



Center for African American Recovery Development

RCO Toolkit

Resource 3.8A

Sustainable Leadership & Workforce Development Guide



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Overview:

A movement can't grow if it doesn't invest in its own people. This guide helps Black-led RCOs build strong leadership pipelines, mentorship systems, and sustainable internal development models that reflect our values, our communities, and our legacy.

We've seen how external gatekeeping limits access to leadership spaces in recovery. This guide is a tool for building our own tables—not just asking for seats. Whether you're building a board, mentoring new voices, or preparing staff for long-term leadership, this resource is designed to help you grow your people from within.

In This Guide:

- **Leadership Pipeline Planning:**
How to identify emerging leaders, map roles, and develop internal growth pathways for continuity and succession.
 - **Mentorship Models:**
Simple frameworks to pair seasoned leaders with up-and-coming advocates for mutual growth and knowledge transfer.
 - **Workforce Readiness Tools:**
Tips for onboarding, training, and nurturing culturally aligned staff—from frontline peers to executive leadership.
 - **Capacity-Building with Intention:**
Avoid burnout cycles and build infrastructure that supports people, not just programs.
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Who This Is For:

Black-led RCOs that are ready to lead on their own terms, build internal capacity, and create lasting community-based leadership without relying on gatekeepers.

CAARD Can Help:

Need support applying these strategies in your organization? CAARD offers facilitation, coaching, and leadership development tailored to your community's needs. Reach out to learn more.