CCF and Direct Services
Defining Capacity Building for CCF programs

You hear a lot about capacity building lately, especially in the context of Federal grants and nonprofits. As stipulated in all [CCF program announcements](), CCF funds must be used for capacity building--they may not be used for direct services.

Capacity building is the process of implementing activities critical to the long-term viability of your organization. The goal of capacity building is to increase organizational infrastructure and bolster sustainability. By building or increasing your organization's capacity, the effectiveness of programmatic activities and organizational operations will also increase.

The bottom line is MORE—if your organization is equipped to function smoothly at the operational level, your profile in the community will increase, you'll retain great staff, develop and implement better programs, engage more stakeholders, and be more likely to acquire funding in the future from diverse sources. The end result is your organization's ability to offer more effective services to those who need them most.

Think of a sustainability feedback loop. Using funds to directly serve clients will help for a time, but once those funds run out, your organization will not be any better equipped to carry out programs in the future. As a capacity building program, CCF strives to empower organizations to become more effective, sustainable social service providers. Engaging in activities that improve your organization's ability to function smoothly will benefit your community; those you serve will be able to depend on your services, well after the grant program ends.

The table below provides examples of capacity building vs. direct services.

CAPACITY BUILDING vs. DIRECT SERVICES	
Capacity Building	Direct Services
Researching and developing new programs or services	Implementing a program, program activities, or program curriculum that provides services to clients
Developing or designing a program or program curriculum	Purchasing food for service programs
Purchasing program-related equipment and durable supplies	Paying management costs for existing programs
Implementing systems to keep records on client needs, referrals, service recipient satisfaction, or service recipient outcomes	Holding seminars or events for clients
Evaluating current needs	Paying staff to work directly with clients