



Community Resources of Sangamon County

2019 Community Action Plan and Needs Assessment



2019 Community Action Plan

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Community Action Plan for PY 2019

Will be submitted to the Community Resources County Oversight Committee and CSBG Advisory Council in October, 2018.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1964, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act to begin America's War on Poverty. As a result of this initiative, a network of Community Action Agencies sprang up all over the country to alleviate the impact of poverty at the local level and to support people with low incomes to improve the quality of their lives. Today, all Community Action Agencies are overseen by a state agency designated by the Office of Community Services of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In Illinois, this state agency is the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). A federal requirement, every three years, all Community Action Agencies must conduct a thorough needs assessment of their service area and create a Community Action Plan.

In 1965, Springfield-Sangamon County Community Action was designated as the agency to carry out anti-poverty work in Sangamon County, Illinois. The first program was Head Start. As the needs of the region changed and new funding opportunities became available, the agency changed and grew tremendously. In 1985, the County of Sangamon was then designated as the Community Action Agency for Sangamon County, and changed the legal name to the Sangamon County Community Resources (SCCR). SCCR manages a wide array of programs. The agency has an annual budget of over \$3 million, 12 employees, and serves over 4,500 households and over 9,000 individuals each year.

This Community Action Plan describes the needs of people with low incomes from our service area. It states SCDCR's programs for January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. A Strategic Planning Committee oversaw the process and consulted with stakeholder group survey responses while delineating these needs and developing the plan. The 2017 Inter-agency Needs Assessment Survey asked each of our 4,500 SCCR clients what were their needs and the 2017 Community Needs Assessment Survey was administered by our community partners to their own clients about what their clients' needs were. We also heard from 85 staff, other organization leaders, and our CSBG Advisory Council. Other research was done into secondary sources of information about our region.

This Community Action Plan is simply a "snapshot in time" of an active process that continues year-round. Each year, assessment and planning do not stop with the publication of this Plan. As conditions in our communities change, routes we take may be adjusted to reach the goals we have set for the agency. However, the initial set of goals and activities in the 2018 Community Action Plan creates a clearer path for us to follow, and as a result, better services are offered to our participants while achieving better outcomes for them.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (CAP)

With the assistance of funding provided by the Community Services Block Grant, SCCR provides the community with access to services and service gaps from results of the Community

Needs Assessment, Strategic Planning, Inter-agency customer surveys, staff, board and stakeholder survey data, census data and poverty data. Examples of programs created in response to the surveys include mental health/goal setting workshops, educational scholarships, GED test funding, funding for Certified Nurses Training, financial literacy workshops, rental, dental and prescription medications assistance and school uniforms. In addition, when critical emergencies arise in the community, other agencies often call SCCR agency for assistance to address situations such as house fires, medical and dental needs in order to avert homelessness, illness, and suffering. The partnership with Catholic Charities to provide financial assistance to seniors on fixed incomes in need of dentures or partials.

SCCR also offers programs that assist clients with energy assistance: The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Percent of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) and the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP). LIHEAP is designed to assist households in paying for winter energy service. At this time, the months of October and November are reserved for appointments for senior citizens, disabled individuals, disconnected households and households with children under age 6. All families with low incomes are served from December through May. For the 2019 program year, State LIHEAP has been swept again other than for current PIPP clients and the federal LIHEAP program will not again begin until October 1, 2018.

Weatherization or IHWAP provides energy conservation services (such as attic and wall insulation, storm windows, caulking, glazing, weather stripping and furnace repair etc.), to income eligible clients based on income for all members in the household for the preceding twelve months. Furnace tune-ups, retrofits and repairs are included with dollar limits for all work done. This dollar amount is reached by performing a computerized energy audit to determine services that can be applied within the spending limit. The number of homes weatherized in 2018 was 42. The waiting list for weatherization service can be up to three years.

On June 1, 2011 a Low-Income Sewer Rebate Program (LISAP) was initiated for customers of the Springfield Metro Sanitary District. For the 2018-19 program, residents are eligible for a benefit of \$90 credited to their sewer accounts if they submit an application, their utility bill (containing a sewer charge) and are determined to be at the 150% or less of the federal poverty level like LIHEAP. For program year 2017-18, 1,700 benefits were available.

The CSBG Advisory Board is responsible for overseeing services and helping to design programs that address the needs of the community. The fifteen-member board is diverse and offers a variety of perspectives at each quarterly board meeting and through feedback from monthly updates sent by email. The tripartite board consists of five elected officials, six representatives of the poor and four representatives of major groups and interests in the community. During meetings, the director reports on the number of clients served and expenditures for the CSBG programs as well as other agency programs and activities during the quarter. Monthly report updates are emailed to the Council to help them keep up with agency activity and future approval items. Committee discussion takes place around activities for that quarter, ways to streamline services, evaluation of agency progress toward meeting the Organizational Performance Standards and the ways in which programming will change due to updated Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Goals and National performance Indicators (NPI's). The departmental budget is also discussed each quarter. As a

result, the board is able to determine if the CSBG work programs are best serving the needs of clients. In addition, SCCR receives monthly oversight from the Community Resources Committee, which consists of six members of the County Board. Based on monthly reports, oversight committee members ensure funds are being utilized appropriately.

CSBG Advisory Council Members – 2018

- Public Officials (5): Linda Fulgenzi, Supt. Jeff Vose, Rose Ruzic, Clyde Bunch, Craig Hall
- Private (4) Chair Brad Mills (Laborers), Vice Chair Terry Young (Business), Diane Murphy (WIOA), David Yankee (Woodforest Bank)
- Low-Income Reps (6): Reverend Silas Johnson (Nehemiah Expansion), Barbara Rochelle (Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries), Sharon Brown (Kumler United Methodist Ministries), Allissa Hall (Springfield Community Federation), Lavon Wilson (Springfield Urban League).

On July 12 and 13, 2018, members of the CSBG Advisory Committee and agency staff, participated in the processes of updating the second year of the 3-year strategic plan (2018-2020). The facilitator was the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA) Vice President of Professional Development and a certified ROMA trainer who prepared the agenda and facilitated the process toward, setting priorities, gauging program outcomes using the ROMA Dashboard, developing strategies and identifying and developing resources. The process was engaging and revealed valuable information used to formulate programs and activities for the 2019 program year. Each year, until 2020, the plan will continue to be reviewed for progress and relevance to community needs.

Again in 2019, one of the most significant outcomes of ROMA 2.0 and corresponding National Performance Indicators (NPI's) will be around implementing programs and bundling services that better move families toward stability and self-sufficiency and also how to measure those results. In 2016-2017, in-person and web-based listening sessions, case studies of bundled services and learning communities have helped move CA agencies closer to implementation of ROMA 2.0 in effect in 2018.

The Community Action Plan serves as the primary planning tool for CSBG programs. Feedback and results from the 2018 Inter-Agency Needs Assessment, the Annual Stakeholder Needs Survey sent to community partners, board and staff, strategic planning updates, important partnerships with other social service partners are all included in the CAP to guide types of agency programs offered to meet needs in the community. The agency currently possesses written agreements with partner agencies to provide services to common households. Current Memorandums of Understanding in place include those with the Lincoln Land Community College, The Brandon Court Health Collaboration, Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries, the Family Service Center, the Parent Place and Primed for Life. A 2018 grant from the PNC Foundation enabled the agency to host a poverty institute presented by Dr. Donna Beagle to 94 social service administrators and staff from 40 local agencies.

Less formal linkage agreements with Public Health, the Parent Help Line, the Regional Office of Education, Salvation Army, Springfield Housing Authority, Youth Service Bureau, Springfield

Center for Independent Living, five different Banking institutions, are important and necessary to strengthen working relationships around customer referrals. Through Continuum of Care meetings, survey feedback from the recipients of agency benefits, community partners, boards and agency staff, the agency have also been able to effectively address family and community needs.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT –

Key Findings: At its core, poverty exists because of the need for stabilizing basic services, mental health services, affordable housing, asset accumulation, lack of employment and education and training. In Sangamon County, data collected from the 2018 SCCR Interagency Needs Assessment from over 4,348 low-income households (Appendix 3) and 248 respondents for the 2017 Community Needs Assessment households (Appendix 2) revealed the greatest needs as finding a full-time job, getting financial assistance to complete education, GED test assistance, budgeting/managing money/credit repair, finding affordable housing, obtaining food, dental care, rental assistance, finding affordable childcare, learning how to set goals, helping children cope with stress and depression, financial assistance for purchasing a car or car repairs, affordable health insurance, utility assistance and buying paper products not covered by SNAP. Interestingly, older individuals would like help learning how to use a computer. Focus groups at schools and homeless shelters have further informed local needs by telling us ‘the story behind the story’. Focus groups will continue to be held in schools and homeless shelters in 2019. Recent violence in our city begs for activities for at-risk youth. And due to the closing of an ex-offender re-entry program, re-entry and re-unification services are needed for formerly incarcerated individuals. Many of these needs are basic (stabilizing) while others increase self-sufficiency. It is also important to note that while rendering services, the 2017-18 Customer Service reports from 4303 respondents show that the overall rating of the SCCR agency and services as 95% as excellent on the average and the balance of 5% as very good (Appendix 5). Good customer service from trained staff can inspire customers to move forward and become less reliant on social services.

Recommendations for the community to mitigate the causes and conditions of poverty include; focusing on seniors and single parent households who face extensive food clothing and shelter challenges, mental health and intensive financial literacy education for families applying for rent/mortgage and employment supports, evidence-based youth programming throughout the year, educating the community about available jobs, innovative/experimental transportation projects to fill current gaps in transportation services;

2018 Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Highlights 4,348 Respondents

- Comparing to the June 2017- May 2018 survey, there was a significant increase of older people in this year’s survey. The number of households with age between 55 and 69 increased from 862 to 1199, and for households with elders 70+, the number increased from 98 to 418. This potentially will shift the agency’s focus toward serving elders.

- The survey asked education levels of all adults 24 years old or older. Among all 4348 individuals and households, 26% of them had at least one household member had less than high school education. 44% households had at least one HS graduates. 12% households had at least one member with 2-4 years of college education. These numbers were similar with last year's survey results.
- Out of 4324 clients who answered the health insurance question, 90% of them had health insurance. This number is consistent with last year's data. Out of 4339 clients who answered the disability question, 48% of them had at least one person disabled in their households, which is a 7% increase from last year.
- Among 4348 clients who answered this question, 39% of indicated as single parent female type household, 7% less than last year. There were also 3% of single parent male family type. Single person family accounted for 43% of all families, an increase of 9% from last year.
- Consistent with the percentage of single person in Figure 3, Figure 4 also shows that individuals accounted for 43% of all clients, a significant increase from last year. There were about 2-3% decrease in each of the two person, three person, four person, and five person households. Single person and multi-person families have different needs. The agency could base service planning on this household size distribution.
- The top three sources of family income were social security, SSI (disability), and employment. Comparing to last year, the reliance on social security increased from 24.7% to 37.7%, while the employment only source decreased from 32.2% to 24.8%. SSI (disability) remained about the same as last year
- Among 4335 clients who reported their housing arrangements, 78% of them were renters, down from 82% of last year. The percentage of homeowners increased from 17% to near 22%. There were a fewer homeless clients comparing to last year.
- When asked whether they had ever used SCCR services, 83% of the clients answered yes. 735, or 17% of the clients were new to SCCR.
- When asked whether they used Public Health/WIC services, 824, or 19% of the clients answered yes. Among these 824 clients, 50 of them said that they also went there on the same day they visited SCCR.
- Among the 4337 clients who provided their residency, 4027, or 93% of them were from Springfield. There were 57 clients from Chatham, 48 from Auburn, 29 from Riverton, 25 from Rochester, and 24 from Pawnee.

Employment and Age Groups

Table 4 compares the employment needs for age groups 18-23, 24-44, and 45-54. It shows that in both survey cycles, the common top employment needs for all three age groups remained similarly.

Their common top employments needs were:

- Finding a permanent full-time job that will support me or my family
- Knowing what jobs are available
- Getting an education for the job that I want
- Getting training for the job that I want

- For the 45-54 age group, they also had high level of needs in learning computer skills to apply for jobs.
- They all indicated more needs in “getting training for the job that I want”, “learning how to interview for a job”, “learning how to write a resume”, “learning how to fill out job applications”, “learning computer skills to apply for jobs”, and “obtaining appropriate clothing for my job.”

Education and Age Group

Table 5 and Figure 9 compares the education needs among three age groups, 18-23, 24-44, and 45-54 and changes between the two survey cycles. Consistent with last year’s pattern, the common top education needs were still:

- Obtaining a high school diploma or GED/HSED
- Obtaining a two-year college degree
- Obtaining a four-year college or university degree
- Getting financial assistance to complete my education
- Choosing a career

One large difference between the age group 45-54 to the younger age groups was that people in this age group less desired to obtain a four-year college or university degree but they wished to learn how to use a computer (13% vs. 5% vs. 6%).

Financial and Legal Issues and Single Parents

Table 6 shows that in the 2017-2018 survey cycle, “budgeting and managing money” was the number one financial need for single parents, followed by “understanding credit scores”, “solving problems with utility or telephone company”, and “solving problems with a credit card or loan company

During the 2017-2018 survey cycle, the top housing needs for all age groups were:

- Finding affordable housing that fits my family's needs
- Making my home more energy efficient
- Getting financial assistance with rent payments

Food and Nutrition and Single Parents

Table 8 reveals that during the 2017-2018 survey cycle, single parent households’ top four food and nutrition needs were: “getting food from food pantries, food Banks, or food shelves”, “getting enough food at home”, “learning how to shop and cook for healthy eating”, and “learning how to stretch my food dollar.”

During the 2017-2018 survey cycle, seniors 55 years and above had the following top food and nutrition needs:

- Getting food from food pantries, food banks, or food shelves
- Having enough food at home

- Enrolling in the food assistance program

For seniors 70 years and above, they also had high level need in “getting meals delivered to my home.”

For the 70 and above age group, there was also a 11% increase of people in need of “having enough food at home.”

Summary of above 2019 Customer survey data (Quantitative Findings):

- The number of 70+ respondents increased from 98 to 418, a 77% increase.
 - 26% of households had at least one member with less than a high school education.
 - 48% of households had at least one disabled member in their household, a 7% increase
 - Single person families accounted for 43% of all families, an increase of 9% over last year
 - Individuals accounted for 43% of all clients, a significant increase from last year.
 - Reliance on Social Security increased from 24.7% to 37.7%
-
- Employment needs for the 45-54 age group reflected they have a high level of need to learn computer skills to apply for jobs.
 - All three age groups indicated more need in getting training for the job I want, learning how to interview for a job, learning how to write a resume, how to fill out a job application, obtaining appropriate clothing for my job.
 - Like last year the top education needs were obtaining a high school diploma/GED, a two year college degree, a four-year college degree and financial assistance to complete my education.
 - For single parents, budgeting and managing money, understanding credit scores, solving problems with credit card or loan companies, and solving problems with utility or the telephone company.
 - For single parents, there was a noticeable increase in needs including filling out tax forms, solving problems with payday loans, foreclosure, divorce and child support issues
-
- For all age groups top housing needs were finding affordable housing that fits my family's needs
 - making my home more energy efficient.
 - getting financial assistance with rent payments
-
- nutrition needs for older clients include getting food from food pantries, having enough food at home, getting meals delivered to my home.
-
- Child care needs for single parents did not change: finding affordable child care in a convenient location

- The largest increase in need is among the single-parent household, getting financial help to make car repairs.
- For single parents, health needs include affordable dental insurance and finding a dentist willing to accept Medicaid (Title XIX)
- Mental health needs for single parents had more needs in dealing with stress, depression, or anxiety than older age groups.
- Basic needs for age groups include: all need help getting financial assistance with utility bills, getting basic furniture, appliances or house wares, getting personal care items such as soap, diapers, toilet paper, and having access to the internet.
- For the 70+ age group, getting clothes and shoes as well as a higher need for help doing yard work or snow removal than younger age groups.
- The agency service provision revealed that 33% of homes had seen a decrease in income in the last year, 11% were unable to get help with their needs within the community. Eighteen percent of customers were referred by a current or former client but 53% were referred by a family member or friend.

2017 Community Needs Assessment Results– 248 respondents

Thank you to assisting agencies which included: Helping Hands, Springfield Urban League, Contact Ministries, Kumler Outreach Ministries, Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries, SC Public Health, Capital Township, Springfield Housing Authority, Central Counties Health Centers, and the Illinois Department of Health and Family Services.

- **Employment:** 52% would like to find a permanent job to support their family, 46% of respondents said they need help knowing what jobs are available, further, 43% said they need an education for the job they want and 29% said they need training for the job they want.
- **Education:** 39.6% said the highest need for education was getting financial assistance to complete my education, 35% said obtaining a GED or H.S. diploma, 31% said obtaining a 2-year degree, 30% said choosing a career and 25% said learning how to use a computer.
- **Financial and Legal Issues:** 52% said they need assistance with budgeting and credit, 36% said they need financial help with rent payments, 36% said qualifying for a loan to buy a home and 33% said getting financial assistance with a down payment or closing costs. 33% also said they need help with rent deposits.
- **Food and Nutrition:** 44% need help getting food from food pantries, 42.7% would like help learning how to stretch their dollar, 41% would like to learn how to shop and cook for healthy eating and 40% would like to have more food at home.
- 55% have children under 18 years in their homes.

- **Child Care and Child Development:** Finding affordable childcare (40%), getting financial assistance for school supplies (38%), finding childcare in a convenient location (36%), getting financial assistance with school fees (31%), financial assistance with school or club activities (31%), getting financial assistance with childcare costs (29%).
- **Parenting and Family Support:** 49% of parents would like to learn how to set goals and plan for their family, 43% would like to learn to help their children cope with stress, depression or emotional issues, 42% would like to learn how to more effectively discipline their children, 41% would like to learn how to communicate and deal with teenage children. Last, 31% said the need to learn how to deal with their children's bullying or violent behavior.
- **Transportation:** 44% need help with financial assistance to buy a dependable car, 38% have access to public transportation, 38% each need help with both car repairs, 37% have trouble with dependable transportation to and from work, and 35% have trouble getting a driver's license.
- **Health needs include:** affordable health insurance (58%), affordable dental insurance (51%) dealing with stress, anxiety and depression (36%), finding a dentist to accept Medicaid (32%)
- **Basic Needs include:** getting basic furniture, appliances (63%) financial assistance with utility bills (44%), getting clothes and shoes (42%), getting personal care items like soap, diapers, toilet paper (39%), and access to the internet (36%).
- **In the last 12 months, families faced these needs:** past due rent, finding a job, transportation, auto accident, car broke down, child taken away, house fire.
- **Improvement you would like to see in your neighborhood:** something for grown kids to do, roads, reduction in violence and crime, garbage, housing for homeless, ex-convicts getting mental health assistance, blighted properties, affordable housing, pot holes repaired, race tolerance, drug activity.
- **Sources of household income:** Employment 38%, No income 23%, TANF 22%, Social Security 17%, SSI 14%.
- **Has your household income changed in the last 12 months?:** No change 52%, decreased 32%, increased 16%.
- **How did you learn about our agency:** Family or friend 32%, other social service agency 26%, current or former client 18%, a state agency 11%, healthcare provider 8%, website 5%

- **What services have you received in the last 12 months?:** Energy Assistance (40%), rent assistance (18%), Medication assistance (18%), food boxes (16%), case management (14%), housing counseling (14%), referrals to other agencies (13%).
- **If you know of anyone with an incarcerated adult in their family, do they ever talk about particular concerns that could be addressed through:** Job skills training (51%), transportation assistance (45%), stress relief (44%), financial assistance (37%)
- **What do you think about SCRDC in the following areas :**
 - Quality of service: Excellent (40.84%), Above Average (24.08%), Good (32.4%)
 - Effective in working with others in the Community: Excellent (39.37%), Above Average (25.13%), Good (31.94%)
 - Visibility/Leadership: Excellent (39.69%), Above Average (22.61%), Average (33.51).
 - Publicity the agency receives for good work: Excellent (38.03%), Above Average (24%), Average (32.81)
 - Leadership in advocating for community issues: Excellent (36.98%), Above average (24.48%), Average (32.81%)

**Contact Ministries Transitional Housing Focus Group
Hosted by Sangamon County Community Resources
March 2, 2018**

Purpose and Process

Sangamon County Department of Community Resources (SCCR) organized a Focus Group at Contact Ministries (CM) Transitional Shelter on March 2, 2018. This is the fifth focus group hosted by SCCR and the third with transitional residents. The purpose of the focus group was twofold; to identify needs and potential areas of assistance for Shelter residents and to assist Contact Ministries in their outreach and programmatic needs.

The questions posed to the group were:

- 1) Where are you at? (this can be interpreted as living arrangements, what are you in need of, food, access to services – it is a broader question designed to surface issues and needs to drive the conversation forward. It is an examination of the past)
- 2) What do you need now? (this is an examination of the current status/situation, what is frustrating, what is the immediate need)
- 3) Are the current resources useful? (this is an examination of current systems and where change or redirection is needed)
- 4) What do you believe are the most important services/resources that would be most useful in the future? (this is an examination of possibilities and realities of what could be, both immediate and long-term)
- 5) What are your dreams? What does your future look like?

Five adult women were present for the focus group, the participants gathered in a meeting space in the shelter at 10:30a. The session was one hour in length and used a design model similar to previous focus groups

Given the number of participants, each of the five participants spent the time together in discussion and were provided markers and flip chart paper to record their responses to the questions. The five proved to be very vocal and wanted to discuss their challenges and looked for feedback from their peers and the facilitator. The session was facilitated by Christine Westerlund, Director of Professional Development for the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies and Sharmin Doering, Executive Director of Sangamon County Community Resources.

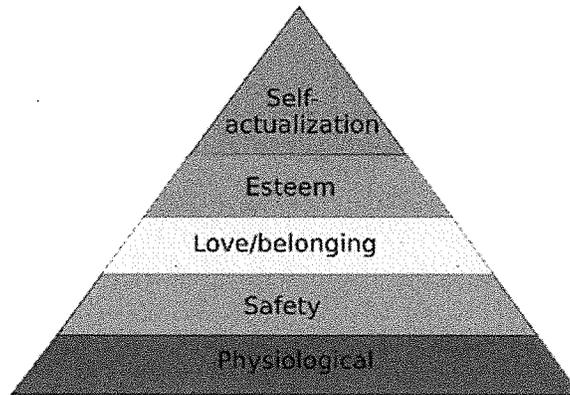
Observations

All of the participants were engaged immediately in the process and shared struggles with system and family issues. Each participant expressed gratitude to Contact Ministries for their support, especially the time needed to consider and think through life goals. It was evident that all were prepared to take notes, participate and had a willingness to support each other. There were lively discussions about immediate and basic needs. Much of this focused on:

- Child Care – accessible, affordable, children with special needs, and for children that fall between the ages of 6-11 (after-school programs and similarly structured care)
- Legal System navigation – especially in the areas of help with Landlords and the Springfield Housing Authority
- Expungement services
- Documentation – for receiving services for children, receipts, housing eligibility
- Supportive systems – the need to regain trust
- Time management with children – concerns about personal safety
- Counseling
- Transportation – access to appointment, reliable vehicles
- Job Skills – to gain employment

Aspirations were evident – housing, career goals, financial independence and the hope of better days was a part of the discussion. This group, collectively, were exuberant, hopeful and pragmatic. There was frustration in navigating the “system”, i.e. finding financial support for educational goals, housing and transportation. Each participant spoke about their children and the importance of good physical and mental health, and the importance of positivity in their lives, which includes family and faith.

As noted in the previous report, the conversation brings in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and that the needs expressed fall into all of the categories. As Maslow’s models teaches us, the foundational needs of breathing, food, water, sleep must be met first before moving on to safety, and then belonging to esteem and finally, self-actualization. Meeting the basic needs of physical and safety are critical to moving forward.



Outcomes

While similar to the previous focus groups, the predominant theme was a focus on accessible child care and affordable, safe housing. The question of regaining trust in systems and individuals loomed in each conversation. The predominant themes were:

- Childcare – accessible, multiple ages and special needs accommodation
- Housing
- Legal Assistance
- Supportive systems
- Job Training skills

As noted in the observations, there was a noticeable connection to the desire to gain stability and independence, much of which surfaced during the “Dream/future” question. A long-term solution is the development or connection to a mentoring/coaching program that would intensively work with CM clients to move towards their personal goals. Of course, that would take funding, collaboration and commitment to ensure programmatic success. System navigation, paired with a life coach, is a potential solution to provide assistance to transitional housing residents. Each participants holds the desire to be independent and expressed frustration with system navigation. Most aspire to become a part of MERCY Communities, with one participant being accepted into their permanent housing program. As Dr. Donna Beegle reminds us; “There is no “magic fix” for the complexities of poverty. The key to sustainable change lies in our ability to challenge the status quo and create a paradigm for working with people in poverty that is inclusive, compassionate, supportive and long term.”

Given that this session was more conversational, a transcription of the flip charts is not provided. However, one participant noted this, “My future looks promising. I just need to get all “my ducks in a row”. And this, “Contact Ministries has been the most helpful resource that I have ever known. Because of them, me and my child are on our way to a permanent – safe – clean and affordable home. “

Methodology:

Assessment and Planning Process, Assessment Protocol

In developing the (PY) 2017 Community Needs Assessment/and 2019 Community Action Plan, Community Resources conducted, throughout the year, an in-house customer assessment to determine community needs. A variety of approaches was utilized to gain input from staff and stakeholders including an annual stakeholder survey. Because the stakeholder survey seeks qualitative data and, therefore, takes more time to complete, the rate of return from stakeholders did not meet our expectations. Even so, responses were reviewed and analyzed (see Key Findings section).

Strategic Planning

The 2018 Strategic Planning update was held on July 12th and 13th and included input from representatives of the CSBG Advisory Council, direct service staff, senior staff and the department director. The Strategic Planning Committee met for 9 hours total with a ROMA certified facilitator who was responsible for:

- Providing leadership, direction, and oversight for the strategic planning process and ensuring integration of various elements that go into the plan.
- Creating a planning design that ensured all stakeholders were included in a meaningful way in articulating needs, goals, and strategies.
- Developing timelines and realistic expectations for completion of tasks by this committee and ensuring that work was completed in a timely way.
- Analyzing needs assessment data.
- Making recommendations to the CSBG Advisory Council regarding priorities, goals, and strategies for the next three years of the agency's development, as well as how progress toward the goals set out in the plan should be monitored.
- Ensuring that the goals and strategies presented to the Council for approval were consistent with the agency's mission, approach, and values, as well as with the needs of the community.
- Ensuring that the planning process and outcomes were consistent with the expectations of the U.S. Office of Community Services and with the National Organizational Performance Standards and the format of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system.

Other Data and Reports used in the Community Needs Assessment Report:

- Utilizing a Strength-Based Approach to ROMA throughout the CAA. This publication was created by the National Association of Community Action Agencies – Community Action Partnership, in the performance of the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services Grant Number 90ET0428 (Appendix 17)

- September, 2017 – June 30, 2018 Inter-Agency Customer Needs Assessment and Demographics, (Appendix 3)
- September, 2017 – June 30, 2018 Inter-Agency Customer Service Report Results. (Appendix 5)
- 2017 Information Survey (IS) Section G Report (Appendix 8)
- Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment Report (2015) from the Community Commons Platform courtesy of the Community Action Partnership. (Appendix 9)
- 2017 Heartland Alliance Report on Illinois Poverty: Sangamon County (Appendix 10)
- 2017 IDES Employment Report (Appendix 11)
- 2016 County Health Rankings Snapshot Report (Appendix 12)
- Springfield/Sangamon County 2017 Continuum of Care Homeless Populations: Point in Time (PIT) Estimates (Appendix 13)
- Sangamon County 2014 Regional Comprehensive Plan: published by the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. (Appendix 18 online)
- 2017 Sangamon County Citizens Survey (Appendix 19 online)
- United Way 2-1-1 Report, January-June, 2017 (Appendix 14)
- 2010 Census Analysis for Population, Age, Households, Race, Housing, Education and Income. Springfield –Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. (Appendix 20 online)
- 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment, Memorial Health System (Appendix 21 online)
- Map the Meal Gap, Overall Food Insecurity in Illinois by County in 2015 (Appendix 15)
- 2016 Child Care Profile, Sangamon County, Community Child Care Connections, Inc. (Appendix 16)
- 2017 Sangamon County Graduation Rates, Illinois Report Card (Appendix 16)

C. Qualitative Data

Community Stakeholder/Board Member feedback

Methodology: Community stakeholders consist of three groups: partners, board/council members and community leaders. Partners are institutions with which SCDCR has a partnership relationship relative to service delivery or community engagement initiatives. Board members are all county board members, oversight committee members of the county board and the CSBG Advisory Committee. (Results located in Tab 6.) Community leaders are individuals in the community with a high-level knowledge of issues relative to particular subject areas (such as crime, education, politics, the faith community, health, etc). Because a specific individual or institution could belong to more than one of these groups, it is critical to ensure that no duplication occurs.

- a) Is our community better, worse or the same than 1 year ago?
- b) What do you think it would take to substantially reduce poverty in our community?
- c) What do you think are our community's most valuable resources?
- d) What are some positive things happening in our community?
- e) What are some challenges facing our community?
- f) What services are missing in our community that you think need to be added?
- g) What do you know about the Sangamon County Department of Community Resources (SCDCR)?

Focus Group Methodology

Purpose:

The Sangamon County Department of Community Resources and Springfield Public School District #186 have partnered in multiple projects to provide learning opportunities focused on effective practices for students and families living in poverty to become engaged in learning and life. Much of this work has been done at a meta level, through knowledge gained at the poverty institute. Other methodologies, such as surveys, often miss the details and insights of those living in poverty. Of the many lessons learned, it is important to have direct conversations with those impacted by poverty and to use those conversations to assess for realistic, practical needs. To facilitate these conversations, focus groups consisting of both students and families will again be held to engage and discover needs, attitudes and perspectives. This will inform SCCR next steps and future practices.

Process:

Focus groups will again be hosted at Lanphier High School, assisted by Tracy Deal, MSW, to bring together families and students impacted by poverty. The focus group structure is influenced by World Café, a flexible, easy to use process that fosters collaboration through conversations that matter and driven by powerful, focused yet open-ended questions.

In the past, an invitation was sent out to families and students identified by Tracy Deal. Food was provided and staff from SCCR and SPS participated in the gatherings. There was a minimum of two groups; one focused on families and the other focused on emancipated teens. Questions were crafted to dig deeper into the conversations and were:

- 6) Where are you at? (this can be interpreted as living arrangements, what are you in need of, food, access to services – it is a broader question designed to surface issues and needs to drive the conversation forward. It is an examination of the past)
- 7) What do you need now? (this is an examination of the current status/situation, what is frustrating, what is the immediate need)
- 8) Are the current resources useful? (this is an examination of current systems and where change or redirection is needed)
- 9) What do you believe are the most important services/resources that would be most useful in the future? (this is an examination of possibilities and realities of what could be, both immediate and long-term)
- 10) (Optional or icebreaker) What are your dreams? What does your future look like?

The focus group moderator was Christine Westerlund, Director of Professional Development with the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies. Christine is an experienced facilitator and moderator, having worked with groups across the nation to gain knowledge and insights through the use of the World Café. She is currently working on the Gold Star Trainer credential, through “Communication Across Barriers”, Dr. Beegle’s organization that promotes deeper understanding and innovative practices to reach low income families. This process will finalize her work on the credential.

The sessions were recorded and notes were taken. The room was set up with 4 to 6 round tables to accommodate up to 24 participants. Each table was set with newsprint/markers and snacks, along with the questions. The rounds of questions were limited to 15 to 20 minutes per question, with participants moving to different tables with each new question. There was a brief introduction to the purpose and the process. The paper and markers at each table were intentionally placed, to allow for freedom of expression, note taking and doodling. Each event lasted approximately one and one half hours.

III. SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

The service delivery system for Sangamon County social services is through individual organization administrations, collaborative/partnership efforts, United Way funded collaborative projects and through meetings of the Heartland Continuum of Care.

SCCR is one of the main providers of human services in Sangamon County. Energy programs (LIHEAP, Weatherization and most CSBG services are provided on a first come-first serve basis by telephone to set an appointment). LIHEAP walk-in appointments are held in the agency at designated times. Since the agency moved to the new location in 2010, services are now

accessible by bus within the medically underserved area as well as through applications mailed to senior citizens, and applications at all high-rises and township offices county-wide.

However, until community agencies/stakeholders offer collective capacity around reduced funding, how to address referrals as a community collaborative in order to address families moving from agency to agency for assistance, the access landscape in our area will not change. The current delivery system is disconnected and significantly less effective likely due to the lack of a common language, a common approach for working together to create shared outcomes. As stated by J. Irwin Miller, “No community sector-public, private or social- has the capacity by itself to create real and sustainable change. A system is a set of relationships. Transforming a system is ultimately about transforming the relationships among people who shape those systems. It’s everyone’s responsibility to understand how these relationships work and how they can be judiciously balanced and shaped over time to fundamentally change the way people work together.”

Local gaps in services, include transportation access and a rural transportation system, especially for seniors who need to access groceries or attend medical appointments. As a result, family members, neighbors, helpers or case managers assist those in need of transportation to doctor appointments, shopping, etc. Unfortunately, the SMTD bus service does not yet reach the west part of the city, where many jobsites are located. Therefore, workers transport their bicycles on the bus and ride the rest of the way to their worksites. In the future, the hope is to provide a county-wide transportation system in Sangamon County.

Outreach to community groups, high rises and senior service agencies remains constant by the Energy staff.

Employment Supports/Rental Assistance programs provide a bundled services approach beginning with the required agency financial literacy program offered each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Participants are asked to call on Fridays for a Monday appointment and attend the appointment with their certificate of completion, household budget and all other required documents. On Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. clients who attend Monday appointments attend a mental health/goal setting workshop and receive a \$25.00 Dollar General giftcard/stipend for attending and completing all tasks and exercises. This helps participants purchase paper products not covered by SNAP. Since criteria for receiving an employment supports or rent benefit must be due to a circumstance out of the applicants control and verifiable by acceptable documentation, not all applicants receive this benefit but may participate in the workshops.

The 2018 summer youth recreation program with Max-Out and the Garvey/Tubman Center will be offered again in 201 to offer tuition to low-income, at-risk youth households to provide tuition to after-school Garvey/Tubman Center activities.

For dental and medication outreach, agency pharmacy, dental vendors and St. Clare’s Dental Clinic are also close in proximity to the homeless population near low-income neighborhoods. In addition, SCCR is a partner in the Brandon Court Health Access program providing LIHEAP and rental/deposit services to eligible clients in partnership with SIU Health Outreach Workers.

CSBG appointments are taken by call in on a first-come-first served basis with the exception of referrals from community partners like the Springfield Housing Authority and transitional housing programs with whom we work as partners to assist families toward self-sufficiency. The agency also works closely with school district parent educators and school social workers to identify students whose parents are struggling with, eviction notices and/or keeping children home from school due to lack of school uniforms.

The customized agency C.N.A. program implemented at LLCC, has filled a gap in training and education for low-income single parents. Even before the 8-week C.N.A. module begins, a two-week "Academy" focusing on professionalism, teamwork and financial literacy is held to assist students with job retention. After, a pre-C.N.A. module consisting of concentration in math and reading prepares students for success in the C.N.A. module and the final exam. The combination of customized course work and case management provide by the SCCR prepares students for success.

For SCCR customers who wish to attend an 8-week C.N.A. or 6-week PCA course, the agency will again work with Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries to enroll and provide dual case management services to students in order to ensure successful completion of the course with barrier reduction and tutoring.

A scholarship program continues to be offered by SCCR via a CSBG Scholarship Committee made up of diverse members including retired teachers, county board members, CSBG Advisory Council members. If an applicant does not hold a "B" average, to be eligible for a scholarship award, he/she must hold a "C" average and be enrolled in training/education in Illinois leading to a local high-growth job sector. Training that leads to employment will foster self-sufficiency for CSBG customers.

Youth leadership programs will again be offered in 2019 with local partners like 4H and other groups who's members may need assistance to participate in the programs.

To assist with household finances, weekly financial literacy workshops are offered by UCB, Woodforest Bank, BOS, Carrollton Bank and the Land of Lincoln Credit Union in the agency conference room. All callers for employment supports or rent assistance are required to attend an agency financial literacy workshop and submit a certificate of completion and budget prior to being eligible to call for an appointment for rental assistance. All applicants must show need within the previous 90 days with income and receipts as verification.

To address hunger and food insecurity, shut-in seniors in poverty are vulnerable year-round and rely on the assistance of Senior Services case managers delivering monthly food boxes provided by SCCR. Boxes are prepared by Humphrey's market and picked up by seniors' case managers or by trust-worthy family members to supplement food stamps which are depleted by the first week of the month. Food box contents is adjusted based on evaluation feedback from consumers.

IV./V. LINKAGES AND COORDINATION OF SERVICES

To provide services to targeted populations, collaboration is necessary method to reach our customers. Linkages, partnerships and collaborations are effective methods to ensure individuals in need receive the services the agency provides.

As examples, the agency:

- Proceed in the Brandon Court Community Health Connection program with SIU Medical School and Central Counties Health Center and 6 other partners funded by United Way of Central Illinois.
- Resume partnership with Regional Office of Education to sponsor a Poverty Coaching Institute to imbed poverty coaches within agencies and our community to create poverty navigators who can better assist families traverse the fragmented social services system.
- Partner with Catholic Charities offer assistance for dentures and partials for seniors and working poor individuals.
- Provide funding and family support to participants of both the LLCC and C.N.A. program and Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries C.N.A./PCA programs.
- Offer GED test assistance in partnership with LLCC and Lawrence Education Center (LEC).
- Continue to partner with Max-Out Basketball Camp and Garvey/Tubman Art Camp to provide tuition assistance for summer youth programming.
- Partner with six financial institutions to offer weekly financial literacy workshops. Partners include PNC Bank, UCB Bank, Woodforest Bank, Bank of Springfield, Carrolton Bank and Land of Lincoln Credit Union.
- Work closely with District #186 director of teaching and learning to provide summer school tuition assistance to students at risk of not graduating, assist with school uniforms and youth leadership opportunities
- Work closely with CSBG Advisory Council member, Pastor Silas Johnson who is also the President of the Ministerial Alliance in Springfield to fill gaps in services, especially by disseminating LIHEAP applications to church leaders for senior members of the congregations.
- Continue to mail paper LIHEAP applications to over 1,000 seniors and add a CSBG brochure.
- Collaborates with training institutions, UIS, LLCC, MTI and the Frontiers and SPS #186 to identify low-income students with student loans to encourage application to the CSBG Scholarship program.
- Partner with the Parent Place, Primed for Life and the Family Service Center to provide employment supports/rent customers with mental health workshops. Through the agency director, continue as a board member of Illinois Ventures for Community Action which creates wealth distribution to member Community Action Agencies to enhance their economic development capacity.
- Agency director is a board member of both the Illinois Community Action Development Corporation and the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies.
- Increase number of seniors who participate in the monthly food box distribution.
- Coordinate with Capital Township and Fishes and Loaves Outreach C.N.A./PCA to offer the LLCC Workplace Ready module to participants before assigning to a work site.

- Continue to work with 4H Leadership programs and identify other leadership programs to assist income-eligible participants.
- Invite past C.N.A. students to speak to current C.N.A. classes and encourage past C.N.A. mentorship of current C.N.A. students.
- Increase referrals to Illinois workNet to inform job seekers of available jobs.
- Partner with Senior Services of Central Illinois to add LIHEAP applications to meals of Meals on Wheels recipients.
- Partner with the Ministerial Alliance to provide LIHEAP applications to pastors to disseminate to senior members of their congregations.
- Work with County Board members, rural food pantries township supervisors and rural utilities to organize a rural food coalition to address child and senior hunger in the rural areas of Sangamon County. The coalition gain not-for-profit status and apply for United Way Basic Needs funding and other grants and accept donations to add capacity to rural food outlets. In addition, a better list of food outlets could be maintained.

In addition to community collaborations, Sangamon County and other social service agencies trade written linkage agreements to assist households with low-incomes. Agencies include Youth Service Bureau, etc. In addition to written linkages, monthly or quarterly attendance at meetings of the Continuum of Care, and advisory councils of Springfield Housing Authority PCC keep the agency linked and informed of activities within the community. In addition to surveys, strategic planning and outreach, the agency is better able to identify service gaps in the system and as a result, clients benefit from agency networking. Again in 2019, focus groups will be held with low-income heads of household at Contact ministries and Lanphier High School.

Community Resources also participates in many service provider fairs throughout the county. Staff participates in outreach at informational fairs at Madison Park Place, Brandon Court, Springfield public school open houses, senior citizen conferences, job fairs, etc.

Until 2013, Community Resources performed LIHEAP outreach to 23 locations to provide on-site intakes. Due to continued reduced funding since 2013, LIHEAP outreach site personnel work with their constituents by assisting with applications and mailing them to the agency for processing. In addition, the agency offers numerous walk-in appointments each week.

For services not offered by SCCR, referral guides and a food pantry informational flyer created by SCCR staff is available for customers and other walk-in clients. (Area food pantries together share an efficient computer system to determine if clients are being served fairly and that residents are not abusing the system.) SCCR LIHEAP staff cross refers customers to the agency GED, and WIOA but also equip all customers with an agency resource guide and department overview.

A significant change occurred on October 1, 2008, when Community Resources WIOA Staff was relocated to the workNet located at 1300 South 9th Street. This change was done to centralize the LWA 20 staff from 5 counties into one location. Community Resources has continued the referral process to WIOA for clients seeking job assistance. In 2019, the WIOA Sangamon County Liaison will provide a consistent, direct connection to WIOA services for SCCR clients and will follow up with the Family Support Specialists.

The Community Resources service delivery system is comprehensive and partners with numerous other local agencies to assist clients to ensure the best possible service to county residents in need.

V. Innovative Community Initiatives

Community Resources of Sangamon County continues to participate in many innovative community and neighborhood-based programs. At times, the agency is approached for funding support when other agencies wish to partner toward initiatives which must also be proven unmet needs in the community.

Education and Training:

- Community Resources has been able to assist with some of these programs such as the Summer School Tuition and GED Test Assistance for all Sangamon County schools.
- The director works in the field with liaisons at training institutions offering education in local high-growth job sectors (MTI and LLCC Trio program) to identify low-income students in need of financial assistance. The agency director gives outreach presentations at each of these institutions to better explain agency educational and other programs. The partnership with the LLCC Trio program has been a very successful partner.
- Scholarship awards to students attending an Illinois educational/training institution.
- The tailored C.N.A. program will again be offered in partnership with LLCC and Fishes and Loaves Outreach Ministries to assist income-eligible, unemployed and selected individuals. In 2018, the program will again assist at least 20 individuals with education and training costs, required uniforms, transportation assistance, employability skill instruction and test expenses for certification in the quest for employment to earn a living wage.
- A 12-hour Money Smart Financial Education module for C.N.A. students with the potential incentive of opening their own savings account.
- Offer 3-hour financial literacy workshops for households to learn about topics including credit repair, parenting and making your food dollar go farther. Add in 2018 the Carrolton Bank partnership to instruct staff on credit coaching skills, teach a credit coaching workshop each month, teach a separate one-hour workshop for seniors who apply for the Ameren good faith effort payment assistance of \$50.00 toward the \$75.00 payment.

Health:

- Continue the Brandon Court Community Health Connection program with SIU Medical School and Central Counties Health Center and 6 other partners funded by United Way of Central Illinois.
- In 2013, the agency began a partnership with the Springfield Urban League (SUL). Local and central Illinois oral surgeons were recruited to provide dental anesthesia to 3-5 year olds enrolled in Head Start in need of full-mouth dental services under anesthesia for baby teeth in decay. Currently, Medicaid covers this entire process and families are referred to Noll Dental Clinic.

- Working directly with the Senior Services to identify food insecure families and provided food boxes once each month.
- Customer evaluations from customers of the food box program.
- Partnering in self-sufficiency with the existing SHA FSS program.
- LIHEAP utility payments to over 4,000 low-income households.
- Weatherization services to reduce monthly utility payments and increase the health and safety of the home.

Housing:

- The Rental Assistance program provides a bundled services approach beginning with the required agency financial literacy program offered each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Participants are asked to call on Fridays for a Monday appointment and attend the appointment with their certificate of completion, household budget and all other required documents. On Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. clients who attend Monday appointments attend a mental health/goal setting workshop and receive a \$25.00 Dollar General gift card/stipend for attending and completing all tasks and exercises. This helps participants purchase paper products not covered by SNAP. Since criteria for receiving an employment supports or rent benefit must be due to a circumstance out of the applicants control and verifiable by acceptable documentation, not all applicants receive this benefit but may participate in the workshops.
- Weatherization services to add value and safety to homes and reduce utility bills.

Information and Referral:

- Follow up on referrals given to CSBG customers and update file. When customers return for service, referral forms are reviewed for progress. Family Support Specialists are dedicated to following up on all referrals with each client.

Agency:

- Staff member will maintain the agency Facebook page and weekly add up-to-date information.

VII. YOUTH

In addition to SCCR GED test assistance, high school summer school tuition assistance and school uniform assistance and rent assistance for families with school-aged children, WIOA youth programs operate under the provisions of Title I of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 serving the at-risk youth population. Populations considered being the neediest youth include, but are not limited to: youth aging out of foster care, youth in the juvenile justice system, children of incarcerated parents, or other barriers that hinder youth from successfully completing their education or attaining employment.

Strategic planning in 2018 revealed:

- The need to expand youth leadership opportunities.
- The need to provide transportation and tuition assistance to summer school to low-income 8th grade students from Washington and Jefferson Middle schools

- Continue Max-Out Basketball Camp at Lanphier and Garvey/Tubman Art camp tuition in the summer for young children (ages 5 to 17) in families with low-income.
- Tuition assistance for above demographic for Garvey/Tubman Camp activities.
- Reunification program in partnership with SING to serve parents released from incarceration.
- School uniform program for families with a required financial literacy class.
- Summer school tuition for low-income 9-12 grade students.

XIII. OUTCOMES

This Community Action Plan is reflective of the needs of the low-income population, described services available, and identified gaps in services. Below is a list of problem statements for each work program and the outcome measures expected for each program. Outcome measures will be monitored on the agency dashboard, client and board survey responses, feedback from other agencies and follow-ups on client progress.

Problem statements, work programs and outcome measures are listed in the order of the CSBG work programs in the 2019 Grant.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Problem Statement – The unemployment rate in Sangamon County as of May, 2018 was 3.4 down from 4.23% in May, 2017. The rate remains below the comparable state rate of 5.6% but many individuals remain unemployed and need education/training and job search assistance.

1.6 Employment Through Education

Provide job placement/employment through education activities to up to 20 CSBG eligible individuals resulting in their employment and retention in un-subsidized employment through a Pre-C.N.A./C.N.A. program in partnership with LLCC. In 2019, a Personal Care Assistant program (PCA), will again be offered. For FLOM students, assistance will be offered to increase job retention through the work readiness credential. SCCR will also continue to provide limited C.N.A. student travel expenses. Past C.N.A.s will speak to and possibly mentor current C.N.A.s.

1.6-5 General Job Skills/Resume Writing

(Although not a separate CSBG work program, the C.N.A. curricula includes the above outcome for students who complete program course work)

(Mod 1/Pre-C.N.A of C.N.A. Course) 10 weeks of employability skills, teamwork, computer skills, Aleks Math and reading comprehension are covered for C.N.A. students by LLCC instructors. The work readiness mod and credential will also be available to students.

1.7-1 Equipment/Uniform/Supplies for employment – Report as Annual Outcome

(Although not a separate CSBG work program, the C.N.A. curricula includes the above outcome for students who complete program course work)

C.N.A. students who pass the pre-C.N.A. module are provided with all C.N.A. equipment and uniforms including scrub tops and bottoms, shoes, watch, and gait belt.

1.7-2 Transportation to Employment Training

C.N.A. will be provided with a \$7.50 stipend for each day of class attendance. Forms to verify attendance are required to be signed by instructors. Transportation support (bus tokens, car repair) is also available under the Employment Supports program.

Licensing or certification for employment - Report as Annual Outcome

(Although not a separate CSBG work program, the C.N.A. curricula includes the above outcome for students who complete take the State board test)

C.N.A. students are provided with fees required at the time of certification exam.

1.7-3 Licensing or certification for employment - Report as Annual Outcome

(Although not a separate CSBG work program, the C.N.A. includes the above outcome for students who complete take the State board test)

C.N.A. students are provided with fees required at the time of certification exam.

1.7-6 Employment Supports

Providing one-time assistance per household for rent or mortgage assistance, bus tokens, car repair, license plate sticker, uniform required by the job as necessary to retain employment. Assistance can be up to \$750.00 (\$600 is standard) for employed individuals (at least 30 hours per week), to better assure they can retain stability/self-sufficiency.

EDUCATION

Problem Statement

Graduating from high school is one of the first steps in moving toward individual self-sufficiency. Not graduating from high school can be an automatic barrier to employment if the individual cannot pass the GED. In 2014, the GED test was significantly revised and became more difficult, more expensive and only computer-based. For low-income students who would require a course to graduate and offered in summer school, tuition assistance would provide significant benefit to them and their families.

Work program 2.6-1

Youth education/achievement

Outcome NPI 1.2.A

2.6-1 Summer School

Many students miss school due to illness or truancy may be in need of fees to attend summer school in order to graduate from high school. With the increased difficulty and cost of the GED, finishing high school and earning a high school diploma reduces barriers later for students who

do not graduate. In district fees are based on a reduced fee schedule for low-income students which is the rate paid by SCCR on behalf of the student.

Problem Statement

Many individuals are striving for their GED certificate to achieve eligibility to enter either vocational training or college. In 2014, in Illinois, the GED testing process will become more expensive, more difficult, and implemented only by computer. In order to assist individuals toward earning their GEDs the agency will again provide vouchers up to \$120.00 for testing or a lower amount for re-testing in order to remove the barrier of the lack of available cash to use for the test. Lawrence Education Center has agreed to offer a night GED class for students 21 and older on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 5:00 – 8:00 pm.

2.6-3 Adult Basic Education (ABE) GED Instruction or other instruction

Provide funding in the form of vouchers to students who have passed the GED on-line practice test to take the actual test at the ROE. The new 4-part test is computer-based, aligns with employment potential costs \$30-\$40 per modules (4) up to a total cost of \$120. The agency will also cover the cost of prepared students who elect to take the pencil and paper version of the GED test when available. Students instructed by GED programs by LLCC or Lawrence Education Center (LEC) are eligible for vouchers.

Problem Statement

Lack of education continues to be a problem for low-income people. Many people in poverty lack funds to continue their education and realize their potential of higher living wages. The scholarship program meets the goal of improving the conditions in which low-income people live by presenting them with the opportunity to continue their education in areas of high-growth job sectors. Recipients may re-apply for further scholarship assistance to attain diplomas for Associates or Bachelor degrees.

2.7 Scholarship Program

Information about the CSBG scholarship program is sent to all colleges, universities, high school deans, churches, libraries and newspapers in the Sangamon County area. Local service providers and staff are emailed the press releases in order to communicate dates, deadlines and eligibility information.

Again in 2017, applicants who hold a “B” average were eligible to apply and be enrolled in training/education of their choice. Applicants with at least a “C” average must enroll in coursework leading to employment in high growth job sectors. Community Resources will attempt to ensure all eligible low-income residents of the county have the opportunity to apply for CSBG scholarships if their chances of employment after graduation are likely. If a client is determined ineligible for a CSBG scholarship, he/she is referred to the WIOA program. Clients enrolled in WIOA are not eligible for CSBG scholarships.

Employment Asset Enhancement and Utilization

Problem Statement

Households with low-incomes many times must choose between which basic needs to satisfy. The ability to manage money is important so as not to fall behind and risk a reduction in their credit. In addition, a housing counseling program will be offered to address homeless prevention and foreclosure assistance.

3.1-2 Financial Literacy/Debt Counseling

All applicants who request appointments to receive rental assistance in 2019 will again be required to complete a financial education/debt reduction workshop offered weekly in the agency prior to becoming eligible to call for a rent appointment. Each workshop presenter will provide a dated a certification of course completion. For customers who work during the day and time of the workshops, on line coursework will also be made available to participants with a certificate of completion.

All agency C.N.A. enrollees and any other education modules offered in the agency must complete the financial education class in order to receive transportation assistance.

Energy Assistance

Problem Statement

Many low-income families rent or own housing that is not energy efficient resulting in utility bills are high enough to force families to choose between food and heating their homes.

Work Program 1.2

Home Repair/Rehabilitation/(Weatherization)

Outcome Measure NPI 1.2K

Emergency Car or Home Repair (structural, appliance, heating system)

4.3 Home Repair/Rehabilitation/(Weatherization)

Applicants call for appointments and are called in order of call in to attend appointments. Once all documents are in the Weatherworks system, an assessment is performed and construction services provided to homes of low-income applicants. This assistance assist in the reduction of high utility bills enable families to better afford food, clothing and other basic needs.

Problem Statement

Due to the high price of utilities, many time, low-income families' utilities are in arrears and/or disconnected. Assistance is needed to enable families to catch up and/or be re-connected to heat their homes. Many of these family members include children who are also lacking food support. Utility assistance enables parents to purchase food for their families.

Work Program 5.3 Emergency Energy Support/LIHEAP/PIPP

Applicants call for appointments in priority order from October-May. The LIHEAP program is designed to assist low-income households pay for winter energy services. A one-time benefit is provided to eligible households to be used for energy bills. Community Resources served approximately 3800 households in program year 2018 with LIHEAP and furnace assistance. The PIPP program is still an option to current PIPP customers only.

Outcome NPI 6.2.B

Emergency fuel or utility payments funded by LIHEAP or other public and private funding sources

Emergency Assistance

Problem Statement

Many agency customers are described as seniors on a fixed income or “working poor”. These individuals often have a difficult time meeting their living expenses while working, due to circumstances out of their control. Periodically, emergency assistance may be needed for rent or re-locating a family after a fire, flood or tornado.

Work Program 5.2

Cash Assistance for Emergency Services

Community Resources provides rental or mortgage assistance through the Emergency Services program.

Outcome Measures NPI 6.2C, K, F

Have more resources to meet basic needs

Community Resources meets the CSBG goal of low-income people achieving their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems, by measuring the number of people who stay in their homes. A survey was conducted again this year to determine how long a client, who has received help with rent, is able to maintain his place of residence.

5.2-3 Emergency Services

The **CSBG Employment Supports/Rental/Mortgage Assistance program** provides emergency and non-emergency assistance to income-eligible clientele. Working families or parents receiving disability with children under 18 years are the priority. All applicants must first have all documentation and attend a 3-hour agency Financial Literacy Workshop. Need is defined as verification of an event within the previous 90 days that occurred out of their control (i.e. death of a spouse, natural disaster, incarceration of parents of child, layoff, car accident medical bill, etc.) and verified with income statements and receipts.

Beginning in 2015, if a parent provides verification of need and is able to work, case manager will instead refer parent to job search, education, agency programs, and community workshops to complete. Although not eligible for the employment support/rent benefit, staff will assist them with job search and referrals. Eligibility for rental assistance is every other year.

Problem Statement

Many low-income families have been disenfranchised by poverty including the opportunity to understand and participate in leadership education. Once leadership is learned there is opportunity to present and articulate concerns to community policy makers.

6.2 Youth Leadership Training

For young people with low incomes to become engaged and active in building opportunities in our community, they must be engaged in order to learn to become leaders. In partnership with U of I Extension 4H program, Community Action will assist with fees associated with three youth leadership activities: Junior Leadership Team, Speaking for Illinois and the Teen Leadership Conference. The agency is also exploring other avenues to support youth leadership assistance through the schools, YMCA and Boys and Girls Club.

Problem Statement

Summer learning programs have the potential to help children and youth improve their academic and other outcomes. This is especially true for children from low-income families who might not have access to educational resources throughout the summer months and for low-achieving students who need additional time to master academic content. However, summer learning programs are often an afterthought of school districts or not offered at all, especially in restrictive funding environments.

6.3 Summer/After-School Youth Recreation/Activities

As indicated on the Inter-Agency Community Needs Assessment, there is a significant need to provide summer recreational opportunities for youth K-12. Tuition assistance for the summer Max Out Basketball Camp and the Garvey/Tubman Center Art Camp as well as tuition for the after school activities offered by the Garvey/Tubman Center will be offered to reduce barriers for youth as well as involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Problem Statement

Many elderly seniors are “shut in” and have experienced significant reductions in Food Stamps/SNAP. To help maintain independence and stability through good health, adequate amounts of proper nutrition is important to continue to live independently.

Work program 6.4-1

Senior/Disabled Meals

Outcome NPI 6.4.F

Obtained Food Assistance

6.4-1 Senior Meals

Seniors served by Senior Services of Central Illinois who are shut in or seniors served by SCCR will receive monthly food boxes to help them maintain stability.

Linkages-Outreach & Referral

Problem Statement

People with low-incomes are not always aware of services available or how to access them. Community Resources will address this problem through an informational resource guide referral forms and referrals when customers call the agency.

Work Program 7.1

Community Resources provides an extensive outreach and referral program by keeping staff informed of services available and by networking with other agencies during staff meetings each week. Additionally, CSBG staff is mandated by DCEO to ask every client if child support is due

and if so, if the family would like assistance in obtaining it. If so, a packet of information is offered and follow up done to determine if child support can and is being received. Internal referrals are done by all staff for individuals who are interested as reflected on their Needs Assessment Survey. General and separate Senior Resource Guides are included in the Resource packet given to all senior customers.

Outcome Measure 6.5.E

Referred to/from other sources

7.1-1 Information and Referral (NPI 6.5.E)

Over 200 CSBG customers annually are formally referred to other agencies by forms during their appointments. Another 2700 are referred to other agencies by the receptionist via telephone. Follow up on paper referrals given in case management program will again be implemented in 2019 and for 2018 customers who return and for all enrolled in the Family in Community Development program. For 2019, an increased effort will be made to refer job seekers to the Illinois workNet.

A strong linkage system with other agencies exists in the Sangamon County area to disseminate updated versions of the agency resource guide two to three times a year. In October, 2013, the agency also created and made available a Senior Resource Guide for senior customers and residents of Sangamon County with the intent of helping this population identify resources in the effort to continue to be self-sufficient in their own homes.

Family Development/Intervention for Family Stabilization

Problem Statement

Often time families experience a life-changing event out of their control which causes an emergency crisis situation rendering them unstable or no longer self-sufficient. Examples include a house fire, tornado or a catastrophic health event.

An FCD certified employee will work with both emergency and non-emergency households applying for employment supports or rental assistance who may also be in crisis working toward stability. The agency service bundle consists of a required 3-hour financial literacy workshop with resulting household budget, a needs assessment using the Illinois Self Sufficiency Scale at intake, a 3-hour family functioning/goal setting workshop, and if household meets hardship criteria, the employment support or rent benefit. If the family also needs dental or medication or any other program to promote stability or self-sufficiency, it will be offered. Then, if the household returns after 24 months, they must show they are making progress or have reached set goals.

The 3-hour family functioning/goalsetting workshop will include family functioning/mental health presentations as well as topics around communication, family cohesion, resilience, religiosity/spirituality, emotional regulation, routines and rituals, pro-social family values and family recreation. Upon completion, household will each receive a \$25.00 stipend if all required paperwork has been submitted.

Work Program 8.5-1

Intensive Case Management

Outcome NPI 1.1.A – Unemployed and obtained a job

Outcome NPI 6.3.C.2 – Parents and other adults learn and exhibit improved family functioning skills.

Outcome 1.2.F – Obtained access to reliable transportation or driver's license.

Outcome 1.2.H – Obtained safe and affordable housing.

Health

Problem Statement

Many clients are also unable to afford medications and/or dental assistance for procedures not covered by the ACA. The need will continue in 2019 as Medicaid does not yet cover all dental or denture charges. Lack of medication and dental care are barriers which keep low-income from maintaining their self-sufficiency or re-stabilizing due to health problems and dental pain.

9.10 Health

This program assists with emergency dental assistance and prescription drug assistance for individuals when Medicaid does not cover needed dental or prescription drugs. However, since most local dentists do not accept Medicaid cards, applicants are in need of assistance anyway from SCCR. The agency works closely with Complete Care Pharmacy and local dentists in the area. Catholic Charities is also an active provider through the St. Clair Health Clinic for dentures. In addition, local pharmacists have been careful to ensure sure that clients get the best prices for medications.

Work Programs 9.2-1 (Dental Assistance), 9.2-2 (Prescription Drug Assistance)

Community Resources provides low-income clients with prescription, dental, so that individuals may continue to function in society and/or at their jobs and not miss wages.

Outcome Measures NPI 6.4.D (Dental) & 6.1.A (Prescription)

Children or adults whose health condition was improved due to access to emergency health and dental care services.

The CSBG goal of the conditions in which low-income people's lives are improved is met when the people receive the prescription or dental assistance and are able to function at their jobs or other duties.

2018-19 ROMA Initiatives in Progress:

Roma Goal 2 – CA joins with other community stakeholders to improve the conditions in which low-income people live.

- Rural Food Coalition
- Summer Educational and Recreational opportunities for youth

- Summer School Tuition Program
- Focus groups with FACE Families at Lanphier High and residents of Contact Ministries
- Community Health Worker initiative in East Springfield.
- Focused Deterrence planning group and agency member
- United Way Vision Council Basic Needs members
- United Way Emergency Food and Shelter Program board member (EFSP)

Roma Goal 3- People with low incomes own a stake in their community

- Story Telling by staff of how agency services have impacted agency customers' lives in positive ways.

Roma Goal 4 – Agency increases capacity to achieve results.

- CSBG and other staff increase professional development through FCD and Financial Literacy instruction.
- Invite Congressmen Davis and LaHood to visit after October CSBG Council meeting.

Roma Goal 5 – Agency increases capacity to achieve results

- All staff will review each household's Needs Assessment to determine if household needs to be referred to CSBG staff while in office.

Community Action Agency Economic Development Program Integration with WIOA

As a result of the Re-Authorization of WIA to the new version re-named WIOA, beginning July 1, 2017, Illinois CSBG economic development programs will be technologically integrated to WIOA in order to assist in achieving state and local workforce's goals and to identify and address potential barriers to collaboration. Community Resources plans to carry out this integration per the following:

1. For the CSBG C.N.A. program or any other customized employment program, to **provide an electronic copy of our flyer to WIOA for WIOA case managers and staff to have available to use to call LLCC for customers they see who do not qualify for the WIOA C.N.A. program.** Case Managers would call the contact number for each appropriate customers and ask for them to and be placed on the list to be contacted to apply for selection for future CSBG C.N.A. cohorts. There would be no guarantee of selection of WIOA referrals as CSBG program criteria is already in place and approved by CSBG and CSBG income guidelines are firm at 125% of poverty .
2. For the Employment Supports program, an interagency referral form between CSBG and WIOA would be created and contain CSBG income guidelines, documentation required and criteria for services. The referral form would also include space for a required narrative describing the need for the service. If all CSBG criteria is met, priority for services would be given to WIOA referrals.

Continuing approach to CSBG services for 2019:

Because numerous customers return every year for services, programs in 2019 will again be written to better assist all customers to improve or gain self-sufficiency or stability. Providing services to those in most need due to circumstances out of their control and those who wish to participate in either short or long-term case management to achieve stability or self-sufficiency will be the agency priority in 2019 and beyond.

Staff will offer eligible customers opportunities in the form of agency services and community partner referrals for them to use when a service is provided in the case of a documentable hardship. Customers who do not follow through with referrals and obtain tools to progress toward self-sufficiency will be ineligible for services until they can verify progress. All services provided will be incentivized with opportunities for self-improvement through short term training, job-search workshops, financial literacy workshops, volunteer opportunities and mentoring in concert with a Family Support Specialist.

Programs to continue in 2019 to increase family self-sufficiency or stabilize families will include:

- All callers for employment supports/rent appointments must have first attended the 3-hour financial literacy workshop. After the appointment, they will then attend a family life skills workshop. At the time of future eligibility, when they call and are eligible, they must show evidence of further progress toward self-sufficiency by reaching goals set by them two years ago.
- Housing Assistance will be defined as head of households who face eviction due to extenuating circumstances out of their control within the 90-days prior to appointment. Examples are fires, floods, tornados. Families with children will be the priority for both emergency and non-emergency rent programs.
- Housing Assistance will also be defined as households heads receiving disability or pension who need rent assistance if their circumstances have changed due that are out of their control (guardians of child whose parents are incarcerated, divorce, death of a spouse, job loss, bills from illness.)
- Parents of children who are on disability and are not working themselves by choice are not eligible for housing assistance.
- Employment Supports will continue as a program that provides support to working families working at least 30 hours per week who encounter situations out of their control which can or is causing a domino effect with resulting crisis. Providing assistance per household for items needed to continue or begin work including test certification, rent or mortgage, car repair, work uniform required by the job, to be able to regain stability or self-sufficiency. Assistance can be up to \$600.00 (\$750.00 with director approval) for employed parents (working at least 30 hours per week), to better assure they can retain stability or self-sufficiency.

- A bundled services approach Family Support Specialist case management program with referrals and follow up.
- Emphasis on credit repair in weekly 3-hour Financial Literacy workshops
- High school summer school financial assistance.
- Intensive case management including referral and follow up
- Year-round senior food box program in coordination with case managers of Senior Services of Central Illinois. Senior monthly food box pick up program for SCCR clients.

Community Outcomes in 2019

TBA