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Dear Friends,

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association staff and Board of Directors are proud to present the 1999 WISCAP Annual Report. In addition to noting the activities of the association, this report highlights important programs, innovations and successes of WISCAP’s members, the sixteen Community Action Agencies and three Special Purpose Agencies funded in part by Wisconsin’s federal Community Services Block Grant. All WISCAP members are bound by the common purpose of helping Wisconsin’s low-income people live in dignity, free from the hopelessness born of chronic poverty.

The great purpose of lessening poverty, a cause known as the War on Poverty 35 years ago when Community Action was created, is a campaign waged on many fronts. It is clearly waged in the homes, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities where we all live. But it is also a cause which, to be successful, must be advanced in town halls, county board rooms, state legislatures, halls of Congress and countless other public and private forums where policy is made. Ultimately, it is the collective will of the American people expressed through these policies that will determine how much poverty is acceptable in this wealthy country. Community Action has long believed that the answer must be “none.”

The effectiveness of Community Action in Wisconsin and across America is based in large part on the fact that we are present in all these forums. Of primary importance, however, is the fact that each Community Action Agency, with all the locally determined diversity of programming illustrated in this report, is present in the homes and lives and aspirations of America’s poor on a daily basis, as they have been for over 35 years. We know what really works, as opposed to what just sounds good.

WISCAP’s advocacy work in the public policy arena is grounded and authenticated by these daily realities. In 1999, WISCAP effectively carried out this advocacy work in several distinct program areas, including low-income Public Benefits legislation, asset development for the poor, housing, transportation, and food security.

These are important and challenging times for Wisconsin and the nation, as government and the private sector seek to redefine their roles and responsibilities in the urgent business of assuring that basic human needs are met and that opportunities are provided for all our citizens. In the new millennium, WISCAP and its nineteen member agencies will keep on working hard to ensure that Wisconsin is seen not only as a leader in welfare reform, but also as a leader in America’s effort to eliminate poverty.

Sincerely,

Peter Kilde, President
Executive Director-West Central CAA
Dear Friends of Community Action,

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) was formally incorporated in 1974 when staff to support the association’s mission were first hired. Twenty six years later we are publishing are first annual report. Why did it take so long? Resources of course, human and financial.

Annual reports have many uses: funders frequently suggest one be included with funding requests; legislators and other policy makers ask “what does Community Action actually do?”; and civic groups and the general public ask the same question. This modest publication shows a very few of the self-help programs our member agencies administer. More information about WISCAP and your local Community Action Agency can be found on our website at www.wiscap.org. While this report, the website, WISCAP and agency newsletters describe programs we administer, what we “actually do” can be found in the mission of each agency which describes the focus as, “the elimination of poverty.” Delivery of program services is a part of alleviating poverty, whether through micro-enterprise development; Head Start; providing shelter for homeless families and individuals; weatherizing and rehabilitating a home to make it safe, warm, and affordable; operating a food pantry or elderly nutrition site; alcohol and drug programs; home health care; transportation; job training; home purchase; rental assistance; literacy training; asset development (IDAs); and so much more.

Community Action Agencies are often viewed as another agency providing support to people already receiving some form of public assistance, but the reality is, most of the people we work with are working but still unable to reach self-sufficiency. Low-income people seek that next step which makes the difference between living in poverty, and adequately providing for the basic needs of their families.

Hundreds of volunteers assist Community Action Agencies toward fulfillment of their mission, working at Head Start centers, food pantries, soup kitchens, elderly nutrition programs, business development mentoring programs, and serving on boards of directors, program advisory committees and planning councils. We have many partners helping us to open the doors of economic opportunity for all Wisconsin people, including Wisconsin’s Departments of Commerce, Workforce Development, Health & Family Services, and the Department of Administration.

We ask that you take the time to become familiar with your local Community Action Agency and the work of their trade association, WISCAP. We welcome you and thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Jackie Lawrence, Executive Director
WISCAP
WISCAP’s Role in Policy Development

- Our goal is to develop and promote public policy that reduces poverty through Wisconsin’s Community Action Network.
- We work with member organizations to formulate anti-poverty public policy priorities.
- We undertake activities in pursuit of those priorities.
- We provide information to member agencies and others on state and federal legislative proposals and actions affecting low-income people.
- We provide training and technical assistance to member organizations on the opportunities, requirements, and limitations for legislative activities.

Low-Income Public Benefits

A major public policy accomplishment of WISCAP, our member organizations, and our collaborators was the enactment of the “Public Benefits” provisions of Reliability 2000 (R2K) as part of Wisconsin’s Biennial Budget for 1999-2001 (1999 Wisconsin Act 9).

This new law provides permanent funding for energy-efficiency programs such as weatherization, and financial assistance to meet the energy needs of low-income households in Wisconsin. Funding is derived from existing federal and utility sources and from a new all-electric access fee. The State’s Legislative Council has estimated the fixed level of funding at $108.5 Million after a three-year transition period. This fixed level represents about a three-fold increase in funding for the weatherization of low-income households and about a 30% increase in funding for fuel assistance payments.

WISCAP is especially proud of this accomplishment. The Law represents a major public policy shift from the past practice of protecting low-income households by reimbursing utilities for meeting their regulatory responsibilities in serving low-income households, to a new policy of providing adequate resources for low-income people to access and conserve energy resources necessary to become more energy self-sufficient.

WISCAP played a major role in shaping the substance of Public Benefits over the past five years. We worked closely with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, the Advisory Committee on Electric Industry Restructuring, a Legislative Council Special Committee on Utility Public Benefit Programs, Class A utilities, and the broad-based “Customer First!” Coalition. The coalition was comprised of representatives of low-income groups, utilities, environmental groups, aging groups, and others.

WISCAP, with participation of its member community action agencies, identified and adopted four basic fundamental values at the start of this process in 1995 to guide us in protecting low-income families as the energy markets in Wisconsin went through restructuring. The first, permanence of low-income energy programs, was met as a direct result of the Public Benefits process. The remaining fundamental values we will actively work to ensure in the future are: maintenance of the industries’ obligation to serve; access to affordable service for all; and retention of the winter moratorium.
PUBLIC POLICY AND ASSETS FOR THE POOR

WISCAP secured federal funding resources to establish a program of Individual Development Accounts (IDA) in Wisconsin through its member Community Action Agencies in 1999. Wisconsin’s CAAs, with this initial federal funding and the assistance of local financial institutions, will help more than 750 low-income working families establish Individual Development Accounts for the purpose of buying a home, starting a small business, or pursuing post-secondary education.

WISCAP and its member agencies resolved to create the IDA Program in order to demonstrate the capacity of the Wisconsin Community Action Network to provide economic opportunity and statewide programs for low-income people. Community Action is especially committed to helping people leave poverty. IDAs are an asset-building strategy, which helps low-income working households enter the economic mainstream. The IDA Projects will help families establish a relationship with a financial institution, and engage in a regular pattern of saving earned income for investments in home ownership, microenterprise development and education.

WISCAP promoted the provision of state funding support for Individual Development Accounts in the 1999 legislative deliberations on the State Budget. While our initial efforts were unsuccessful, we remain committed to renewed efforts to promote an asset-based approach to reducing poverty in Wisconsin.

THE PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGE

WISCAP remains challenged by the paradox of poverty in the midst of great prosperity in Wisconsin. We believe that the great economic prosperity within the state enables us, and calls on policy makers, to create opportunities for all residents to participate in and benefit from that prosperity.

We believe that Community Action—for the past 35 years—has been the source of innovative solutions to poverty at the local level. Wisconsin’s CAAs have a proven track record of developing innovative anti-poverty projects in a collaborative style involving many organizations at the local level. Examples include: our development of the first weatherization programs in the nation during the mid-1970’s; the creation of our Jobs and Business Development Program creating more than 1,500 jobs and more than 750 small businesses since 1991; and our innovative work in creating affordable rental housing and home ownership for the poor throughout the State.

We look forward to working with policy makers to create economic opportunity for all Wisconsin residents in this new millennium.

WISCAP Public Policy Director, Richard Schlimm (center) discusses pending legislation and advocacy strategies with staff at the Social Development Commission (SDC) in Milwaukee.
Agency Highlights

Wisconsin Community Action Agencies are independent, non-profit corporations or commissions. The purpose of Community Action Agencies as defined in the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, is to focus all available resources upon the goal of enabling low-income people to attain the skills, knowledge, motivations, and opportunities needed to become self-sufficient.

Community Action Agencies are clearly defined in both state and federal law. They are formed and governed by local communities, to address specific barriers to self-sufficiency. Their Boards of Directors are composed of one-third local government representatives, at least one-third low-income representatives, and the remainder community and business leaders. A major source of CAAs’ strengths and a unique aspect of each agency is this belief in and utilization of local people to develop solutions to poverty.

Participation of low-income people is an important facet of community action. The “maximum feasible participation” of low-income people is sought and valued as a part of the local planning and decision-making process. Through participation on CAA boards and committees, low-income people can also become empowered as effective community leaders.

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association is a professional association of Wisconsin’s sixteen Community Action Agencies and three Special Purpose Agencies. The Association is governed by a Board of Directors with representatives from each member agency. WISCAP has a staff of eleven full-time employees and serves its members and low-income people as an information clearinghouse, a policy review and advocacy forum, a public information network, training facilitator, and administrative agency.

WISCAP’s member agencies offer a wide range of programs and services to communities in Wisconsin. The strength of Community Action lies in the fact that each agency is locally controlled by a volunteer board that represents all sectors of the community, and that this board develops a strategy to eliminate poverty that utilizes the strengths of each community. In this way, Community Action Agencies develop a comprehensive approach that links low-income people to a variety of programs and services, and acknowledges that the solution to poverty requires a multifaceted approach. Community Action Agencies not only address the needs of low-income individuals and families, but work to improve the community as a whole to ensure that all people have the opportunity to work, play and live comfortably in a place they feel safe and proud.

In the following pages, you will see a variety of programs and success stories that highlight the work of Community Action in Wisconsin. Provided the opportunity, there are many more stories to tell of families and people who have lifted themselves out of poverty with help from the hard working staff members and volunteers that make Community Action a reality. These stories represent the diversity in approach and programming that make Community Action Agencies unique and successful in Wisconsin. To learn more about the wide range of programs and services offered by our agencies, please contact the WISCAP office or individual agencies.
JOB & BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Job and Business Development Program (JBD) provides business and job opportunities to low-income entrepreneurs. The program provides training and technical assistance to individuals who have sound ideas for establishing a small business, but lack the expertise and knowledge to succeed. With the help of the JBD Program, many participants have been able to leave welfare and establish a secure income. Others have found a way out of minimum wage, dead-end jobs and are now able to look to a bright and productive future as small business owners. It is a proven and successful tool in providing a path to self-sufficiency at ADVOCAP.

Knight Carpet Cleaning
Oshkosh

Knight Carpet Cleaning was founded by Clarence Knight, an African-American with 20 years experience in the maintenance field. He was employed for 6 years by Winnebago County in building maintenance. After experiencing racial encounters at his last two places of employment, he decided to start his own business where he felt he would receive credit for a job well done. Mr. Knight has experienced great acceptance since the start of his business. He has received several large commercial contracts since his start-up. Mr. Knight is very excited about the response to his business.

Rocky's Custom Tile
Menasha

Rocky is a single parent with one child. He was injured in an accident and is unable to perform certain kinds of jobs. He had experience in laying tile and decided that his best road to self-sufficiency was through establishing his own business. Rocky's business will concentrate on custom tile laying for floors and bathrooms. He will also specialize in customizing entertainment areas in homes.

Rocky was assisted with his business and financial plan, and in putting a loan package together to obtain financing. He will continue to receive technical assistance in his start-up and the future growth of his business.
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Karl S. Pnazek
Chief Executive Officer

VIRTUAL BUSINESS INCUBATOR

CAP Services’ Jobs and Business Development (JBD) Program has developed an innovative online resource for entrepreneurs in Wisconsin. This new resource offers cutting edge technology to provide timely and accurate information to individuals with the dream of starting a business and to small business owners who hope to expand.

The Virtual Business Incubator (VBI) at www.virtualincubate.com offers all the information and resources an individual needs to start their own business. Heidi O’Brien, CAP’s Technology Project Coordinator, said, “This innovative website can help you decide whether to incorporate, walk you through the steps of hiring your first employee, teach you how to market your business, or answer many of your small business questions.”

Clements said, “A primary goal of the VBI is to help low-income individuals start, sustain, or expand a small business. To sustain and grow their businesses, low-income entrepreneurs need access to quality business information, expertise and education as well as access to new markets.” Clements adds, “Rural entrepreneurs face unique barriers to meeting these needs. These include a lack of monetary resources and significant distance to business education resources serving larger markets. In addition, access to public transportation, childcare, and staff required to leave day-to-day business operations for travel are not available.”

The VBI provides small business owners and entrepreneurs access to many of the benefits of a traditional business incubator, without having to physically leave the day-to-day management of their business. Entrepreneurs can access the site at their place of business or at other facilities located in their community including libraries or at each of Wisconsin’s 74 Job Centers.

CAP-Net
Virtual Incubator

The following corporations assisted in developing the VBI content: Anderson, Shannon, O’Brien, Rice & Berts; Clifton Gunderson, LLC; M&I Bank; and Sentry Insurance. Clements states, “This project required the collaboration between the non-profit sector, private and public sectors. It’s exciting to see all these partners working together to enhance opportunities for business development throughout the state.”

O’Brien states the entire project has been exciting because “we’re empowering individuals.” She notes that naturally many small businesses use their computer simply for word processing but this technology is liberating. O’Brien says, “Now there are many entrepreneurs who are utilizing the resources and available technology provided with the VBI. Some businesses are using e-commerce to increase sales and many are creating their own websites.”

Serving Portage, Waupaca, Outagamie, Waushara & Marquette Counties

WISCAP Annual Report 2000
PROJECT CHANCE
Profile of Success: Dennis Degroff

Dennis is a 37-year-old single father of four children: three daughters aged 13, 14, and 15, and a 16-year-old son. He came into the Project CHANCE Program with major barriers to address. An unemployed welder, Dennis was homeless, without a vehicle or driver’s license and owing fines, and he was heavily in debt. All four of his children were in temporary placement or foster care. He was working with Lutheran Social Services and the County Human Services on reunification with his children and needed to obtain adequate housing and employment. Temporary housing was established at a boarding house.

After one week of being in the Project CHANCE Program Dennis found a full-time job as a welder within walking distance. Shortly after entering the program, Dennis received a phone call that one of his children had attempted suicide by hanging. In his attempt to cope with this he chose to drink and drive, and on the way to see his child he received his second OWI in less than three months.

Despite all the stresses and problems Dennis faced he remained committed to his three main goals: keep working and find an apartment; stay clean and sober; and most importantly, reunify his children and be the best father that he could be.

Dennis immediately took charge of putting his life back together and was always open to ideas and recommendations. He started attending Family and AODA counseling and AA meetings. An apartment was found within a month. His son Josh and his two youngest daughters, Bobbi Jo and Vanessa were placed back in the home three weeks after Dennis moved into his apartment. With the assistance of a County Homemaker/Budget Counselor his fines and past bills were getting paid off. Dennis and his family not only started attending church each week but also became involved in the church’s activities. His 16-year-old son, Josh, obtained a part-time job after school and on weekends. His grade point average has improved from a 1.4 to a 3.0 since rejoining the household. Dennis waited very patiently for his daughter Angel to be returned home and that happened shortly after his successful completion of the Project CHANCE Program.

Six months after Dennis’ successful completion of Project CHANCE, he was referred to the Columbia County Community Reinvestment Program known as GET SET. Dennis was finally eligible to have his driver’s license reinstated after more than a year of revocation. With a valid Driver’s License, Dennis would be able to obtain a vehicle and obtain a better paying job outside of the city of Columbus. Dennis completed his court ordered Alcohol Assessment Counseling and paid his license reinstatement fee, making him a valid driver. Through the GET SET program, Dennis received assistance with a van and automobile insurance. As of April 10th Dennis has a new full-time job making $14 an hour as a welder. This new job will be paying him over $3 an hour more than his current job.

Dennis and his children have had some trials and tribulations with finances and the normal frustrations of parenting teenagers, but overall they have become a caring, close-knit family that has worked together, supported one another and shared their kindness, gratitude and love with those who have come into their home. Project CHANCE is a program of CWCAC since 1998 funded by a federal Continuum of Care grant through the State of Wisconsin.
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Arnell Jorgensen
Executive Director

HUB CENTER
Youth Mentoring Program

The HUB Center is a community-based organization that aids youth in reaching personal, family and economic success. In HUB Clubs, our prevention programs, at-risk youth are matched with high school teen mentors who serve as role models, tutors and friends. These mentoring relationships provide a tool for promoting responsible choices and healthy behaviors. “Kids reaching kids” works because they often turn to their own peers for information and advice before turning to adults. In HUB’s Parent Aide Program, a component of Pregnant and Parenting Teen Services, young parents are matched with parent aides, formally teen parents themselves, who assist in goal setting and accomplishment, model appropriate parenting skills, and serve as credible examples of success. Parent aids give young parents unique inspiration and motivation to work toward their potential.

Providing services which meet the holistic needs of at-risk youth and their families in a culturally competent setting has proven successful. All 42 of the HUB Club mentors have graduated from high school. One graduate entered the military, 67% began post secondary education, and three entered the workforce directly after completing high school.

Tracking a cohort of 30 participants who were involved in the HUB Club for three years revealed significant academic achievement. The group began HUB Club as sixth graders with an average grade point average below 1.0. As eighth graders, 90% had achieved a grad point average of 2.0 or better. Ten received honor roll recognition with a grade point average of 3.0 or better.

Of 14 sixth grade participants whose HUB Center involvement began by joining HUB Jr. three years ago, 13 had had contact with the juvenile justice system and five were on probation as fourth graders at program entry. Currently, only three have had contact with the juvenile justice system and none are on probation. These same children had an average of five days of school absence per child at program entry. This average has been reduced to two days per child.

Examples of individual success stories are equally demonstrative of program success. One participant had 10.5 school absences for the year when he began involvement with HUB. This year he had only one absence. At program entry he was on formal probation. After three years of club participation, he is no longer on probation and has not had any juvenile justice involvement in the past six months. Another participant had 16.5 school absences for the year when he joined HUB. This year he has had only four absences. He was also on probation at program entry but has had no juvenile justice involvement in the past year.

- 1998 - National Model Program - Center for Disease Control; highlighted on CDC website.
- 1998 - Wisconsin Public Health Associations Award for Wisconsin’s Best Prevention Program.
COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION

COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION'S

GARDEN PROGRAM

The Community Gardens Program provides a multi-pronged approach to a variety of low-income needs such as: access to abundant high quality fresh produce; productive family-enhancing recreation; opportunities to develop and transfer self-reliance skills; positive role modeling; a positive community image; safe gathering spaces; opportunities for leadership development, relaxation and renewal; and interaction with other income and cultural groups on a peer basis around a common activity. This work is done in the context of a community setting with aspirations determined by group members.

The Garden Program is the primary local developer of community gardens and takes interest in any garden project that may benefit the area’s low-income families. This includes developing and maintaining good relations with other garden groups, gathering and keeping data on all area gardens, providing referrals to non-CAC gardens, and helping to develop positive local policies.

Currently, the program is directly involved with major responsibilities at 13 locations in the greater Madison area, each of which is at a different stage of organizational and physical development with sizes that range from 1/10th of an acre to 4 acres. CAC provides a mix of technical (layout, tillage, water systems, fencing, etc.) and design assistance, access to resources, materials, tools, donated seeds and plants, community buildings, newsletters, leadership development, and support. CAC brokers access to land, insurance, water, and capital improvements as well as serving as a clearinghouse for community garden information. In order to continue to develop new sites, gardens are organized to be self-managing with respect to the group’s functioning as a social entity. Garden groups are trained and encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to proactively address their own circumstances. Groups that are making these efforts are given priority in staff time and garden scheduling as recognition for their assistance. Garden fees collected are made available to these groups for their own use. Larger scale community wide trainings and events are held to broaden perspectives and provide for synergies between groups and broaden overall awareness.

Last year, CAC community gardens produced an estimated 270,000 lbs. of food on 10 acres with 320 households participating. Garden leadership training affected approximately 600 gardening families. The Garden Program also plays a technical support role for several local children’s gardens and a youth run CSA project. The Garden Program also serves as a site for various youth training, restitution, and diversion programs to teach work skills that will directly benefit disadvantaged local residents.
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Jerome Drahos
Executive Director

**KINSHIP of Rusk County**

KINSHIP is a national community based mentoring program that has been serving Rusk County residents for over 20 years. The need for a mentoring program was identified by a local attorney and social worker who realized many of the cases they were working with involved youth who did not have a positive adult role model in their lives. Indianhead Community Action Agency recommended the Kinship mentoring program and secured grant funding to get the program started. KINSHIP, Inc., which is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has standards of practice for program quality, a network of experienced staff for technical assistance, and an organizational flow that allows programs to be community “owned and operated.” Kinship of Rusk County is directed by a board of 13 individuals.

Kinship of Rusk County Youth program began in 1977 and serves families with children 5-17 years old who would benefit from a positive adult role model. Children are referred to Kinship by parents, human services, schools, law enforcement and other sources. Adult mentors are recruited, screened, trained and matched with these children to spend time together on a regular basis doing mutually enjoyable activities. Community service projects are done four times a year to connect the families with the community. At the present time the Kinship Youth Program serves 70 families.

Kinship of Rusk County Senior Program was developed in 1986. One of the beauties of the Kinship model is the flexibility and community control. After witnessing the effect caring adults can have on families, the Rusk County Aging Board approached the Kinship Board and requested a similar program for the home-bound elderly. Kinship of Rusk County Senior Program was born! Operating under the same National Standards of practice, Senior Kinship matches caring adults with home-bound seniors on a one-to-one basis. These caring adults help with errands, reading, and visit and share meals together thus helping seniors be able to stay in their own homes longer. Kinship of Rusk County currently serves 40 elderly participants.

Kinship of Rusk County Explorer Program was developed in 1996. A local human service agency approached the Kinship Board about developing a program for adults with minor mental or physical disabilities. These adults were too old for Youth Kinship and too young for Senior Kinship. Rusk County does offer work-site opportunities for this population, but there were no resources available for social and recreational activities. Through the Kinship Explorer Program these adults now have the opportunity to have a one-on-one mentor, help plan and attend monthly group activities with other Kinship participants, and get involved in community service events. These adults can now be contributing members of society just like everyone else! The Kinship of Rusk County Explorer Program serves 14 adults with minor mental or physical disabilities.

Indianhead Community Action Agency is very proud of this initiative. KINSHIP is a program that helps people help themselves and others!

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Serving Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Rusk, Taylor & Clark Counties

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PROGRAMS OPERATED BY THIS AGENCY

- Homebuyer Assistance Program (HCRI/HOME)
- Emergency Housing Assistance
- Continuum of Care (Project HOPE)
- Family Education & Resource Center (Manitowoc Co)
- Supportive Parenting Program (Manitowoc Co)
- Teen Parent Program (Manitowoc Co)
- Healthy Families Collaborative (Manitowoc Co)
- Lakeshore CAP Rental Management
- TEFAP (Service Area & Calumet, Outagamie, Waupaca, Ozaukee & Washington Co)
- Door County Juvenile Restitution Program
- Youth Mentoring Program (Manitowoc Co)
- Electronic Monitoring/Home Detention (Manitowoc & Door Co)
- Intensive Supervision Program (Manitowoc Co)
- Juvenile Restitution Program (Manitowoc Co)
- Hometown Energy Program (Sheboygan Co)
- Bi-lingual (Hmong/English) Public Health Outreach
- CHDO Rental Housing Development
- Special Needs Housing Program
- Washington Island Preschool
- Legal Services Outreach, Information & Referral

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Lakeshore CAP, Inc.
Mission Statement

The mission of Lakeshore Community Action Program is to promote economic self-sufficiency and well-being of low income persons through service programs, advocacy, community education, and resource development in Door Kewaunee, Manitowoc and Sheboygan Counties.

The Agency mission is to enable and empower all persons, parents and families through voluntary prevention education, support, and intervention and treatment programs. Emphasis is placed on practices which promote strong service coordination, collaboration, and comprehensive case management. To further this mission, activities are developed which fulfill the following primary needs:

- Emergency Services Which Meet Basic Human Needs
- Family Based Services
- Youth Services
- Housing
- Job Development
- Childcare

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Serving Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc & Sheboygan Counties

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NEWCAP in 1999 distributed 472,886 pounds of federal TEFAP supplemental food items to these 17 food pantries and 5 soup kitchens. Both the food pantries and the soup kitchens match the federal contribution of food with local and purchased food items. With the leveraged food, 2,310 households per month received a food box to supplement their monthly food requirements. The soup kitchens, in turn, serve 9,927 meals each month.

Many recipients of food pantry services are elderly people who find it difficult to pay the increasing cost of medical prescriptions and still eat nutritionally balanced meals.

While NEWCAP does receive funding to operate the food pantry program, it is no where near what it costs. Last year the agency received $56,183 but spent an additional $49,047, most of that money coming from the Community Services Block Grant. In addition, the agency purchased a $33,000 cube van from its own corporate reserves to haul the food items to the individual pantries.

Finally, it should be noted that most of the pantries are staffed strictly by volunteers committed to helping people with their emergency food needs. Coordinating and leveraging all of these resources is a challenging and rewarding task, but one that NEWCAP takes on willingly and enthusiastically.

More information on the food pantry program can be obtained by contacting Teresa Hudson, Community Access Director.
In 1994, NCCAP was designated as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) by the State of Wisconsin. This designation opened the door for the development of rental housing. Almost simultaneously, NCCAP began to notice that the need for emergency rental housing assistance was increasing at an alarming rate. What once was an issue (homelessness or pending eviction status) confronting 100 households in our service area during the early to mid 1990s was by 1998 and 1999, an issue confronting over 500 households.

W-2 has been a factor in the increased need for housing assistance, but of far more significance is the simple fact that households averaging $650-$700 in income per month cannot afford $400 a month in rent and $95 in utility payments. Paying over 60% of income on rent and an additional 10% to 15% on utilities has become an all too common scenario. Affordable housing has traditionally been defined as representing 30% or less of a household’s income. At 40% to 50% of income, you have an affordability problem. At 60% to 75%, you have an affordability crisis.

Frankly, NCCAP has struggled for years to find a meaningful way to address this crisis. Emergency assistance and rent subsidies may prevent an eviction or ease the financial burden, but status as a CHDO presented the agency with an opportunity to address the problem of affordability on a more permanent basis. NCCAP decided it would focus its efforts on households with exceptionally low incomes at or below 30% of the County Median Income (CMI). It was also decided that NCCAP would not pursue the development and ownership of rental housing without reasonable assurances that rent would be “affordable” without the use of on-going subsidy payments. We felt strongly that if we failed at either of these two priorities we would, in essence, be part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Between 1997 and early 2000, NCCAP:
1. Secured a $50,000 grant from the Ministry Fund at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Marshfield.
2. Secured a $25,000 grant from WHEDA.
3. Submitted proposals to the Division of Housing’s Rural Housing Development (RHD) Program and eventually secured conditional grant funding with a twenty year affordability period.
4. Identified and purchased property in the city of Marshfield for the purpose of constructing a six unit complex called CAPISTY TOWN HOMES (“istry” derived from the Ministry Fund).
5. Utilizing a subcontracted developer and a local construction firm, began construction in the fall of 1999.
6. Sought and secured a property tax exemption from the city of Marshfield (to be renewed annually).

1999 saw NCCAP’s rental housing complex become a reality. However the real purpose of our efforts was not that we own rental housing, but that we provide truly affordable housing for the very poor. Have we succeeded? Judge for yourself........

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<th>MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE INCOME @ 30% CMI</th>
<th>BEDROOM SIZE</th>
<th>RENT TO BE CHARGED</th>
<th>RENT % OF INCOME</th>
<th>UTILITIES TO BE CHARGED</th>
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Serving Marathon, Wood & Lincoln Counties
In the spring of 1999 the director of Solid Rock Mission, a homeless shelter for men and community soup kitchen, decided to retire. Solid Rock Mission had been a part of the Superior community for over 60 years and was funded by individual donations. Several nonprofits including Northwest Community Service Agency (NWCSA) had an interest in assuming responsibility for the facility and operations.

After several meetings with the Board of Directors of Solid Rock Mission and of NWCSA, the Board of Solid Rock decided that the mission of NWCSA was similar to what they had focused on at the shelter, and agreed to assist NWCSA in acquiring the facility. The NWCSA Board of Directors felt that the homeless shelter would be a great addition to the services provided through NWCSA, and funding was sought to assume responsibility for the shelter. NWCSA was able to fund the first year of operations with support from individual donations, Douglas County, and the City of Superior.

After studying the population served at Solid Rock and finding a significant history of drug and alcohol abuse, NWCSA decided to turn the facility into Solid Rock Safe Haven. Funding for the program was received by NWCSA through a federal Continuum of Care grant offered by the State of Wisconsin for 2000 through 2002. NWCSA has also received a WHEDA Grant to bring the facility up to code and make the facility accessible to persons' with disabilities. With these improvements, NWCSA will also be able to provide service to persons who are differently-abled.

Solid Rock is the only shelter in the area and serves about 10 to 12 men each night. The facility has a capacity of 25, and clients can stay as long as there is a need. NWCSA is also looking at adding an additional facility that could serve women. NWCSA believes Solid Rock Safe Haven is a valuable resource for people who are in desperate need of help, and is very thankful the gift from Solid Rock Mission’s Board of Directors continues to serve the community.
HEAD START

Through Head Start, the Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency has been providing quality child care and family development services for over thirty years in Racine County. The program currently has five centers in Racine County: four in the city of Racine and one in Union Grove.

The Union Grove center serves 51 children and is funded through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction-Head Start Supplement Grant. The four centers in Racine serve 578 children in a half-day program and 60 children in three full-day, full year classrooms.

One of the full-day, full year classrooms is located in a homeless shelter for women. Homeward Bound of Racine County has had a full-day, full year classroom since the fall of 1994. This unique collaboration allows children staying at Homeward Bound to participate in Head Start for thirty days. The Head Start program can accommodate up to five additional children. One Step Ahead Day Care has allowed the R/K CAA Head Start program to place a full-day full year classroom in their center. Head Start funds support most of the services provided to the twenty children attending. However, to reduce costs, two assistant teachers in the Head Start classroom are provided by the day care. Child care subsidies (W-2 co-pay) support the assistant teachers. Head Start funds are used to hire support staff, provide additional teaching staff, allow time for curriculum planning, training, home visits, and substitutes. In addition, the Child Development Credential (CDA) is offered free to staff at the day care. Child care licensing standards and Head Start Performance Standards are met throughout the day. Children attend all three full-day, full year classrooms between 6:45a.m. and 5:30p.m. five days per week for 50 weeks per year. The shared costs, additional training, benefits and support have enhanced day care staff and provided the needed assistance working families need.

Loren Skelton is the R/K CAA Head Start Director. He is supported by eight service area managers and staff in providing comprehensive, quality and dependable services to Racine County Head Start families.
Dunlap, who is legally blind, works with the Chair Rockers, a group of about 15 persons, most in their eighties, including one man in his nineties. They exercise in their chairs. “I tell them to keep moving; if you don’t move your muscles, you lose them,” she said.

After working 25 years as a cook at Pandl’s Restaurant, Dunlap said her “eyes got bad.” “I had nothing to do, I put on a whole lot of pounds for about a year. Then I lost 25 pounds—I walked it off.” Went to the Clinton Rose Senior Center. Formed the first black line dancing group in Wisconsin in 1991, The Roselette Dancers. Somebody told me about SDC.” In “1993 or 1994” she joined the Social Development Commission’s Senior Meal Program at Locust Street Court, and took the Roselette Dancers to perform at all the Senior Meal sites.

An SDC Senior Aide assigned to the YWCA, Dunlap, after taking YWCA physical fitness classes, started physical fitness classes at Lapham Park. She was told the elderly there were “too busy gossiping, too into themselves,” she said.

Pat Pollwork, supervisor of YWCA Older Adult Program said, “if Frannie can’t motivate them, nobody can.” Dunlap said, “In a months time we had 15 participants. Mayor Norquist is an honorary member—he’s not old enough to wear a Chair Rocker shirt and hat yet.” She has also been involved with Senior Striders, and the Rose Country Dust Busters, both from the Rose Center, and the Golden Girls from the Vel Phillips YWCA.

Dunlap said she was 18 when she went totally blind for a period, while living in Georgia. “I jumped to hit a volleyball, and I lost my eyesight. My eyesight finally came back, but it never came back completely. Then I came to Milwaukee in 1953 and lived with a family in Whitefish Bay and worked as a nanny.” She suffers from retinitis pigmentosa. She takes a taxi to work, sometimes a bus. “I don’t see the details."

“I love older people...since I was kid,” Dunlap said. “I love to see them happy and moving.” “I tell them (the elderly) you ain’t going anywhere until God gets ready for you. Just be happy until he’s ready for you.”

She organized a physical fitness club for the visually impaired at River Park Court in Shorewood, where she lives. “They were dwelling so much on their eyesight. Their exercise uplifted them so. I told them, ‘your helping hand is at the end of your arm.’” Dunlap said, “We don’t call ourselves visually impaired people—we are VIP.”

In the SDC Senior AIDES program, seniors ages 55 and older, gain work experience through community service assignments in a variety of careers, such as clerical, food service, child care, and janitorial services. There are 112 seniors enrolled for 104 Senior AIDES slots. SDC Senior AIDES has reached 13 placements in unsubsidized jobs this year—50 percent of its goal (from June 1999 through June 2000). The program is funded by the National Council of Senior Citizens.
FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM
Fostering HOPE and GROWTH through LOVE

"Fostering HOPE and GROWTH through LOVE" is the theme of the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). Created as a National Demonstration Project in 1965, the program was created to show that low-income people over the age of 60 have the ability to assist professional educators in meeting the needs of exceptional students. The program offers seniors 60 and older with limited incomes (125% of poverty level or below), opportunities to serve as mentors and tutors for youth with special needs determined by professionals. Additional qualifications for the program participants include: good physical and mental health and the willingness to serve 20 hours a week working with children with special and/or exceptional needs.

While the focus of the Foster Grandparent Program is to provide mentoring and tutoring benefits to children, the Foster Grandparents also receive some benefits. There is a $2.55 per hour non-taxable stipend to allow the Grandparents to volunteer without incurring costs themselves. They also receive a pre-service orientation, monthly training, travel reimbursement, financial assistance for an annual physical, a meal while volunteering, recognition, and social opportunities.

Southwest CAP has been organizing the program for 22 years, since 1978. In 1999 the thirty-six Foster Grandparents of SWCAP volunteered 28,772 hours serving over 200 special and exceptional needs children at 20 different sites in a four county area: Richland, Grant, Iowa, and Lafayette. The average years of service was 10. The age range was from 63 to 90 with an average age around 70. One "Grandma" has volunteered since January 1979. Five more have volunteered 15 years or more. The "real story" these numbers tell is age and geographic location are no deterrent to providing volunteer services to youth.

For the Southwestern CAP program the following sites are served: one high school, one middle school, one daycare center, one preschool, thirteen elementary schools, and two family assistance sites in the towns of Argyle, Arena, Boscobel, Benton, Cassville, Dickeyville, Dodgeville, Lancaster, Muscoda, Platteville, Richland Center, and Shullsburg. The breakdown by county includes: Lafayette county with 3 Grandparents serving 3 sites; Iowa County with 5 volunteers serving at 2 sites; Richland County with 9 volunteers at 4 sites; and Grant County with 19 volunteers at 10 sites.

Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program, located centrally in the four county area in Dodgeville, Wisconsin also sponsors: Headstart; Women, Infant and Children (WIC); Weatherization; Women's Cancer Control Program; Reproductive Health; and Community, Housing, and Emergency programs.
Becky is a single, working mother who received AFDC before its elimination by 1997 federal TANF legislation. Her income is adequate as long as she continues to receive childcare assistance and Medicaid. Her days are filled with travel: 3-year-old Sam to day care; 6-year-old Danielle to school; and herself to work. During lunch, she runs mother’s errands: prescriptions; school supplies; cleaning. After work, she picks up the kids, and goes home to a mother’s chores. On weekends, she shops for groceries, looks for bargains at Goodwill, goes to the laundromat, and has an outing with her sister’s family or brings the kids to the park. A couple of times a year she takes Sam and Danielle to visit her folks in Iowa.

Two years after implementation of welfare reform, some patterns have emerged. First, the demand for childcare is much lower than anticipated. At the same time, lack of adequate transportation has emerged as one of the most intractable barriers to the integration of former AFDC recipients into the work force.

At West CAP, work on this issue suggests that the complexity of the challenge is not fully appreciated. During 60-years of AFDC, American life developed around the car. Neighborhoods where work, groceries, school, church, medical care, and relatives are within walking distance have disappeared. Becky’s transportation challenge in post-welfare America is unprecedented. Becky, and all of us who want her to go to work and provide for her family, have never before had to face this challenge. Transportation under welfare reform must at least meet the needs of Becky’s small family.

In order to meet this challenge, West CAP initiated the JumpStart program in 1996. The transportation needs identified included: safety; reliability; flexibility; manageability; affordability; consistent and predictable monthly expenses; sustainability; rural and urban applicability; and reasonable public cost. The only option that could be found to meet all of these minimum requirements was the facilitated purchase of a late model, fully warranted, economy car.

JumpStart was started with the assistance of the Department of Workforce Development Employment Transportation Grant. The program assists participants by providing a down payment for a vehicle and training on how to maintain the vehicle, safe driving tips, financing the vehicle, and budgeting. West CAP provides up to $3000 to assist with a down payment depending on the family’s ability to make monthly payments. After two years, participants are required to begin payments to pay back half of the original down payment provided by West CAP. If participants successfully complete the program and pay off the loan, half of the down payment is forgiven.

The JumpStart program has already demonstrated its effectiveness. Early reviews suggest that getting a good car enables a family to not only connect with their basic needs, but to connect with other resources and events offered in the community. Owning a car also serves as a powerful incentive for people to change some behaviors that were obstacles to self-sufficiency. The program has helped participants to repair bad credit, restore a valid driver’s license, respond better to case workers, keep and upgrade employment, and budget basic needs. Asset development has also been shown to help low-income families look ahead and plan for the future.
The Operation Fresh Start concept began 30 years ago in Madison, Wisconsin and within the past year was expanded into West-Central Wisconsin. In 1999 the Western Dairyland Fresh Start Program was one of two replication programs awarded by the state, which serves young adults in Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau and Eau Claire counties.

The Fresh Start Program works with young men and women ages 16 to 24. The program is designed to resolve deficiencies in education, enhance self-esteem and foster a desire to lead a successful life.

One tool that is used to accomplish these goals is the construction of a new house, which will be sold to a low-income family. The Fresh Start Program is also bolstered by classroom hours each day. "Math, reading, writing, social studies, science, and civics make up the backbone of the curriculum," said Natalyn Marlaire. "Participants also take charge of their lives through AODA counseling, anger management seminars, marriage counseling, CPR/First Aid certification, health and nutritional training, independent living, career and vocational training."

The participants came on board in February of 1999, eager and ready to change their lives personally, as well as professionally. Since that time, the participants have enjoyed much success on an individual level throughout the year. Some highlights of their success include:

- Participants have passed a total of 15 HSED tests.
- 1 participant received his High School Equivalency Diploma.
- 2 participants passed their drivers license skills test and road test.
- 1 participant is attending technical school at CVTC.
- All participants are Americorps members.
- 2 participants have completed their 900 hours of Americorps service and will receive a total of $2,362.50 in continuing education money.
- 13 individual goals have been successfully accomplished.
- 8 participants have been CPR/First Aid certified.

Under the supervision of Sverre Berg, the Fresh Start Site Supervisor, and many months of sweat, perseverance and teamwork, the young participants completed a beautiful 3-bedroom home located at 2510 Blakeley Avenue in the town of Washington.

The participants' individual and team-oriented success over the past year received much recognition both locally and at the state level. This past February, we were honored to have Governor Tommy G. Thompson preside over the festivities at our Fresh Start Open House. In praising Western Dairyland's program and its participants, Thompson said, "Fresh Start is a vital, cost-effective program for rebuilding young lives while providing an affordable new home for a deserving family."

Dan Allen, a Fresh Start participant, who delivered a very powerful speech at the Open House, seemed to sum up the program best. "If it (Fresh Start) can do for others what it has done for me, it is and will continue to be an excellent foundation in assisting our state's youth. As you all know, like every home or building, everyone needs a strong foundation in order to grow and prosper." This is what Fresh Start and Community Action are all about.
LA CROSSE SKATE PARK
Community Youth Initiative

Following a couple years of dreaming, planning, fundraising and hard work, the La Crosse Skate Park became a reality in 1999. The concept for the park originated more than two years ago when the Community Youth Initiative, a Coulee CAP sponsored and supported youth coalition, held facilitated listening sessions at two La Crosse area high schools and one middle school. The students, when asked what they would like to see built or changed within the community, overwhelmingly responded with, “a safe place to skateboard or rollerblade.” Since that time, a group of committed community members including young people has been striving to make that request a reality. Working collaboratively with the City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department and a local architect, a location and design for the park was selected and approved. Throughout the process, local young people have played an integral role by providing feedback on the design, speaking at the La Crosse Common Council committee meetings, and holding fundraisers for the park. The result has been the design of one of the best skate parks in the state.

Generous support to develop the park came from numerous organizations and individuals in the community. A major contributor was the La Crosse Community Foundation with a pledge of $50,000 as well as a challenge to the Youth Initiative to raise another $50,000. Once this was successfully raised, the Community Foundation matched it with another $50,000. Support from the City Mayor and Chief of Police resulted in a City donation of $30,000 beyond the donation of park space for the Skateboard Park. With this support, the target of needed funds totaling $250,000 was realized.

The Skate Park has been in full use for the past eight months. On August 13, 1999, the Community Youth Initiative held the grand opening. Since then, hundreds of youth have come to the park to skateboard, in-line skate, and ride their trick bikes. The park is located in Lueth Park, a City owned property, and includes a half-pipe, quarter pipe, pyramid pool, stage and wall ride. Youth who helped plan the park and worked to make it a reality also use the park and encourage people in the community to come and watch talented young people perform.

The Youth Initiative is a movement based on research by the Search Institute in Minneapolis to build assets in young people. The Community Youth Initiative consists of two primary governing bodies, an Advocacy Committee and Youth Commission. The Advocacy Committee is composed of adult community members representing medical centers, schools, businesses, government, higher education, finance, media, youth organizations, human services, law enforcement, legal professionals, and the religious community. Advocacy Committee members are proponents for youth and families and assist with providing oversight and guidance for the project. The Youth Commission consists of student representatives from nine high schools in La Crosse County and La Crescent, Minnesota. Four youth are selected from each school and serve as a leadership team in identifying and articulating the needs and concerns of youth. In addition to the building of the skate park, the Community Youth Initiative has held a variety of community events including: band concerts; dances; theme days; and the battle of the bands.

Serving La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon & Crawford Counties
"There’s no place like home. There’s no place like home." That’s what more than 3,000 older people chanted at a rally held May 19, 1999, at the state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin. The rally, sponsored by the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, was in support of passage of Wisconsin’s Family Care legislation which would, according to CWAG Executive Director Tom Frazier, "greatly improve Wisconsin's long-term care delivery system and offer consumers more choices and better access to care." Family Care went on to pass the Joint Finance Committee with a 16-0 vote and was finally signed into law by Governor Thompson. Pilots of different components of the plan are slated to begin in 2000. But while the primary goal of the rally was to precipitate action on the Family Care legislation, it has come to be recognized by legislators, media, and citizens as a demonstration of the power of grassroots advocacy.
The Foundation for Rural Housing, for the past 30 years has been serving statewide needs in housing. Our goals are to support local efforts and the self sufficiency of each household. We fill the gaps and demonstrate innovative ideas. One of these efforts recently is the Volunteer Senior Home Repair Program.

Over the years, we found that many of the calls to our office were from seniors for small repairs. While the funds decreased from governmental sources and the paperwork seemed to increase, we sought a private source of funding to specifically address these needed repairs and safety concerns of seniors. Often a simple repairs such as a handrail, faucet handle, lighting or maybe a ramp, could enable a senior to stay in their home.

Rural Housing started the program in four counties and has now expanded to 24. We work with numerous local agencies, especially the Offices on Aging. Each county has a coordinating group, which includes the local Community Action Agency. This group oversees the volunteer coordinator. The seniors’ original request may come in to a variety of agencies including the rural electrical cooperatives. The coordinator then matches a volunteer with the senior to get the job done. In most of the cases the senior wants to pay for the materials which are generally under $100.

For example, in Barron County numerous reusable sectional ramps have been built. Some of those sections were built by a high school shop class and then installed by the Kiwanis. The local lumberyard, Interfaith Caregivers, AARP and CWAG members, West CAP, and the COP program has also been involved. The seniors pay $5 a month rent, which then goes to buy materials for the next ramp.
STARTFRESH

Low-income families, and children in particular, benefit when both parents are working at living-wage jobs and participating in their children’s emotional development. The StartFresh program focuses on residents of Southeast Milwaukee County, though UMOS can serve individuals from anywhere in the county. UMOS has developed a multi-lingual, culturally sensitive model that builds on each participant’s norms regarding parenting and child-rearing.

FreshStart Job Coaches offer intensive services to non-custodial fathers during a one-year period. Program goals include preparing participants for good-paying work and strengthening their family ties. Small caseloads of approximately 15 participants to one Job Coach ensure quality service delivery.

A consortium of four South Side agencies including Journey House, La Causa, SER-Jobs for Progress, and the United Community Center, have joined with UMOS to provide Job Coaching services. UMOS also partners with Esperanza Unida, Lao Family Community Center, and MATC to offer education and training opportunities to StartFresh participants.

StartFresh has a “work first” emphasis. Unemployed or underemployed participants find work quickly and then pursue educational or occupational skills classes in their free time. As participants’ competencies grow, Job Coaches find them permanent employment for a sustainable wage and good benefits package. StartFresh participants receive assistance with:

- Job readiness, such as resume preparation and interviewing skills
- Parenting/life skills abilities
- Personal budgeting
- Life planning and motivation
- Removal of physical, mental health and substance abuse barriers
- Basic education in such areas as GED, English as a Second Language, and literacy
- Specialized training for in-demand jobs
- Mentoring, advocacy and support from job coaches
- Establishment of regular child support payments

StartFresh is primary for men who do not have custody of their children. To qualify, the child’s custodial parent, usually the mother, must be receiving W-2 cash benefits or financial assistance with childcare. The majority of non-custodial fathers in the program have families with 30 months or more of welfare dependence. Participants often possess multiple barriers to employment including: substance abuse issues; poor work history; learning disabilities; criminal history; limited English proficiency; and insufficient math and reading skills.

UMOS also provides several other programs designed to assist men in reconnecting with their children and finding gainful employment including the State Department of Corrections Project NOW which assists criminal offenders; and the Children First Program which assists non-custodial parents who come in contact with Family Court Commissioners.
1999 Annual Meeting Awards

GAYLORD NELSON HUMAN SERVICES AWARD

The distinguished WISCAP Gaylord Nelson Human Services Award is named after Gaylord Nelson who served 10 years in the Wisconsin state senate, two terms as Governor of Wisconsin, and represented the state of Wisconsin in the United States Senate for 18 years from 1962 to 1980.

During his tenure in the United States Senate, Gaylord Nelson was an outspoken advocate for the poor. He was one of the original sponsors of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 creating the War on Poverty and Community Action Agencies. He championed many Community Action Programs including the national home weatherization program modeled after existing programs at CAAs in Wisconsin.

WISCAP presents this award in honor of this great man to a state or federal elected official for their work on behalf of low-income people.

WILLIAM A. STEIGER AWARD

This award is named in honor of US Congressman William Steiger, a native of Oshkosh, who represented Wisconsin’s Sixth District in Congress for 12 years. William Steiger was first elected to Congress in 1966, and served until 1978, when he died suddenly at the age of 40.

William Steiger was a strong supporter of ADVOCAP and Wisconsin’s Community Action Agencies. He served as a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, as well as its subcommittee on Equal Opportunities which oversaw the nation’s War on Poverty. Congressman Steiger was the principle author of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and led the congressional effort to create the Community Services Administration after the President of his own political party sought to abolish the Office of Economic Opportunity.

WISCAP presents this award in honor of his leadership, and efforts in support of Community Action to a state or federal legislator for their work on behalf on low-income people.
**SPECIAL AWARDS**

WISCAP gives several special awards based on nominations from member agencies that honor dedicated community advocates, CAA volunteers, legislators, successful small business entrepreneurs, community and state partners, and CAA Board members from across the state. The work of Community Action depends on the hard work and dedication of a variety of individuals. WISCAP honors these individuals and organizations to thank them for their efforts and publicly recognize the success and diversity of Community Action.

**OUTSTANDING MEDIA AWARD**

Community Action Agencies not only assist low-income people, but help to develop and improve communities. As locally governed and operated agencies, CAAs depend on community involvement and support for their success. Local media can have a significant impact on community investment and the effectiveness of their efforts.

This award honors print or broadcast media services that contribute to the mission of Community Action and provide a positive portrayal of low-income people and solutions to poverty.

**OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE AWARD**

Community Action Agencies have the privilege of working with many hard working and dedicated staff that make the mission of Community Action a reality. Many spend countless hours on their own time working to ensure that low-income people are provided the opportunities, skills and support that they need to succeed.

WISCAP honors the dedication of Community Action staff with the Outstanding Employee Award.

**PRESIDENT’S AWARD**

Each year the President of WISCAP recognizes an organization or individual for their work and efforts in support of the mission of Community Action and the Association. At times this has been a CAA that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership, a legislator or special advocate, or a community organization that has been exemplary in its actions in advocating for low-income people.
Training and Technical Assistance —

QUARTERLY MEETINGS

WISCAP meets on a quarterly basis to review the work of the Association and build on the success of Community Action. Quarterly meetings provide an opportunity for networking and training. In addition to the business of the Association, several roundtables meet to allow staff and board members to share ideas and develop skills. Roundtable topics include: energy assistance; family development; food security; housing; Individual Development Accounts; job and business development; planning; and public relations. WISCAP has used roundtables to provide training and strengthen partnerships between Community Action Agencies and the state. Training provided through roundtables has included: mental health issues; conflict resolution; design and layout of brochures and newsletters; community fundraising; grant writing; working with refugees; child support payment/receipt; business development; and Individual Development Accounts.

RESULTS ORIENTED MANAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) was developed by the federal Office of Community Service in response to the Government Standards and Performance Act requiring all agencies receiving federal dollars to report on outcomes. Working in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, WISCAP began implementing ROMA with assistance from the Rensselaerville Institute.

The Rensselaerville Institute provided an introductory training to Association members in October 1999 and then met with each agency individually to provide feedback and address questions. A factsheet was also prepared by WISCAP to help agencies educate staff and board members about ROMA. In January, agencies began a demonstration project with the Rensselaerville Institute that allows them to pilot two or three projects using a results oriented framework.

ROMA provides a framework for helping agencies to transition from current reporting methods to outcome measurement, while allowing for flexibility in implementation. It represents a shift from headcount reporting to measuring the actual impact of programs on individuals and families. ROMA is a different way of thinking about the work of Community Action and focuses the efforts of agencies on making concrete improvements in people’s lives.

Cary Wright, Michael Bonartz, Tina Potter, and Steve Pierce at ROMA training. (October 1999)
DIALOGUE ON POVERTY 2000

Dialogue on Poverty 2000 is a nationwide effort led by Community Action Agencies to bring local communities together to identify important issues and the actions necessary to help eliminate poverty. In 1996, the National Association of Community Action Agencies (NACAA) initiated the first National Dialogue on Poverty. Over 3,000 local dialogues were held in nearly 500 communities across the country. The 1996 Dialogue resulted in a clear mandate for action at the local, state and national levels: America needs more full-time jobs which provide adequate wages, health insurance and other benefits. The Dialogue helped local Community Action Agencies build public support for poverty programs, bring attention to the causes of poverty and needs of the poor, and raise policy and funding concerns with elected officials.

Dialogue 2000 builds upon the results of the 1996 Dialogue and seeks to develop a clear action agenda that can guide policy and programmatic change. The purpose of the Dialogue is to make the elimination of poverty a national priority by defining the debate for the 2000 elections and increasing public commitment. WISCAP prepared a factsheet providing an overview of the dialogue and highlighting the value of participating in a national movement to draw attention to the work of Community Action and the issue of poverty. In November, 1999, WISCAP brought in Denise DeVaan from DeVaan & Associates in Minneapolis to train agency staff on all aspects of the dialogue including: holding a community event; getting involvement from all sectors of the community; marketing the event; facilitating the dialogue; and adjusting the dialogue to fit the needs of individual communities. Ten agencies participated in the training, and assisted in the development of a state action plan.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are dedicated savings accounts that help low-income individuals and families build assets. Through the work of Association members and WISCAP’s Public Policy Director, WISCAP was able to obtain a federal grant funding the development of a statewide IDA program.

WISCAP held a training session for all agencies participating in the IDA program, and highlighted the success of agencies that had piloted IDAs with the American Dream Demonstration Project funded by the Corporation for Enterprise Development. WISCAP also provided training on the Management Information Software developed for tracking the progress of IDA participants.

WISCAP received grant funding from the federal Office of Community Service and the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to develop IDAs. WISCAP has worked with participating agencies to provide guidance on the federal provisions and eligibility of each program. Long Vue, was hired in October, 1999 to provide ongoing technical assistance to agencies and manage the statewide Job and Business Development program and IDAs. Long has provided training to agencies on working with refugees and assists agencies in meeting federal guidelines and reporting requirements.

The IDA program will help more than 750 low-income families across Wisconsin to buy a home, start a business, or further their education over the next two years.
Public Relations

WISCAP Reports

WISCAP Reports began publication in September 1999 after a five-year interval. The six-page newsletter highlights the successes of Community Action Agencies, provides information on programs and available grant opportunities, updates member agencies on WISCAP activities and staff, and lists upcoming events. The newsletter will be published six times a year and will help keep member agencies, state legislators, WISCAP’s state partners, and friends of the Association informed on the work of Community Action.

WISCAP ONLINE

www.wiscap.org

WISCAP is now online with a new website that features an overview of the Association, program listings from member agencies, upcoming events, available training, the WISCAP Reports, and links to state and national organizations and resources. The site features information on Individual Development Accounts, Job and Business Development, housing, energy, Public Benefits, ROMA, food security, the Rural Community Assistance Program, public policy, and technical resources.

PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDE

In November, 1999 WISCAP released its first Public Relations Guide designed to assist agencies in developing a public relations strategy and media related skills. The guide provides an overview of developing a strategy, building local coalitions, hosting community events, working with the media, preparing press releases and press advisories, working with state and local officials, marketing, and bringing attention to work of Community Action.
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WISCAP Member Agencies

ADVOCAP, Inc.
CAP Services, Inc.
Central Wisconsin CAC
Community Action, Inc.
Community Action Coalition
Indianhead CAA
Lakeshore CAP
NEWCAP
North Central CAP
Northwest CSA

Racine/Kenosha CAA
Social Development Commission (SDC)
Southwest CAP
West Central CAA
Western Dairyland EOC
Wisconsin Coulee Region CAP
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
Foundation for Rural Housing
United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS)