Community Action in Wisconsin

Creating Local Opportunities for Economic Self-Sufficiency
The Wisconsin Community Action Network

1. ADVOCAP, Inc
   Michael Bonertz, Executive Director
   19 W. First St., P.O. Box 1108
   Fond du Lac, WI 54936
   920-922-7760, Ext. 515
   miked@advocap.org
   www.advocap.org

2. CAP Services, Inc.
   Mary Patoka, COO
   5499 Hwy 10 East, Ste A
   Stevens Point, WI 54481
   715-343-1500
   mpatoka@capmail.org
   www.capserv.org

3. Central WI Community Action Council
   Fred Hebert, Executive Director
   1000 Hwy 13, P.O. Box 430
   Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965
   608-254-8353
   cwacac.donna@verizon.net
   www.cwacac.org

4. Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Inc.
   Gretchen Hansen, Executive Director
   1717 N. Stoughton Rd.
   Madison, WI 53704
   608-248-4730
   ghansen@cacsccw.org
   www.cacsccw.org

5. Community Action, Inc.
   Lisa Forsythe, Executive Director
   200 W. Milwaukee
   Janesville, WI 53548
   608-755-2470
   lforsythe@community-action.org
   www.community-action.org

6. CouleeCap, Inc.
   Grace Jones, Executive Director
   201 Melby St.
   Westby, WI 54667
   608-634-3104
   grace.jones@couleecap.org
   www.couleecap.org

7. Indianhead Community Action Agency
   Jerome Drahos, Executive Director
   Brett Gerber, Executive Director
   Elect 209 E. 3rd St., P.O. Box 40
   Ladysmith, WI 54848
   715-532-5594
   jerryd@indianheadcaaa.org
   brettg@indianheadcaaa.org
   www.indianheadcaaa.org

8. Lakeshore CAP, Inc.
   Noel Ryker, CEO
   702 State St., P.O. Box 2315
   Manitowoc, WI 54221-2315
   920-822-3737
   nryder@lakeshorecap.org
   www.lakeshorecap.org

9. NEWCAP, Inc.
   Robert Koller, Executive Director
   1201 Main St.
   Oconto, WI 54403-1541
   920-834-4621
   robertkoller@newcap.org
   www.newcap.org

10. North Central Community Action Program
    Ron Schnyder, Executive Director
    1430 2nd St. N., P.O. Box 1141
    Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495
    715-424-2581
    ronncap@charter.net

    Millie Rounsville, Executive Director
    1118 Tower Ave.
    Superior, WI 54880
    715-392-5127
    mrounsville@mncsa.clarinet.net
    www.mncsa.org

12. Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency
    Tom White, Executive Director
    2113 N. Wisconsin St.
    Racine, WI 53402
    262-637-8377
    rkcaa.racine@rkcaa.org
    www rkcaa.org

13. Social Development Commission
    Deborah Blanks, CEO
    4041 N. Richards St.
    Milwaukee, WI 53212
    414-506-2700
    dbanks@cr-sdc.org
    www.cr-sdc.org

14. Southwest Community Action Program
    Walter Orzechowski, Executive Director
    149 N. Iowa St.
    Dodgeville, WI 53533
    608-935-2236
    w.orzechowski@swcap.org
    www.swcap.org

15. West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency
    Peter Kilde, Executive Director
    525 2nd St., P.O. Box 308
    Glenwood City, WI 54013
    715-265-4271
    pkilde@wcap.org
    www.westcap.org

16. Western Dairyland Community Action Agency
    James Schwartz, Executive Director
    23122 Whitehall Rd., P.O. Box 125
    Independence, WI 54747
    715-955-2391
    wofgang@westerndairyland.org
    www.westerndairyland.org

Special Purpose Agencies (Statewide)

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
    Thomas Frazier, Executive Director
    2850 Dairy Dr. Ste 100
    Madison, WI 53716-6751
    608-224-0606
    tfrazier@cwag.org
    www.cwag.org

Foundation for Rural Housing, Inc.
    Char Thompson, Executive Director
    4506 Regent St.
    Madison, WI 53705
    608-238-3448
    ruralhousing@tds.net
    www.wisconsinruralhousing.org

United Migrant Opportunity Services
    Rod Ritcherson, Special Assistant to the
    President and Director of Corporate Relations
    2701 S. Chase Ave.
    Milwaukee, WI 53207
    414-389-6000
    rod.ritcherson@umos.org
    www.umos.org
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, for our report “Poverty Matters: Facing Poverty in Wisconsin” and more information on community action.

How Do Community Action Agencies Help?

Every year, Community Action Agencies analyze their community’s 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.

Of those residents...

- 77% are at or below the federal poverty level.
- 37% have no health insurance
- 12% are over 55.
- 45% 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 $196 Million in federal, state, local and private resources.

$127 million - Federal $32 million - State $25 million - Private $12 million - Local

2007 Program Highlights

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. Towns, villages, and sanitary districts have received help with over 300 projects to date. During 2007, RCAP staff provided assistance to 23 communities implementing 28 water/wastewater system projects. WISCAP’s Tribal Circuite Rider Program provides assistance to all 11 Wisconsin tribes. The WISCAP Watershed Initiative works with the Bad River and Red Cliff tribes, the Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency and the Bad River Watershed Association to improve water quality in the 1,092 square mile Bad River watershed area.

Skills Enhancement

The Skills Enhancement Program helps low-wage workers obtain better paying jobs and improved access to employer health care by paying the tuition & fees, child care and transportation expenses so they can attend classes. Additionally, Skills Enhancement provides families with supportive services like personalized training plans, case management, referral and job search assistance. In the first 20 months of the program 11 CAAs enrolled 612 low-wage workers. Ninety percent of enrollees were women; 80% were single parents. The first 100 Skills graduates have experienced dramatic results – doubling their average incomes, and increasing their average earnings by over $10,000 a year! Graduates’ annual incomes have collectively increased by $1 million a year. In addition, 70% of Skills graduates gained access to employer-sponsored health care – a 400% increase over their rate before entering the program. Skills Enhancement has proven to be a cost-effective investment that directly improves the economic self-sufficiency of Wisconsin’s working poor.
Long targeted by Wisconsin’s CAAs as a priority need for helping low-income households towards economic opportunity, the problem of affordable housing grew to become even more relevant during 2007. Our member agencies were ready to step in, addressing many of the myriad problems associated with finding a safe and affordable home: growing foreclosures and burdensome sub-prime mortgages, a disconnect between income and rental costs, the need for more and better housing adaptable to community and employment needs, and homelessness. Member agencies, in 2007, helped nearly 4,000 persons obtain safe and affordable housing. They were responsible for the creation of 199 new safe and affordable housing units, continued to own, operate or manage over 1,500 units and, through rehabilitation efforts and weatherization, helped to preserve and improve over 5,500 dwellings. CAAs also helped 224 low-income individuals purchase a home and helped 39 households save their homes from foreclosure. Member agencies, actively participating in local 'continuum of care' programs designed to serve homeless populations and help them toward permanent housing, provided 2,006 households with temporary shelter and related support services during the year.

Wisconsin has, on a per capita basis, the largest low-income weatherization program in the nation – and CAAs are the primary provider of weatherization services to eligible households in our state. In 2007, CAAs weatherized 5,869 dwelling units, helping families to save, on average, over $230 on their annual heating bills. The savings are repeated and magnified every year, directly helping to give a 'hand up', not a 'hand out' to low-income households. And, in these times of growing awareness on the need for conservation and improved energy efficiency, Wisconsin's low-income weatherization program is one of the state's single largest existing initiatives to save energy. Weatherization provides low-income households served by CAAs the opportunity to use as much as 15% less energy. Seven CAAs contract with their local county government to directly provide energy bill payment assistance to eligible low-income households. In 2007, these agencies, serving ten counties, provided over 154,000 persons with one-time bill payment assistance and provided crisis payments to an additional 19,332 households. Together, these efforts provided just under $30 million in financial assistance to low-income households struggling to keep the power on and stay warm and healthy in their homes.

Thirteen CAAs distributed over 4.8 million pounds of federal commodities worth nearly $2.4 million dollars to network of 235 participating food pantries, meal sites and shelters in 69 counties during 2007. Food pantries served a monthly average of 101,000 people, while meal sites and shelters served a monthly average of 81,000 meals. Food pantries in the network distributed an additional 16 million pounds of privately donated or purchased food to low-income households for a total distribution of 21 million pounds. Thirteen CAAs and three partner agencies distributed free vegetable seed packs to 6,000 food pantry households to grow home gardens. The Social Development Commission's Youth Food Program served over 2 million meals and snacks to Milwaukee children and the Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc.'s successful CAC Gleaners program distributed over 1 million pounds of prepared and perishable food in Dane County. Community Action representatives contributed to planning the Food Security Consortium's 1st Hunger Summit attended by 200 people.

The Wisconsin Community Action Network has been providing entrepreneurial training and business development services since 1989 through the Job & Business Development Program (JBD). Since that date JBD has created 1,720 new businesses and 5,248 new jobs with federal, state and private funding. In 2007 alone 11 CAAs operating the JBD program created 79 new businesses and 104 new jobs. Agencies provide low-income entrepreneurs with access to varied services including technical assistance to develop business, financial and marketing plans, access to grant and loan funds, business incubators, and a lease/purchase program. In addition, some CAAs assist existing businesses to expand, creating better paying jobs for hundreds of formerly low-wage workers. Two agencies maintain nationally recognized internet-based initiatives: an online Virtual Business Incubator, www.vbi.biz, and an online e-commerce marketplace at www.wisconsincommonmarket.com.

Seven CAAs provided Head Start child development services to 7,474 pre-school age children and their families during 2007. In addition, 7,017 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.
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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.

Wisconsin Community Action Program Association
1310 Mendota St., Ste 107, Madison, WI 53714  Phone (608) 244-4422  Fax (608) 244-4064  www.wiscap.org

Executive Director
Richard Schlimm
(608) 244-4422
rschlimm@wiscap.org

Administrative Services Manager
Diana Austin
(608) 245-3294
wiscap@wiscap.org

Special Projects Coordinator
Colleen Rainey
(608) 245-3291
crainey@wiscap.org

Public Policy Director
Bob Jones
(608) 244-0466
bjones@wiscap.org

Community Action
Programs Manager
Jonathan Bader
(608) 244-0745
jbader@wiscap.org

Rural Development Director
Bill Brown
(608) 244-0407
bbrown@wiscap.org

Rural Development Specialist/
Tribal Circuit Rider
Richard Lawe
(715) 799-3907
rlawe@frontiernet.net
P.O. Box 75, Keshena, WI 54135

Rural Development Specialist
Carolee Ilminen
(715) 561-4000
cilminen@wiscap.org
501 Granite Street, Ste. 3
Hurley, WI 54534

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

community action partnership
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association is a proud member of the Community Action Partnership. To learn more about CAP, please visit their website at www.communityactionpartnership.com.