

# ***Community Action in Wisconsin***

***Creating Local Opportunities for Economic Self-Sufficiency  
May 2013***



## Community Action Fights Poverty

According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data, more than 725,700 Wisconsin residents live in poverty, representing over 13% of the state's population. The member agencies of the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) believe that poverty affects us all; that the costs and consequences of poverty have significant impacts on everybody, regardless of our station in life. Poverty is the cause of unnecessary and preventable suffering and of enormous economic and social costs for millions of Americans and thousands of Wisconsinites of all ages.

WISCAP believes in personal responsibility and in the responsibility of the larger community to ensure the availability of economic opportunity. There are cost-effective solutions to poverty and implementing these cost-effective solutions helps everyone in the community. Through efforts that create jobs that pay living wages with benefits; that provide for safe and affordable housing; that make healthcare both affordable and accessible; and that expand education we can – together, as communities in action – provide economic opportunity for all.

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are unique because each agency's programs and services reflect the needs of their local communities. CAAs are governed by locally-controlled Boards of Directors that consist of community, government and low-income representation. Community needs assessments identify and analyze strategies that will work best in attacking poverty in each particular service area. The CAA is charged with bringing together the necessary public and/or private resources – federal, state, or local – which will allow it to address those local needs. Please visit our website at [www.wiscap.org](http://www.wiscap.org) for more information on Community Action.



In 2012...

**335,349**

low income and working  
poor residents of  
Wisconsin turned to  
Community Action for help!

### Of those served:

- ◆ 66% had incomes below the federal poverty level
- ◆ 6% were homeless
- ◆ 39% were children
- ◆ 15% were over 55
- ◆ 56% were female
- ◆ 64% were caucasian
- ◆ 36% were people of color
- ◆ 17% were disabled
- ◆ 54% were 'working poor'

To address the problems of poverty and to create economic opportunity, Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies and Special Purpose Agencies mobilized \$212 million in federal, state, local and private resources in 2012:

- \$141 million – Federal
- \$37 million – State
- \$27 million – Private
- \$7 million – Local

## 2012 Program Highlights ...

### Community Action Creates Jobs and Businesses

Since 1989, Wisconsin's CAAs have provided business development services to low-income entrepreneurs through its **Job and Business Development Program (JBD)**. With funds from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), JBD helps entrepreneurs to develop business, financial and marketing plans and obtain financing to start or expand small businesses. In 2012, 10 CAAs and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council launched 53 new small businesses and assisted 18 more existing businesses to sustain or expand their operations. JBD created 72 new jobs and preserved 37 more. JBD businesses received \$734,000 in loans and grants in support of their activities. In addition, CAAs utilized other funds to create 24 jobs at non-low-income businesses. Since its inception, JBD has started 1,987 new businesses and created 5,684 new jobs.



### Community Action Helps Low-Wage Workers Get Better Jobs and Benefits

The **Community Action Skills Enhancement Program** helps low-wage workers obtain better paying jobs with benefits by assisting them to get a degree or certification at a technical or community college. Participants receive assistance paying for tuition, child care and transportation to attend classes, as well as individualized career planning, case management, referral and job search support. Fifteen Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and United Migrant Opportunities Services (UMOS) served 343 participants in 2012 with funding from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). Of the 98 graduates who completed training in 2012, 74% obtained new jobs and reported earning an average of \$7,754 more per year, a 66% increase. Each graduate is projected to earn an average of \$295,000 more during their working lifetime. Graduates also report a 260% increase in access to employer-sponsored health care. Since 2010, when state funding became available, 561 workers have enrolled in the Skills Enhancement program. 219 have graduated. Nearly 80% obtained new jobs and reported earning an average of \$8,380 more per year – a 69% increase.

## Community Action Supports Safe and Affordable Housing

WISCAP's member agencies helped 8,831 low-income families **obtain and/or maintain safe and affordable housing** during the year; this assistance taking the form of homeownership counseling, down payment assistance and foreclosure mitigation. In addition, 16,513 low-income households were provided with emergency rent or mortgage assistance. Because of help from a WISCAP member agency, 159 families were able to purchase a home in their community in 2012. Wisconsin Community Action Agencies (CAAs) who serve as owners/managers of affordable housing properties created 63 affordable housing units last year. On a larger scale, CAAs were responsible for preserving and improving 5,075 affordable housing units. Finally, through active participation in local 'Continuum of Care' programs created to address the plague of homelessness, WISCAP member agencies provided temporary shelter and other assistance to 2,074 households.



## Community Action Helps Save Energy

Wisconsin's **Weatherization Assistance Program** is a proven success in making homes of low-income families more energy efficient, safer and healthier. Thirteen of WISCAP's CAAs weatherized a total of 4,659 homes in 2012, using a combination of federal funds and state public benefits resources. The weatherization program, which has been in existence for more than 30 years, provides energy efficiency services – such as insulation and furnace repair/replacement – that help low-income families save \$400 a year on their utility bills. In addition, four Community Action Agencies contracted with their local county government to provide **energy bill payment assistance** to eligible low-income households. These agencies – serving 6 counties – provided 47,025 households during the year with a one-time bill payment averaging \$401.

## Community Action Assists Rural Communities

Since 1992, WISCAP's **Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP)** has provided training and technical assistance to low- and moderate-income rural communities on matters and issues related to the planning, development and management of water and wastewater systems. Small cities, towns, villages, sanitary districts and tribal communities have benefited from RCAP assistance with over 400 projects completed to date. During 2012, RCAP staff provided assistance to 33 communities, implementing 20 water/wastewater projects. Through this work, RCAP was able to leverage \$4.815 million in federal funds for 3 Wisconsin communities: the Village of Curtiss (Clark County), the Village of Strum (Trempealeau County), and the Village of Eleva (also Trempealeau County). Additionally, WISCAP's **Tribal Circuit Rider Program** provides services and technical assistance to all eleven Wisconsin tribes.

2012 saw the first full year of operation of WISCAP's **Community Development Services (CDS)** program. CDS offers education, training and technical assistance to rural Wisconsin communities, on a fee-for-service basis, in the planning, development and management of community facilities projects (beyond water/wastewater). CDS builds community capacity and expertise to develop, implement and manage community development projects such as: housing, downtown development and public facilities development (city/town/village halls, police/fire stations, community centers, health care facilities and libraries). In the first 14 months of CDS operation (November 2011 through December 2012), four villages, one sanitary district and one tribe contracted for program services, totaling \$79,566 in training and technical assistance.



## Community Action Advances Food Security

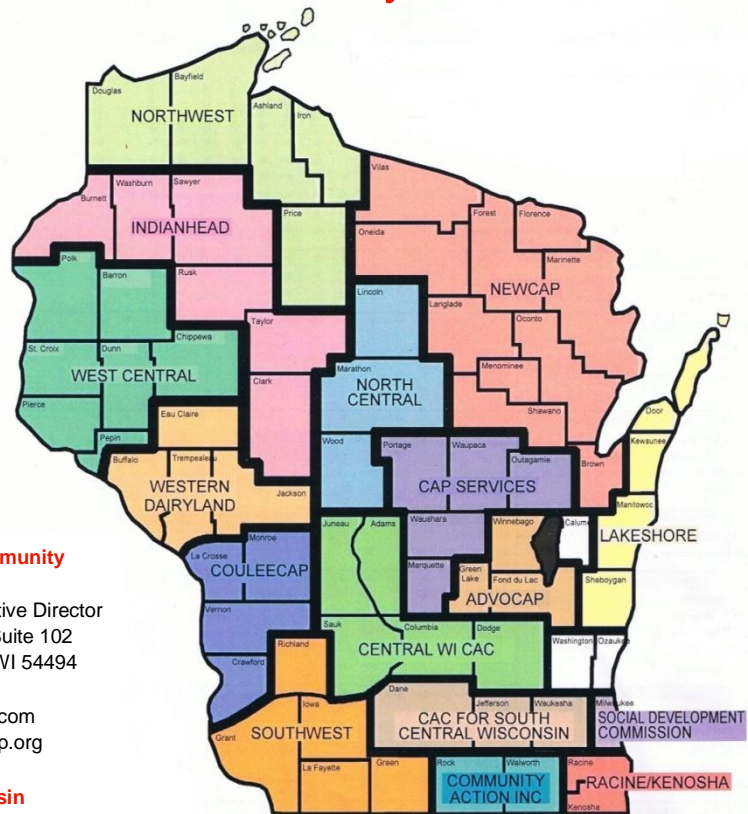
Thirteen CAAs and 3 partner agencies coordinated the distribution of 8.2 million pounds of government commodities in Federal Fiscal Year 2012 – valued at \$4.9 million – to 329 **food pantries, meal sites and shelters** in 71 Wisconsin counties. Food pantries distributed an additional 33 million pounds of private food to needy households and served an average of 202,600 individuals every month – an increase of 56% over pre-recession levels. Meal sites and shelters served an average of 161,000 meals each month – 14% higher than before the recession.

## Community Action Serves Communities, Addressing Local Needs

- Community Action Agencies (CAAs) provided **asset building programs** for 166 low-income participants; these participants saved an aggregated \$170,981 in 2012 and used these accumulated savings to purchase a home.
- Through CAAs, 522 low-income people participated in formal community organizations, government, boards or councils that provide input to **decision-making and policy-setting** efforts.
- CAAs provided 14,651 infants and children with age appropriate **immunizations, medical and dental care**.
- CAAs obtained **child care** for 6,432 individuals.
- CAAs helped 1,674 participants obtain access to **reliable transportation** and/or a driver's license.
- CAAs helped 18,873 persons obtain **healthcare services** for themselves and/or a family member.
- CAAs provided access to **emergency medical care** to 1,398 individuals.
- CAAs sponsored tax preparation programs allowing 15,215 qualified participants the ability to receive available **Federal or State tax credits** totaling \$14.8 million.
- CAAs reported in 2012 receiving a total of 830,175 **volunteer hours** from their communities; of this total, over 485,000 hours were volunteered by low-income individuals.



# The Wisconsin Community Action Network



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## CAP Services, Inc

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## Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Inc.

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## Lakeshore Community Action Program

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## NEWCAP, Inc.

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## Special Purpose Agencies Statewide

### Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups

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### Foundation for Rural Housing, Inc.

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# Community Action Programs & Services

5/13

Program	ADVOCAP	CAP Services	CWCAC	CACSCW, Inc.	CA, Inc.	Coulecap	Indianhead	Lakeshore	NEWCAP	North Central	Northwest	R/K CAA	SDC	Southwest	West CAP	WDEOC	CWAG	FRH	UMOS
<b>Education/Skills Enhancement</b>	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦
Adult Literacy Skills	*						*			*		*	*		*				*
Skills Enhancement Program	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*
Financial Literacy Education	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*			*			*
Employment Training	*		*		*	*	*	*	*			*	*			*			*
<b>Economic/Business Development</b>	♦	♦	♦			♦	♦	♦		♦		♦	♦	♦		♦			
Business Development	*	*	*			*	*	*		*		*	*	*		*			
Business Revolving Loan Programs	*	*	*			*	*			*				*		*			
<b>Energy / Utilities</b>	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦
Emergency Fuel Assistance Programs			*	*		*			*				*			*			*
Weatherization Programs	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*			
Telecommunications Assistance				*						*									
<b>Food Security/Environmental</b>	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦
Emergency Food Assistance	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*			*
Community Garden Programs	*	*		*	*		*		*		*	*			*				
Community Meal Prgrms/Holiday Baskets	*		*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*			*				
Nutrition Education	*		*	*		*			*		*	*	*	*	*	*			*
<b>Housing</b>	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦
Transitional Housing/Homeless Shelters	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*			*	*	*			
Rental Property Management/Development	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*		*				*				
Rent Payment Assistance/Section 8			*	*			*	*	*	*		*		*	*				
Rental Assistance Programs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*			*	*
Homeownership Programs	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*					*	*	*			
Foreclosure Assistance	*			*				*	*						*			*	
Home Repair Programs / Lead Abatement	*	*	*			*	*						*	*		*			
Housing Revolving Loan Fund	*	*	*				*	*						*		*			
Home Repair Programs	*	*	*			*	*	*					*	*		*			
<b>Headstart/Child Development</b>	♦	♦					♦					♦	♦	♦		♦			♦
<b>Parenting/Family Support</b>	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦	♦	♦	♦		♦			♦
Childcare Provision/Assistance/Referrals		*			*			*					*			*			
Parenting Classes	*	*			*		*	*					*	*		*			
Clothing Assistance			*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*		*			
Fatherhood Initiative	*	*			*								*			*			
Violence Prevention/Victim Services		*					*												*
Legal Services				*				*			*						*		*
<b>Physical/Mental Health</b>		♦			♦	♦	♦		♦		♦	♦	♦	♦		♦			
Women's Health					*				*			*	*	*		*			
MA/WIC Programs										*	*								
AODA/Mental Health		*				*	*						*						
Dental Programs		*											*	*					
Home Healthcare							*										*		
<b>Refugee/Migrant Services</b>	♦	♦							♦				♦						♦
<b>Senior Services</b>	♦					♦					♦		♦			♦	♦		
<b>Tax Preparation Assistance</b>		♦									♦	♦	♦			♦			
<b>Transportation</b>	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦		♦					♦	♦	♦	♦		♦
Car Purchase Programs	*	*	*		*	*			*					*	*	*			
<b>Youth and Young Adult Services</b>	♦	♦			♦		♦	♦					♦			♦			♦
Education Skills	*				*		*	*		*			*			*			
Fresh Start	*	*			*		*									*			
Mentoring Program		*					*			*									*
Juvenile Justice/Violence Prevention					*			*					*						*
Homeless/Runaway Programs		*						*											
Employment/Living Skills	*				*		*	*					*						

## WHAT IS WISCAP?

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

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

For 39 years, WISCAP has served the needs of its member agencies in various ways: helping to identify and sponsor professional training in anti-poverty areas, facilitating regular meetings of Community Action leadership staff and Board members, serving as a conduit for resource development needs, 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 activities.

WISCAP is organized as a private, not-for-profit corporation, governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the Executive Directors and Chief Executive Officers of its member agencies. Core funding for WISCAP is provided through member agency dues. Program and training funds are provided, in part, by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - Office of Community Services, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the generous contributions from sponsors of our conference and training events.

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