



Community Acceleration Project (CAP)

What Makes a Good CAP?

Design Your CAP for Success

Drawing on our four years of partnerships with San Mateo County community organizations, we have learned what helps to make the most of an organization's limited time and resources. Consider these lessons to design a focused, achievable project that advances your organization's goals and strengthens its impact in the community.

SUBJECT	LESSON LEARNED
Choose the Right Project	Select an important project that can remain relevant from the fall application period through final delivery in May. Consider holidays, approval schedules, and other timing constraints.
Define a Clear, Achievable Scope	Identify the underlying problem or opportunity without prescribing the solution. Focus on a meaningful result that a CAP Team can realistically accomplish within five months and approximately 80-90 hours of project work.
Set Clear Expectations and Deliverables	Explain what you hope to receive from the CAP Team and how your organization expects to use the work. Clear expectations help the team develop a practical work plan.
Designate an Engaged CAP Lead	Choose someone who can provide context, answer questions, secure timely decisions, and guide the team throughout the project.
Commit the Necessary Time	Plan for the CAP Lead to spend at least two to three hours per month meeting with the team, reviewing progress, and providing feedback. Some projects may require more time.
Communicate Regularly and Responsively	Establish a consistent meeting schedule and respond promptly when the team needs information, introductions, feedback, or decisions.
Remain Flexible and Plan for What Comes Next	Be prepared to adjust the project as new information emerges. Consider who will implement, maintain, or champion the team's recommendations after the CAP concludes.