing and the Low-Income Testimony and the Agency’s Response document as appendices A and B, respectively. Other appendices such as need assessment surveys, maps, graphs, executive summaries, analytical summaries are encouraged. All appendices should be labeled as an appendix (e.g., Appendix A: Copy of the Notice of Public Hearing) and submitted with the CAP.

Document Title	Appendix Location
Appendix A. Notices of Public Hearing	A
Appendix B. Low-Income Testimony and Agency Response	B
Appendix C. Lake County Community Health Needs Assessment	C
Appendix D. Mendocino County Community Health Needs Assessment	D
Appendix E. Additional Assessment Data for COVID-Related Needs	E

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Appendix A. Notices of Public Hearing

Appendix B. Low-Income Testimony and Agency Response

Name	Verbatim Testimony	Concern addressed in draft CAP? (Y/N)	If not, Agency Response

Appendix E. Additional Assessment Data for COVID-Related Needs

In addition to the comprehensive assessments and data compilations conducted for each county (Attachments C and D), NCO staff compiled the following listing of needs identified through their work with vulnerable families and individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Many families are not eligible for government assistance or are unwilling to apply for eligible family members (e.g., children born in the U.S.) due to fears surrounding their immigration status. Many were concerned that receiving funding support would be considered a public charge and affect their immigration status.
- Clients have lost jobs, experienced reduced working hours, or missed work without pay due to quarantine or isolation orders (in some cases for up to 3 months).
- Mothers particularly have been unable to work due to childcare responsibilities.
- Families who rely on childcare help from elderly grandparents or other relatives are unable to do so because of the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- People have behind with rent and utility payments, with some owing up to \$5,000 on utility bills. Some are paying bills with credit cards or have taken out loans to pay landlords. Others are relying on help from friends or family members.
- Some landlords do not want to participate (e.g., refuse to provide W9s) with programs that can provide rental assistance, meaning their tenants cannot take full advantage of resources provided by the community or state.

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- The unemployment application process is difficult and confusing, and people who experience difficulties with the process were often unable to reach anyone at the EDD office for assistance. People receiving disability insurance and some clients receiving social security have similar difficulties getting any issues sorted out.
- Clients who receive unemployment note that the payments aren't sufficient and are often irregular amounts or unreliable.
- Many clients are homeless and rental or utility assistance can't help them. Organizations that help find affordable housing have long waiting lists.
- Homeless families with children don't have a shelter to go to.

Federal and state assistance, whether through unemployment, stimulus payments, or otherwise, is usually insufficient to cover the financial needs of those who lost employment during the pandemic. Moreover, a significant portion of people in Mendocino County are ineligible for government assistance.