2017 Annual Report

Sangamon County

Community Resources

Helping People. Changing Lives.

community Action®

PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY RESOURCES OF SANGAMON COUNTY

A Message from CSBG Advisory Council Chair, Brad Mills

Dear Friends,

Each year all 1,050 U.S. Community Action Agencies are charged with assessing their community's needs then working to meet the unique needs of their service areas by implementing programs and services to mitigate the root causes of poverty. In this way, households are stabilized and are able to move toward self-sufficiency for a better life.

In 2017, a total of 6,315 services were rendered to 9,437 households to help families regain hope in their future, expending $3,922,518. Each year when we compile our annual report, I am always amazed at Sangamon County's myriad services which exist along a broad spectrum ranging from money management to regain hope in their future to extended case management integrated with bundled services. We help families maintain safe, affordable housing, participate in high-growth area training to enter our local workforce. If individuals are employed and encounter a circumstance out of their control, we enable them to move past difficult times and resume stability. As Council Chair, I wish to extend my thanks to the members of the CSBG Advisory Council for their dedication to Sangamon County Community Resources, to our Executive Director and her staff for their commitment to families in need of direction and assistance. Our whole team's devotion to our community is what really does change lives and make our community a better place to live.

Taking time to get to build your community, to get to know your people know your community, will have long-lasting benefits. --- Clifton Taulbert

Bradley Mills

CSBG Advisory Council Chair

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

Dear Friends,

As a Sangamon County board member, former teacher in high-poverty schools and chairman of the Community Resources committee that oversees spending of Sangamon County Community Action funds, we are resolute in our efforts to ensure funds are used to assist numerous individuals in moving toward attainment of the independence. We are committed in our daily efforts to providing a "hand up" rather than a "hand out" in the quest for this dream.

> The secret to getting ahead is getting started.
>
> Mark Twain

Over the years, I have seen Sangamon County Community Resources change and grow, expanding the services provided to the community to meet the needs of our community and its residents. The stories of our clients demonstrate the enormous impact we have made in Sangamon County.

I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who has made Community Resources so successful over the past 32 years. We weatherize homes to reduce utility bills, assist with utility bill payments, offer financial literacy, life skills and goal setting opportunities, aid in homeless prevention and assist other customers who are in crisis. In the coming years, we will continue to assess community needs and strive to meet those needs of our vulnerable individuals and families.

Linda Fulgenzi

Linda S. Fulgenzi

Sangamon County Board Member and Community Resources Oversight Committee Chairman

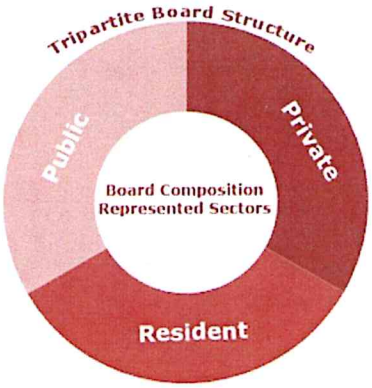
2017 Community Services Block Grant Advisory Council

Front Row: Vice Chairman, Terry Young, Chairman Brad Mills,

Second Row: Pastor Silas Johnson, LaVon Wilson, Scholarship Committee Chairman, Sharon Brown , Michelle Tucker, Supt. Jeff Vose, Allissa Hall, Barbara Rochelle.

Third Row: Craig Hall, Diane Murphy, David Yankee.

Not Pictured: Linda Fulgenzi, Clyde Bunch, Rose Ruzic



A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Community Action Stakeholders,

As Community Action changes lives, so does the National Community Action Network change to meet federal requirements. In the last few years, all 1,050 Community Action Agencies in the U.S. have been mandated to meet a rigorous set of Performance Standards as well as updated ROMA outcomes. Both of these initiatives have made the Community Action network stronger, more accountable and better able to serves families who need our support.

We thank the hundreds of people who answered the Stakeholder and Inter-Agency Needs Assessment surveys; our customers, staff, community organizations, CSBG Advisory Council, Community Resources County Oversight Committee for their commitment throughout this process. We are moved to hear over and over again from our staff how good they feel about working here. We were pleased to hear from our participants who have said Community Action has made a real difference in their lives. We are challenged to think about how we can do an even better job using National Performance Indicators, to emerge as an even stronger organization as a result.

Yours in the Promise of Community Action,

Sharmin Doering

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

In 2017, SCDCR served 15 individuals through the customized **LLCC C.N.A. program and 9 C.N.A.s and 4 Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) through the Fishes and Loaves (FLOM) C.N.A./ Personal Care Assistant Program for a total of 31 participants**. A total of $52,377.15 in education assistance and $4,837.50 in student transportation vouchers were provided to complete the course work. Twenty-eight participants passed the completion exam at LLCC and FLOM, with a success **rate of 90%.** Twenty students passed the C.N.A State Board certificate exam, eight more will test in early 2018. Twenty students landed and retained nursing jobs, moving up above the Federal Poverty Guideline of $11,670 per person annually.

Hello Community Resources,

I want you to know how truly grateful I am to have been a part of the Lincoln Land Community College C.N.A. program. I am currently working for an assisted living facility and am now enrolled in LLCC taking English, Math and Biology. Things are going good, thus far.

It's important to me to let you all know how much I appreciate your assistance and how I am doing.

Michelle Fierge
LLCC Community Resources LLCC C.N.A. Student

2017 Lincoln Land Community College Cohort 15 C.N.A. Graduates

CSBG Scholarship Committee Members

LaVon Wilson, Chairman, Retired Teacher, SPS #186
Brad Mills, CSBG Council Chairman, Member SMEAA Board
Linda Fulgenzi, Chairman, Community Resources Oversight Committee, Retired Teacher, SPS #186
Janet Woodson, Retired Teacher, SPS #186
Dr. Mary Loken, Regional Office of Education, Retired Teacher, SPS #186

In 2017, weekly financial literacy workshops were hosted in the agency and presented by banking partners (UCB, PNC, BOS, Woodforest Bank and Carrollton Bank).

Weekly Financial Literacy Classes

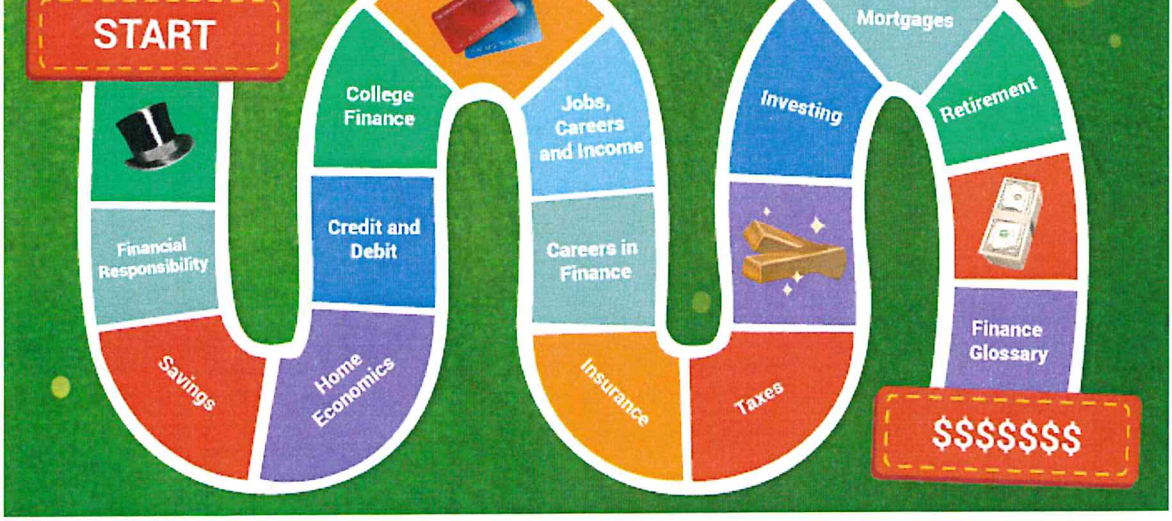
A total of 195 **customers attended the workshops** and were expected to increase savings, reduce debts, complete and use household budgets.

2017 Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministry
C.N.A. (Certified Nursing Assistant) Graduates

The CSBG scholarship committee awarded **$20,000** to 9 college students in 2017, assisting them in their quest to continue their studies or to acquire diplomas or certificates. Seven were first-time recipients and 2 recipients were returnees. Three of the scholarship recipients graduated from schools with diplomas or certificates in 2017, and **three** graduates found jobs. Debt reduction for recipients provided through scholarship awards was between $500 and $2,500.

Dear CSBG Scholarship Committee Members,
I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to
you for making the SLICE Scholarship possible.
This award is a stepping stone which allows individuals who live in
low-income areas and equal chance to obtain an education.
I was thrilled to learn of my selection for this honor and I am
deeply appreciative of your support. I promise to work very hard
and eventually give something back to others, both as a teacher and
possibly a scholarship to future students like me.
Sincerely,
Meagan L. Turner

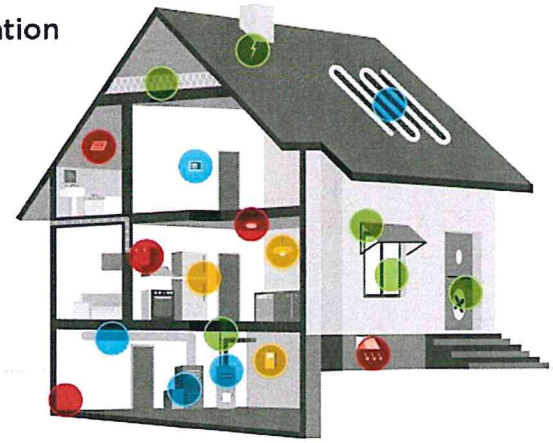
Thank you to our Financial Literacy Workshop Banking Partners!



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 2017, a total of 60 homes were weatherized, resulting in saving both energy and additional income for customers.**

Typical Weatherization Measures Installed



MECHANICAL MEASURES

- Clean, tune, repair, or replace heating and/or cooling systems.
- Install duct and heating pipe insulation.
- Install programmable thermostats and other HVAC controls.
- Repair/replace water heaters.
- Install water heater tank insulation.
- Insulate water heating pipes.
- Install solar water heating systems.
- Install waste heat recovery devices.

HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES

- Complete combustion appliance safety testing.
- Repair/replace vent systems to ensure combustion gas draft safely outside.
- Install mechanical ventilation to ensure adequate indoor air quality.
- Assess fire hazards. Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms when needed.
- Evaluate mold/moisture hazards.
- Perform incidental safety repairs when needed.

BUILDING SHELL MEASURES

- Install wall, floor, ceiling, attic, and/or foundation insulation.
- Complete Blower Door Testing.
- Perform air sealing.
- Repair/replace primary windows/doors.
- Install storm windows/doors.
- Install window film/solar screens/window louvers and awnings.
- Repair minor roof and wall leaks prior to attic or wall insulation.

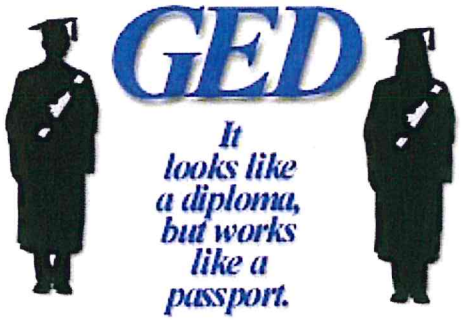
ELECTRIC BASELOAD MEASURES

- Install motor controls.
- Install efficient light sources.
- Replace refrigerators and freezers with energy efficient models.

Community Resources Architectural Contractor and Weatherization Customer

GED Test Assistance

The GED Test Assistance program provided financial assistance to individuals who successfully passed the practice GED tests. The program helps individuals with low incomes overcome the barrier of affordability of the test. Those who passed all 4 tests became significantly more employable. This year, this program provided **$1,080 in GED test vouchers to 13 clients**.



Goal 2: The Conditions in Which Low Income People Live Are Improved

Poverty Competency Institutes Offered Tools for Making a Difference

A Poverty Institute was held on June 6, 2017 at Erin's Pavilion. Dr. Donna Beegle, founder of Communication Across Barriers presented an institute to Springfield School District #186 and Sangamon County School administrators, Public Health nurses and community partner organizations.

With the growing number of students who are experiencing poverty, it is imperative that education leaders have the knowledge and skills for systemically addressing the impacts of poverty. Leaders were provided with a poverty knowledge base necessary for improving educational outcomes. Leaders gained tools for understanding how the many different life experiences of poverty impact educational success and what they can do to improve outcomes. Examples were also shared of school districts that are implementing proven strategies and experiencing success in removing poverty related obstacles.

Each school or school district was tasked with developing a "Blueprint for Change" a careful, well thought-out, evolutionary process that can lead their organizations towards poverty competencies critical to improving educational outcomes.

Dr. Donna M. Beegle and a participant welcoming all to the Poverty Institute

Dr. Beegle presenting the Poverty Institute

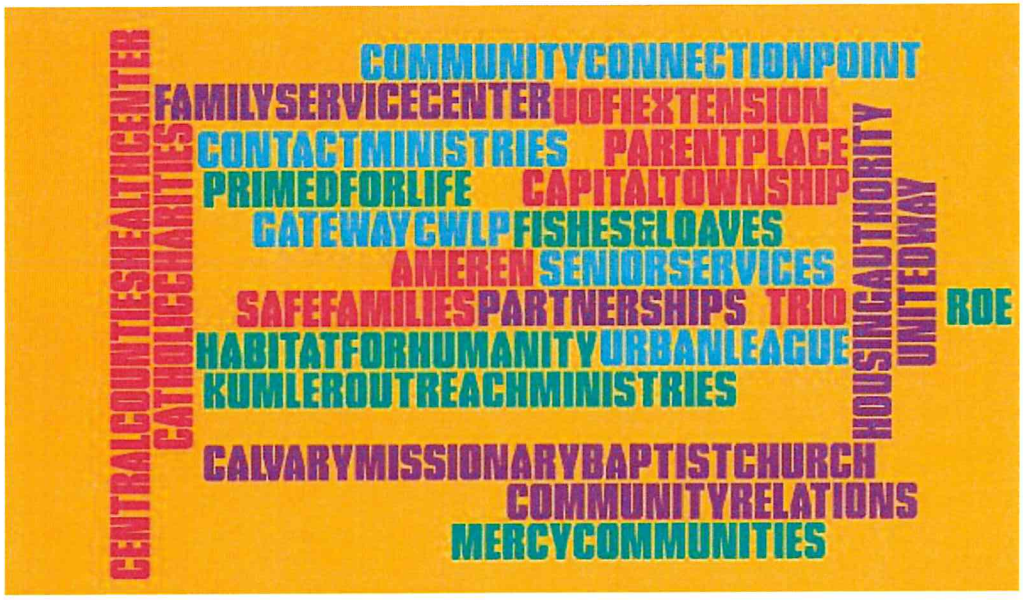
Goal 4: Partnerships are Achieved to Better Serve Low-Income People

SCDCR has developed collaborations, partnerships or linkages with 87 organizations, including non-profits, faith-based and government agencies at all levels, and businesses. Thanks to our community partners, Community Resources is able to strengthen the agency mission and services.

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.	I.) Unduplicated Number of Organizations(#)	II.) Number of Partnerships(#)
A. Non-Profit	18	20
B. Faith Based	7	7
C. Local Government	15	18
D. State Government	2	2
E. Federal Government	2	2
F. For-Profit Business or Corporation	6	6
G. Consortiums/Collaboration	6	6
H. Housing Consortiums/Collaboration	2	2
I. School Districts	5	5
J. Institutions of postsecondary education/training	13	15
K. Financial/Banking Institutions	6	7
L. Health Service Institutions	4	5
M. State wide associations or collaborations	3	4

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

N. **Total** number of organizations and total number of partnerships CAAs work with to promote family and community outcomes	**88**	**102**



<u>2017 Partnerships among supports and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.</u>

A. <u>Non-Profit (12) (14)</u>– Senior Services of Central Illinois (food box program and LIHEAP), Springfield Center for Independent Living (referrals), Springfield Community Federation (member), Central Counties (pediatric dental program) , United Way (Basic Needs Vision Council member, UW EFSP board member), Computer Banc (computer recycle), Springfield Urban League (letters of support, referrals), Dominican Sisters (Associate Committee member),Sangamon County Medical Society (Medical Resource Guide), Community Connection Point (referrals), Forefront (member agency), Communication Across Barriers (Poverty Competency Workshops), Habitat for Humanity (resident housing counseling services) St. Johns Hospital and Memorial (Health Needs Assessment), SIU School of Medicine (Health Round Table), Shifting into New Gear (referrals)

B. <u>Faith-Based (7)</u> – Faith Coalition for the Common Good anchor partner, Calvary Missionary Baptist Church (housing counseling), Catholic Charities (cross referrals), Kumler Outreach Ministries (board member), Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries (C.N.A. and PCA programs), Contact Ministries (Community Needs Assessment and Focus Groups).

C. <u>Local Government</u> (15) (18) -_ Sangamon County Dept. of Public Health (Poverty Workshop, Health Needs Assessment), Macon County Health Dept. Dental Clinic (pediatric dental provider), Springfield and Capital Townships (referrals) City of Springfield Community Relations (Landlord/Tenant referrals), Sewer Rebate local government vendors including, City of Springfield (CWLP), Villages of Grandview, Jerome, Chatham, Rochester, Williamsville Public Works, Springfield Metro Sanitary District (LISAP program), Veterans Assistance Commission (Resource Fair), Regional Office of Education (CSBG Council Member and Poverty Workshops), Springfield

Housing Authority (FSS Committee Member, Charlie Brandon Day, Father's Day Fair, Housing Workshop partner).

D. State Government – (2) DCEO - 4 (state grantor), DHS (data sharing agreement)

E. Federal Government (2)–Congressman Rodney Davis (co-signer for CSBG re-authorization), US Health and Human Services (federal grantor).

F. For-Profit Business/Corporations (6)–Ameren (LIHEAP vendor), MTI, CASPN as educational institutions for scholarship and WX Contractors including Wood Heating and Cooling, Baily architectural contractor and VL Porter architectural contractor.

G. Consortiums/Collaborations (3) - Community Health Connection Program (Brandon Court) Executive Directors of Central Illinois, Forefront Member

H. Housing Consortiums/Collaborations (1)- Heartland Continuum of Care Member and Nehemiah Expansion Project Partner in Housing Counseling.

I. School Districts (3)(6) – Springfield School District #186 and ROE (Poverty Workshops) Lawrence Ed. Center GED partner, District #186 Homeless Liaison (referrals), Birth to 5 MOU, Riverton School District Parent University.

J. Institutions of Post-Secondary Education/Training (13) (15)– UIS (2017 Child Poverty Conference), LLCC (C.N.A. , scholarship and GED programs), Scholarships through Benedictine, MacMurray, SIU, SIU-E, U of I, MTI, and CASPN, Chicago State, Knox College, Capital Area Career Center, University of Spa and Cosmetology,

K. Financial/Banking Institutions (6)(7) - UCB, PNC, Woodforest National Bank (also does 12-hour Money Smart Course), Bank of Springfield, Heartland Credit Union, Land of Lincoln Credit Union, Carrollton Bank.

L. Health Service Institutions (4) (5)– SIU Med School and Central Counties Health Center (Brandon Health Access Outreach), Central Counties Health Center is also agency dental vendor and referral agency, Sangamon County Dept. of Public Health (Community Health Needs Assessment)

M. State-wide Assns./Collaborations – (3) (4) IACAA, IVCA, ICADC, agency board memberships and partner with IACAA on multiple poverty simulations.

N. Other (2) (3) - Community Action Partnership Member and CCAP Commission member, National Community Action Foundation members.

Goal 5: Agencies Increase their Capacity to Achieve Results

The human capital resources available to Community Action to increase agency capacity to achieve family and community outcomes include 1 Certified Community Action Professional, 1 ROMA Trainer, 1 ROMA Implementer, 5 Family and Community Development Certified staff, Weatherization Certified Technicians, 12 staff attending 579 hours of training.

7 Reasons for Professional Development

1. **Confidence and Credibility**
2. **Efficiency**
3. **Ability to Influence and Lead**
4. **Opportunities to Network**
5. **Keeping Current On New Approaches**
6. **Achieve Career Goals**
7. **Become a Better Employee**

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 - 89 families obtained or maintained safe and affordable housing or employment supports.
School Uniforms- 77 children **avoided truancy with new school uniforms.**

Dental Services- 25 families received dental assistance.
Medical Assistance- 5 families received medical assistance.

Hello and Happy Holidays to Community Resources! It is my pleasure to inform the community how helpful Community Action has been to me and my family. You were very helpful with all of my problems; not only the bank, CWLP and Ameren, but your friendships have also been a blessing to me. I'll never forget you.

Geraldine Johnson

Nutrition- 52 vulnerable seniors at risk of losing their independence received a total of 600 monthly food boxes due to reductions in SNAP benefits, half of which were delivered monthly by our partner, Senior Services of Central Illinois.
Utility Assistance (LIHEAP program) helped 4,477 households with low incomes avoid the risk of disconnection and/or obtain re-connection assistance.
Weatherization- 74 senior homes were weatherized to reduce monthly energy bills.
Sewer Assistance Program- 1,700 households received Low-Income Sewer Assistance due to increased sewer rates.

Dear Community Resources:

My name is Shirley Harvill. As of January 1, 2017, I will be 87 years old. I live on $965.00 a month Social Security and $16.00 in food stamps. If it were not for Sangamon County Community Resources, I would not be able to be independent and live in my own home. I use a walker and a cane. Community Resources has helped me with a sewer rebate and utility assistance in the winter which allows me to stay warm and gives me a little breathing time to catch up on my bills. In the summer, they gave me a fan to help circulate the air and stay cool. I also receive a monthly food box from this agency. It is so nice to have the support of Community Resources, the staff is always standing ready to help. I can call anytime and if they can't help me, they connect me with who can help me. I am glad that someone still cares about the elderly and to know we are not forgotten. Again everyone, a great big thanks and a hug.

Sincerely,
Shirley Harvell

SCDCR received 2,484 **phone call inquiries** from customers about services available in Sangamon County. Staff assessed callers' situations and provided appropriate information and referrals to callers for community services outside of SCCR.

2017 SCCR Customer Service Ratings:

Excellent - 98.0%

Very Good – 1.8%

Good - .2%

Fair – 0%

Poor – 0%

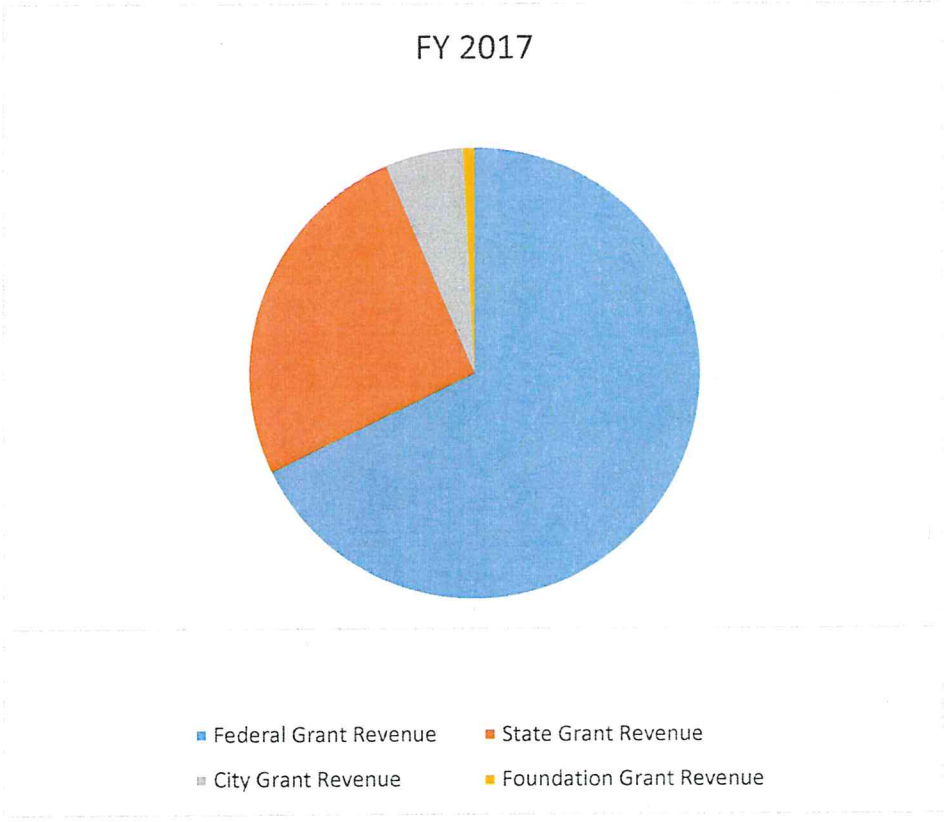
Agency's 2017 Financial Report

Source of Grant Funds

Federal Grant Revenue	$2,662,703.00
State Grant Revenue	$1,007,315.00
City Grant Revenue	$220,000.00
Foundation Grant Revenue	$32,500.00
Total	**$3,922,518.00**

Use of Grant Funds

Low Income Heating/Cooling Assistance	$2,573,157.00
Home Weatherization	$616,245.00
Sewer Rebate Assistance	$192,841.00
Community Services	$480,610.00
Rollover to next grant year	$59,665.00
Total	**$3,922,518.00**



Thank You
for your commitment to our youth of today and leaders of tomorrow.

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 skate 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 Foals. 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

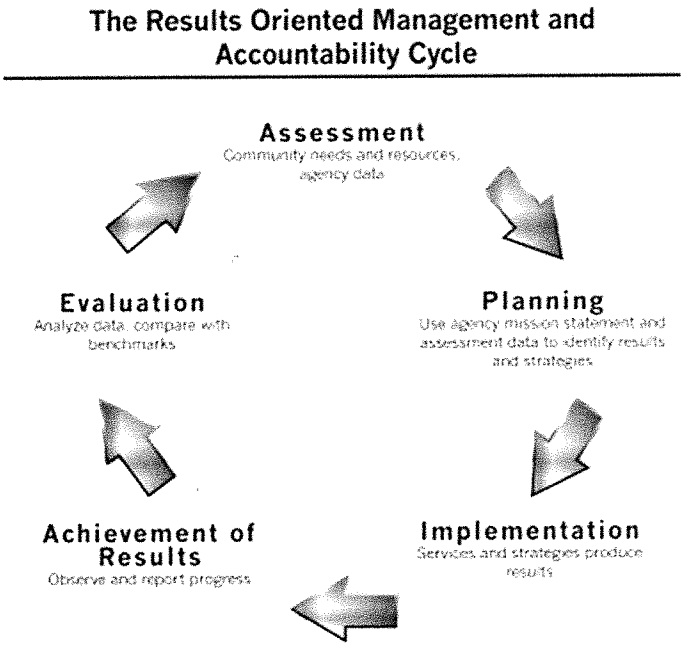
that focus on results-oriented management and results-oriented accountability:

Results-Oriented Management

- Assess poverty needs and conditions within the community;
- Define a cleat 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.



IACAA

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, with 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 then 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:

FLEXIBILTY - 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 PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

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 each other.

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Sharmin Doering, Executive Director

Office Hours

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Call (217) 535-3120 for appointments

Our Mission

Sangamon County Community Resources strives to improve the quality of life for people with low incomes in Sangamon County through agency programs, services and referrals that promote stability and/or self-determination.