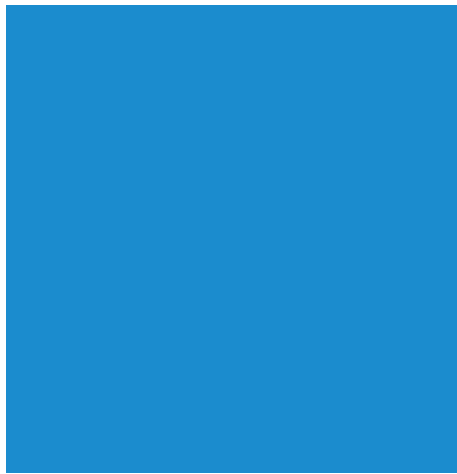




Helping People. Changing Lives.

Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies



A special advertising supplement

▶ A Chance For A Better Life

Community Action Agencies fight poverty in Ohio

One out of every six Ohioans lives in poverty — that's 1.8 million people. They live in cities, suburbs and rural towns. They are children. They are parents. They are elderly. Some have college educations. Some have served in the military. Many have never needed assistance before now and need help.

Many individuals are just one catastrophic event away from not being able to pay their bills, whether it's from losing a job, getting injured or an illness.

Community Action Agencies (CAA) help low-income people in your community who are struggling to make ends meet become self-sufficient. With a broad range of programs that address issues such as hunger, education, employment and housing, CAAs give people the tools to improve their lives. The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies represents the state's network of 50 CAAs that serve individuals in all 88 counties.

Community Action Agencies were created as part of the historic Economic Opportunity Act, which was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. The act ensured that individuals weren't given a "hand out" but the resources and assistance to

help them help themselves to a better life. The act also made sure that low-income individuals would participate in the program by serving on Community Action Agency boards, giving them a voice.

In the following pages, you will read just a sampling of stories about individuals from across the state who have received life-changing assistance through Community Action Agencies.

People need the assistance offered by CAAs now more than ever. Poverty has increased in Ohio by nearly 58 percent from 1999 to 2011. The rate of poverty in Ohio exceeds the national average of 15.9 percent. And with federal funding continually threatened, Community Action Agencies in Ohio need support to continue serving those affected by poverty.

Without these services, many residents would not be given the chance to achieve economic independence for themselves and their families. By increasing economic independence within each community, each community benefits by having members that are more productive, responsible and economically viable.

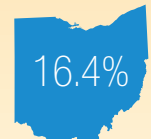
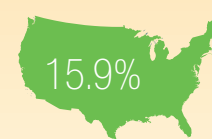


By The Numbers



▶ Nearly **1** in every **4** Ohio children lives in **poverty**.

▶ **1** in **6** Ohioans lives below the federal poverty level.



▶ Ohio's statewide poverty rate (**16.4%**) **exceeds** the overall national poverty rate of **15.9%**

▶ Poverty in Ohio increased by **57.7%** between 1999 and 2011, but the population increased by only **1.7%**

57.7%

1.7%



Earning Their Payday

Workforce development programs put the jobless back to work

► On the right career path

Sandra had come from a broken home. She dropped out of school in the ninth grade, had an addictive lifestyle, had served time in prison, and was living on the streets. But thanks to Community Action, she completed her education and has a home and a great job. While applying for an assistance program, Sandra heard a speaker talk about IMPACT Community Action Agency's program Support of Self-Sufficiency (S.O.S.). This case management program helps participants create and meet goals to achieve self-sufficiency. Through meetings with her case manager, Sandra set a goal of becoming a heavy equipment operator. To do so, she needed to meet certain educational requirements and acquire various certifications. To help with her goal, she enrolled in IMPACT's Re-Entry program, which helps ex-offenders reintegrate into society, and a Workforce Development program. With financial assistance through the programs at IMPACT, Sandra was able to get her GED and she attended the necessary classes to receive her heavy equipment operator's license. Sandra was able to secure a job with an apartment complex that included her housing, so she was no longer homeless, but that wasn't enough for her. She continued to pursue her dreams, progressing through her career, and now has a job with Wright Patterson Air Force Base making \$35 an hour!

► New skills help land a new job

James had steady employment as a food processor, but when the recession hit, he lost his job. His resources were quickly diminishing and James knew he needed to improve his skills to find a new job. James contacted the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency and learned that their Workforce Development program

offered a unique Cincinnati Manufacturing Certificates (CMC) course. This is a free training course offered to qualified individuals seeking to sharpen their skills and obtain national credentials from the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council. The course equips participants with Production Technician Certificates and improves skills and knowledge in nine different sought-after manufacturing sub-industries. After completing the course, James was offered a supervisor position at the annealing facility for a large metal manufacturer and now has a stable career with good pay and benefits thanks to Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency's CMC program.

► Veteran gets back to work

David, a Navy veteran of the first Gulf War, found himself homeless after losing his job and going through a divorce. The father of two was staying at a homeless shelter in Fremont, Ohio when he turned to WSOS (Wood, Sandusky, Ottawa and Seneca counties) Community Action for help. WSOS is one of six pilot Community Action Agencies in Ohio participating in the Ohio Vocation, Education, Training & Services (VETS) program that offers education and training to assist veterans in finding meaningful employment at a living wage, and providing them and their families with other supportive services to help them attain self-sufficiency. David had a background in manufacturing and through the Ohio VETS program, WSOS was able to help him find a good job at an auto parts manufacturing plant. WSOS also set David up with short-term housing. Through that program, David received assistance with the rent for a short time until he was financially ready to take over the payments.

CAAs drive economic activity

According to a study commissioned by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies and conducted by Ohio University, CAAs spend nearly 40 percent of their funding on community economic development projects, which in 2010 equated to \$208 million. Of that, \$196 million was designed to improve Ohio's employment outlook.

One example from the report is **Adams Brown Counties Economic Opportunities' Recycling Center**. In 2011, the center collected and processed nearly 2,500 tons of material and provided stable employment to 22 individuals. The program also offers a buyback program, purchasing non-ferrous metals from residents that resulted in more than \$1.4 million in the hands of local residents and kept 997 tons of waste out of the landfill. The program generated a profit of more than \$350,000 to be reinvested in the operation.

Guernsey, Noble and Monroe Tri-County Community Action Commission began a **broadband service program** that has grown into a self-sustaining enterprise with seven towers and more than 700 customers that provides free service to essential services such as police and fire, and has allowed a local technical college to offer distance learning to this rural community.

Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action Partnership's GoBus program provides daily, round-trip service between Athens, Columbus, Marietta and Cincinnati for only \$10, which increases access to health care, education and job opportunities for area residents. GoBus averages 2,000 riders per month.



The skills to attain self-sufficiency

Community Action Agencies throughout Ohio offer a variety of training and education programs to help low-income people gain the skills they need to become self-sufficient. Helping low-income people manage their finances is one way to do this.

The Community Action Organization of Delaware, Madison & Union County's Right on the Money training is a financial literacy program that introduces children to key financial concepts and provides parents with tools and information to reinforce their own financial knowledge.

Many CAAs offer Family Development programs, which provide intensive case management that establishes a framework to work holistically with those seeking services. **The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland offers Certified Family Development Specialists**, who meet with all clients applying for services to determine eligibility, assess their needs and ensure they're willing to work with them to establish goals for self-sufficiency.

Gallia-Meigs Community Action Agency offers a Help Me Grow program where expectant parents or parents with young children are provided with a parenting curriculum delivered by home visitors, and children are screened to make sure they are meeting developmental milestones. They also provide family support and connections through agency-sponsored family activities and a blog. In addition, their Pathways to Care Coordination provides all Medicaid-eligible mothers with assistance in navigating the health care and social services systems to ensure healthy babies with a desirable birth weight.

Empowered To Achieve

Education programs are the path to lifelong success

► 3-year-old gets a 'Head Start' on learning

When Tristan's parents brought him to Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission for Head Start preschool classes, he was 3 years old and the staff was unable to understand one word that he tried to speak. He was administered the National Reporting System (NRS) assessment test, which is a standardized assessment for Head Start students instituted by the federal government to demonstrate a child's understanding of certain words, to identify letters, recognize geometric shapes and solve simple addition and subtraction problems. Tristan failed the picture naming test because the staff could not understand him. Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland had him tested and he qualified for speech therapy. Together, the speech therapist and Head Start staff prepared Tristan for kindergarten. He attended Head Start for three years where he excelled, learning every letter and their sounds and counting to 100. He was ready to move on to kindergarten. After the first parent-teacher conference, Tristan's mom came back to tell the Head Start staff what his teacher had said. The teacher had told her that in all her years of teaching, she had never had a student so well prepared to start kindergarten. She also said that he was at the top of his class in all subjects and was reading at a very high level.

► Computer skills help 60-year-old go back to school

Linda, a 60-year-old disabled resident of Lorain County, was unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. She turned to the Lorain County Community

Action Agency for help with her utilities through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), and while there, learned about their Community Learning and Technology Center's (CLTC) computer classes. Linda decided to take the computer classes and improve her knowledge enough to go back to school and earn her degree online. Linda attended every class that was offered. She also enrolled in the Connect Your Community program offered by Lorain County Community College. This allowed her to take six additional computer and internet training classes and she received a free computer.

► Building a foundation

When Tyreek entered Akron Summit Community Action's YouthBuild program, he did not have a high school diploma or GED and had limited work experience. The YouthBuild program engages young adults ages 18 to 24 in a 40-hour-per-week job skill development program, where participants advance their education, earn construction certification, and build other soft skills to prepare for the job market. Once enrolled in the program, Tyreek began preparing for his GED exam, which he passed. Immediately after getting his GED, Tyreek began completing applications for financial aid and researching colleges. He also obtained employment at Giant Eagle grocery store. He worked for several months to pay off his bills and then enrolled in classes at the University of Akron. Tyreek returns to visit the YouthBuild program staff and current trainees, providing updates on his progress and seeking continued guidance from the staff.



► Program helps mother back on her feet

Skyla is a 23-year-old mother of five who lives in Chillicothe, Ohio. Through a Ross County Community Action program called Determined To Succeed, she has become a shining example of how someone can thrive despite being confronted with numerous barriers. Determined To Succeed is a newly developed program at Ross County Community Action that was started to help individuals with the will and determination to become successful, but who may lack the resources needed to make it so. Through the Determined To Succeed program, Skyla has received her GED, moved into her own apartment and has completed the steps necessary to obtain her driver's license. She is now providing for herself and her family and plans to continue on to achieve bigger and better things in the future.

► Financial skills reunite family

When Josh was referred to the Community Action Commission of Erie, Huron & Richland (CAC EHR) counties' Fathers Matter program by the child support offices, he was homeless and living in his van. The program worked with him and taught him budgeting skills so that he could save for a home and be able to visit with his daughter. CAC EHR also helped him find affordable child care and dental care. They acted as an advocate for him with the Ohio Department of Job &

Family Services, helped him get his van repaired and also helped him with his taxes. He now has found a place to live and is able to have his daughter living with him full-time.

► Single mother gets a second chance

Charity was a stay-at-home mom with three young children who was feeling frustrated about some of her past decisions and not being able to provide for her family the way she needed to. She knew that she wanted more out of life for her and her children and wanted to be a good example for them. Her two youngest children were enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start at Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs (LACCA). Through the Head Start program, Charity was able to work with a Support Services Manager that LACCA provides. She set many goals with her Support Services Manager, such as finding employment, increasing her self-confidence, becoming a positive and empowering role model to those around her, and becoming actively involved in her community. Charity also became involved in LACCA's support/mentor group, Building Links. Charity has recently gained employment and is working steadily, determined to be as self-sufficient as she can for her and her family. She has become active in her Neighborhood Watch Association and will graduate from the Building Links group and go on to become a mentor to the next group of participants.





Health care for those who need it

Many low-income people don't have access to quality health care and nutritious foods due to a lack of funds, insurance or transportation. Because of this, Community Action Agencies offer a variety of health and nutrition programs. In 2011, more than 900,000 low-income Ohioans received health and nutrition services from a CAA.

After losing the only hospital in the county, **Ironton-Lawrence County Community Action Organization** partnered with St. Mary's of Huntington, West Virginia to open the **St. Mary's Medical Center** in Ironton. The 46,000-square-foot facility offers 24-hour emergency care, a diagnostic center, laboratory, 12-bed trauma center and primary care services.

Clermont County Community Services has run a **pediatric dental clinic** for more than 30 years that offers low-cost, high-quality dental care to treat children before problems arise and ensure healthy teeth and gums.

Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission coordinates the services and resources of more than 10 agencies and businesses to provide a much-needed **backpack lunch program** for school children, providing over 100 kids with enough food to hold them until their next school-provided meal.

A Lifeline For The Ailing

Health and nutrition programs help the sick and hungry

► Woman manages diabetes thanks to CAA

Kathy is a diabetic who takes two types of insulin to manage her condition and tests her blood sugar three times a day. But after being injured in 2010, she had to switch from full-time to part-time work and was struggling to pay for her expensive medications after the decrease in income. At 60 years old, Kathy doesn't qualify for Medicare yet and was unable to successfully manage her diabetes. Kathy turned to Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers — the Community Action Agency in Lake County — for assistance. Lifeline was able to provide Kathy with an emergency one-month supply of her medications and supplies, such as syringes and blood glucose test strips, as well as devise a long-term plan for her through a patient assistance program that works with pharmaceutical companies.

► Program improves family's health

Gary and his wife had been clients of Highland County Community Action Organization's (CAO) food pantry program for a long time, with Gary coming in every month to apply for help with food. The agency changed

its intake process for the food assistance program to include a full assessment. Using the new guidelines, the staff determined that Gary and his family could receive both energy and prescription assistance, but at the time, he did not have the necessary paperwork to apply for the programs. When he came in to apply for the Winter Crisis Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and brought his paperwork, Highland County CAO was able to keep his electricity and propane heat from being disconnected to his home. With both he and his wife being diabetic, they were also able to receive prescription assistance for 22 necessary medications. This created a monthly savings for the household of over \$350, which Gary is now using to purchase healthier foods.

► Getting to doctor no longer an obstacle

Roy is a diabetic living in rural Mahoning County who had a stroke that left him blind. His doctor recently ordered him to start receiving dialysis treatments three times per week at a facility in Trumbull County, roughly 25 miles away from his home. Although he has seven siblings, Roy could not find transportation to his necessary appointments because their schedules did not work with the times of his treatments. Mahoning

Youngstown Community Action Partnership (MYCAP) Rural Services provided the needed transportation to his first treatment and coordinated with his social worker to move his treatments to a facility almost half the distance from his home and adjusted his treatment schedule to a more convenient time. Rural Support Services continues to transport him to his doctor's visits and also assists him and his 85-year-old mother with transportation to other services.

► Community action helps child to walk

A single mother with two children in Head Start at the Community Action Agency of Columbiana County was having trouble getting assistance for her oldest child with special needs who was struggling to walk. She explained to her family advocate provided by Head Start that doctors were telling her the child was double jointed and nothing could be done. Her family advocate worked with her to find a second opinion and made arrangements to get the family to the appointment. They determined that the child needs surgery and until then she will need ankle braces. Their family advocate continues to work with them as they go through this process.



A Roof Over Their Heads

Housing programs provide the most basic need

► Disabled man gets a safer home

Mr. Dean, a disabled veteran who uses a wheelchair, had not left his home in two years because he did not have a wheelchair ramp. He was encouraged to contact Supports to Encourage Low-income Families (SELF), the Butler County Community Action Agency, by his grown children who did not have the financial or physical ability to build a wheelchair ramp and make their father's home safer. Thanks to the support of SELF's Group Workcamps and Home Repair Project, Mr. Dean received a new wheelchair ramp and other mobility improvements including railings, handles and wider doorway openings. All work was done free of charge, thanks to donations of supplies and volunteer labor from supporters. Now Mr. Dean can safely enter and leave his home without worry. It has completely changed his life.

► Mortgage assistance for the underemployed

Frank and Jennifer were working hard to provide for their two children. Frank had a good teaching position, but his job was eliminated and the only work he could find was as a part-time pizza delivery man. Jennifer was also working irregular hours, demonstrating products in stores. But with the decrease in income, they were falling behind on their mortgage payments. The couple turned to the Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area for assistance. They learned that they might benefit from changes to the Restoring Stability program, which allows families to receive assistance if they are considered underemployed. The couple's housing counselor worked diligently with them to complete their application in time for the new program and the family

received a rescue payment to bring their mortgage current. They will receive full mortgage payments for up to 12 months or until their job status changes for the better. Under the old rules, they would not have received assistance because Frank had found employment, even though it was part-time and substantially less money.

► Program gives mother, daughter a place to call home

Unable to work due to health issues, Debbie and her 12-year-old daughter had been living with her father. But when her father kicked them out after an argument, Debbie was unsure where she and her daughter would live. Being on Social Security, she had a limited income and the wait for HUD assistance could be as much as two years. She did have a trailer, but it was in such disrepair it was uninhabitable. Debbie applied for the Weatherization program at the Pickaway County Community Action Organization (PICCA) in order to get assistance with fixing up the trailer. She received emergency assistance and through PICCA, Debbie received a new furnace and insulation, the water pipes and faucets were repaired and a hot water heater was installed, gas shut-off valves were installed for the stove so that it could be safely used again and a new front door was installed. Now, Debbie and her daughter have a place to call home.

Giving people a place to feel safe

Community Action Agencies throughout Ohio offer low-income people assistance with housing. This ranges from building low-income housing, to providing rental or mortgage assistance, to operating homeless shelters. CAAs also provide home repair, weatherization and utility assistance to ensure that low-income families have safe and secure homes. In 2011, CAAs helped over 487,000 Ohioans maintain safe and secure homes.

The Community Action Commission of Fayette County's Self-Help Housing program provides new homes for low-income families, requiring families to complete at least 65 percent of the labor to construct their home. Additionally, participants are required to attend weekly homeowner education courses. Through the program, 240 families have purchased new homes with a USDA 502 mortgage.

In addition to managing several low-income housing units and housing for people with disabilities throughout their four-county area, **HHWP (Hancock, Hardin, Wyandot, Putnam) Community Action Commission has purchased several vacant single-family homes in need of rehabilitation** and organized contractors, area high school students and volunteers to do the repair work, and sold the properties to income-qualifying residents. They also constructed 10 new single-family homes that were sold to families, whose mortgage payments were required to be only 30 percent of their income, including utilities, taxes and insurance.

The Community Action Committee of Pike County operates a property operations, maintenance and inspections company that provides a variety of repairs, maintenance, inspections, lead abatement, and energy conservation services to keep homes safe.

► Get Involved!

Find the Community Action Agency in your area

Visit www.oacaa.org/nr

- Find your local CAA
- Volunteer
- Make a donation
- Show your support
- Read more stories of how CAAs have helped people

- 1 Adams/Brown Counties Economic Opportunities, Inc.
www.abceoi.org • (937) 378-6041
- 2 Akron Summit Community Action, Inc.
www.ascainc.org • (330) 376-7730
- 3 Cincinnati/Hamilton County Community Action Agency
www.cincy-caa.org • (513) 569-1840
- 4 Clermont County Community Service, Inc.
www.cccsi.org • (513) 732-2277
- 5 Clinton County Community Action Program
clintoncap.org • (937) 382-5667
- 6 Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area
www.cap-dayton.org • (937) 341-5000
- 7 Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, Inc.
www.caaofcc.org • (330) 424-7221
- 8 Community Action Commission of Belmont County
www.cacbelmont.org • (740) 695-0293
- 9 Community Action Commission of Erie, Huron and Richland Counties
www.cacehr.org • (419) 626-4320
- 10 Community Action Commission of Fayette County
www.cacfayettecounty.org • (740) 335-7282
- 11 Community Action Committee of Pike
www.pikecac.org • (740) 289-2371
- 12 Community Action of Wayne/Medina
www.cawm.org • (330) 264-8677
- 13 Community Action Council of Portage County, Inc.
www.cacportage.net • (330) 297-1456
- 14 Community Action Organization of Delaware/Madison/Union Counties, Inc.
www.caodmu.org • (937) 642-4986
- 15 Community Action Organization of Scioto County
www.caosciotocounty.org • (740) 354-7541
- 16 Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland
www.ceogc.org • (216) 696-9077
- 17 Economic Opportunity Planning Association of Greater Toledo
www.eopa.org • (419) 242-7304
- 18 Gallia-Meigs Community Action Agency, Inc.
www.gallinameigscaa.webs.com • (740) 367-7341
- 19 Guernsey, Monroe, Noble Tri-County Community Action Agency
www.gmntrico.org • (740) 732-2388
- 20 Hancock Hardin Wyandot Putnam (HHWP) Community Action Commission
www.hhwpcac.org • (419) 423-3755
- 21 HARCATUS Tri-County Community Action
www.harcatus.org • (740) 922-0933
- 22 Highland County Community Action Organization
www.hccao.org • (937) 393-3458
- 23 Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action
www.hapcap.org • (740) 767-4500



- 24 IMPACT Community Action Agency
www.impactca.org • (614) 252-2799
- 25 Ironton-Lawrence County Community Action Organization
www.ilcao.org • (740) 532-3534
- 26 Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc.
www.jvcaf.org • (740) 384-3722
- 27 Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission
www.knohoco.org • (740) 622-9801
- 28 Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.
www.lclifeline.org • (440) 354-2148
- 29 Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs
www.lacca.org • (419) 227-2586
- 30 Lorain County Community Action Agency, Inc.
www.lccaa.net • (440) 245-2009
- 31 Mahoning Youngstown Community Action Partnership
www.my-cap.org • (330) 747-7921
- 32 Muskingum Economic Opportunity Action Group, Inc.
www.meoag.org • (740) 453-5703
- 33 Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission, Inc.
www.nocac.org • (419) 784-5136
- 34 Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission
www.ohcac.org • (740) 387-9703
- 35 Pickaway County Community Action Organization
www.picca.info • (740) 477-1655
- 36 Ross County Community Action Commission, Inc.
www.rossccac.com • (740) 702-7222
- 37 SOURCES Community Network Services
www.sourcescns.com • (419) 584-1550
- 38 Stark County Community Action Agency
www.sccaa.org • (330) 454-1676
- 39 Supports to Encourage Low-Income Families (SELF)
www.selfhelps.org • (513) 868-9300
- 40 WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc.
www.wsos.org • (419) 334-8911

Ohio Community Action Agencies represent low-income people in all 88 counties.
For a complete list, visit www.oacaa.org/nr.