

**Policy Council Meeting Agenda | October 1, 2025**

1. **Call to Order | Chairman Sam Gibson**
2. **Roll Call | Sherry Thurman**
3. **Approval of Minutes | Chairman Sam Gibson**
  - a. August 6, 2025
4. **CSBG | LaNelle Godsey, Deputy Director/Community Services Director**
  - a. Dashboards
  - b. Whistle Blower Policy
  - c. Introduction to ROMA Training
5. **Roundtable | Mark Farley, Executive Director**
  - a. Cammy Aguilar, Tennessee Governor's Office of Faith Base Initiatives
6. **Old/New Business | Chairman Sam Gibson**
7. **Public Comments | Chairman Sam Gibson**
8. **Adjourn | Chairman Sam Gibson**

**Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency  
Policy Council Meeting**

|                   |   |  |                |
|-------------------|---|--|----------------|
| MINUTES           | AUGUST 6, 2025  | 10:30 A.M.   | COOKEVILLE, TN |
| MEETING CALLED BY | City Mayor Sam Gibson called the meeting to order.  |  |                |
| TYPE OF MEETING   | UCHRA Policy Council  |  |                |
| FACILITATOR       | City Mayor Sam Gibson   |  |                |
| NOTETAKER         | Sherry Thurman  |  |                |
| MEMBERS PRESENT   | Sam Gibson, Keisha Richards, Phil Fox, Kristi Paling, Bill Gibson, Tracie Long, Alejandra Cisneros-Conohan, Michael Burton, Barbara Wheeler, Bob DePriest, Linda Pastrick, Marilyn Davis, Patti Ognibene  |  |                |
| MEMBERS ABSENT    | Charlene Whitaker, Cindy Putman, Zack Gilpin, Anne Stamps, Misty Phy  |  |                |
|                   | CALL TO ORDER   | MAYOR SAM GIBSON   |                |
| CALL TO ORDER     | City Mayor Sam Gibson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.  |  |                |
|                   | ROLL CALL   |  |                |
| ROLL CALL         | Sherry Thurman called the roll and the attendance is recorded above. There was a quorum of the committee members present.   |  |                |
|                   | APPROVAL OF MINUTES   | MAYOR SAM GIBSON   |                |
| DISCUSSION        | City Mayor Sam Gibson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2025 Policy Council meeting.   |  |                |
|                   | A motion was made to approve the minutes.   |  |                |
| ACTION            | <u>Motion to Approve</u><br>Motion made by: Linda Pastrick<br>Motion seconded by: Keisha Richards<br><br>City Mayor Sam Gibson asked for discussion on the motion.<br><br>Motion carried unanimously.   |  |                |
|                   | CSBG<br>• CSBG Dashboards   | LANELLE GODSEY,<br>DEPUTY DIRECTOR/COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR |                |
| DISCUSSION        | LaNelle Godsey reported that the May and June 2025 dashboards, along with updates on other programs under the Community Services Program, were presented. She noted that the ERA rental program, which aimed to prevent homelessness, has concluded. All program funds were fully utilized, including |  |                |

**DISCUSSION**

additional funds reallocated from other agencies that were unable to spend theirs. She also highlighted the agency's significant work in providing Information and Referral services, connecting clients to resources not available within the agency by directing them to other organizations.

LaNelle also provided updates on the following Community Services Programs:

- **SCSEP Older Worker Program** – Currently on furlough pending the release of funds and documents from the federal government. Updates are provided every two weeks, and both participants and county offices are being kept informed.
- **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)** – This grant provides referrals from Adult Protective Services for in-home services offered by UCHRA. The program also partners with the Area Agency on Aging and Disability to provide additional in-home support.
- **Options** – Funding source for in-home services that UCHRA provides.
- **Title III** – Funding source for in-home services that UCHRA provides.
- **Alzheimer's HMK/Respite** – Support services for Alzheimer's patients and caregivers.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** – Provides reimbursement for programs serving healthy meals to children.
- **Weatherization** – Assistance for energy efficiency improvements in homes.
- **CREST and CREVAA** – Serve vulnerable elderly adults who have been victims of crime or neglect.

**Commodities Program Update:**

The Commodities program will conclude in September 2025. Distributions will continue through August and end on September 20th with the agency's final—and largest—event. This event will be held at UCHRA's warehouse in Cookeville and will serve all 14 counties. The goal is to distribute as much food as possible, ensuring every item in the warehouse is given out. Policy Council members received flyers to share within their counties. Those interested in volunteering on September 20th are encouraged to contact Judy Sanchez, Jordan Herald, or LaNelle Godsey. Distributions originally scheduled after September 20th have been moved up to ensure all counties receive food before the program's end.

LaNelle noted that she and Executive Director Mark Farley will meet next Tuesday with representatives from food banks and the Department of Agriculture to finalize the official transition plan. They expect to have information to share after that meeting.

Executive Director Mark Farley stated that UCHRA has administered the Commodities program since its inception 30–40 years ago. The agency board

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p>chairman sent a letter to the Commissioner of Agriculture on behalf of the executive board of all mayors, but there has been no response. Numerous attempts to contact the commissioner or other high-level officials have also gone unanswered. Moving forward, Second Harvest of Middle Tennessee will serve 11 Upper Cumberland counties; Cumberland and Fentress counties will be served out of East Tennessee; and Van Buren County will be served out of Chattanooga.</p>  |
|                   | <p><b>UCHRA ROUNDTABLE</b> <b>MARK FARLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b><br/> <b>• Community Action Plan Discussion and Approval</b></p>   |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p>Jordan Herald presented the Community Action Plan, which is submitted annually and is a comprehensive document. A summary was provided to the Policy Council members. Jordan advised that anyone interested in reviewing the full plan can contact her, and she will send it to them.</p> <p>Jordan explained that UCHRA is evolving not only in how services are delivered but also in how the agency connects with the individuals and families it serves. Thanks to CSBG funding, UCHRA is shifting from a model focused primarily on emergency one-time vouchers to a holistic, person-centered approach that supports long-term self-sufficiency. Historically, CSBG funds have helped respond to crisis situations, which remains important. However, the agency is now working to meet individuals where they are and walk alongside them as they set and work toward meaningful goals.</p> <p>To support this shift, the agency has partnered with Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System to provide in-depth staff training in September. This training will cover assessment, goal setting, service planning, and effective documentation—all critical components of the ongoing case management process.</p> <p>Jordan then presented several initiatives expanding or launching this year, all supported through CSBG funding:</p> <p><b>Holistic Goal-Setting Approach</b> – Staff are being trained to move beyond crisis response and assist clients in planning for long-term success. This aligns with the Tennessee DHS mission and UCHRA’s commitment to self-sufficiency. County Coordinators are also receiving leadership development through community partnerships.</p> <p><b>Poverty Simulation and Community Education</b> – UCHRA has partnered with local agencies and HR departments to offer hands-on poverty simulation experiences. These events help local businesses, HR professionals, and others better understand the challenges faced by people living in poverty.</p> <p><b>Fee-Based Home Repair Program for Older Adults</b> – Launching soon, this program will provide basic home repairs for adults aged 60 and over. CSBG funding will assist with staff salaries to get the program started. Executive Director Mark Farley noted that because it is fee-based, the program will start small,</p> |

**DRAFT MINUTES**

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| DISCUSSION | <p>initially serving Putnam, Overton, White, and Jackson counties. Two experienced individuals will perform the repairs, with hopes to expand across all fourteen counties.</p> <p><b>CREST and CREVAA Program Integration</b> – These programs support older and vulnerable adults. CREST helps seniors remain in their homes, while CREVAA provides advocacy and assistance to victims of crime and abuse. CSBG supports the administrative side of these programs.</p> <p><b>CHOICES Program Startup Support</b> – This program delivers critical in-home services to eligible individuals, helping them stay independent and safe in their homes.</p> <p>CSBG also supports frontline staff in county offices who connect residents with transportation, utility assistance, and other local resources. Administrative support is provided for programs under the Community Services umbrella, including LIHEAP, SCSEP, SSBG, CREST, and CREVAA.</p> <p>Jordan provided an update on the Needs Assessment, which is part of the CSBG application process. The last assessment was completed in 2023, with feedback from the Policy Council members. In 2023, the top five needs identified were: higher paying jobs; access to affordable housing; quality job opportunities; resources for individuals who are homeless; and access to mental health services.</p> <p>Jordan is currently beginning a new assessment. Often, the same needs reemerge, though sometimes priorities shift. The Policy Council helped initiate the new assessment, and their current top five needs are: childcare and healthcare access; housing affordability and availability; transportation limitations; lack of higher wage jobs; and an underprepared workforce. Jordan welcomes continued feedback from anyone interested.</p> <p>A motion was made to approve the Community Action Plan as presented.</p> |
| ACTION     | <p><b><u>Motion to Approve</u></b></p> <p>Motion made by: Bill Gibson</p> <p>Motion seconded by: Alejandra Cisneros-Conohan</p> <p>City Mayor Sam Gibson asked for discussion on the motion.</p> <p>Motion carried unanimously.</p>  |
| DISCUSSION | <p>Executive Director Mark Farley presented the ALICE Report. These reports are prepared for each individual county and were shared during our summer strategy meetings. The ALICE Report illustrates the income required for someone in the community to cover all their bills, save money monthly, and maintain a decent quality of life.</p> <p>In Tennessee, the annual income needed is \$29,328 for a single adult aged 16-64;</p>   |

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p>\$32,796 for a single adult aged 65 and older—though there are not many seniors in the region earning that amount. Our aging population and waitlists for aging programs continue to grow, and this trend is expected to worsen. For a household of two adults, one infant, and one preschooler, the annual income needed is \$74,796. This highlights the urgent need for higher wages, and we are continuing to advocate for ways to increase people’s earnings.</p> <p>Executive Director Farley also updated on current agency projects:</p> <p>An application has been submitted to the Department of Human Services for a partnership with the Putnam County School System. Putnam County plans to consolidate most Pre-K classes into an older school building. We aim to extend our Empower Program’s work by partnering with the school system to support those Pre-K classes and their families, replicating the positive impact Empower has had on children.</p> <p>In the coming weeks, we plan to collaborate with the Trauma Informed Community Alliance (TICA), a coalition of nonprofits and groups in Cumberland County that serve struggling families. We will be presenting a proposal to a national organization funded by the New York Federal Reserve to explore participation in a pilot project. This initiative would help childcare facilities strengthen their curricula with a focus on early childhood education and family support.</p> <p>Please let us know if there are nonprofits in your community interested in partnering with UCHRA. Also, if there are new initiatives underway in your area, inform us so we can explore potential collaborations.</p> |
|                   | <p><b>OLD/NEW BUSINESS</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>MAYOR SAM GIBSON</b></span></p>   |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p>LaNelle Godsey reminded Tracie and Alex that she had emailed them an overview of the Policy Council. She asked them to review, sign, and return the document via email.</p> <p>Kristi Paling shared that the 2025 County Profiles in Child Well-Being are now available on TCCY’s website. The 2025 overall rankings for the Upper Cumberland counties are as follows: Cannon County – 73rd; Clay County – 58th; Cumberland County – 42nd; DeKalb County – 77th; Jackson County – 59th; Macon County – 63rd; Overton County – 41st; Pickett County – 85th; Putnam County – 31st; Smith County – 12th; Van Buren County – 49th; Warren County – 74th; and White County – 36th.</p> <p>Barbara Wheeler announced that the Food Bank will be in Jackson County on August 7th.</p>   |

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Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency

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|  | <b>PUBLIC COMMENTS</b>   | <b>MAYOR SAM GIBSON</b> |
| <b>DISCUSSION</b>                      | No public comments were presented for discussion.  |                         |
|  | <b>ADJOURN</b>   | <b>MAYOR SAM GIBSON</b> |
| <b>ADJOURN</b>                         | City Mayor Sam Gibson advised that he would accept a motion to adjourn.  |                         |
| <b>ACTION</b>                          | <u><b>Motion to Adjourn:</b></u><br>Motion made by: Linda Pastrick<br>Motion seconded by: Alejandra Cisnero-Conohan<br><br>The Policy Council members voted unanimously to adjourn the August 6, 2025 meeting. |                         |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b><br><b>11:15 A.M.</b> |  |                         |

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Mayor Sam Gibson

| August 2025 UCHRA Services Dashboard |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
|                                      | Total Households Served Duplicated | Cases of Ensure Sold | Regular LIHEAP Households Served | Regular LIHEAP Funds Utilized | Crisis LIHEAP Households Served | CRISIS LIHEAP Funds Utilized | Outreach events- number of attendees | WP Applications | Commodities | Information and Referrals |
| TIER 1 Counties                      |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
| Cumberland                           | 119                                | 8                    | 60                               | \$ 48,200.00                  | 14                              | \$ 11,000.00                 | 0                                    | 0               |             | 37                        |
| Putnam                               | 508                                | 38                   | 72                               | \$ 57,600.00                  | 19                              | \$ 13,800.00                 | 0                                    | 0               | 351         | 28                        |
| Warren                               | 1112                               | 27                   | 79                               | \$ 62,800.00                  | 16                              | \$ 11,000.00                 | 423                                  | 2               | 293         | 272                       |
| TIER 2 COUNTIES                      |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
| DeKalb                               | 290                                | 5                    | 16                               | \$ 11,200.00                  | 9                               | \$ 6,400.00                  | 0                                    | 0               | 237         | 23                        |
| Fentress                             | 1038                               | 11                   | 64                               | \$ 51,200.00                  | 8                               | \$ 6,200.00                  | 710                                  | 0               | 226         | 19                        |
| Macon                                | 255                                | 12                   | 25                               | \$ 14,400.00                  | 8                               | \$ 6,400.00                  | 1                                    | 0               | 99          | 110                       |
| Overton                              | 440                                | 19                   | 85                               | \$ 52,400.00                  | 12                              | \$ 9,200.00                  | 0                                    | 1               | 323         | 0                         |
| Smith                                | 69                                 | 0                    | 56                               | \$ 35,800.00                  | 7                               | \$ 5,200.00                  | 0                                    | 0               |             | 6                         |
| White                                | 173                                | 12                   | 70                               | \$ 44,600.00                  | 10                              | \$ 7,600.00                  | 0                                    | 0               |             | 81                        |
| TIER 3 Counties                      |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
| Cannon                               | 183                                | 2                    | 7                                | \$ 5,205.00                   | 5                               | \$ 3,600.00                  | 0                                    | 3               | 141         | 25                        |
| Clay                                 | 46                                 | 26                   | 9                                | \$ 6,000.00                   | 10                              | \$ 7,400.00                  | 0                                    | 1               |             | 0                         |
| Jackson                              | 100                                | 18                   | 61                               | \$ 47,400.00                  | 4                               | \$ 2,400.00                  | 0                                    | 0               |             | 17                        |
| Pickett                              | 60                                 | 11                   | 43                               | \$ 33,000.00                  | 3                               | \$ 2,200.00                  | 0                                    | 0               |             | 3                         |
| Van Buren                            | 66                                 | 7                    | 11                               | \$ 8,600.00                   | 3                               | \$ 2,200.00                  | 27                                   | 0               |             | 18                        |
| Total:                               | 4459                               | 196                  | 658                              | \$478,405.00                  | 128                             | \$94,600.00                  | 1161                                 | 7               | 1,670       | 639                       |



| July 2025 UCHRA Services Dashboard |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
|                                    | Total Households Served Duplicated | Cases of Ensure Sold | Regular LIHEAP Households Served | Regular LIHEAP Funds Utilized | Crisis LIHEAP Households Served | CRISIS LIHEAP Funds Utilized | Outreach events- number of attendees | WP Applications | Commodities | Information and Referrals |
| TIER 1 Counties                    |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
| Cumberland                         | 616                                | 7                    | 31                               | \$ 24,800.00                  | 18                              | \$ 12,400.00                 | 226                                  | 0               | 271         | 63                        |
| Putnam                             | 109                                | 50                   | 34                               | \$ 27,200.00                  | 8                               | \$ 4,838.96                  | 0                                    | 1               |             | 16                        |
| Warren                             | 302                                | 15                   | 47                               | \$ 37,800.00                  | 9                               | \$ 7,000.00                  | 5                                    | 0               |             | 226                       |
| TIER 2 COUNTIES                    |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
| DeKalb                             | 27                                 | 3                    | 1                                | \$ 800.00                     | 7                               | \$ 4,800.00                  | 0                                    | 0               |             | 16                        |
| Fentress                           | 532                                | 11                   | 33                               | \$ 26,400.00                  | 21                              | \$ 14,800.00                 | 455                                  | 0               |             | 12                        |
| Macon                              | 315                                | 4                    | 59                               | \$ 29,800.00                  | 8                               | \$ 6,200.00                  | 13                                   | 2               | 92          | 137                       |
| Overton                            | 69                                 | 21                   | 41                               | \$ 32,000.00                  | 6                               | \$ 5,000.00                  | 0                                    | 0               |             | 1                         |
| Smith                              | 165                                | 3                    | 41                               | \$ 25,200.00                  | 7                               | \$ 5,400.00                  | 0                                    | 0               | 92          | 22                        |
| White                              | 640                                | 13                   | 30                               | \$ 24,200.00                  | 8                               | \$ 5,800.00                  | 295                                  | 0               | 246         | 48                        |
| TIER 3 Counties                    |                                    |                      |                                  |                               |                                 |                              |                                      |                 |             |                           |
| Cannon                             | 375                                | 3                    | 6                                | \$ 4,400.00                   | 4                               | \$ 3,000.00                  | 350                                  | 0               |             | 12                        |
| Clay                               | 258                                | 17                   | 60                               | \$ 35,400.00                  | 10                              | \$ 7,400.00                  | 0                                    | 0               | 169         | 2                         |
| Jackson                            | 229                                | 17                   | 32                               | \$ 25,600.00                  | 10                              | \$ 6,400.00                  | 0                                    | 1               | 169         | 0                         |
| Pickett                            | 155                                | 5                    | 15                               | \$ 12,000.00                  | 3                               | \$ 2,000.00                  | 0                                    | 0               | 130         | 2                         |
| Van Buren                          | 224                                | 3                    | 5                                | \$ 3,400.00                   | 5                               | \$ 3,600.00                  | 20                                   | 0               | 167         | 24                        |
| Total:                             | 4016                               | 172                  | 435                              | \$309,000.00                  | 124                             | \$88,638.96                  | 1364                                 | 4               | 1,336       | 581                       |

| ERA EPP County | Ended 7/31/2025 HH | Amount      |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Clay           | 4                  | \$5,058.00  |
| Cumberland     | 1                  | \$2,025.00  |
| Dekalb         | 1                  | \$3,885.00  |
| Fentress       | 2                  | \$5,198.00  |
| Jackson        | 3                  | \$4,980.00  |
| Macon          | 1                  | \$1,600.00  |
| Putnam         | 1                  | \$3,645.41  |
| Smith          | 1                  | \$540.90    |
| Warren         | 7                  | \$18,918.51 |
| White          | 2                  | \$2,628.00  |
| Total          | 23                 | \$48,478.82 |



## Whistleblower Protection Act

Whistleblower rights and protections were initially addressed by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. In 1989, Congress passed the Whistleblower Protection Act to “strengthen and improve protection for the rights of federal employees, to prevent reprisals and to help eliminate wrongdoing within the government.” One way the law did this was by clarifying the procedure by which employees could report wrongdoing and workplace.

- A violation of law, rule or regulation
- Gross mismanagement
- Gross waste of funds
- Abuse of authority
- Substantial and specific danger to public health or safety

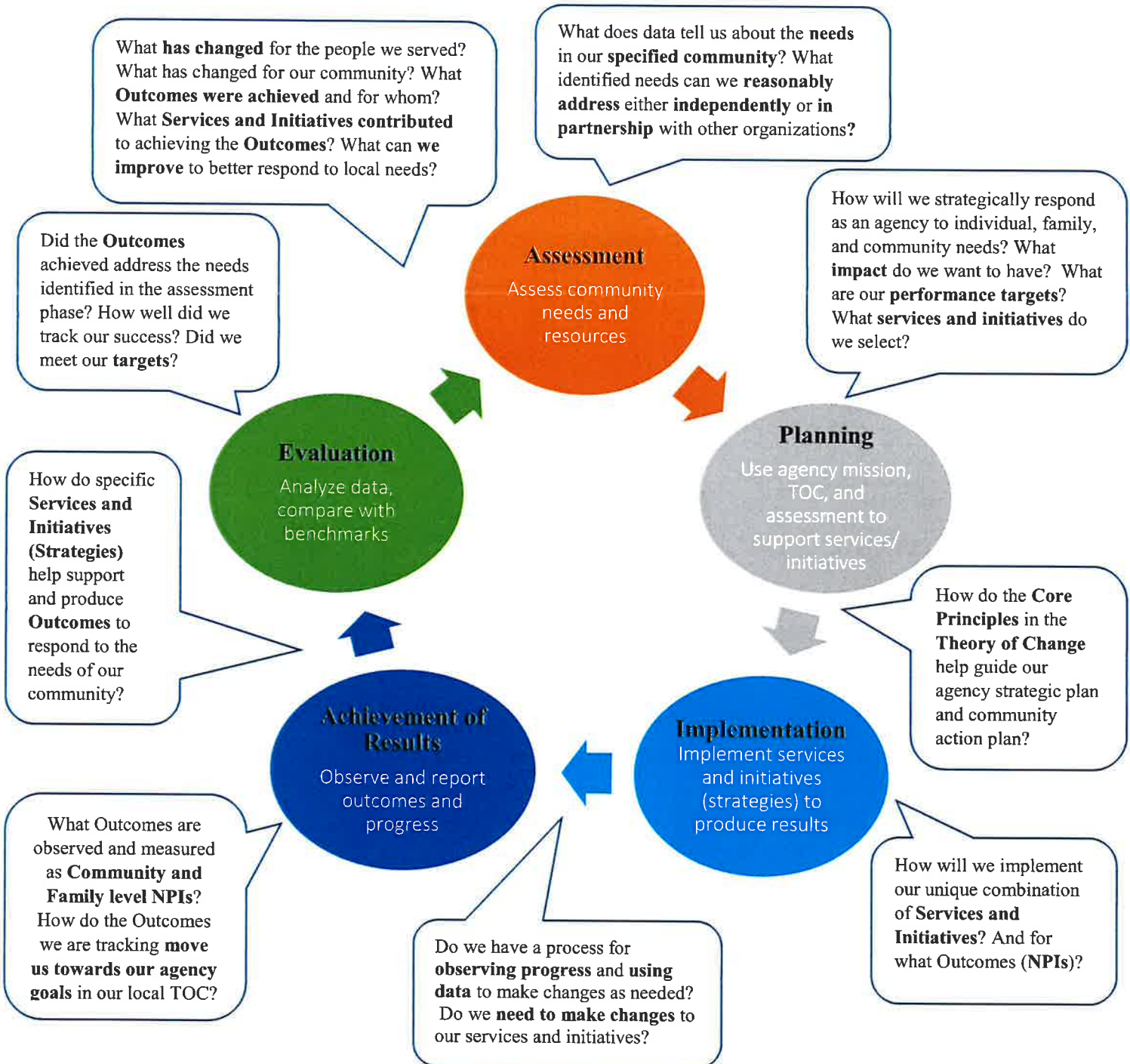
The Federal False Claims Act (qui tam) provision is one of the strongest whistleblower protection laws. It allows private persons to bring lawsuits on the governments behalf against those that have defrauded the government.

DHS/OIG Hotline: 1-800-323-8603

More information: [oig.dhs.gov/hotline](https://oig.dhs.gov/hotline)

# HOW DOES ROMA NG FIT INTO ROMA?

The ROMA Next Generation framework builds on ROMA principles and practices to support agencies and states as they gather and use data at all points of the cycle. Data collected and analyzed from assessment through evaluation allow us to identify our successes and our challenges and make use of the information for continuous improvement.



NASCS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS