

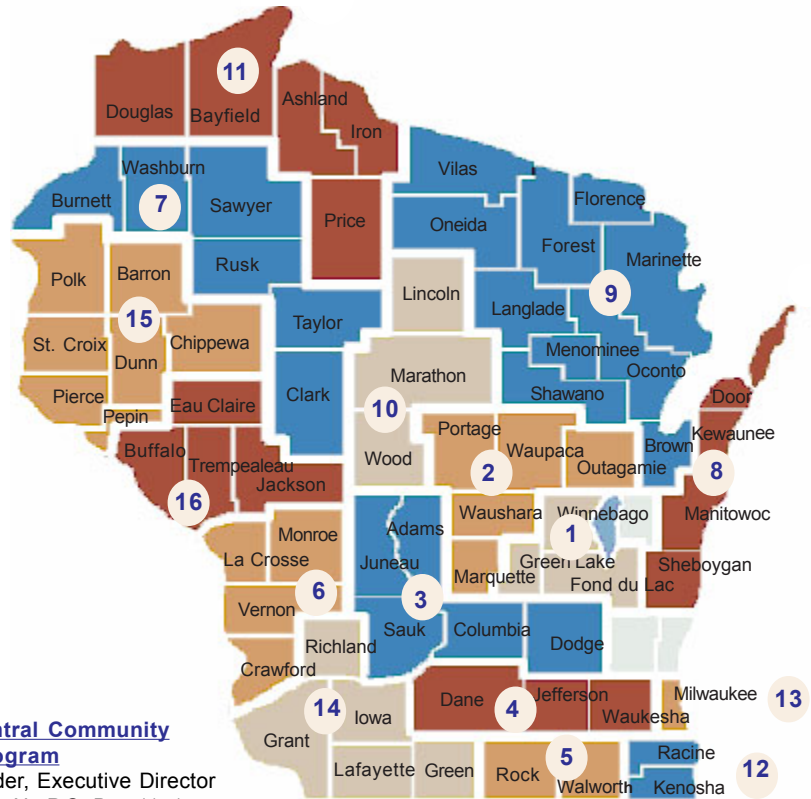


# Community Action in Wisconsin

*Creating Local Opportunities for Economic Self-Sufficiency*



# The Wisconsin Community Action Network



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## Special Purpose Agencies (Statewide)

### [Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups](#)

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## Poverty in Wisconsin

About 600,000 residents in Wisconsin live in poverty. Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) believes that all of us are vulnerable to poverty and that the costs and consequences of poverty have significant effects on everyone, whether poor or not. Poverty is the cause of unnecessary and preventable suffering among millions of Americans and thousands of Wisconsinites of all ages. The economic and social costs are enormous. We believe there are cost-effective solutions to poverty. Through efforts that create jobs that pay living wages with benefits, affordable housing, affordable health care, and education we can eliminate poverty. Please refer to our website, [www.wiscap.org](http://www.wiscap.org), for our report "Poverty Matters: Facing Poverty in Wisconsin" and more information on community action.

## How Do Community Action Agencies Help?

Every year, the Community Action Network analyzes community needs to identify strategies that will work best in attacking poverty; with a full-scale 'community needs assessment' every three years to identify major poverty problems and needs of local residents and their communities. Each agency is unique because its programs reflect the needs of their local communities which are prioritized by their local Board of Directors. These agencies are unique in their ability to deploy diverse program activities and services in meeting their mission.



**In 2006....**  
**262,656**  
**very low-income and working poor residents of Wisconsin turned to Community Action for help!**

### Of those residents...

- 70% are at or below the federal poverty level.
- 91% are at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.
- 39% have no health insurance
- 12% are over 55.
- 47% are children.
- 58% are female.
- 71% are white.
- 29% are people of color.

To address the problems of poverty and create economic opportunity, Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies & Special Purpose Agencies mobilized \$179 Million in federal, state, local and private resources.

\$123 million - Federal	\$30 million - State
\$21 million - Private	\$10 million - Local

## 2006 Program Highlights.....

### Skills Enhancement



The Skills Enhancement Program helps low-wage workers move to better paying jobs and access employer paid health insurance and other benefits. In 2006, eleven CAAs offered Skills help with tuition, books, transportation, and childcare to 490 working individuals. Successful Skills completers have obtained better jobs and have increased their average annual earnings by nearly \$12,000. Also, 79% of those who completed the program obtained employer sponsored health insurance while only 21% of them had it at the time of entering the Skills Program.

### Helping Rural Communities

Since 1992, WISCAP's Rural Community Assistance Program has provided training and on-site technical assistance to small, low or moderate income, rural communities on matters and issues related to water and wastewater systems development. Over 300 towns, villages and sanitary districts have been served to date. In addition, WISCAP continues to partner with Northwest WI Community Services Agency in expanding community and economic development efforts in Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron Counties. During 2006, RCAP staff provided assistance to 33 communities implementing 41 water/wastewater system projects.



# opportunities for economic self-sufficiency

## **Affordable Housing**

WISCAP's statewide network is committed to addressing the growing need for safe and affordable housing in Wisconsin. Our member agencies, in 2006, created or improved 227 housing units; own and operate just under 700 units of affordable housing and manage over 1,150 units. Our member agencies assisted 190 households in becoming first-time homebuyers last year; they also counseled over 275 households in the prevention of mortgage defaults. CAAs actively participate in local 'continuum of care' programs designed to serve homeless populations and help them towards permanent housing; member agencies in various parts of the state operate transitional housing facilities, assist families with critical support services, and provide services to local shelters. And, through weatherization and other housing rehabilitation services, CAAs contributed to the increased local property values in the average community of over \$360,000.



## **Energy & Home Weatherization**



In the past year Wisconsin CAAs weatherized or rehabilitated 5,469 dwelling units. Households weatherized by CAAs in the past year saved, on average, 833 kWh and 156 therms, which translates to a savings of 11% and 15% of pre-weatherization usage. In dollars and cents, the program means an annual savings on energy bills averaging over \$210. Because of the unique conservation nature of the weatherization program, these are not one-time savings – they will be magnified year, after year, helping to both save energy and protect these households from some of the more severe impacts of rising energy prices. In the past ten years, the CAA network has weatherized more than 35,000 homes, resulting in annual energy cost savings of over \$7 million! The CAAs operating weatherization programs also work closely with local energy assistance providers, helping households to receive financial assistance on their energy bills. Some CAAs, on behalf of their local county government, directly provide fuel assistance to low-income households to help with utility payments; these agencies, in 2006, served just under 39,000 households who received a total of \$15.7 million in energy assistance.

## **Head Start & Child Development**

Seven CAAs provided Head Start child development services to nearly 7,094 pre-school age children and their families during 2006. In addition, 10,232 adolescents and teens participated in youth development programs. WISCAP and the Wisconsin Head Start Association work together to promote collaborations between CAAs and Head Start Programs throughout our state.



## **Food Security & Health**



In 2006, 13 CAAs distributed over 5 million pounds of commodities to a network of 230 participating food pantries, meal sites and shelters in 69 counties. Food pantries served a monthly average of 97,000 people, while meal sites & shelters served a monthly average of 87,000 meals! CAAs distributed an additional 1 million pounds of food from the National Non-Profit Humanitarian Initiative and provided garden seed packs during the summer to 5,500 food pantry households to grow home vegetable gardens. SDC's Youth Food Programs served over 2 million meals & snacks to Milwaukee children through a variety of programs and Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Inc.'s, successful CAC Gleaners program distributed over 1 million pounds of prepared & perishable food to local providers. WISCAP prepared and distributed *WISCAP's Guide to Resources for Wisconsin Food Pantries* to 800 pantries statewide. Agencies completed a three year partnership grant to assist DHFS in creating and testing the nationally recognized ACCESS website ([www.access.wi.gov](http://www.access.wi.gov)) that enables low-income households to use the internet to check eligibility, apply, and manage benefits for federal health and nutrition programs.

## **Creating Jobs and Businesses**

The Wisconsin Community Action Network has been providing entrepreneurial training and business development services since 1989! In that time 1,641 new businesses and 5,144 new jobs have been created! A total of 62 businesses and over 99 jobs were created in 2006. Agencies provide low-income entrepreneurs with access to a wide range of services including business training and technical assistance, access to loan funds and financial assistance, a lease/purchase program, and two nationally recognized technology-driven initiatives: a Virtual Business Incubator (at [www.vbi.biz](http://www.vbi.biz)) and online e-commerce opportunities at [www.wisconsincommonmarket.com](http://www.wisconsincommonmarket.com).



Access to Education

Homeownership

Food Security

Family Support

Energy Efficiency



# What is WISCAP?



The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association is the statewide voluntary association of Wisconsin's 16 Community Action Agencies and 3 special purpose agencies with statewide anti-poverty missions: the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, the Foundation for Rural Housing, and the United Migrant Opportunity Services.

The Association was incorporated on March 1, 1974 with the intent of its members that the cause of economic self-sufficiency for Wisconsin's low-income households would be strengthened by working together on issues of policy, resource mobilization, training & development and advocacy.

For over 30 years, WISCAP has served the needs of its member agencies through various ways: helping to identify and sponsor professional training in anti-poverty areas, facilitating quarterly meetings of Community Action Agency leadership staff and board members, serving as a conduit for resource development needs of its members, advocating for public policy conducive to the locally-developed goals of its member agencies and advocating for laws, rules and regulations which support economic opportunity efforts, community development, and locally-designed strategies and procedures.

WISCAP is organized as a private non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the Executive Director from each of its member agencies. Core funding for WISCAP is provided through member agency dues. Program and training funds are provided in part by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Federal Office of Community Services, Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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## Vision 20/20

We believe that poverty matters and that we can do something about it!

WISCAP and the Wisconsin Head Start Association together with the Wisconsin Council on Children & Families are joining forces to call for an end to child poverty by the year 2020.



Join us to end poverty! Find out more about the Vision 20/20 campaign and how to become involved in local and statewide efforts by visiting [www.2020wi.org](http://www.2020wi.org).

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