

RUSHER LOSCAVIO FISHER

NONPROFIT EXECUTIVE SEARCH

CAREER PROSPECTUS

**POSITION:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**ORGANIZATION:** [www.buttecaa.com](http://www.buttecaa.com)

**ORGANIZATION  
BACKGROUND:**

The Community Action Agency of Butte County, Inc. (CAABCI) is a critically important nonprofit organization devoted to services to individuals and families coping with poverty in Butte County and five neighboring rural Northern California counties (Tehama, Plumas, Sierra, Colusa, and Glenn). As is common in smaller communities and rural areas, low density of population does not provide the critical mass to support extensive networks of nonprofit organizations, so responsibilities are concentrated among county and local government, and a few significant nonprofits, of which in its large region CAABCI is notable. The few small cities (e.g., Chico, Oroville) are surrounded by relatively vast rural areas, predominantly agricultural, and forested federal lands. Residents throughout the United States in such areas typically include higher percentages of individuals and families in poverty and the challenges of the region served by CAABCI have been exacerbated by widespread dislocations of those in or at risk of poverty by the failure of the Oroville Dam, by drought, and by major wildfires (e.g., the Camp Fire, the Dixie Fire). The next Chief Executive Officer of CAABCI will find an exceptional opportunity to continue the long history of distinction earned by CAABCI in its nonprofit services to the disadvantaged.

After nearly 30 years in the CEO position, following previous experience in Southern California poverty-fighting nonprofits, Tom Tenorio has announced his plan to retire in the first half of 2022, at the convenience of the Board and his successor. Achievements during Tom's long tenure are numerous; his successor will inherit an organization with long-term staff espousing a culture, having adopted the Strength Finders model, focused on strengths and weaknesses, dedicated Board, a history of scrupulous financial management and balanced budgets, and an impact through the diversity of its programs that is felt throughout the large region served. Always looking to the future, a current multi-year strategic plan is expected to reach completion in early 2022.

CAABCI is currently governed by a tri-partite Board (one-third from the public sector, one-third from the private sector, and one third from the low-income community) of eight, with room to grow up to 12 members. The staff size fluctuates in the 35-45 FTE range, and is now at the low end because of the pandemic and exigencies in the funding streams. The 2021 balanced Budget of February 2021 projects about \$5.2 million in revenues and expenditures, but recent success in contracting will likely increase the current year and next year substantially with respect to energy services. Most revenue is from federal, state, and local government contracts, with relatively modest support from an endowment fund and from charitable contributions to the Food Bank.

The program services of CAABCI fall into four broad categories:

- Food and nutrition services. The North State Food Bank purchases or receives in-kind contributions of food which distributes food to some 50 local partner organizations in 6 counties that provide needed distributions to those at risk of food insecurity. Some distributions, in addition, are achieved directly

through a “tailgate” model, to address the needs of those in remote locations.

- Homeless prevention services. Esplanade House was founded by CAABCI in 1991, receiving start-up and ongoing financial support from an active group of community leaders, including the establishment of a restricted endowment fund at the area’s community foundation. Originally focused on transitional housing in 14 units in a former motel, in 2003 a 60-unit multifamily complex was added, again with the generous support of a cadre of community leaders. Today, a total of some 60 units with a maximum capacity of about 250 beds is dedicated to both transitional and permanent housing, enriched by an array of support services (e.g., Head Start, health assessment, after-school/childcare), in collaboration with other organizations, including Chico State University.
- Energy services. Energy costs are significant and costly in Northern California, on average consuming some 16% of income and in many cases forcing low-income residents to choose between the provision of home utilities and food or medicine. Seniors on fixed income are especially vulnerable and many in these six counties live in remote locations. A very substantial program of CAABCI is a federally-funded contract that enables the nonprofit to offer “weatherization” to the large percentage of homes occupied by disadvantaged residents, reducing costs and achieving energy saving. An energy assistance program is available to assist qualified households in paying utility costs and in arranging for emergency services when in receipt of a shut-off notice.
- Community services. These programs are varied and invaluable to the community served. Among these programs is a seasonal service, largely delivered through volunteers, providing assistance with income tax reporting (VITA); a disaster relief program whose importance in a region battered by

wild fire cannot be overstated; a homeless prevention program in a region which at the best of times had higher poverty and unemployment rates than California averages, now impacted dramatically by as many as 20,000 - 30,000 residents seeking refuge from the loss of their homes in the wild fires. The funding for these varied services is also essential to the operations of CAABCI because it provides support to the admirably low overhead costs of the entire nonprofit, about \$350,000 for Administration, or less than 7% of the 2021 budget. This economy, from which all programs benefit, has been achieved in part by reducing occupancy costs, moving Administrative Services to underutilized space in Esplanade House.

Future challenges. CAABCI is thriving because the long-serving CEO and staff have found ways to do what needs to be done in adapting to fluctuating funding streams in times when low-income residents are being severely impacted by natural disaster. The demands of the programs and the needs of the community exceed the budget and manpower resources available. This will continue to pose a real challenge to sustainability, especially with a change in chief executive leadership. Essential to the future will be the ability of the next executive director to recruit and motivate able staff, to leverage current resources and attract new funding, and to thrive effectively in this environment.

The ideal Chief Executive Officer will relish not only the opportunity to perpetuate the remarkable work of a healthy nonprofit organization but to address the numerous challenges that can be overcome during the next CEO's tenure, including:

- The Weatherization program is an important service, a hefty budget component, and employs a substantial workforce. With many homes having benefitted from this program and not yet qualified for updating, with many new homes, especially in

more urban areas and areas that suffered from wildfires, being built to higher code weatherization standards, the demand for services is increasingly in more remote areas where program costs per client are increased, requiring more outreach and more efficient business models for the program to thrive.

- The needs of the region for food security far outstrip the ability of the North State Food Bank to meet them. New resources to fund food distribution must be found, especially in remote and rural areas. The interrupted relationship with Feeding America has hampered CAABCI in enhancing the volume of its available food and every effort must be bent to reestablish that partnership.
- Esplanade House provides invaluable temporary and permanent housing services. Federal funds guided by “Housing First” priorities have negatively impacted CAABCI’s ability to pursue its historic priority of providing transitional housing. Strategic decisions about the balance between transitional and permanent housing and then effective funding and outreach to prospective residents will be essential to take advantage of the unique resource of Esplanade House.

No qualified chief executive expects nonprofit leadership to be a cakewalk. The next CEO of CAABCI will appreciate the assets of this carefully managed nonprofit, its appreciation by its community, its critically important services to at-risk residents, and the opportunities for organizational advancement offered to the effective institution-builder. A new CEO will be stepping in to his/her role at an auspicious moment in CAABCI’s history. After 54 successful years and with the retirement of a respected leader in the poverty-fighting field, the right successor to Tom Tenorio will be welcomed into a healthy organization poised for continuing enhancement and growth and a community that appreciates, trusts, and supports CAABCI. Fortunately, Chico is distant from the heavily forested areas at risk of wildfire. Located in a region known for its beauty and

outdoor recreation, for its affordability and quality-of-life, for the contributions of its state university and community colleges, for the vigor of its business communities and amenities for families, and headquartered in a city of considerable size (120,000) and enhanced amenities, qualified candidates for this position will find this an unusually attractive career opportunity.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the management and operation of all programs and services provided by the Community Action Agency of Butte County, for implementing all policy decisions of the governing Board, and for employing and supervising a staff whose dedication and morale create a healthy working environment and produce quality of service more than adequate to achieve Board objectives. S/he oversees the administrative and fiduciary functions of CAABCI. S/he represents CAABCI to the community and builds strong relationships with the parents and families of people served, key stakeholders, staff, and the Board.

Specifically, the CEO:

- Helps determine and ensure, in partnership with the governing Board, that the mission, vision, and values of CAABCI are carried out.
- Anticipates changing community needs with vision and imagination, initiates long-range strategic and operational planning with the Board and others, and is responsible and accountable for implementation of all such plans.
- Is acutely aware, because of domain expertise acquired by experience in the field of social services to low-income communities, or, transferable learning from experience providing other social services, of the vulnerability of CAABCI clients.
- Demonstrates an extremely high level of business acumen. Works with the staff to recommend budgets, oversees revenues and expenditures, maintains internal controls and financial discipline, and works closely with

the Board to ensure the financial wellbeing of the organization and continuing scrupulous compliance with all funding regulations and restrictions.

- Embodies an entrepreneurial sophistication and capacity to assess cost-benefits and financial risk that enables CAABCI to pursue development opportunities for reorganized, new or expanded services, as part of a well-conceived and articulated framework, value-based and strategically-oriented. Is able also to assess the cost-benefits of ongoing programs and to make politically unpopular recommendations to the Board when certain program services may no longer be sustainable or justifiable. Above all, s/he must be a visionary with extraordinary capacity to mobilize physical and human resources to implement programs and services.
- Works closely with Board members, community friends of CAABCI, families and advocates of clients, and staff to identify, cultivate, and solicit public funding wherever available as well as private sources for charitable gifts in support of the programs of CAABCI. Sustains candid and trusting relationships with the government contractors with whom community needs are addressed. Increases charitable giving to fund both operations, capital requirements, and growth at a level appropriate to CAABCI's needs, present and future.
- Works closely with all external funding sources and service providers with shared interests in services to low-income residents and promotes inter-organizational partnerships wherever collaboration can enhance such services. Appreciates the value of networking and earns the respect of other agencies through a style of collaboration that places the interests of people served above all else.
- Understands knowledge management, program evaluation, the usefulness of metrics, and is comfortable with information technology and its broad applications. Appreciates the importance of social media, branding, website design, marketing, and media relations in projecting CAABCI to the community and all current and prospective stakeholders.

- Represents and is an articulate, informed, persuasive, charismatic advocate of CAABCI to community stakeholders, government, associations, agencies, and the media. Has the gravitas and charisma to be the recognizable face of a highly-regarded service organization.
- Oversees and approves contracts, maintains an agency-wide standard of operation that sets a high standard with respect to all regulations, and complies with all external reporting requirements. Takes executive responsibility for agency compliance with all applicable non-profit laws, labor/workplace laws, contractual obligations, and donor restrictions, and maintains appropriate internal policies and procedures to ensure such compliance. Manages with such a high level of commitment to accuracy, transparency, and trust – and demands the same from all colleagues – that a well-informed, no-surprises governing Board is never in doubt or concerned about performance or compliance information.

**PROFESSIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS:**

The ideal candidate for Executive Director will have:

- Passion for service to low-income residents, and genuine affection, respect, and compassion for them and their families. Embodiment of values, style, and energy that sustain the generosity of spirit that is CAABCI's hallmark.
- Extensive non-profit experience at the executive level, or, executive experience with an extensive history of public service.
- Ability to establish relationships with community decision-makers, to involve diverse leaders in the work of CAABCI, and with the Board to recruit and support effective new and continuing Board members.
- Domain expertise: an understanding of how services are provided to low-income individuals and families,

and an understanding of funding streams supporting anti-poverty services is certainly preferred, but many exceptional candidates are expected to demonstrate proven leadership with a broad array of skills transferable to a complex non-profit human services organization and the ability quickly to master a new, highly regulated, and very complex field of service.

- Profit and loss experience evidencing a high level of financial acumen and the ability to lead creatively in times of both surplus and financial exigency; entrepreneurial ability appropriate to a rapidly changing and turbulent funding and service environment. Evidence of anticipation of risk, sound judgment in crisis, grace under pressure.
- Ability to move an organization forward day by day in the context of the long view. Experience with successful implementation of plans, making intentions happen, both tactically and strategically, with planning, anticipation of challenges and surprises, monitoring of progress, attentive follow-up of outcomes and implications for next steps.
- Fundraising ability, with the tenacity to pursue the “yes,” and the durability to rebound from the “no,” fueled by an infectious passion for the work. A sophisticated understanding of how to engage community friends and Board in attracting governmental, corporate, foundation, and individual support to provide resources essential to maintain a viable and sustainable business model. The absolute integrity to earn and maintain the trust of funders.
- Highly developed communication skills, and especially the ability to listen and learn. Flexibility to be accessible and present to all constituencies – staff, people served and their families, Board, funders, external colleagues, the community, State and Federal policymakers.
- Understand the importance of advocacy, have a demonstrated ability to be the effective voice and face of CAABCI in the community. Also be dedicated to the role of the leader in advocating for staff and

people served, grounded in values of social justice, fairness, appreciation of diversity, and the transcendent value of human dignity.

- Demonstrate the ability to motivate, mentor, and inspire an effective professional and volunteer workforce, to work selflessly and closely, in partnership, and in a position of leadership, with a diverse staff, in a style of respect and collaboration. The dedication to accessibility that enables staff to feel known and appreciated by their leader. The ability to delegate and avoid micromanagement unless necessary to support or train staff, balanced by a can-do and no-job-too-small readiness; great attention to interpersonal detail with unfailing attention to the big picture. The confidence to lead; the confidence to follow. A sensitivity to the critical importance of inclusiveness and the avoidance of even a hint of favoritism or partiality. The sensitivity to recruit, mentor, reward, and advance talented staff; appreciation of longevity of service; the sound judgment, patience, and confidence to hold staff accountable for their performance and to make difficult personnel changes when appropriate.
- An exemplary work ethic, authenticity, robust high energy, persistence, durability, impeccable integrity, a good sense of humor, and the humility that comes with a wise and caring view of the human condition.

**EDUCATION:** Lifelong learning and/or educational achievement appropriate to the complexity of the position.

**COMPENSATION:** Compensation will be competitive, probably in the range of \$120,000 - \$140,000, negotiable based on experience, plus benefits.

Rusher Loscavio Fisher  
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Community Action Agency of Butte County  
Chief Executive Officer  
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Robert Fisher and Michael Loscavio of Rusher Loscavio Fisher Nonprofit Executive Search (San Francisco Bay Area) are privileged to provide recruitment and leadership transition counsel to the Community Action Agency of Butte County. We suggest review of both [www.buttecaa.com](http://www.buttecaa.com) and [www.rll.com](http://www.rll.com). CAABCI takes great pride in the diversity of its staff and encourages candidacy to all who are qualified. All discussions with prospects for this position will be treated with *utmost discretion*.

We would be grateful to receive inquiries, expressions of interest, nominations, and applications *in strict confidence* at the following address:

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