2017 Annual Report
Promoting Self-Sufficiency Since 1965
A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Community Action Agency published our Community Needs Assessment in April of 2017. Through a process of meetings with community partners and stakeholders, agency participants and staff, we engaged in conversations around data related to poverty in our service area of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties. We looked at the affects and conditions of poverty through several lenses, including race, age and gender. What we found in our communities, unfortunately, is not new – poverty rates are increasing; women are more likely to be in poverty than men; a greater percentage of youth are living in poverty; and African Americans are experiencing poverty at a higher rate than Whites. The full report is available for review on our website at www.caajlh.org. I would encourage you to review the information provided.

Recommendations from the needs assessment for strategic priorities include the expansion of CAA’s financial empowerment programs; addressing local housing needs; looking at opportunities to collaborate to address transportation barriers; and address the need for soft skills development that assist residents to obtain and maintain employment. The Community Needs Assessment recommendations will guide our work in 2018 and while CAA understands and appreciates that there is not a quick fix, the board, staff and myself are dedicated to continuing our work with our community partners and residents to ensure success for those facing financial instability. As always, thank you for your support of Community Action Agency. We are only as strong as the community support we receive.

Toby L Berry
Chief Executive Officer

“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Created & maintained a budget for 90 days: 170
- Attended 1-on-1 Financial Counseling: 294
- Getting Ahead™ Graduates: 143
- Increased savings through IDA Program: 19
- Attended Financial Literacy classes: 461
2016/2017 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS

- 315 Attended Homebuyer Education Classes
- 71 Received Emergency Housing Services
- 141 Received Foreclosure Prevention Services
- 112 Received Emergency Rent or Mortgage Assistance
- 80 Received Supportive Housing Services

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 21,121 Received Services
- 60,620 Donated Volunteer Hours
- 5,647 Received Tax Services
- 4,246 Connected to Healthcare
- 1,857 Received WIC Services
- 748 Received Emergency Utility Assistance
- 114 Homeless Veterans Served

Homeless Veterans Served
Janis Montalvo, Board Chair

Already active in her community having served on several boards over the years in the Lenawee County area, Janis Montalvo readily agreed to serve on the CAA board. Janis brings extensive knowledge of her community through her experience on the Board of Housing Help of Lenawee, Communities in Schools, Lenawee Cares, and Kiwanis.

Community Action Agencies are governed by a tripartite board made up of elected officials, private sector representatives and low-income residents. As a local realtor in Lenawee County, Janis represents the private sector and currently serves as the Board Chair.

When asked in what ways serving on Community Action Agency board has allowed her to assist the community, Janis shares that serving on Community Action Agency’s tri-county board has allowed her to get to know more about Jackson and Hillsdale Counties and to be able to look at some of the things needed in Lenawee County. In this way, serving on a multi-county board, helps in other community roles, by providing the insight of sharing the experiences of similar programs.

The CAA Board is the first board that she has served on that has a budget that is largely federally and state funded. Janis shares, “It makes you pay a lot more attention to what is happening in the government and how that is going to affect our budget.”

As Broker/Owner at Living In Lenawee Realty, Janis can provide insight to individuals and families interested in moving into the community.

2016/2017 Community Action Agency Board Members

Board Officers

Janis Montalvo, Chairperson
Sara Tackett, Vice Chairperson

Public Sector
Karol “KZ” Bolton, Lenawee County
Lenawee County Commissioner

John Calhoun, Jackson County
Past Chair
Columbia Township Treasurer

Bruce Caswell, Hillsdale County
Hillsdale County Commissioner

Sarah Lightner, Jackson County
Jackson County Commissioner

David Stimpson, Lenawee County
Lenawee County Commissioner

Julie Gamez, Hillsdale County
Hillsdale County Commissioner

Private Sector
Annette Magda, Hillsdale County
Independent Farmer

Janis Montalvo, Lenawee County
Living in Lenawee Realty

Tim Robinson, Lenawee County
Lenawee Now

Sue Smith, Hillsdale County
Economic Development Partnership of Hillsdale County

Jean Stewart, Jackson County
Member at Large

Sara Tackett, Jackson County
Jackson District Library

Consumer Sector
Ann Fike, Hillsdale County
Advisory Council Representative

Elyia Lamb, Jackson County
Head Start Policy Council Representative

Joella Miller, Lenawee County
Advisory Council Representative

Judy Mort-Duncan, Lenawee County
Advisory Council Representative

Sarah Primm, Jackson County
Head Start Policy Council Representative

Larry Socie, Jackson County
Advisory Council Representative
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Strengthen and build local communities/neighborhoods
Neighborhood Development
Neighborhood Stabilization

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT
Programs to increase individual and family self-sufficiency
Complete Approach to Self-Sufficiency (CASS)
Credit Counseling
Getting Ahead ™
Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)
Financial Stability Classes & Goals
Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
Emergency Services
Heat a Home/ Walk for Warmth
Warm the Children

EDUCATION
Offering educational opportunities, birth to five years
Early Head Start
Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)
Head Start
Coordinating educational opportunities for adults
Adult Basic Education
English as a Second Language (ESL)

HOUSING
Home repairs, rehab, weatherization, education, rental, emergency assistance and counseling
Homeless Prevention & Assistance
Supportive Services for Veterans Families
Housing Counseling
Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
Homebuyer Education
Housing Programs for the Homelessness
Weatherization

HEALTH/NUTRITION
Medical, emergency and nutrition services
Michigan Enrolls/Medicaid Enrollment
Migrant Outreach Services
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

INFORMATION SERVICES
Advocacy services
Local Poverty Data & Statistics
*Presenters available on poverty issues

*Upon request

Community Action Agency is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY

The programs that Community Action Agency provide reflect the needs of the community we serve. The best way to accurately assess those needs is to directly ask those that come to us for assistance.

Each year in January, Community Action Agency releases a Community Needs Survey. The surveys are provided to each client that receives services. The questions asked are designed to help break the barriers that prevent individuals and families from being fully self-sufficient.

*Presenters available on poverty issues
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY FISCAL YEAR 2016/2017 BUDGET

FUNDING SOURCES

- 64.3% FEDERAL GRANTS
  - $11,530,285
- 21.4% DONATED MATERIALS
  - $3,554,562
- 9.7% STATE GRANTS
  - $2,805,700
- 4.6% PRIVATE REVENUE
  - $990,903

AREAS OF INVESTMENT

Total Funding $17,872,345

- EDUCATION
  - $11,968,428
- HOUSING
  - $2,833,477
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
  - $1,275,185
- HEALTH & NUTRITION
  - $1,795,185

MARY CASTLE

2017 PEER AWARD WINNER

Originally joining Community Action Agency as a temporary employee in 2006, Mary Castle was hired a year later. In the years since, Mary has worked in various roles helping to carry out the Community Action Agency mission of “Promoting Self-Sufficiency.

While her current role as Accounts Payable Coordinator is behind the scenes, that wasn’t always the case. Working in Adult Literacy, Community Services, and Weatherization allowed her to help those in her own community. “I do feel fortunate that I had the opportunity to work in different programs. It gave me better first hand knowledge of what the needs of the community were”, shares Mary.

At the 2017 CAA All-Staff Meeting, Mary received the 2017 Peer Award. “It was a very big surprise and a great honor, actually”, Mary added.

The Peer Recognition Award recipient is a role model individual who exemplifies an extraordinary commitment to low income families/individuals. While we recognize we have many exceptional employees this award is meant to recognize those employees in any department or program who demonstrate selflessness, commitment to services and has a significant impact on others through their work at CAA.
Chelsea met her Early Head Start worker after she was referred by her doctor during a high risk pregnancy. Staff began working with her daughter Laraya on her fine motor skills, her growth and development milestones, and preparing for school. While working on building the child parent relationship, they also began working with the entire family by providing ideas that engage the whole family. Working together was key for their blended family. Both Chelsea and her boyfriend, Ryan, each have a son separately, and they have a daughter together.

Chelsea found that working with Early Head Start and using the program as a support, to learn about going through milestones with your children makes a huge impact. She shared, “You learn and then have a tool.” It has helped them succeed in building their parenting skills.

During her participation in the Early Head Start program Chelsea pursued a career in the Human Services field. She began working at the Aware Shelter while pursuing her degree. Chelsea graduated from Baker College in August of 2017 with her Bachelors degree and she recently began working at Family First. Family First goes into homes of families who have had Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals for their programs. If a family has an issue/concern/barrier, Family First provides support to the individuals and families.

The goal of Family First is to help families address issues identified by Child Protective Services. While growing up CPS was involved with Chelsea’s family and custody was eventually lost, but a family member stepped in and they were able to stay with them.

Now 30 years old, Chelsea has come to realize that her parents and people sometimes struggle, especially when no one taught them how to cope. Fear can prevent many from seeking help when there are challenges. Individuals keep the struggles a secret as if the help is actually the enemy.

Chelsea added, “Use the supports and even though hard things come about, you can get through it.” Chelsea went through a lot during college. Her father was diagnosed with cancer twice and lost his battle February 5, 2018. “You can either let these hardships grab ahold of you or use them as motivation.” She came back and wanted to use her degree to help others.

When an opportunity at Family First came open, Chelsea was making her last visit before her dad’s death. She came back and applied for the position at Family First because she felt her dad wouldn’t want her sitting there doing nothing with the degree she earned.

Chelsea feels she has much to offer people and it is not just about what you learn in a class but also where you came from.
Community Action Agency in Lenawee County oversees the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. WIC is a supplemental nutrition program for pregnant, postpartum women, infants and children up to five years of age.

The WIC Program strongly encourages and provides support for breastfeeding through peer support and lactation consultation. WIC also assists with infant and toddler feeding, prenatal weight gain, preventing anemia or iron deficiency, child growth and development and other nutrition related health issues.

Anyone ineligible for food stamps may participate in WIC if they are Michigan residents from low-to middle income households (185% of poverty and/or Medicaid or food stamp eligible). Foster children receive automatic eligibility for WIC services.

While WIC is a supplemental nutrition program, it has even greater far-reaching benefits. WIC has been found to reduce infant mortality. When a child is on WIC from birth through the time their eligibility ends, a family can save up to $3,000 on grocery bills. Children 4 to 5 years of age participating in WIC have better vocabularies and digit memory scores than children not participating in WIC. For every dollar spent by this program, more than three dollars in subsequent health care costs are saved.
Brittley first utilized the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program at the age of nineteen when she was pregnant with her daughter. Ten years later and pregnant with her second child, Brittley had a better job as a chemical operator and was able to pay her bills but needed additional supports and was not eligible for other benefits. Brittley knew that she could get assistance for nutritious food for herself and her unborn child through WIC, but wasn’t sure that she would qualify. She was happy when she was able to be seen quickly and realized she was able to utilize the program. Brittley shares, “I was in a position where I NEEDED help.”

During her pregnancy, Brittley received nutritional information from WIC staff and began preparing different meals with her WIC food benefits. Brittley realized how much money she was saving preparing her meals instead of eating out. Brittley also noticed changes in the WIC program from her first interactions 10 years earlier. Paper coupons have been replaced by debit type cards and you can use a WIC app to schedule your appointments. The process is more efficient and families are seen quickly with very little waiting.

“I was in a position where I NEEDED help”--Brittley

Brittley found the program focus put an emphasis on relationship building and this allowed the staff to provide the service she needed. After the birth of Lio, “LJ”, when Brittley was struggling with breastfeeding, she felt comfortable sharing those frustrations with WIC staff. This allowed staff to provide support to help her successfully breastfeed.

The relationship with WIC staff also provided additional benefits for Brittley through connections to other Community Action Agency programs. Staff often reached out to Brittley to make sure she had what she needed and during one of these conversations Brittley shared that she was interested in owning her own home. WIC staff were able to connect Brittley to the program staff for Homebuyer Education to assist her towards this goal. Currently Brittley and LJ are staying with her mother in order to save money to purchase a home. She has been working to improve her credit and pay off her debts. Brittley went in to Community Action Agency for support with her pregnancy and now is on her way to purchasing her first home.
Leah was encouraged to apply for WIC by her mother who knew the program would help with groceries when she was pregnant and formula once her baby was born. Since this was her first child, Leah had so many decisions to make, the first being whether to bottle feed or breastfeed. Through her participation in WIC and in conversations with her doctor, Leah was given information about the health benefits of breastfeeding. During an ultrasound her doctor diagnosed her daughter with gastroschisis, a condition affecting the abdominal wall that results in the intestines being outside the baby’s body. With this diagnosis, her doctors encouraged her to breastfeed.

Leah was nervous about her ability to successfully breastfeed, but understood the benefit to her baby. When Annalee was born, Leah realized that breastfeeding was easier than she thought it would be and actually more affordable for her family. Her experience made her an advocate for breastfeeding and Leah is now a Pre-nursing student. She hopes to one day become a lactation consultant in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).
Children slowly construct informal mathematical knowledge, beginning in the first few months of life. First-hand exploration is important for learning mathematics. As infants, children begin to use their everyday experiences to construct a variety of fundamental mathematical concepts and strategies. This informal knowledge that is acquired will prove to be the foundation for concepts and skills later learned formally in the school setting.

MATHEMATICS

Children learn to use words to communicate with others, rather than pointing or using their hands. Children are encouraged to listen to and participate in conversations that expand their vocabularies.

LANGUAGE

Large muscle development through participating in activities as balancing, running, jumping, throwing and catching help children learn to control their bodies. The small muscles in their hands develop as they button coats, string beads, cut and write.

PHYSICAL

Children who learn to read and write by the end of primary grades have a greater chance for school success. Literacy learning begins at birth. During the early childhood years, children engage in emergent reading and writing behaviors that form the foundation for conventional literacy. These early years are critical.

Cognitive

Children develop thinking skills through activities such as sorting, classifying, comparing, counting and making patterns. This helps increase problem solving skills and logical thinking. Imaginations and creativity are stimulated through working with crayons, paint, clay, and other media.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children’s interactions with others are crucial to their learning. Children learn how to manage their emotions and regulate behavior in an environment that is nurturing, and where the adults are trustworthy and responsive to each other’s needs.

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS
2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

Preschoolers are constantly learning new things, learning best through active hands-on experiences. Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs uses The First Three Years as its curriculum for pregnant women. The Creative Curriculum is used in Early Head Start, Head Start, and the Great Start Readiness Program to prepare children for kindergarten in the five important areas of Mathematics, Physical, Cognitive, Language, Social-Emotional Development, and Literacy. 462 children transitioned to kindergarten through CAA Children’s Programs.
Children Experienced Homelessness

93% of Eligible Children Served

86 Children Existed

762 Head Parents & Great Start Readiness Children Served

91% Over Received Dental Exams

100% Average Monthly Enrollment

Over 89% Received Medical Exams

FUNDING

The Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs are both Federally and State funded. Below are the sources and amounts of our funding for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

FEDERAL FUNDS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>APPROVED BUDGET</th>
<th>ACTUAL EXPENSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
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<td>USDA</td>
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Non-Federal Funds

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<th>ACTUAL EXPENSES</th>
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<td>MI Dept. of Education</td>
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<td>GSRP</td>
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<td>Total Federal and Non-Federal Funds</td>
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Non-Federal Share

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<th>Program</th>
<th>APPROVED BUDGET</th>
<th>ACTUAL EXPENSES</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
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<td>Total Non-Federal Shares</td>
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EXPENDITURES

Program, training, and family support accounted for 87% of the Community Action Agency’s Head Start and Early Head Start Programs total expenditures. The remaining 13% was for administration.

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017

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<th>Category</th>
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<th>ACTUAL EXPENSES</th>
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<td>Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Federal Share</td>
<td>$1,972,943</td>
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RESULTS OF THE MOST RECENT REVIEW BY THE FINANCIAL AUDIT

In January 2017, auditors, Rehmann Robson, found “…the financial statements referred to present fairly, in all materials respects, the financial position of Community Action Agency as of September 30, 2016, and the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of the Framework have been fundamental to the Head Start Program from its inception. They underlie the program policies and practices that prepare young children for success in school and beyond.

• Each child is unique and can succeed. Children are individuals with different rates and paths of development. Each child is uniquely influenced by their prenatal environment, temperament, physiology, and life experiences. With the appropriate support, all children can be successful learners and achieve the skills, behaviors, and knowledge described in the Framework.

• Learning occurs within the context of relationships. Caring families, teachers, and other adults matter in a young child’s life. Responsive and supportive interactions with adults are essential to children’s learning.

• Families are children’s first and most important caregivers, teachers, and advocates. Families must be respected and supported as the primary influence in their child’s early learning and education. Their knowledge, skills, and cultural backgrounds contribute to children’s school readiness.

• Children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure. Nurturing, responsive, and consistent care helps create safe environments where children feel secure and valued. In these settings, children are able to engage fully in learning experiences.

• Areas of development are integrated, and children learn many concepts and skills at the same time. Any single skill, behavior, or ability may involve multiple areas of development. For example, as infants gain fine motor skills, they can manipulate objects in new ways and deepen their understanding of cause and effect. As preschoolers gain new verbal skills, they can better manage their emotions and form more complex friendships.

• Teaching must be intentional and focused on how children learn and grow. Children are active, engaged and eager learners. Good teaching practices build on these intrinsic strengths by providing developmentally appropriate instruction and opportunities for exploration and meaningful play.

• Every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family’s culture, background, language, and beliefs. Responsive and respectful learning environments welcome children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Effective teaching practices and learning experiences build on the unique backgrounds and prior experiences of each child.
Parents are children’s first and most important teachers. To assist parents in taking an active role in their children’s education, both now and in the future, the program emphasizes parent involvement. Parents are taught about the stages of child development and what they can do to nurture development at each stage. Head Start and Early Head Start parents are encouraged to work with their children at home and to volunteer in the program.

THE FOLLOWING ARE A SAMPLE OF THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES HELD DURING THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR:

Meet & Greet  Classroom Volunteers
Family Focus  Parent/Teacher Conferences
Policy Council  Home Visits
Health Advisory Council  Playgroup (Early Head Start)
Parent Workshops
5 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

1) DONATE
   Donate online at: www.caajlh.org
   Mail checks payable to:
   Community Action Agency
   1214 Greenwood Ave
   Jackson, MI 49203

2) VOLUNTEER

3) SHOP. Use Amazon Smile (https://smile.amazon.com/), or
   Kroger Community Awards (www.krogercommunityrewards.com)

4) SHARE the information to help others.

5) GET INVOLVED. Vote, and support specific causes, groups or
   organizations you consider important.

HOW TO CONTACT COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

JACKSON COUNTY
1214 Greenwood Ave,
Jackson, MI 49203
Phone: (517) 784-4800 or (800) 491-0004

LENAWEE COUNTY
400 West South St.,
Adrian, MI 49221
Phone: (517) 263-7861 or (800) 438-1845

HILLSDALE COUNTY
55 Barnard St.,
Hillsdale, MI 49242
Phone: (517) 437-3346 or (800) 750-9300

FIND US ON THE WORLD-WIDE WEB AT:
www.caajlh.org

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