Logic Garden Consulting

Risk Assessment

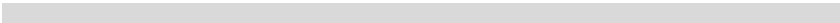Unity Community Action Council

UNITY
COMMUNITY ACTION
COUNCIL, INC.

Contents

2025 - 2027

Risk Assessment

Executive Summary

Introduction

Unity Community Action Council, Inc. (formerly West Central Community Action Council, Inc.) engaged Logic Garden Consulting Group, LLC to complete its first comprehensive, organization-wide risk assessment under new executive leadership. This initiative fulfills the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standard 4.6 requirement and positions Unity to strengthen compliance, mitigate risks, and continue effectively serving its communities.

The assessment combined a PESTEL analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal) with a Self-Assessment involving the board, executive leadership, and program managers. Findings confirm Unity's strong governance, accountability, and commitment to continuous improvement, supported by recent quality improvement efforts led by the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Georgia Community Action Association (GCAA). No major deficiencies were identified; however, several external and internal risks warrant proactive management.

Key External Risks

- Political/Economic: Heavy reliance on federal funding (CSBG, LIHEAP, Weatherization) exposes Unity to budget cuts, delays, and shifting policy priorities. Local economies face systemic poverty and dependence on vulnerable industries, heightening community need and financial strain.
- Social: High social vulnerability across the rural service area, with significant poverty, isolation, and lack of support networks. These conditions increase demand for services and highlight the need for intentional outreach and partnerships.
- Technological: Rural broadband gaps, outdated systems, and rising cybersecurity threats create operational and service delivery risks. Emerging technologies, such as AI, require cautious and ethical adoption.
- Environmental: While most of the service area shows low immediate risk, elevated particulate matter in Macon and Sumter counties may pose long-term health concerns.
- Legal: Complex compliance requirements, board governance responsibilities, client safety, and workforce management necessitate vigilant oversight, staff training, and strong contracts/MOUs with partners.

Key Internal Strengths

- Strong financial and programmatic controls with clear oversight from both the board and leadership.
- Active board engagement in fiscal, audit, and risk management responsibilities.
- Recent Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) reinforced policies, procedures, and internal controls.
- High commitment to transparency, accountability, and stakeholder inclusion.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Increase engagement and active participation of low-income representatives in board discussions.
- Strengthen unrestricted fundraising efforts to support operational flexibility.

- Expand outreach to reduce service disparities in remote areas.
- Invest in staff training on compliance, leadership development, technology use, and risk management

Recommendations

1. Diversify funding streams to reduce reliance on government allocations and expand unrestricted support.
2. Enhance community engagement strategies, particularly addressing isolation, mental health, and vulnerable populations.
3. Strengthen digital equity efforts, cybersecurity protocols, and prepare for responsible AI adoption.
4. Continue monitoring environmental data and collaborate with local partners on emerging risks.
5. Maintain rigorous legal and compliance oversight, including regular policy reviews and enhanced MOUs with partners.
6. Institutionalize a culture of continuous improvement through routine assessments, audits, and community feedback integration.

Concluding Remarks

Unity Community Action Council, Inc. is in a strong, stable position following its successful DHS and GCAA reviews. With proactive planning, diversification of funding, and strengthened community and technological capacity, Unity is well-prepared to safeguard its mission, build resilience, and continue empowering the communities it serves.

Introduction & Assessment Overview

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standard 4.6 requires: "An organization-wide, comprehensive risk assessment has been completed within the past 2 years and reported to the governing board" (NCAP, 2015). Based on this governing principle, leadership at Unity Community Action Council, Inc. has requested the assistance of Logic Garden Consulting Group, LLC. to successfully complete this requirement. This report is intended to not only satisfy the Organizational Standards requirement, but also provide Unity the ability to ensure any current or potential risks are addressed and mitigated to continue utilizing CSBG funding, protect the agency, and continue serving the community.

This risk assessment is the first for the agency under its new name Unity Community Action Council, Inc. (formerly known as West Central Community Action Council, Inc.), and the first under its new executive leadership, Camille Vickers, Certified ROMA Trainer. The agency is also actively working on completing its new Community Needs Assessment to ensure compliance with multiple Organizational Standards. Within this Federal Fiscal Year (2025), the agency has successfully undergone the IM 116 process and a thorough Quality Improvement Plans (QIP). These were both guided by the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Georgia Community Action Association (GCAA) to ensure that all requirements (fiscal, human resources, executive leadership, and board governance) were met and in compliance for the agency.

This assessment consisted of a PESTEL Analysis, and Self-Assessment (including board, executive, and program leadership). The key findings and recommendations are presented at the end of this report along with the supporting documentation. While no major findings were present, it is clear that the board, agency leadership, and staff are committed to organizational excellence as evidenced by their desire to participate in the assessment and consistently and actively striving for the agency's improvement.

PESTEL Analysis

To ensure that Unity has a holistic view of its risks, looking both outward and inward, a PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal) analysis was completed for the organization. This, paired with the self-assessment in the following section, will go beyond the normal SWOT analysis organizations are required to complete. While the factors within the PESTEL analysis are largely uncontrollable by the organization, Unity will use this data to equip itself and be poised to take on any potential issues that may come from these evolving times.

Political

Recent significant shifts in the federal administration has caused regulatory and funding policies at the local county and state levels and have significantly impacted nonprofits. Those that rely heavily on government grants have seen the most impact. The current administration's Federal Fiscal Year 2026 budget has proposed significant cuts or complete elimination to social services programs, including the CSBG, LIHEAP, and Weatherization grants, all of which Unity offers under its umbrella of services.

Economic

The economic conditions across Unity's service area present a series of challenges and risks that directly influence both the agency's operations and the communities it serves. Drawing on data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Bureau of Community Affairs (BCA), the average median household income across Unity's combined counties is $34,390 per year, significantly below national and state averages. This lower income level reflects systemic economic hardship in rural areas and directly correlates with higher rates of poverty, housing instability, and reliance on social services. These conditions not only increase demand for Unity's programs but also limit the ability of local residents and businesses to provide significant financial support to nonprofit organizations through philanthropy or charitable contributions.

The economic base of the region is concentrated in manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, utilities, mining, quarrying, and oil/gas extraction. While these industries provide critical employment, they are often highly sensitive to economic fluctuations, global commodity pricing, environmental regulations, and automation. For example, downturns in agriculture due to market volatility or extreme weather events can ripple across

entire communities, reducing household incomes and straining local support systems. Similarly, industries like manufacturing and mining may be vulnerable to closures, relocations, or technological shifts, which can quickly destabilize local economies. The region's economic reliance on a relatively narrow set of industries therefore creates a heightened risk of cyclical unemployment and underemployment, both of which drive up community needs for safety-net services.

For Unity as a nonprofit, financial stability is heavily dependent on government grants, particularly CSBG and related funding streams. While this is a common structure for Community Action Agencies, it creates vulnerability to federal and state budget fluctuations, shifting political priorities, and changes in programmatic requirements. Reduced allocations or delays in grant disbursement could significantly impact Unity's ability to sustain services, retain staff, and meet rising community needs. This underscores the importance of maintaining compliance with all federal and state guidelines while also building resilience through diversified funding.

The agency also faces the challenge of securing unrestricted funding, which remains essential for covering operational costs, investing in innovation, and responding flexibly to emergent needs. Restricted grants, while valuable, often limit the agency's ability to allocate funds to capacity-building, infrastructure, or community-driven initiatives. Increasing the flow of unrestricted dollars through individual giving campaigns, foundation partnerships, or earned-income ventures is a critical strategy for economic sustainability.

Additionally, Unity's organizational assets and revenue streams must be carefully managed to maintain fiscal health. This includes ensuring adequate reserves, prudent investment of available resources, and proactive financial planning that accounts for both short-term volatility and long-term sustainability. In rural service areas with limited local philanthropic infrastructure, nonprofits often compete for the same small pool of donors and foundation support, heightening the importance of strategic fundraising and regional collaboration.

Taken together, these economic factors highlight the dual risk landscape faced by Unity: the vulnerability of its communities to external economic shocks and the vulnerability of the agency itself to funding volatility. Sustaining operations in this environment requires not only compliance with government funding requirements but also intentional efforts to diversify revenue streams, expand unrestricted support, and strengthen long-term financial resilience.

Social

The social risks of the population across Unity's rural footprint indicate significant areas of concern that may directly impact community well-being and service delivery. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) data from 2022 and 2024, the service area demonstrates consistently high levels of vulnerability.

First, the socioeconomic status score of 0.93 (on a scale where 1.0 represents the highest vulnerability) highlights the pervasive challenges related to poverty, unemployment, lower income, and limited educational attainment. This socioeconomic strain creates barriers to accessing health care, stable housing, healthy food, and transportation—factors that in turn exacerbate reliance on social safety net programs and increase demand for agency services.

Additionally, the presence of five highly vulnerable SVI factors across the footprint underscores compounding risks. These factors may include limited access to transportation, crowded or unstable housing, disability prevalence, language barriers, or minority status, all of which intersect with socioeconomic hardship to create systemic barriers to resilience. When multiple vulnerabilities overlap, recovery from emergencies, disasters, or even everyday stressors becomes significantly more difficult for residents.

The 32.88% of residents lacking social or emotional support is especially concerning in a rural context, where social networks often play a crucial role in buffering against isolation and hardship. The absence of supportive networks contributes to increased mental health challenges, reduced resilience in times of crisis, and lower overall community cohesion.

Similarly, 35% of the population experiencing social isolation signals a critical public health risk. Rural geography often magnifies isolation due to physical distance from services, limited broadband or digital connectivity, and fewer opportunities for social engagement. Social isolation is linked to negative health outcomes, including higher rates of chronic disease, depression, and premature mortality. In terms of service delivery, isolation also means that at-risk individuals may be less likely to access available programs or even be aware of existing resources.

Taken together, these indicators point to a heightened need for intentional outreach, integrated service models, and strategies that not only address material deprivation but also strengthen social connectedness. Unity's programs must consider both the economic vulnerabilities and the social fabric of the community, recognizing that building resilience requires more than addressing financial hardship, it requires fostering supportive networks, reducing isolation, and creating equitable access to resources across the rural service area.

Technological

Technology presents a complex set of risks and challenges for Unity, particularly given the agency's rural service footprint. Limited access to high-speed internet and modern technology infrastructure continues to be one of the most pressing threats. Many households and even some community institutions within the region face gaps in broadband connectivity, device availability, and digital literacy. This digital divide creates inequities in accessing essential services as more public and private providers transition to self-service online platforms for applications, benefits, healthcare, and employment. Residents who are unable to navigate or afford these systems risk further marginalization, while the agency itself is challenged to bridge gaps with more labor-intensive, in-person support.

For Unity, these infrastructure challenges also translate into operational risks. Staff may face difficulties maintaining reliable connections for remote work, virtual training, and data management systems. The cost of keeping up with required technology, both hardware and software, can strain limited budgets, especially as funders and partners increasingly expect agencies to track and report outcomes through digital platforms. Inconsistent or outdated systems can hinder efficiency, compromise data quality, and erode client trust.

Another emerging area of concern is the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) and its implications for nonprofit operations. While AI adoption in human services is still evolving, its impact on case management, referrals, and documentation is on the horizon. Automated systems may streamline data entry, referrals, or eligibility verification, but they also raise risks related to data privacy, accuracy, and ethical use. Errors or biases embedded in AI systems could negatively affect vulnerable populations, especially if service decisions or referrals are influenced by algorithms without adequate human oversight.

For Unity, there is also the risk of falling behind in technological adaptation. As peer agencies, funders, and government entities begin experimenting with AI and advanced data tools, there may be pressure to adopt

these systems quickly. Without careful evaluation, training, and safeguards, premature adoption could expose the agency to cybersecurity vulnerabilities, compliance issues, or inefficiencies if systems do not integrate with existing case management practices.

Lastly, cybersecurity threats represent a constant and growing technological risk. As more sensitive client and program data is stored digitally, the agency faces exposure to phishing, ransomware, and data breaches. A single incident could not only compromise client confidentiality but also damage Unity's credibility and trust within the community.

Taken together, these technological risks highlight the need for Unity to pursue a proactive and balanced approach. Investments in digital infrastructure, staff training, and cybersecurity protections are critical, as is ongoing monitoring of emerging technologies like AI. Ultimately, Unity must position itself to leverage technology to improve service delivery while safeguarding the communities it serves from further marginalization due to the digital divide.

Environmental

Based on the 2023–2024 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reporting through the Air Toxics Cancer Risk, Particulate Matter, and Respiratory Hazard Environmental Justice Index, Unity's service area does not appear to face widespread or immediate environmental threats. Overall, the environmental burden across the footprint is comparatively low, suggesting that communities are not currently at high risk from the most common air quality–related hazards tracked by federal monitoring.

That said, Macon County and Sumter County stand out with higher-than-average levels of particulate matter and respiratory hazards. These elevated indicators may point to underlying environmental concerns connected to local industrial activity, heavy transportation routes, agricultural practices, or meteorological conditions that trap air pollutants. While these levels do not yet constitute an acute or urgent environmental threat, they represent a potential emerging risk for residents in those areas, particularly vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, and individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

From a community action perspective, these environmental factors intersect with social and health vulnerabilities. Rural residents already face barriers in accessing specialized healthcare, and higher particulate matter or respiratory hazards may contribute to increased rates of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or other respiratory issues. Without sufficient access to healthcare or mitigation resources, such risks could compound the health disparities already present across Unity's service area.

Another consideration is the potential for environmental risks to change rapidly due to external pressures. Climate variability, shifts in agricultural practices, or the siting of new industrial facilities could increase exposure over time. Additionally, the lack of robust environmental data at the local level makes it difficult to fully capture the cumulative impact of smaller, community-specific hazards such as water quality issues, pesticide use, or illegal dumping, which may not be reflected in federal datasets but can affect health and quality of life.

While current data does not indicate an immediate environmental crisis, ongoing monitoring and data collection are essential. Unity should remain attentive to emerging trends and potential hotspots within its footprint, especially in counties where particulate matter and respiratory hazards are already trending above average. Building relationships with local public health departments, environmental agencies, and academic institutions can help ensure the agency has access to timely data and can proactively respond to environmental risks that may exacerbate community vulnerabilities.

Legal

Nonprofit governance, particularly within a Community Action Agency, is shaped by a distinct set of legal and regulatory requirements that differ significantly from for-profit entities. Unity operates under a complex framework that includes the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, WIPFLI requirements, Organizational Standards, and both federal and state regulations. These frameworks dictate standards for operations, reporting, fiscal management, revenue use, and tax compliance. Because these requirements are frequently updated, agency leadership must remain vigilant in monitoring legal changes and ensuring compliance through regular reviews by certified public accountants (CPAs) who specialize in nonprofit regulations. Failure to comply can result in funding reductions, audit findings, or reputational damage that could threaten the agency's financial and operational stability.

Beyond compliance with regulatory frameworks, Unity also faces legal challenges in its interactions with clients, partner agencies, and community members. As a service provider, Unity must balance accessibility with risk management. Issues such as client grievances, disputes over eligibility, or dissatisfaction with services could escalate into formal complaints or legal claims if not addressed with clear policies and documentation. Additionally, the agency may be exposed to liability risks related to client safety during service delivery, including transportation programs, facility use, and community events. Ensuring that staff and volunteers are properly trained, policies are consistently enforced, and liability insurance coverage is adequate is critical to mitigating these risks.

Partnerships with other agencies and community organizations also create potential legal exposures. Collaboration is essential for holistic service delivery, but it can bring risks such as data-sharing and confidentiality concerns under HIPAA or FERPA, contract disputes, or misunderstandings about roles and responsibilities. Without carefully constructed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and clear legal agreements, Unity could find itself entangled in disputes that divert resources away from its mission.

At the community level, legal risks may arise from governance practices and public accountability. As a Community Action Agency, Unity is required to maintain a tripartite board structure with representation from elected officials, community members, and low-income representatives. While this governance model ensures diverse input, it also increases the potential for conflict of interest, disagreements over fiduciary duties, or disputes related to transparency and decision-making processes. Community perceptions of fairness, accountability, or exclusion could escalate into legal or reputational challenges if not proactively managed. Finally, like all nonprofits, Unity faces employment-related legal risks. These include compliance with federal and state labor laws, wage and hour requirements, workplace safety standards, and protections against discrimination or harassment. In a rural setting, where the pool of qualified staff may be limited, the risk of disputes related to hiring, termination, or workplace conditions may be heightened.

Taken together, these legal risks highlight the necessity for Unity to maintain robust internal controls, clear policies, ongoing staff training, and proactive legal oversight. Regular consultation with nonprofit legal experts and CPAs, combined with transparent communication with stakeholders, will help the agency navigate an increasingly complex legal environment while maintaining trust and stability in the communities it serves.

Self-Assessment

Unity Community Action Council, Inc. completed a comprehensive self-assessment based upon the National Community Action Partnership's (NCAP) guided self-assessment. The categories focused upon the foundational aspects of a Community Action Agency that included: Low-Income Community Representative Engagement, Program Manager Controls, Board Controls, and an overall Control Review. The assessment was completed by the agency's Board Chair, Executive Director, and Program Leadership. The following overview is a highlight of the strengths and opportunities for improvement. This full, compiled completed document is attached as Appendix A.

Low-Income Community Representative Engagement

Based on the agency review, the Self-Assessment data reflected that low-income community representatives are encouraged to be active participants within the organization. This included:

- Sharing community perceptions about the integrity, honesty, and effectiveness of the agency services with management and the board conducting the risk assessment

- Providing their perceptions of community needs, their importance and urgency, to assist as a part of the needs assessment

- Sharing their knowledge of other community resources that may impact the demand of the agency's services

- Observation and provision of feedback based on the program activities, service quality, and participant treatment as a part of the board's evaluation

- Participation in the board's discussion surrounding the annual budget to understand the proposed use of resources, and the ability to express their views about the priorities for the use of unrestricted funding

- Agency leadership noted that there were three opportunities for improvement for low-income community representatives participation that included the following:

- The representatives need more encouragement to share their knowledge of the community to provide more effective operation of the agency

- During board discussions, low-income representatives should raise more questions and offer their observations based on their experiences

- Provide more input and sharing of knowledge to support full engagement and participation of all the low-income representatives for meetings.

Program Manager Controls

- From the Self-Assessment data provided by the program leadership Program Manager Control Checklist, all categories were listed as either Implemented Fully or Implemented Partially. There were no items on the control checklist that were listed as Not Implemented. To highlight the Implemented Fully categories, the data included the following results:

- The program manager reviews new funding agreements for compliance requirements and ensures that there are adequate control systems in place to meet these requirements

- There is a clear whistleblower policy that focuses on respect, honesty, and integrity that is shared with all team members

- Management seeks feedback from the staff in which they supervise and regularly reviews and approves personnel reports

- Purchase controls are in place to ensure that input is sought from program management and that all program purchases are reasonable and allowable based on grant guidelines

- There is adequate information sharing, training, and review available to program management and staff members

- Monitoring practices are in place to review program and fiscal data by program management staff

- The categories that were marked as Implemented Partially are as follows:

- Program management staff are regularly asked to participate in risk assessment discussions

- The board has an established environment that demands honesty and integrity and encourages all staff to report concerns without retaliation

- Program management staff has easy access to current fiscal policies and procedures which are clear and understandable

- Program management staff fully understand the process to report and resolve program and financial data questions and errors and follow it clearly and consistently

Board Controls

The board chair facilitated the Self-Assessment process using the Board Control Committee Checklist, ensuring that Unity's governance practices were thoroughly reviewed. Based on the data provided, the assessment confirmed that the board has recently examined and reaffirmed its responsibilities across a wide range of critical oversight areas. This includes the review and implementation of board policies, adherence to established governance practices, and the board's direct role in ensuring organizational accountability.

Specifically, the assessment reflected active engagement in full board financial oversight, with regular reviews of financial reports, budgets, and fiscal controls to ensure alignment with nonprofit governance standards and funder requirements. The finance committee checklist was also evaluated, demonstrating that appropriate safeguards are in place for financial planning, monitoring, and reporting. Similarly, the check signer checklist was reviewed to confirm appropriate internal controls, segregation of duties, and protections against fraud or misuse of funds.

The board also affirmed its role in audit committee responsibilities, ensuring that external audits are conducted annually, findings are addressed in a timely manner, and corrective action plans are developed if needed. The investment oversight review further demonstrated the board's commitment to protecting and stewarding agency resources by monitoring investment policies, evaluating risk exposure, and ensuring that investments are consistent with the organization's mission and long-term financial health.

Importantly, the self-assessment confirmed active engagement in board risk management oversight. The board has reviewed Unity's organizational risk profile and considered areas such as fiscal sustainability, regulatory compliance, reputational protection, and emerging external threats (social, technological, environmental, and legal). This proactive review ensures that the board is not only fulfilling its fiduciary duty but is also anticipating and planning for risks that could impact the agency's ability to serve its community.

Lastly, the board compliance oversight review confirmed that the board remains attentive to regulatory and legal requirements, including those tied to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards, IRS nonprofit regulations, state-level compliance mandates, and federal OMB guidance. This demonstrates an organizational culture of accountability, transparency, and continual improvement.

Taken together, the self-assessment reflects a high level of board engagement and governance maturity. The structured review process helps ensure that Unity's board remains well-positioned to provide effective leadership, safeguard public trust, and support the agency in navigating both opportunities and risks. By institutionalizing this process, the board reinforces its commitment to strong governance as a foundation for advancing Unity's mission.

Overall Control Review

The overall control review of Unity reflects a sound and well-documented system of internal oversight, which has been reviewed and affirmed by both the board of directors and the agency's leadership team. This demonstrates a strong commitment to accountability, transparency, and organizational integrity. The recent Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) provided a structured framework for evaluating and strengthening Unity's policies, procedures, and operational controls, ensuring the agency remains in compliance with federal, state, and funding-source requirements.

The controls review encompassed key areas of organizational risk management, including fiscal oversight, program implementation, human resources, and compliance monitoring. Financial controls were found to be appropriately structured, with segregation of duties, documented approval processes, and board-level review of financial statements to mitigate risks of fraud or mismanagement. The QIP also ensured that procurement, contracting, and check-signing policies were reviewed for alignment with OMB Uniform Guidance and CSBG Organizational Standards.

In terms of programmatic controls, Unity has reviewed procedures for eligibility determination, client data management, and outcome reporting. These controls are critical for maintaining service integrity, protecting client confidentiality, and ensuring accurate reporting to funders. Oversight mechanisms, such as periodic file reviews and internal audits, have been reinforced to ensure compliance with federal and state mandates.

From a governance perspective, the board's involvement in oversight was strengthened through its review of audit committee responsibilities, risk management practices, and compliance monitoring. This level of engagement helps ensure that both the board and leadership share accountability for upholding control systems and addressing any identified gaps.

The QIP also addressed standard operating procedures (SOPs), reinforcing the need for consistency across departments and programs. By standardizing procedures, Unity reduces the risk of operational inefficiencies, compliance failures, or inconsistent service delivery. SOPs also provide continuity during leadership transitions or staffing changes, reducing organizational vulnerability.

Importantly, the controls review acknowledged that policies and procedures must be dynamic, not static. As funding requirements, regulations, and community needs evolve, Unity must continue to monitor its control environment and make adjustments accordingly. Regular internal audits, external reviews by CPAs specializing in nonprofit compliance, and ongoing staff training are key components of maintaining a strong control framework.

OVERALL, THE REVIEW CONCLUDES THAT UNITY HAS A ROBUST SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROLS THAT ALIGNS WITH BEST PRACTICES FOR NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE AND FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY. THE QIP DEMONSTRATES A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, ENSURING THAT UNITY NOT ONLY MEETS CURRENT COMPLIANCE STANDARDS BUT IS ALSO WELL-POSITIONED TO ANTICIPATE AND RESPOND TO FUTURE RISKS.

Recommendations

External

As outlined in the PESTEL analysis, many of the risks identified are external to the agency and largely outside of Unity's direct control. However, proactive risk mitigation strategies can reduce their impact. Unity should continue to adopt a forward-looking approach that includes contingency planning, routine monitoring, and scenario-based preparedness. This means establishing protocols for responding to identified threats, conducting regular reviews of external risks, and developing strategic methods for resolving issues as they arise. By staying proactive, Unity will be positioned to adapt quickly to environmental changes while safeguarding its mission and service delivery. grounded in the belief that lasting change begins with empowering individuals and strengthening communities throughout Crisp, Dooly, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor, and Webster counties.

Political

- Diversify funding streams by prioritizing the pursuit and maintenance of non-governmental grants, reducing reliance on federal and state allocations.
- Strengthen governmental relations by fostering relationships with local and state leaders, as well as actively participating in the Government Solutions Committee within the Georgia Community Action Association (GCAA).
- Develop service continuity plans to ensure that core services can continue in the event of reduced or eliminated government funding, including exploring reserve funds, partnerships, or phased service models.

Economic

- Prioritize unrestricted funding through targeted fundraising efforts, ensuring the agency maintains flexibility to address emerging needs and operational costs.

- Expand grant-writing capacity to capture additional corporate, foundation, and philanthropic opportunities, increasing economic stability and diversifying income streams.
- Cultivate local business partnerships in the primary industries across Unity's footprint (manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and energy-related sectors) to explore sponsorships, workforce initiatives, and corporate giving opportunities.
- Schedule regular asset and investment reviews to maximize returns and safeguard long-term sustainability, ensuring financial resources are actively managed.

Social

- Enhance outreach efforts to Unity's most remote service areas, ensuring all eligible households can access available programs and reducing disparities in service delivery.
- Strengthen partnerships for mental health services by creating referral networks and collaborations that integrate emotional and social support into existing programs, addressing the high rates of social isolation and lack of support identified in the service area.
- Promote community engagement strategies that foster social connectedness, volunteerism, and peer support programs, building resilience across vulnerable populations.

Technological

- Advance digital equity initiatives by exploring technology access and digital literacy programs, potentially in collaboration with local governments, internet providers, and state-funded programs targeting rural areas.
- Adopt hybrid service models to expand accessibility, offering remote options (video conferencing, digital document submission, and virtual case management) for clients with internet access, while maintaining in-person services for those without.
- Prepare for AI adoption responsibly by engaging in AI preparedness workshops through GCAA and SmartQuest, ensuring Unity leverages new tools to improve efficiency while prioritizing data integrity, client privacy, and ethical safeguards.

- Strengthen cybersecurity protocols by updating policies, training staff on best practices, and ensuring adequate protections for sensitive client and financial data.

Environmental

- Continue environmental monitoring using EPA and Environmental Justice Index data to track potential risks related to air quality, particulate matter, and respiratory hazards, particularly in Macon and Sumter counties.
- Engage with local health and environmental partners to better understand community-specific risks, such as agricultural practices, industrial activities, or water quality concerns.
- Incorporate climate awareness into future risk planning by considering potential impacts of extreme weather, flooding, or heat events on service delivery and client vulnerability.

Legal

- Provide ongoing compliance training to staff, leadership, and the board, focusing on OMB guidance, WIPFLI requirements, Organizational Standards, and state or grantor-specific guidelines.
- Conduct a legal review of bylaws at least every five years in accordance with Organizational Standard 5.03, and use this opportunity to assess other policies and procedures for alignment with best practices.
- Strengthen contracts and MOUs with partner agencies to clarify roles, responsibilities, and data-sharing agreements, reducing risks of disputes or compliance failures.
- Enhance risk management protocols for client interactions, workplace safety, and employment practices to prevent grievances or legal claims.

Internal

- Based on the internal self-assessment and the recent Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), Unity's internal controls and processes are strong, with minimal items of concern. Recent organizational transitions,

including a name change, executive leadership change, and completion of a DHS-led QIP, have reinforced compliance with board, fiscal, human resources, and program management requirements.

- Address Opportunity for Improvement (OFI) items by maintaining strong engagement with the board, clients, and program leaders. OFIs can be resolved through routine oversight, capacity-building, and intentional inclusion of client voices.
- Ensure maximum feasible participation by continuing to solicit feedback, ideas, and concerns from low-income populations, embedding community perspectives into program design and decision-making.
- Support implementation of partially completed processes by investing in staff training, leadership development, and change management strategies, recognizing that new policies and leadership require time to be fully institutionalized.

Overall

Unity Community Action Council, Inc. is in a strong and stable position following its recent DHS and GCAA review and QIP. The agency has implemented new processes, procedures, and controls that ensure compliance with federal, state, and organizational standards. Moving forward, Unity's success will depend on its ability to:

- Stay proactive in monitoring external risks.
- Continue diversifying funding streams and securing unrestricted support.
- Strengthen community partnerships that address social vulnerabilities.
- Responsibly adopt technological tools while safeguarding client privacy.
- Maintain a culture of continuous improvement and compliance.

By taking these steps, Unity will be well-positioned to safeguard its operations, strengthen resilience, and continue advancing its mission to serve and empower communities across its rural footprint.

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