

The Camden Capacity Building Project:

A Comprehensive Approach for Camden City Council and Administration

As the state of New Jersey prepared the Municipal Revitalization and Economic Recovery Act (MRERA) for the City of Camden, it was clear that realizing the long-term benefits of economic and infrastructure investment in Camden would depend on simultaneously rebuilding the governmental capacity of the City. Under the MRERA, the Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI) has developed a capacity building program for Camden. The goal is to help transform Camden into a city in which government is linked to its people by responsive service systems, state-of-the-art technology, and accountable decision-making processes. Outlined below are the fundamental initiatives necessary to increase the capacity and effectiveness of Camden City Government (CCG).

Phase I: Framework, Design and Outcomes

In Phase I, WRI worked directly with City Council, the COO, the Mayor and City Directors to assess the organizational environment. Specific activities and findings of Phase I included:

- In-depth interviews with City Council, the Mayor, the COO, and key stakeholders.
- Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (SWOT) analysis of CCG organization, human resources and governmental processes.
- A report of CCG information technology environment.
- Two retreats for Council, Department Directors, the Mayor and COO.
- Job descriptions for City Council nonpartisan, professional staff and a search for those positions, in accordance with MRERA.



Camden City Department Directors collaborate during training activities, July 2005



Camden City Government Managers participate in a two day training in April 2006

Phase II: Framework, Design and Outcomes

Integral functions of the ongoing Phase II components are the proactive facilitation, coaching, and skill development of all management levels of CCG staff. Outlined below are the fundamental initiatives of Phase II designed to increase the capacity and effectiveness of CCG.

- Design and implementing legislative and administrative trainings for Camden City Council based on stakeholder interviews and other source data.
- Conducting a system-wide developmental and technical skills survey of employees in Camden government.
- Utilized needs analysis survey to design and implement an on-going executive leadership training program for Camden's administrative Department Directors and Managers.