NCBI 101 – Building Blocks: Institutional Capacity & Organizational Readiness for Development

Course Goal:
To equip nonprofit executives and boards with the structure, leadership, and operational systems required to function as credible housing developers. Participants complete a comprehensive readiness audit and create an actionable plan for organizational growth and compliance.

Weekly Course Sequence

Week	Module Description	Core Competencies / Activities
1. Strategic Vision & Alignment	Ground the organization's purpose in the housing ecosystem. Clarify how your mission connects to affordable-housing outcomes and identify early capacity gaps.	**Competencies:** Mission clarity and alignment with housing goals. **Activities:** Develop or refine mission and vision statements; complete an Institutional Self-Assessment;
2. Governance Architecture & Board Composition	Establish a compliant, functional board structure and define board roles, terms, and duties of care, loyalty, and obedience.	**Competencies:** Board structure, fiduciary duties, and compliance **Activities:** Confirm board roster and basic governance documents (articles, bylaws, IRS letter).
3. Executive Leadership & Management Culture	Build a leadership framework that balances board oversight and staff authority. Clarify decision-making lines and accountability systems.	**Competencies:** Leadership development, organizational culture, accountability, and delegation. **Activities:** Map a simple leadership/org chart showing who decides what.
4. Leadership & Talent Infrastructure	Strengthen the organization's internal capacity through role clarity, leadership continuity, and operational alignment.	**Competencies:** Leadership pipeline design, role clarity, delegation, and continuity planning**.** **Activities:** Complete the *Leadership and Operations Assessment Survey* to identify staff, volunteer, and leadership strengths, gaps, and development priorities.
5. . Operational Systems & Capacity Readiness	Build the infrastructure needed to manage programs, data, and communication effectively before projects begin. Focus on systems integration, workflow optimization, and operational consistency across finance, CRM, and reporting tools.	**Competencies:** Systems design, workflow integration, and operational consistency across core functions (finance, CRM, communication). **Activities:** Conduct an "Operations Snapshot" to identify how key systems

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		currently operate. Identify 2–3 process bottlenecks and outline a plan to address them. Develop a one-page "Systems Improvement Plan" summarizing next steps.
6. Community Visibility & Collaborative Readiness	Establish community trust and visibility before entering formal partnerships. Learn how to engage residents, local governments, and potential allies in ways that demonstrate credibility and shared purpose—without drafting legal documents	**Competencies:** Community engagement, partner mapping, public communication, and reputation management. **Activities:** Create a Community Visibility Map identifying current and potential collaborators. Draft a one-page "Community Engagement Brief" linking your mission to local housing priorities. Identify one concrete opportunity to increase visibility (e.g., media story, coalition meeting, or event participation).
7. Program Design & Data-Driven Decision Making	Connect your programs to measurable housing outcomes. Use simple data tools to show accountability to funders and the public.	**Competencies:** Linking programs to housing outcomes and impact metrics. **Activities:** Identify one program metric and create a simple tracking sheet.
8. Institutional Readiness Portfolio (Capstone)	Integrate everything learned into a concise organizational snapshot demonstrating readiness for partnership and funding. Conduct a full organizational audit—governance, HR, systems, finances, compliance—and produce a formal **Institutional Readiness Portfolio** certifying capacity to engage in development.	**Competencies:** Compliance integration, documentation, and presentation of readiness. **Activities:** Assemble an *Institutional Readiness Portfolio* that integrates all Building Blocks assignments — including governance documents, financial statements, leadership assessments, systems improvement plans, community engagement summaries, and the updated 3-Year Strategic Capacity Plan. Present findings to an NCBI Advisor for certification.

Assignments & Deliverables

- Board Governance Matrix & Gap Analysis (Week 2)
- Leadership and Operations Assessment Survey (Week 4)
- Systems Improvement Plan (Week 5)
- Institutional Readiness Portfolio (Capstone) (Week 8)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Produce a strategic capacity plan aligning mission, vision, and housing objectives.
2. Structure a high-functioning board and management team.
3. Implement HR, technology, and operational systems that meet compliance standards.
4. Strengthen financial transparency and accountability.
5. Demonstrate organizational readiness through a documented **Institutional Readiness Portfolio**.

Position in the NCBI Pathway

Tier	Course Code	Focus	Certification Outcome
Building Blocks	**NCBI 101**	Institutional capacity, governance, leadership, and operational readiness	Certified as **Organizationally Ready Developer**; eligible to advance to **NCBI 201 – Momentum: Development Fundamentals**

* To advance to the next certification level, participants must achieve a minimum "Capacity Readiness Score" of 70% on the NCBI Capacity Test. This test measures mastery of prior course competencies and ensures readiness for the next level of certification.