

# 2015 Annual Report

CELEBRATING



## Sangamon County Community Resources





**Sangamon County Community Resources**

Springfield, IL 62703

(217)535-3120 Fax (217)535-3119

<http://co.sangamon.il.us/departments/a-c/community-resources>

June 2016

Dear Friends,

Enclosed is your copy of the Sangamon County Department of Community Resources 2015 Annual Report. In 2015, Community Resources celebrated our 30th Anniversary of service to Sangamon County. I hope you will take a few moments to read about the many programs and services made available to our community. Last year our agency served 11,080 customers from households with low incomes.

Over the last 30 years, the Sangamon County Department of Community Resources has developed and provided the types of services necessary to meet the ever-changing needs of our community and help our residents obtain the opportunities and services they need to become stable or self-sufficient. Our core values of accountability, collaboration, commitment, community, efficiency, integrity, leadership, respect, and service excellence have not changed over our long history of serving the people of Sangamon County.

I would like to express my appreciation to our CSBG Advisory Council and County Oversight Committee who are so generous of their time and expertise and to our staff who are so committed to the work they do on behalf of our customers. Thank you also to each of our community partners and elected officials for their on-going support.

Sincerely,

Sharmin Doering

Executive Director

Enclosure

## A Message from CSBG Advisory Council Chair, Brad Mills

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present the 2015 annual report for Sangamon County Community Resources, the Community Action Agency for Sangamon County. The year 2015 represents the 30<sup>th</sup> year that our organization has been positively changing lives of households with low-income. It all started on September 10, 1985 with Resolution 9 to take a significant step forward in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of necessary services to County residents. It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the Community Resources CSBG Advisory Council for the past 7 years. Putting together this annual report gave us the incentive to look back not only on the prior year but on our entire history since 1985. We have reminisced on old office spaces and reflected on changes in our community. While we are pleased to mark our 30<sup>th</sup> year, the goals and values that our agency has embraced for years will not change. Our core values of accountability, collaboration, commitment, community, efficiency, integrity, leadership, respect, and service excellence have not changed over our long history of serving the residents of Sangamon County.



Our Advisory Council, County Oversight Committee and staff want to help people to become more stable or self-sufficient. We want to increase our capacity to achieve results, and we want to help families with low-income, especially the most vulnerable populations, to achieve their potentials.

As Council Chair, I wish to extend my gratitude to the members of our Council for their commitment to SCDCR, and to our Executive Director and her staff for their commitment to the vision and values of Community Action.

I invite you to take some time and read through our 2015 Annual Report and hope that you will learn more about our agency and the work we do here on a daily basis. Last year we provided thousands of services to thousands of households expending more than \$1,746,117. We are very proud of our accomplishments during the program year, and hope to continue building on our successes and creating new opportunities to help the families and individuals we serve.

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. Andrew Carnegie – American Industrialist and Philanthropist

Brad Mills

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Mills". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CSBG Advisory Council Chair

## A Message from Sangamon County Board Member and Community Resources Oversight Committee Chairman, Linda Fulgenzi



Dear Friends,

This year, Sangamon County Community Resources is thirty years old. In 1985, 29 Sangamon County Board Members established a department to centralize JTPA, LIHEAP, Weatherization and the Community Services Block Grant to allow customers to go to one central location. Since the closing of the Springfield Community Action Agency, many people were in need of help. The proposal for the creation of the department stated “The need for an expansion and re-focusing of our efforts to coordinate the activities of the public and private sector agencies which provide a wide variety of community resource services and economic development strategies to Sangamon county residents, has never been more evident.” In short, Sangamon County had an opportunity to take a significant step forward in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of necessary services to county residents; to strengthen the operations of the several agencies and programs involved, and to expand the options and horizons for youth and adults in Sangamon County. This was the beginning of what remains the Community Action Agency serving Sangamon County. The 30-year history involved hundreds of citizens working on the CSBG Advisory Council and the SCCR Oversight Committee, more than 100 people employed in the agency over the years and countless residents served with a variety of services from health care to job training.

We have improved the conditions of residents in our communities. Our citizens are healthier, have shelter, are warmer, more educated and live in supportive communities. This work could not have been done without the help of hundreds of community partners ranging from municipalities to hospitals. These partners are critical in helping SCCR spend our resources wisely and improve our local economy. In this annual report, we also highlight the people who make it all possible. The CSBG Council, Oversight Committee and staff members all play a vital role in allowing SCCR to provide its programs and services. I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all who contribute to SCCR’s mission in some way.

*One of the most moral acts is to create a space in which life can move forward. Robert M. Pirsig*

Linda Fulgenzi

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda L. Fulgenzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sangamon County Board Member and Community Resources Oversight Committee Chairman



2015 Community Services Block Grant  
Advisory Council

Front Row: Diane Murphy, (WIOA Representative), Sharon Brown (Kumler Outreach Ministries), LaVon Wilson, Scholarship Committee Chairman, Barbara Rochelle (Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministry), Back Row: Linda Fulgenzi (County Board Member), Craig Hall (County Board Member) Terry Young, (Business-Hoosier Tire Midwest), Brad Mills (Chairman), Reverend Silas Johnson (Calvary Missionary Baptist Church), David Yankee (Wood Forest Bank) Not pictured: Clyde Bunch (County Board Member), Jason Ratts (County Board Member), Allissa Hall (Springfield Community Federation), Michelle Tucker (New Beginnings Apostolic Church).

**Officers: L-R Terry Young (Vice Chair), Linda Fulgenzi (Oversight Committee Chairman), Brad Mills (CSBG Advisory Council Chairman)**



## A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Sangamon County Community Resources has been serving the people of Sangamon County since we opened our doors in 1985. Over our 30 year history, the department re-located once in August, 2010 to the then-new Public Health and Community Services building in the former Cub Food location on South Grand Avenue East. Our new office is easily accessible from all parts of Sangamon County and is located in the medically underserved area of Sangamon County, offers ample parking for customers and is on a main bus route.



As the local Community Action Agency, we are charged with creating and administering programs that meet the needs of our community. Those needs are identified in part through annual needs assessment surveys, as well as through our partnerships with our elected officials and collaboration with other social service agencies. The menu of programs that we offer has changed throughout our history and will continue to evolve in response to the needs of the families we serve.

What has not changed over our 30-year history is our commitment to fighting poverty and our mission to help stabilize families while they move toward self-sufficiency. Our staff members project externally the same vision and values of the Community Action Movement; to offer excellent customer service, to be a source of information and referral, to be an active partner in the community and to accept the presence of the positive in people by working from an individual, asset-based model.

I wish to express my thanks to the many community partners, local officials, and staff members that have been with us every step of the way. We thank all of you for your dedication to families in need and look forward to our continued partnership in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Sharmin Doering

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharmin Doering". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

Executive Director

You might be poor, your shoes might be broken, but your mind is a palace.

— Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*

## Celebrating 30 Years of Sangamon County Community Resource's Work in the Community Action Movement – 1985-2015 while Helping People, Changing Lives, and Improving Communities

This year, 2015, marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SCDCR. Community Resources consistently serves the most vulnerable groups of people in our community with the end goals of stability and self-sufficiency. Since 1985, the agency has offered locally driven programs addressing locally driven needs covering a wide range of categories including employment, education, housing, nutrition, health care, household finance, and emergency assistance.



Community Action was established in Sangamon County in 1965 with the original name of Springfield-Sangamon County Community Action, Inc. The agency was designated to carry out anti-poverty work in Sangamon County, Illinois. As the agency grew and evolved, it was designated as the Community Action Agency for Sangamon County. In 1985, the legal name was changed to the Sangamon County Department of Community Resources (SCDCR) to manage a wide array of programs. With a tri-partite council, county oversight committee and staff passionately committed to the mission, **the agency spent \$1,746,117 to help a total of 11,080 clients through more than 10 programs in 2015.**



## Goal 1: Low-Income People Become More Self-Sufficient

In 2015, SCDCR served 31 individuals through the customized **C.N.A. program**. A total of \$66,708 in education assistance and \$9,612.50 in student transportation vouchers were provided to

Patricia Spearman was a single stay-at-home mother of two teenage daughters and her cousin's three young sons, ages 8, 7 and 6, "I've always like to help kids and older people. When LLCC's GED instructor, Pat Gallegher, told me about the C.N.A. program, I applied and was accepted. It was very hard but I wanted to be a good example for my children. My children were a very big inspiration. Next, my goal is to become a licensed practical nurse. This program helped change my life."

complete the course work. Thus far, fifteen of the participants have passed board certification (47%), and six students will take their final exams on May 9 for an anticipated final total of 21 successful students (67%). In addition, 10 of the students obtaining certification as C.N.A.s are now employed (32%) and

retained their jobs, moving up above the Federal Poverty Guideline of \$14,851 per person annually. We are hopeful that students in the final cohort of 2015 will also pass their boards and obtain employment in May, 2016. The average overall successful outcome percentage since the program's inception in 2012 is currently, 74%.

**Pictured: Family of Distinction for Sangamon County, Patricia Spearman with her family, Kris White, IACCA Board Chairman and Representative Sarah Jimenez Accepting their honor at the FOD Banquet**



# ***SCHOLARSHIP***



*The CSBG scholarship committee* awarded **\$32,900** to 21 students in 2015, assisting them in their quest to continue their studies or to acquire diplomas or certificates. Seventeen were first-time recipients and 5 were returnees. Nine of the scholarship recipients graduated from schools with diplomas or certificates in 2015, and at least 6 of the graduates have found jobs. Student loan debt reduction for recipients provided through scholarship awards was between \$500 and \$2,500 per student.



**CSBG Scholarship Committee**

*I wish to extend my appreciation to the Sangamon County Community Resources for awarding me a scholarship which helped to pay my tuition to Midwest Technical Institute. This opportunity allowed me to achieve my goal of becoming a Medical Assistant. I am currently happily employed at HSHS, St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur. All the studying and hard work has really paid off!*

*Respectfully,  
Bonnie Green*

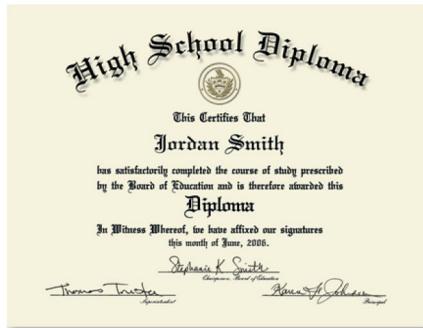


*I just went thru and successfully completed the cosmetology course at University of Spa and Cosmetology arts. I received a scholarship thru your program and I wanted to thank you. The scholarship has helped more then you know. Being a single mother it was hard to come up with the amount to finish school and this scholarship helped so much!!! Thank you again for this!*

*Sincerely,  
Breeanna Boulanger*



**Summer School Tuition Assistance:** Twelve students took summer classes to catch up and two students finished and earned their diplomas.



A total of 271 **customers attended Financial Literacy workshops** IN 2015 and are expected to increase savings, reduce debts, complete and use household budgets.

**In 2015, weekly financial literacy workshops** were hosted in the agency and presented by banking partners (UCB, PNC, BOS, Woodforest Bank and Heartland Credit Union).

### OUR BANKING PARTNERS - THANK YOU!

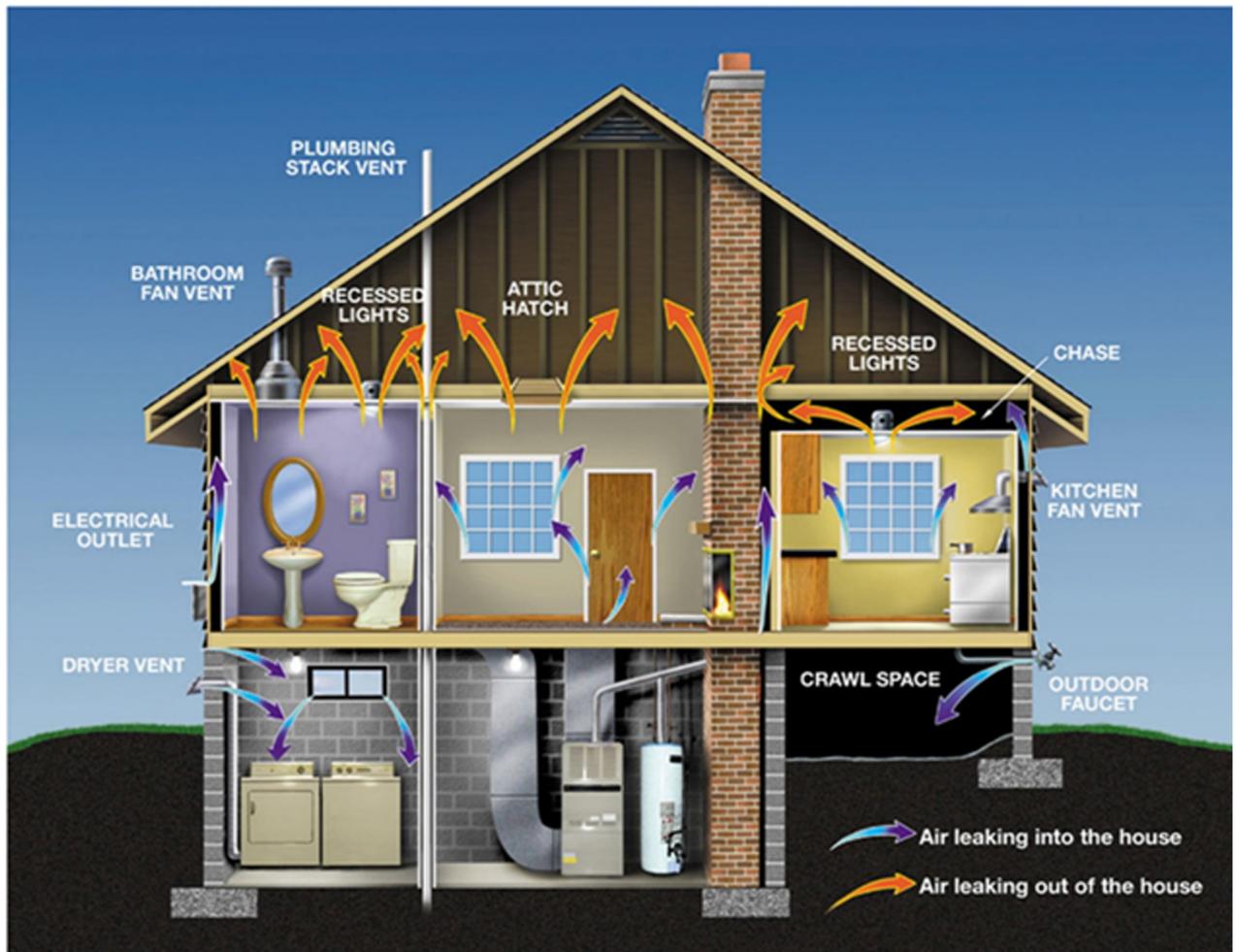


**Bank like You own the Place.**



## Goal 2: The Conditions in which Low-Income People Live are Improved

The **Weatherization program** provides a variety of repairs to weatherize homes of households with low incomes to improve energy efficiency and reduce monthly utility bills. Weatherization services include furnace repair or replacement and air sealing including adding insulation, caulking or weather stripping windows and doors. **In 2015, a total of 105 homes were weatherized, resulting in saving both energy and additional income for customers.**



*In reality, studies show that investments to spur renewable energy and boost energy efficiency generate far more jobs than oil and coal. Jeff Goodell*



**Community Resources** is a member agency of **The Faith Coalition for the Common Good (FCCG)**. The SCCR agency director is an active member of the FCCG Education Task Force and Chairman of the FCCG Development Committee to raise revenue for advocacy efforts on behalf of low-income families.



**#Go4RacialUnity** 

**Save the date!**

**WHO:** Faith Coalition for the Common Good  
**WHAT:** Annual Breakfast Fundraiser  
**WHEN:** Thursday, March 17, 2016  
**WHERE:** Union Baptist Church  
1405 E. Monroe St.  
**TIME:** 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

**RSVP Please**

**On-line:** <https://faithcoalition-ilorg.presencehost.net/news-events/calendar.html/event/2016/03/17/annual-breakfast-fundraiser/118717>

**FCCG Office: 544-2297**

**Speaker: Jennifer Gill, School Superintendent**

## Goal 3: Low-Income People Own a Stake in their Community

The FCCG Education Task Force consisted of membership of low-income people and representatives of community agencies like SCDRC. Members participated with input into the SPS #186 Anti-Bully policy additions, initiating a Clear Book Bag Program at Washington Middle School and press conferences regarding proposed Education Senate Bill 16.



Below: Reverend Ida Jackson speaking to the media in support of the release of State LIHEAP funding at a press conference organized by the *Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies*.



Below: Superintendent Jennifer Gill keynote speaker at the FCCG Annual Breakfast.



*Hundreds of FCCG members with low incomes took part in one or more of the other 4 FCCG Task Forces: City Services, Rail Benefits Agreement, Immigration Reform and Civic Engagement.*

# Goal 4: Partnerships are Achieved to Better Serve Low-Income People

**Nine Poverty Simulations were held throughout schools in District #186 in 2015.** Three hundred district personnel participated either as participants or vendors for the poverty simulation events. A total of 1,050 hours were spent by school personnel to hold the events to learn how life is for families living in poverty 24/7 and how they may better accommodate these families.



**Above: Poverty Simulation at Wanless School for District #186  
Teachers and Administrators**

*The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) is a unique tool that community action agencies are able to use to educate everyone, from policy makers to local community leaders, about the day to day realities of life with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress.*

*During a simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families, from single parents trying to care for their children to senior citizens trying to maintain their self-sufficiency on Social Security. The task of each family is to provide food, shelter and other basic necessities during the simulation while interacting with various community resources staffed by low-income volunteers.*

SCDCR has developed collaborations, partnerships or linkages with 78 organizations, including non-profits, government agencies at all levels, and businesses. Thanks to community partners, SCDCR is able to strengthen the agency mission and services.

<b>The number of organizations, both public and private, that Community Action actively works with to expand resources and opportunities in order to achieve family and community outcomes.</b>	<b>I.) Unduplicated Number of Organizations(#)</b>	<b>II.) Number of Partnerships(#)</b>
A. Non-Profit	8	14
B. Faith Based	8	8
C. Local Government	14	14
D. State Government	4	4
E. Federal Government	2	2
F. For-Profit Business or Corporation	7	7
G. Consortiums/Collaboration	4	7
H. Housing Consortiums/Collaboration	3	3
I. School Districts	4	6
J. Institutions of postsecondary education/training	12	14
K. Financial/Banking Institutions	5	6
L. Health Service Institutions	4	4
M. State wide associations or collaborations	2	2

Data sharing with DHS	1	1
Member agency of Community Action Partnership	1	1
Member agency NCAF	1	1

<b>N. Total</b> number of organizations and total number of partnerships CAAs work with to promote family and community outcomes (automatically calculates)	<b>80</b>	<b>94</b>
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## Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

### 4.1 2015 Partnerships among supports and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.

A. Non-Profit (14) – Fifth Street Renaissance, Sangamon County Aging Network, Senior Services of Central Illinois, Springfield Center for Independent Living, Springfield Community Federation, Springfield Urban League (Headstart - pediatric dental program UYEP, 21<sup>st</sup> Century After School program at Feitshans, Man Camp 12-hour financial literacy course with savings account), Youth Service Bureau, United Way (Basic Needs Vision Council member, EFSP board member, Money Smart Week, attend Annual Meeting).

B. Faith-Based (8) – Faith Coalition for the Common Good anchor partner, Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Salvation Army, Unity for Christ Outreach Ministries, Catholic Charities, Kumler Outreach Ministries, Fishes and Loaves, Union Baptist

C. Local Government (14) - Sangamon County Dept. of Public Health, Macon County Health Dept. Dental Clinic, Springfield Township, Capital Township, City of Springfield Community Relations (Landlord/Tenant Workshop), Sewer Rebate local government vendors including, City of Springfield (CWLP), Villages of Grandview, Jerome, Chatham, Rochester, Williamsville Public Works, Springfield Metro Sanitary District, Veterans Assistance Commission, Regional Office of Education.

D. State Government – (1) DCEO

E. Federal Government (2)– Congressman Rodney Davis, US Health and Human Services/OCS

F. For-Profit Business/Corporations (7)–Ameren (LIHEAP vendor), MTI, ITT, CASPN as educational institutions and WX Contractors including Wood Heating and Cooling, Baily architectural contractor and VL Porter architectural contractor.

G. Consortiums/Collaborations (6) - Springfield Collaborative for Active Child Health, Springfield Housing Authority Family Self Sufficiency board member (and participated in SHA outreach events including Charlie Brandon Day, Father’s Day Celebration)Springfield Urban League (member of Headstart medical advisory council member, SUL UYEP advisory council member), WIB member agency.

H. Housing Consortiums/Collaborations (3)- Heartland Continuum of Care, SIU Vulnerable Populations Housing Steering Committee, Abundant Faith Housing Partner through ICADC

I. School Districts (8) – Springfield School District #186 (Serving the Same Families Leadership Team, Lawrence Ed. Center GED partner, Homeless Liaison, Birth to 5 MOU), Riverton School District, St. Patrick’s School and Diocese,

J. Institutions of Post-Secondary Education/Training (12)– LLCC (C.N.A. , scholarship and GED programs), Benedictine, MacMurray, SIU, SIU-E, U of I, Eastern IL, Western IL, MTI, ITT and CASPN, UIS (War on Poverty Panel Discussion Event and planning committee for 2016 Child Poverty Conference).

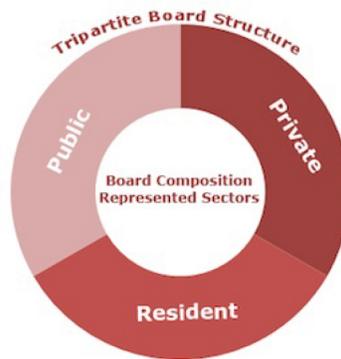
K. Financial/Banking Institutions (6) - UCB, PNC, Woodforest National Bank (also does 12-hour Money Smart Course), Bank of Springfield, Heartland Credit Union.

L. Health Service Institutions (4)– SIU Med School (Homeless Health Clinic vendor), Central Counties Health Center is agency dental vendor and referral agency, Sangamon County Dept. of Public Health, Macon County Health Dept. Dental Clinic,

M. State-wide Assns./Collaborations – (3) IACAA, IVCA, ICADC agency board memberships.

N. Other (2)- Community Action Partnership and National Community Action Foundation members.

## Goal 5: Agencies Increase their Capacity to Achieve Results



**The contribution of 151 hours in general and committee meetings** by 12 Advisory Council and County Oversight Committee members ensured application of the unique Community action tri-partite board structure to bring together community leaders from each of these groups to collaborate on developing responses to local needs. The time spent allowed for **Maximum Feasible Participation in both the creation and administration of Community Action programs.**



Staff Members of Sangamon County Community Resources

**The human capital resources** available to Community Action to increase agency capacity to achieve family and community outcomes include 1 Certified Community Action Professional, 5 Family Development Certified Staff, 12 staff attending 587 hours of trainings, and 12 Board Members attending 3 hours of trainings. In 2016, two more staff members will become certified as Families and Community Development (FCD) Specialists and one staff member will become a certified ROMA trainer and implementer.

*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

Andrew Carnegie



Kelly Comerford, Energy Dept. Coordinator



David Petrilli, Fiscal Officer



Ruth Ann Ramsey, Receptionist



Erika Orr, Asst. Energy Coordinator



Elaine Berndt, Family Support Specialist



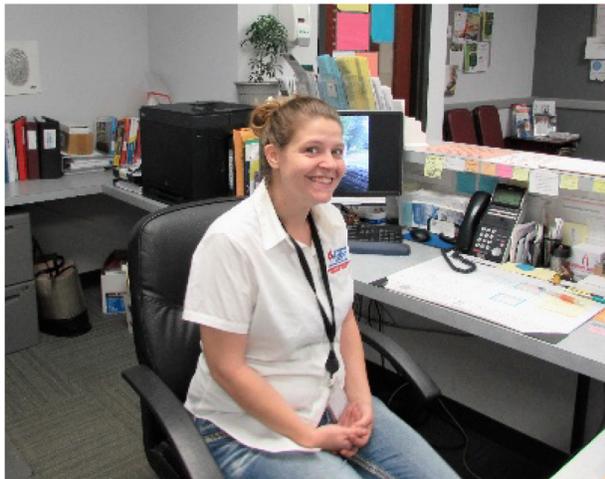
Pam Spoor, Family Support Spec./ Housing Counselor



Amanda Kemper, Family Support Specialist



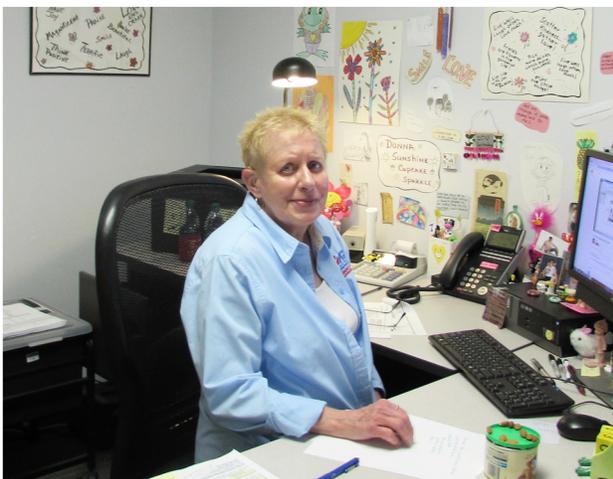
Christina Sugars, Family Support Specialist



Amber Bauer, CSBG Intake Specialist



Lenny Hamende, Weatherization Final Inspector



Donna Roderick, Data and Analysis Specialist



Sharmin Doering, CSBG Coordinator

## Goal 6: Low-Income People, Especially Vulnerable Populations. Achieve their Potential by Agency Programs that Strengthen through Supportive Services

Basic Needs assistance provided services to re-gain family stability.

**Rental Assistance** - \$28,291 ensured 161 families obtained or maintained safe and affordable housing.

**School Uniforms**- \$31,028 helped 201 children **avoid truancy**.

*Thank you so much! I know I was a wreck when I came in, but you made me feel like there was someone who cares about people like me. Sylvia Thornton (LIHEAP Customer)*

**Dental Services**-\$30,360 assisted 91 families.

**Medical Assistance**- \$4,560 was provided for 23 families.

**Vision Assistance** -\$2,024 in vision exam and glasses assisted 22 seniors

**Nutrition**-\$15,440 in monthly senior food box assistance provided for 59 seniors, half of whom were shut ins delivered by our partner, Senior Services of Central Illinois. These 248 **food boxes** fed 58 seniors who experienced reduction in food stamp benefits.

**Utility Assistance (LIHEAP program)** helped 4,389 households with low incomes avoid the risk of disconnection and/or obtain re-connection assistance.

**Pediatric Dental Anesthesia** - \$4,500 in assistance enabled 9 children, ages 3-5 to receive anesthesia not covered by Medicaid for oral surgery for the painful condition of baby bottle tooth decay.

Dear Community Resources Staff: Thank you for all of your help and compassion. It was very hard for me to come to the agency and ask for help but your staff made me feel so much better and really understood how I was feeling. I can't express how grateful I am for the LIHEAP service and great customer service I received. Bless you all, Rachel Coons

**SCDCR also provided a series of services to seniors, disabled clients, and caregivers.**

**Health Care Services** - 31 clients obtained services for themselves or a family member.

**Food Boxes** - 48 seniors received food boxes twice each month to assist with food stamp cuts.

**LIHEAP** energy assistance saved 1,340 senior households from disconnection.

**Weatherization**- 27 senior homes were weatherized to reduce monthly energy bills.

**Sewer Assistance Program**- 1,022 households received Low-Income Sewer Rebate Assistance due to increased sewer rates.



SCDCR received 2,892 phone call inquiries from customers about services available in Sangamon County. Staff assessed callers' situations and provided appropriate information and referrals to customers for other existing community services.

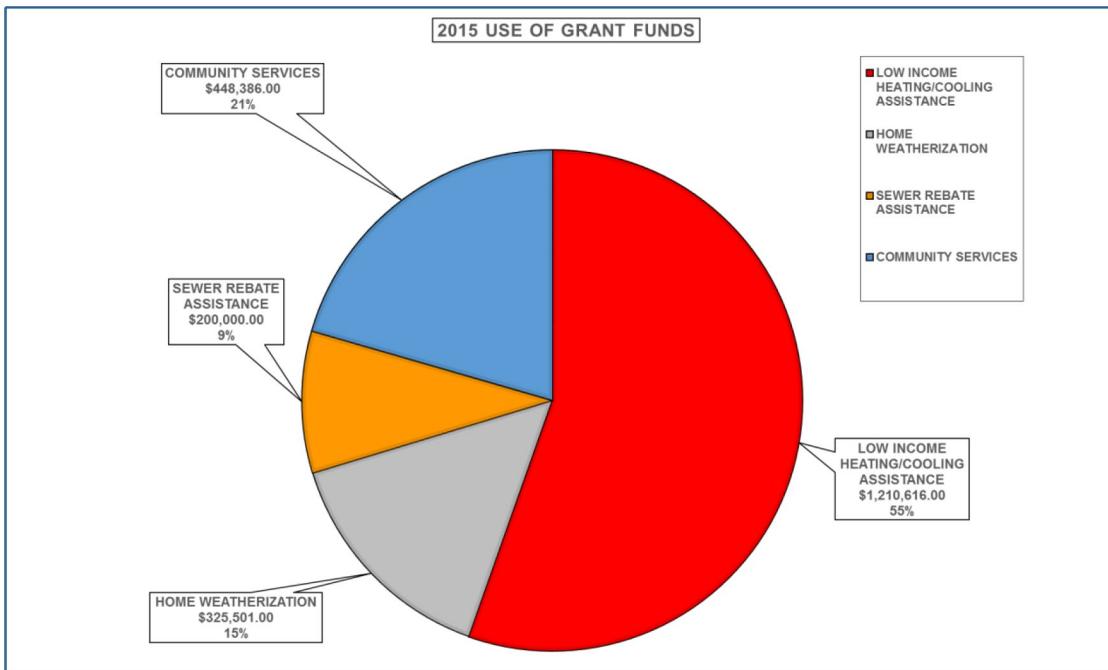
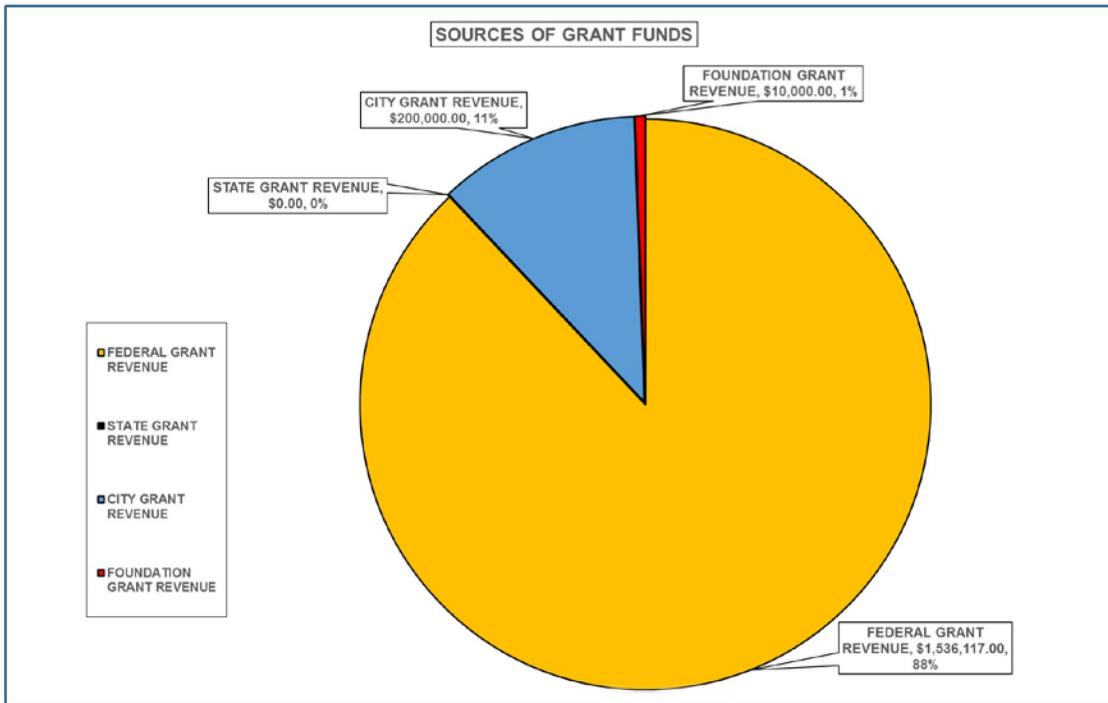
### 2015 SCCR Customer Service Ratings:

Excellent – 92.5%  
Very Good – 5.4%  
Good – 2.1%  
Fair – 0%  
Poor – 0%.

All of our customers  
are partners  
in our mission

- Shep Hyken

# Agency's Financial Report



## 2015 Use of Grant Funds

Low Income Heating/Cooling Assistance	55%
Home Weatherization	15%
Sewer Rebate Assistance	9%
Community Services	21%

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Total	\$1,746,117
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# Community Action Goals

## Six National Goals

1. Individuals with low income become more self-sufficient.
2. The conditions in which low income people live on are improved.
3. Individuals with low income own a stake in their community.
4. Partnerships are achieved.
5. Agencies increase capacity to achieve results.
6. Individuals with low income become more stable.

## Why These Goals?

If we expect to achieve results, we must expect change to happen.

In the Community Action network, the results achieved are broadly identified as achievement of the Community Action Six National Goals. The Six National Goals divided into family level, agency level and community level goals.

To achieve these goals the family (or individual), agency, or community will experience a change. This could be a positive change in circumstance, or it could be the prevention of a negative change. It even could be maintenance of a stable condition (which is a neutral change). These changes happen when families receive services from Community Action Agencies or their partners.

One of the primary assumptions in the Community Action National Theory of Change is that family and community successes are interconnected. When families own a stake in their community (Goal Three), they work to assure that community conditions are improved (Goal Two). Additionally, their involvement in community activities provides them with social capital and access to resources that contribute to them becoming more stable (Goal Six) or more self-sufficient (Goal One).

And, of course, the agency is the primary catalyst in family and community change. Stakeholders and other partners (service providers, businesses, government representatives, funders, etc.) must work together with the Community Action Agency (Goal Four) and the CAA must have the capacity (Goal Five) to help facilitate the interactions that most effectively will address complex issues related to the reduction of poverty.

## Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)

To accomplish these goals, local community action agencies have been encouraged to undertake a number of ROMA implementation actions that focus on results-oriented management and results-oriented accountability:

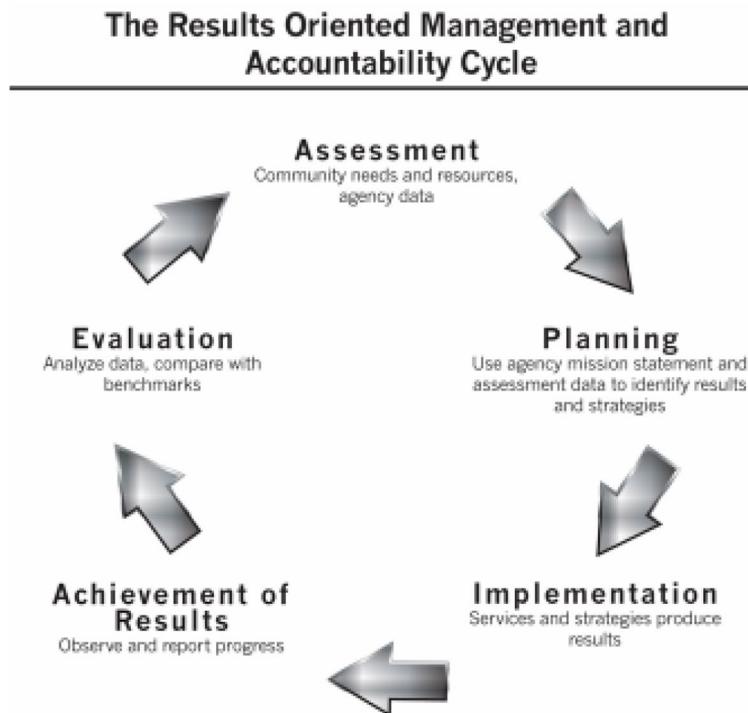


## Results-Oriented Management

- Assess poverty needs and conditions within the community;
- Define a clear agency anti-poverty mission for community action and a strategy to address those needs, both immediate and longer term, in the context of existing resources and opportunities in the community;
- Identify specific improvements, or results, to be achieved among low-income people and the community; and
- Organize and implement programs, services, and activities, such as advocacy, within the agency and among “partnering” organizations, to achieve anticipated results.

## Results-Oriented Accountability

- Develop and implement strategies to measure and record improvements in the condition of low-income people and the communities in which they live that result from community action intervention;
- Use information about outcomes, or results, among agency tripartite boards and staff to determine the overall effectiveness, inform annual and long-range planning, support agency advocacy, funding, and community partnership activities.



# History of Community Action

## What is Community Action?

In 1964, The Great Society, as envisioned by President Lyndon Johnson, was a sweeping plan to improve the lives of all Americans, regardless of their circumstances. Inspired by President Kennedy and his New Frontier, Johnson pledged to fulfill his promise of equal opportunity for all by enacting several comprehensive changes within the federal government. In August of that same year, the Economic Opportunity Act was signed into law by President Johnson creating the nationwide Community Action Network.

## The War on Poverty

In 1963, shortly before he was assassinated, President Kennedy had asked his economic advisors to draw up some proposals to address the problem of American poverty. Johnson took up this charge after he succeeded Kennedy as President. In Johnson's first State of the Union address on June 8, 1964, he called for an unconditional war to defeat poverty. He expanded and revised the proposals given to Kennedy and developed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The act included a variety of initiatives:

- Head Start
- Job Corps
- Work-Study program for university students
- VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) - a domestic version of the Peace Corps
- Neighborhood Youth Corps
- Basic education and adult job training
- CAPS (Community Action Programs) - CAPS turned out to be the most controversial part of the package, as it proposed the "maximum feasible participation" by poor people themselves to determine what would help them the most. CAPS were a radical departure from how government had run most social reform programs in the past.

The Economic Opportunity Act was innovative legislation, but it received only about \$1 billion to divide among the various programs and remained critically underfunded. By 1966, Congress appropriated \$4 billion for the programs.

## The Start of Community Action

Community Action was a bold idea, especially for the federal government. It handed over control to the local level, so that programs were geared specifically for target population needs. This concept, "maximum feasible participation", represented a new paradigm in the government and many sectors were wary of its innovative ideas. President Johnson selected a member of President Kennedy's inner circle to head up the newly formed "Office of Economic Opportunity" –Sargent Shriver.



President Johnson signing the Economic Opportunity Act, August 1964

Shriver was head of Peace Corps in the Kennedy administration and married to Kennedy's sister, Eunice. He had proved himself to be a capable leader and President Johnson admired his abilities. President Johnson, legendary for his acumen in recruiting key personnel, offered the position to Shriver and would not take no for an answer. Shriver was installed as the first head of the OEO in October 11, 1964 and leapt into action.

Unfortunately for Shriver, he simply did not have adequate funding to begin the process of addressing national poverty issues. However, he assembled an impressive team of advisers, including Michael Harrington, author of *The Other America* and began to implement new policies and actions to resolve these issues.

Community Action was modeled after two fairly successful urban renewal projects, one undertaken by the Ford Foundation and the Mobilization for Youth, a program aimed at juvenile delinquency. Inspiration was also taken from the "Back of the Yards" program in Chicago, which was developed by Saul Alinsky, considered the father of "community development". It should be noted that Alinsky became very critical of the OEO as it developed. The key component was that low-income citizens played an active role in program design and administration, or "maximum feasible participation". The Economic Opportunity Act was amended (known as the Green Amendment) in 1967 to mandate the board structure of community action agencies, which complemented the earlier Quie Amendment which required the tripartite representation, including low-income participation.

In 1981, President Reagan introduced the Block Grant, which dramatically changed the way federal funding was distributed. Programs including Community Action, would now receive

funding through the State Office of Community Action/Services and would be under more intense scrutiny than previous administrations. Illinois Community Action now worked more closely with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to implement the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) and worked to build a strong partnership to provide robust services to Illinois' low-income residents.

Over the past several years, federal funding to support the Community Service Block Grant has been challenged. President George W. Bush denounced Community Action programs as being static. However, Community Action remains an important safety net for many vulnerable individuals and families. Beginning in 2001, Community Action has improved their reporting through the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) framework and continuously seeks ways to improve outreach and services. The National Community Action Partnership now encourages all Community Action Agencies to embrace the National Standards of Excellence as a pathway to improve and empower agency operations. The guiding principle of maximum feasible participation continues today in Community Action. Local Community Action boards are tripartite, in other words, have representation from all segments of the local community including their low-income clients.

### **Why Community Action?**

Community Action equips low-income citizens with the tools and potential for becoming self-sufficient. The structure of program is unique – federal dollars are used locally to offer specialized programming in communities. It is a coordinated effort to address the root effects of poverty and to, ultimately, move families and individuals to self-sufficiency.

This work is not easy and demand is always shifting and changing. Over the years, the federal government has changed as well. The funding is now part of the Block Grant System, which allows for the flexibility and specialization of unique programs. Poverty is viewed as a systemic problem and Community Action is a systems approach to resolving those issues. There are now over 1000 Community Action Agencies throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

### **Community Action Agencies (CAAs) promote self-sufficiency, not dependency. Among their three key assets are:**

**FLEXIBILITY** - The Community Services Block Grant, which supplies the core CAA funding, is unique; it is flexible, and it primarily funds local investments in services, facilities and partnerships which are particular to the CAA's home community. By adding to and altering government programs' "one-size-fits-all" programming, a community can provide its low-income members the right mix of assistance, encouragement, and incentives to become self-sufficient.

**IMMEDIACY** - CAAs are located in the areas of greatest need, managed and staffed by community residents and often open far into the evening. Therefore, when a family or an individual faces a crisis, their CAA is able to respond quickly with targeted forms of assistance appropriate to the situation; these may well include the mobilization of help from many of the CAA's private sector partners, volunteers, and faith-based groups.

The goal is to promptly stabilize a family, and thus avoid the long-term consequence of costly dependency. However, Community Action also has the capability to sustain long-term involvement in a family's progress to self-sufficiency, as well as in the development of the low-income community.

COORDINATION - A bedrock principle of Community Action is that resources of all kinds need to be integrated so they can be used in combination to solve community and individual problems. CAAs manage more than \$5.6 billion in public and private resources annually, serving more than 9.3 million low-income persons; the CSBG-funded staff goes into the community and to other government sources to bring in not only leveraged funds but also hundreds of thousands of local volunteers.

So, in other words:

The Community Action Method:

- Prioritizes prevention
- Addresses the causes of poverty
- Involves the Community
- Improves the Community
- Creates Opportunity
- CAA response to clients/customers is:
  - Flexible
  - Coordinated
  - Directed to Long Term Client Development

Typically, the programs and services coordinated, enhanced and offered to the community by its CAA include all or some of the following:

TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE CHILDREN AND YOUTH: Head Start, Literacy Programs, Dropout Prevention, After School Enrichment and Tutoring, Teen Centers, Recreation and Sports Programs, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC), Well-Baby Clinics, Summer Enrichment Programs, Summer Food Programs, Child Care Food Programs, Pregnancy Prevention, Character Education, Substance Abuse Education, Prevention & Counseling, Summer Youth Employment Programs, College Counseling and Placement.

TO SUPPORT THE WORKING POOR: Child Care, Adult Education, GED Preparation, Job Training and On-The-Job Support, Job Search Assistance, Job Placement, Job Creation, Small Business Development, Loan Funds, Senior Community Service Employment, Displaced Homemaker Programs, Budget Counseling, Internet Training and Access.

TO SUPPORT THE POOR FACING CRISIS: Homeless Shelters & Drop-In Centers, Utility Deposits, Eviction Prevention, Domestic Violence Programs & Shelters, Transitional Housing, Food Pantries Energy Crisis Assistance & Shelter, Emergency Food Baskets, Emergency Clothing, Supplies, and Services - including Medical & Legal Volunteer Help.

TO SUSTAIN AND HONOR THE ELDERLY: Meals on Wheels, In-Home Care Programs, Senior Centers, Senior Day Care, Foster Grandparents, Congregate Meals, Medical Transportation, Volunteer Chore Services.

TO STRENGTHEN THE WHOLE FAMILY: Comprehensive Family Development Support, Nutrition Education, Parenting Education, Community Gardens and Canneries, Food Stamps, Health Clinics, Weatherization Assistance, Energy Assistance, Rental Assistance, Home Ownership Programs, Community Centers, Individual Development Accounts.

TO STRENGTHEN THE WHOLE COMMUNITY: Low-Income Housing Development, Economic Development and Support for New Business Ventures, Mobilization of Community-Wide Safety and Crime Prevention Initiatives, Consumer Education and Fraud Prevention, Community Reinvestment Act Partnerships, Support for Groups Working on Neighborhood Improvements, Support for Dialogue and Planning among all Sectors of the Community.

### **Unique Characteristics of Community Action Agencies**

BOARD STRUCTURE - CAAs are required to have a tripartite board consisting of equal parts of local private sector, public sector, and low-income community representatives. This structure brings together community leaders from each of these groups to collaborate on developing responses to local needs. This allows for Maximum Feasible Participation in both the creation and administration of Community Action programs.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT – The CAA network is one of the largest users of volunteer services in the country. In FY 98, CAAs reported that volunteers contributed more than 27 million hours of service, equivalent to more than 13,000 full time employees.

LEVERAGE FOR OTHER RESOURCES – Every Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) dollar spent leverages nearly \$4 of state, local, and private contributions combined. The CAA network administers a total of nearly \$5.6 billion in federal, state, local and private resources.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS – CSBG funds give CAAs the flexibility to design programs that address needs specific to individuals and the local community and to identify specialized resources that fit these needs.

## **The Community Action Promise**

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and others.



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Sharmin Doering, Executive Director

#### **Office Hours**

Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Call (217) 535-3120 for appointments

#### **Our Mission**

The Sangamon County Department of Community Resources strives to improve the quality of life of residents with low incomes in our county. The goal for our customers is self-sufficiency and is increased by utilizing agency programs and by referrals for customers made by agency staff to community partner organizations.