The War on Poverty-50 Years Later

Many are not aware the Community Action Agency is part of a much larger network of agencies that were established under the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. The primary goal was to fight the War on Poverty. Today, there are approximately 1000 Community Action Agencies, they serve every state, and Puerto Rico. 96% of the counties nationwide are served. Our tripartate boards consist of a third of its members from the lower-income families and individuals we serve, another third are public officials, and the last third individuals from the private sector. This unique structure has helped give individuals experiencing poverty a say in the choices being made that would effect them at a community level.

Fifty years later, Our local Community Action Agency has continued to serve the individuals and families who need us most. Through the years the programs have remained a reflection of the needs of the people in our communities. Some of the programs have become so successful that they have expanded and left the umbrella of Community Action. At the same time, programs that didn’t exist at the time of its start now have become necessary. Each family and individual who receives services from CAA is given a voice when they are asked to answer questions pertaining to their greatest needs in our Community Needs Survey.
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Community Development
Strengthen and build local communities/neighborhoods
• Neighborhood Stabilization
• Neighborhood Development

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

Housing
Home repairs, rehab, weatherization, education, rental, emergency assistance and counseling
• Weatherization
• Home Rehab and Repair
• Housing Programs for the Homelessness
• Homeless Prevention & Assistance
• Housing Counseling
  • Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
  • Support Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)
  • Homebuyer Education

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

Information Services
Advocacy services
• Local Poverty Data & Statistics
• Presenters available on poverty issues

Education
Offering educational opportunities, birth to five years
• Head Start
• Early Head Start
• Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

Coordinating educational opportunities for adults
• Adult Basic Education
• English as a Second Language (ESL)
EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION—Provides adult education classes for those interested in developing skills in reading, writing, math and communication. Also, educational opportunities are provided for individuals whose primary language is not English who are learning to speak, read, write, and understand English. All programs are classroom-based, tailored to the needs of the individual learner and operate in all counties on a year-round basis. GED preparation and testing. CAA coordinates this service provided by South Central Michigan Works. They can be reached at (517) 841-5627.

EARLY HEAD START—FREE home-based program for infants and toddlers and their families. EHS Home Visitors utilize the Parents as Teachers curriculum to provide encouragement and support to parents as they do the work of being their child’s most important teacher and best advocate! During home visits, EHS Home Visitors focus on play with parents and their children because play is the “work” of babies to help them grow and become ready for preschool and other learning experiences. Home Visitors help parents to strengthen their parenting skills as well as their relationship with their baby to prepare their baby for later success in life and school. Play groups, or socialization opportunities are provided for each child and family at least twice a month at one of our centers. These groups are a place where families can come together with other children and families in the program and build relationships with others as they are building stronger relationships with their own children and working on developmental goals from home visits.

GREAT START SCHOOL READINESS—A preschool program in Jackson & Hillsdale for 4 year-olds and their families to meet educational, social, health, nutritional, and family support needs. GSRP helps kids get a jump start on enhancing self-esteem, building social skills, developing academic skills, and giving parents the opportunity to participate in their children’s early education.

HEAD START—Pre-school classes for qualifying children in Jackson & Hillsdale that helps children ages 3-5 get a jump start on the basics before attending kindergarten. Children in Head Start participate in nationally accredited educational activities and receive medical and dental care. Head Start helps children develop through interactive time with parents, nutritious meals and snacks, indoor and outdoor play and safe spaces in which to learn and grow. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, serve on the Policy Council as part of our decision making body, and to become an active, effective community participant. Parent meetings on topics such as: child development, health and nutrition, self-esteem, and literacy.
HEAD START LOCATIONS

Ashton Ridge
2921 Ashton Ridge Drive
Jackson, MI 49201

Bennett Elementary
820 Bennett Street
Jackson, MI 49202

Camden Schools
4971 W. Montgomery Road
Camden, MI 49232

Chalet Terrace
316 Barberry Drive
Jackson, MI 49203

Dibble Elementary
3450 Kibby Road
Jackson, MI 49203

Francis Street Primary
1320 Francis Street
Jackson, MI 49203

Frost Elementary
1226 South Wisner Street
Jackson, MI 49203

Greenfield School
3471 Beck Road
Hillsdale, MI 49242

Hillsdale CAA
55 Barnard Street
Hillsdale, MI 49242

Hunt Elementary
1143 N. Brown Street
Jackson, MI 49202

Northeast Elementary
1024 Fleming Avenue
Jackson, MI 49202

North Adams-Jerome Elementary
455 Knowles
North Adams, MI 49262

Salvation Army
806 E. Pearl
Jackson, MI 49201

Shahan Apartments
109 Shahan Drive
Jackson, MI 49202

Springport Elementary School
300 W. Main Street
PO Box 100
Springport, MI 49284

Pittsford, MI 49271

Reading
221 Strong Avenue
Reading, MI 49274

Waldron
13380 Waldron Road
Waldron, MI 49288

TO APPLY, CONTACT:

Jackson County:
1214 Greenwood Ave.
Jackson, MI 49203
PH#: (517) 784-4800

Hillsdale County
55 Barnard Street
Hillsdale MI, 49242
PH#: (517) 437-3346

Promoting Self-Sufficiency in Jackson, Lenawee & Hillsdale Counties Since 1965
ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

COMPLETE APPROACH TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY—This program is an innovative approach to helping families overcome systematic barriers & achieve economic self-sufficiency. The program allows families or individuals to work directly with a counselor to achieve goals & locate resources.

CREDIT & BUDGET COUNSELING—A one-on-one session where participants will receive a copy of their credit report. They will learn ways to improve their credit score and how to build credit. Participants will work with the counselor to set up a savings and spending plan that will help the participants manage their finances and save for the future.

EMERGENCY SERVICES—Emergency financial assistance for utility, rent, and information and referral services to other agencies or programs that may be able to help.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY—Comprehensive program that helps family members with the skills and experience to enable suitable employment. Families are provided support through job, education, and human service delivery system to address financial barriers to economic self-sufficiency. This program is available for families receiving MSHDA’s Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program.

Getting Ahead™, Successfully Helping Individuals Break the Cycle of Poverty

Getting Ahead™ a program that originally was launched in Lenawee County has now expanded to all three counties. The Getting Ahead program that works to provide a way to examine the impact that poverty has on individuals, families, and communities. The goal is to provide a learning environment and experience where adults can examine their lives, investigate new information critical to addressing poverty issues, assess personal and community resources, and discover how to help solve problems. Participants are navigators to help identify generational and situational poverty and examine solutions to implement to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty.
CLASSES

FINANCIAL STABILITY CLASSES—Community Action Agency uses a comprehensive financial education curriculum designed to help low and moderate income individuals enhance their financial skills and create positive banking relationships.

The program makes a concerted push to raise consumers' awareness about the benefits of learning more about their financial matters. Participants are equipped with materials and tools to help them better manage and take control of their personal finances. Topics covered through education, activities, guest speakers and assignments are:

- How to open and maintain a checking/savings account
- How to set up a personal spending plan
- Strategies and tools to help you save money
- Learn how to establish credit and ways to increase your score
- Understanding consumer protection laws
- Insurance basics
- Avoiding identity theft
- How to be organized
- How to reduce debt

Participants through the six week series learn how to identify with their own spending style and savings habits. They learn how their own financial decisions can affect them in their overall goals. Participants create action plans and identify steps they want to take in order to achieve greater financial independence.

Homebuyer Education Workshop

Homeownership anchors vibrant communities where engaged citizens, safe neighborhoods, thriving schools and healthy people converge. It’s a place where you put down roots, grow a family, live your life and invest in your future.

The recent housing crisis threatened the dream of homeownership for millions of Americans. How can you be sure that buying a home makes the most sense for you?

Homebuyer education can help you make the smart choices for yourself and your family. With services available online and in person, everyone can have access to the education they need to make smart choices.

The workshop covers information on down payment assistance, budget and credit, house selection, realtors, fair housing, predatory lending, loan products with comparisons, purchase procedures, the closing process, money management, home inspections, energy efficiency and other programs offered that the participant may benefit from.

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Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

The SSVF program provides supportive services to very low-income Veteran families in or transitioning to permanent housing.

Assistance will be provided to obtain U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other benefits which may include:

- Health care services
- Personal financial planning
- Transportation
- Legal services
- Child care
- Housing counseling services
- Utility assistance and other services

In addition, CAA may also provide time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis.

HEALTH & NUTRITION

MIGRANT OUTREACH SERVICES—In collaboration with the University of Michigan, CAA has developed an outreach program that includes a team of volunteer students, interpreters, and doctors that provide medical care, WIC, mental health services, conflict resolution, prevention services, translation services, clothing and emergency needs assistance in Lenawee.

WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN (WIC)—WIC provides nutritional assistance to supplement diets of children, pregnant and postpartum women in Lenawee. WIC provides nutrition and health screenings and helps correct and prevent malnutrition. WIC partners with Project Fresh in the summer to offer local produce and education about the importance of fresh foods in diets of women and children. Satellite office hours in Hudson are offered to increase access to services for those in surrounding rural communities. The office has a breastfeeding support group as well as breastfeeding classes with peer support offered to help new mothers.

In August 2018, the Lenawee WIC office will hold its 3rd Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Community-Wide Event in Adrian.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ HOUSING

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION-- CAA is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved housing counseling agency with Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) certified counselors who provide FREE foreclosure intervention counseling. Services are provided to homeowners who are facing foreclosure or are at-risk of foreclosure.

HOMELESS PREVENTION & ASSISTANCE-- Programs for Jackson & Hillsdale County residents at risk of housing eviction. The program provides early intervention for at-risk residents before a crisis escalates into eviction. Participants may be eligible to receive assistance with utilities, rent or security deposits and other unmet needs.

In Jackson County, CAA participates in a weekly Eviction Diversion program in partnership with District 12 Court, Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services as well as Legal Services of South Central Michigan in an effort to prevent imminent homelessness.

HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS-- Projects which provide homeless participants a chance to have stable housing, increase life skill levels, and eventually become self-sufficient. People living in emergency shelter, a car, on the street, and/or fleeing domestic violence are eligible. Program includes intensive case management services and direct financial assistance during transition from homelessness to permanent housing.

HOUSING COUNSELING--certified housing counselors provide information to increase homeownership opportunities for low to moderate income families. CAA provides pre and post purchase counseling, one on one credit and budget counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance, financial stability, and home maintenance education.

WEATHERIZATION-- This program provides an energy audit and weatherization assistance. The assistance can include energy saving measures as the installation of insulation in the walls, attics, and foundation as needed, air sealing, weather stripping, repair of windows and other minor repairs, in an effort to make the homes both energy efficient and more affordable to live. The program is open to income-eligible home owners and renters. Residents may receive health and safety measures (smoke and carbon monoxide detectors) and other minor repairs or improvements necessary for energy efficiency. Appliances are tested for efficiency levels and in some cases refrigerators, furnaces, and hot water heaters are replaced.
SPECIAL PROJECTS/ PROGRAMS

WALK FOR WARMTH—In partnership with statewide Community Action Agencies, and utility providers, Walk for Warmth is held in February to raise awareness and funds for emergency utility assistance for low-income neighbors in need of emergency heating bill assistance.

WARM THE CHILDREN—Through community donations, CAA helps to buy new warm winter clothing for eligible children in need in Jackson & Hillsdale counties. Income eligibility applies and children must be 16 or under at the time of sign-up. Proof of household income for the past 30 days and social security cards for everyone in the household are required. If child received clothing the previous year, they are not eligible the current year.

HEAT-A-HOME—Program to maintain an emergency fund for anyone experiencing home heating related emergencies. Low-income households who have received a shut off notice or are in need of emergency fuel delivery are eligible. Businesses and individuals may participate by mailing or dropping off donations at any tri-county office. 100% of all funds raised will directly assist in the payment of utility bills and/or fuel delivery. Funds received will be utilized within the county they were received unless otherwise noted.

Funding for this project may be in part through the U.S. Department of: Agriculture, Education, Energy, HHS, Homeland Security, HUD, Treasury, and Veteran Affairs.


Michigan law prohibits discrimination in employment, education, housing, public accommodation or public service based on religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, height, weight, arrest record or handicap. This institution is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and service provider. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington DC, 20250. Auxiliary aids are available to qualified applicants or participants with disabilities in all programs to ensure equal access to agency and effective communication. Any individuals needing accommodations should contact the Human Resources Office at 1214 Greenwood, Jackson, MI 49203, or call (517) 784-4800 or (800) 491-0004 or the Michigan Relay Center (800) 649-3777 for communication with persons who use TDD.

Archived Community Needs Assessment Reports are available at: www.caajlh.org under heading Reports & Research.

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