



CONNECTIONS
Quarterly Newsletter
March 2022

**From the Desk of Our
Executive Director**



**Executive Director
Andrew J. Devany**

www.ohcac.org

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With the coming of the month of March, we at OHCAC are completing our second year of the pandemic challenge. I am hesitant to say that I am starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel because that light has fooled me before. However, maybe we are finally turning the corner. I certainly hope so. The past few months have continued to be challenging, particularly for our Head Start classrooms. We are all looking forward to Spring this year for a number of reasons.

OHCAC is scheduled to close on the purchase of the Marie English Child Care Center in April. This is an opportunity that we have been anticipating for a number of years. OHCAC Head Start has been renting space in the facility for over 20 years. It was formerly part of the U.S. Army Depot complex on State Route 309 East just outside of Marion. What many people do not know is that Marion-Crawford Community Action Commission (now OHCAC) had its first offices in Marion County on this same site at what is now the City of Marion's Senior Center – right next door to the Marie English Center. Our current longest serving employee, my Executive Secretary Linda Hartle, is the only OHCAC employee who remembers that experience.

At one time OHCAC also had a weatherization material storage facility (known officially as Building T-14) on the Depot site, located on the west side of the current Marie English Center. Well, enough ancient history. This child care facility will provide us with expanded bus parking, a nice gymnasium, up to 10 Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms, storage space, a state-of-the-art (roomy) Board room, and additional Head Start staff office space.

I am sure there will be some unexpected and unanticipated surprises. There always are. But anytime we acquire a new building, whether we have been there already or not, it is always a time for change and improvement.

In addition to our building excitement we are looking forward to staff hiring opportunities this Spring that we have never experienced before. Like many organizations and companies that have gone through the pandemic we have seen the departure of multiple staff members for various reasons. Right now, for the first time in memory, we have openings throughout our various OHCAC programs and opportunities for staff members with a variety of skills. With our current funding level and variety of programming we may employ as many as 40 new staff between now and September.

In Head Start, in addition to hiring more staff we hope that the long-ordered playground improvements that have been delayed due to pandemic material and delivery issues will soon be received.

With these changes and improvements, we still are awaiting news on our organizational funding through September 30 in our annual budget, which has been delayed as a result of numerous continuing resolutions in Congress. At this time our funding for the fiscal year looks solid with opportunities for expansion in some areas.

My final assessment is that the Spring of 2022 will be challenging, exciting, (as always) somewhat unpredictable, but bright for Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission.

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OHCAC Services Offered

**Ann and Jaime
Administration - Receptionists
740-387-1039 x-1100**

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- AEP Neighbor to Neighbor Program
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
- Food Pantry (Galion)
- Personal Needs Pantries (Marion, Morrow)
- Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)
- WARM CHOICE Program
- Electric Partnership Program (EPP)
- Community Connections Program
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (ESFP)
- Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)
- Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention (Marion and Crawford)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Clothing Outlet in Crawford County (also available to Marion and Morrow County residents)
- Prescription Assistance Program
- Senior Commodity Boxes (Galion)
- Payee Program (Marion)
- Water Assistance
- Emergency Senior Funding Grant (Marion)
- Work boots (Crawford)
- Gas to work assistance
- Early Head Start and Head Start in Marion, Morrow, Crawford and Richland Counties
- Columbia Gas Fuel Funds
- First Energy Fuel Funds
- Resource and Referral
- Assistance obtaining state identifications and birth certificates to gain employment.
- Medication Lock Boxes (Morrow)
- Summer Reading Program (Marion)
- School Supplies (Crawford)
- Backpack Program (Crawford)

Agency Directors

Joe Devany
Executive Director
740-387-1039 Ext. 1118

Joseph Main
Deputy Director / Energy
Coordinator
740-387-1039 Ext. 1121

Jim Lavelle
Chief Fiscal Officer
740-387-1039 Ext. 1117

David Wirick
IT Manager
740-387-1039 Ext. 1108

Debbie Schuster
Head Start Director
740-387-1039 Ext. 1109

Robert Foreman
HEAP Director
Energy Programs
740-387-9703 Ext. 1111

Tracey Rector
Marion Co. Director
740-383-2154 Ext. 1313

Sara Herrera
Morrow Co. Director
419-946-2009 Ext. 1905

Tammy Crabtree
Crawford Co. Director
419-468-5121 Ext. 1619



Head Start
Debbie Schuster, Director
740-387-1039 x-1109

Thank you to all the Head Start staff for working daily with children and families during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring that our classrooms are in ratio and that all staff receive their breaks. You have all been flexible and have stepped in to assist when requested. I truly appreciate the teamwork you have exhibited.

We were at 97.1% enrollment at the end of January and continue to have children on the waitlist. We are one of the very few programs that have achieved that level of enrollment in Ohio! Great job staff!

ENROLLMENT

Month	Enrollment	% Enrolled	# Under-Enrolled
January 2022	570 458 HS/ 112 EHS	97.1%	17

WAITLIST

County	EHS	HS
Richland	24	0
Marion	21	19
Crawford	10	3 - Galion 3 - Bucyrus
Morrow	4	7 - Mt. Gilead 0 - Cardington
TOTAL	59	32

We will be working with the Office of Head Start and STGi consultants to develop a program improvement plan based on an incident that occurred at the Haxton Center in January. Part of the plan includes improving our staff wellness and creating a staff wellness committee. We have surveyed all Head Start staff, but any suggestions that you have to boost morale would be helpful. We are having several training sessions within the next six weeks regarding Adult Development Theory. The training is aimed at better understanding the families we serve and to create a work culture where people are supportive with their communication yet open to challenge others in a way that creates more accountability and better results. Staff wellness is an ongoing process and we will revisit the training again during our next program year.

We have hired a new Lead Teacher for Marion County allowing us to eliminate the need for distant learning in Marion. We are still in need of staff and would appreciate any referrals that you have to add to our team. All job openings can be located by clicking on our website at www.ohcac.org and scrolling to employment.

We are continuing the grant writing process and we will not be making any program option changes for next year, except that we hope to be able to move two of our Early Head Start classrooms to the recently purchased Marie English Center from the other locations in Marion. With the move of the two EHS rooms: Marian Clark will have 2 EHS classrooms, Sam Center will have 2 EHS classrooms and 1 Head Start classroom, and the Marie English Center will have 2 EHS classrooms and 6 Head Start centers.

BOARD MEMBERS

Marion County

- Paula Burnside
- Kerr Murray
- Staci Thomas
- Jan Hulse
- Sherry Russell
- Stephanie Shaffer
- Robert Concepcion
- Laura Detweiler

Crawford County

- Richard Genzman,
Board President
- Larry Schmidt
- Thomas O'Leary
- Joe Stafford
- Tina Bloomfield
- Douglas Court
- Darrin Harvey

Morrow County

- Kelli Cooperider
- Tracy Blackburn
- Kelsey Lewis
- Darci Hendrickson

Richland County

- Theresa Alt
- Tamea Jobe
- Fred Boll

Home Energy Assistance Program

Robert Foreman, Director

740-387-1039 x 1111

BIRTHDAYS

April

Stacie Shrader	1
Amanda McKinney	1
Jessica Elswick	2
Elizabeth Kriel	3
Erin Howard	5
Chasity Channell	5
Robert Foreman	7
David Wirick	8
Elizabeth Mallory	9
Karrie Starr	11
Scott Payne	15
Samuel Starr	15
Barbara McLernon	17
Shelly Mabrey	20
Karmann Rose	24
Hannah Adamson	27
Nikita Lee	29
Jamie Fry	30

The 2021-2022 Winter Crisis Program (2022WCP) started on November 1 and will run through March 31, 2022. At the time of this printing, staff have assisted 1,355 households through the Winter Crisis Program. Since November 1, in addition to the WCP applications, staff have processed over 2,500 State HEAP applications and over 1,900 PIPP Plus applications.

We continue to assist our families with utility assistance through over-the-phone interviews. This has proven to be beneficial for both our families and our staff allowing for all to remain safe during the pandemic.

Per Ohio Department of Development (ODOD), OHCAC will continue to call customers for their WCP/HEAP/PIPP Plus appointments. Each customer will still need to provide all required documentation ***before*** their scheduled appointment that they schedule through our automated appointment hotline, **419-718-0047**. Customers can either email, fax, or drop off documentation at one of our 3 CAC centers in the black drop boxes located near the front doors. If required documentation is not provided at the time of an appointment, you may need to reschedule until documentation can be provided. Please contact one of our county CAC offices for more information.

We are requesting that our customers have a good working email or text number that they check regularly so that we can send documents to this email or text number for their required signatures.

We have three additional fuel funds available: Columbia Gas Fuel Funds, AEP, Neighbor-2-Neighbor, and First Energy Fuel Funds. If you are still in need of utility assistance with one of these utilities, please contact your local county CAC office for more information and to schedule an appointment.

To schedule your WCP/HEAP/PIPP PLUS appointment by phone, please call the toll-free automated appointment hotline at **419-718-0047**. To schedule your appointment on the **online web scheduler** using *google chrome*, go to <http://app.capappointments.com>.

Thank you to all intake/outreach workers, center directors and fiscal staff for all their hard work and dedication to the HEAP department. You have done an excellent job assisting our families with their home energy needs.



Crawford "Egner" Center

Tammy Crabtree, Center Director

419-468-5121 x-1619

We remain busy here at the Crawford Office. With so many programs to offer our community we seldom have time to enjoy the sweeter things in life, like chocolate cake. (inside joke)

All joking aside, we are grateful to have so many programs available to assist Crawford County. Just to name a few: rental assistance, limited mortgage assistance, property tax, homeowner insurance, and more. We have water bill assistance, prescription assistance, car repair, work boot assistance, bed bug treatment, and more. Please call if you have questions.

Crawford Office received \$500.00 from Save-A-Lot for the Food Pantry. Save-A-Lot sold Holiday Bags for our Food Pantry in November 2021. The Corporate office was so impressed with the sales that they decided to donate \$500.00 to their charity of choice – OHCAC.



Center Director Tammy Crabtree with Megan Glasser of Save-A-Lot

Morrow Neighborhood Center

Sara Herrera, Center Director

419-946-2009 x-1905

Everyone at the Morrow County Center is excited to welcome the upcoming spring/summer season.

The CAA-HRG program will continue to be an asset to Morrow County residents throughout the spring. Staff members have been doing a great job coming together to understand these programs and assist our clients in ways we have not been able to in the past.

CSBG programs that Morrow Center can offer include (but are not limited to): Car repairs, internet service, water and trash bills, rent payments, homeowner-related expenses, and utility assistance.

The personal needs pantry is open and serves area residents with toiletries, diapers and household items. Individuals can call the Morrow Center on Wednesdays (after 1:30 p) to request assistance.

Prescription assistance and medication lockboxes are also available.

BIRTHDAYS

May

Ashley Hisey-Buchanan	1
David Wright	1
Joyce Branam	2
Sheila Nickum	6
Joseph Main	6
Ryan Kessell	6
Meg Hutchman	10
Jennifer Deas	10
Tammy Crabtree	12
Sara Herrera	12
Paula Langenderfer	14
Chelsea Dingus	15
Susan Schuler	20
Katelyn Hamilton	21
Nicole Schreck	26
Jessica Miller	26
Karla Granlee	28



Home Weatherization Assistance Program

Joseph Main
Deputy Director/Energy Coordinator
740-387-1039 x-1121

We are moving towards the final stretch of the Grant year for Weatherization, EPP, and Community Connections. We are currently on track to meet our goals for all of our programs.

One of our office staff is retiring. We are grateful for her service, and we wish Liz Feliciano-Deeter the best as she transitions into a new phase in her life. We welcomed in a new Energy Office Clerk, and have just hired another. One of our EPP auditors successfully completed the training and testing to become a certified inspector. We look forward to continuing to stay on pace to hit our goals for our programs.

The Energy Office would like to remind everyone to stay safe and warm.

Guard your water pipes. When indoor plumbing pipes run through exterior walls, take care to monitor them in the winter and make sure wall insulation is up to recommended standards.

Seal holes and cracks. Even small holes where cable wires or phone lines enter your home can be an entry point for freezing air—or places where precious indoor heat can escape.

Keep water flowing. If any of your indoor faucets are located on exterior walls that aren't adequately insulated, set your faucets to a slow drip whenever the temperatures dip well below freezing. This is usually necessary only during those especially bitter cold spells. Faucets and pipes located along exterior walls are especially susceptible to freezing.

Keep the water shutoff accessible. Should a water line ever freeze and burst, you will need to shut off the home's water supply immediately. If stuff is blocking easy access to your main water shut valve off, rearrange your basement or garage so that it will be easily accessible in the event of a plumbing emergency.



Safety Committee Members

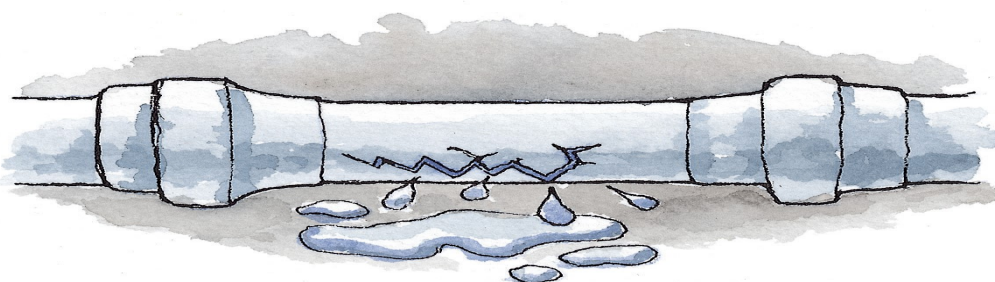
740-387-1039

Bev Kuenzli	Ext. 1104
Bob Foreman	Ext. 1201
Debbie Shuster	Ext. 1109
Paula Langenderfer	Ext. 1130
Tammy Crabtree	Ext. 1619
Tracey Rector	Ext. 1313
Sara Herrera	Ext. 1905

BIRTHDAYS

June

Kasandra Barr	4
Natalie Basilone	7
Sierra Thompson	7
Whitley Smith	10
Jeneeyah Beasley	11
Teddy Sherman	11
Sharon Thomas	17
Beverly Kuenzli	19
Jamie Baumberger	21
Amy Davis	26
Cheyenne Stacklin	27
Kathleen Edler	30



Marian Clark Center
Tracey Rector, Center Director
740-383-2154 ext. 1313

What a busy time at the Marian Clark Center. So busy in fact, we have hired 2 more intake staff to handle the wonderful things that are happening here. We welcomed Jodi and Chelsea at the end of 2021 to assist with the LIHWAP program and the COVID funding for housing needs. Amy, a long-time staff member, moved into a Rapid Rehousing position and Pasheauna joined us from the Morrow County office. When we built the 8 offices in the back I never would have dreamed we would have filled them, but we did.

VITA is going strong with drop-off tax preparation currently underway. Our goal is 300 returns and we are on track to pass that.

Since November of 2020, we have assisted over 1,000 households with rents, utilities, and mortgages with a little over 2 million dollars spent for Marion County residents.

If you know anyone who needs help paying their bills and is on a fixed income, we have a Payee Program. Rhonda has 10 clients at this time and would be happy to talk with you about the program. She will set up an account, pay your bills, and give you spending money if there is any left over. No more worry for you or your family.

“The world’s favorite season is spring. All things seem possible in May.” - Edwin Way Teale

OHCAC Mission Statement

The Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) will foster and promote planning services and developmental efforts for the mobilization and utilization of resources, public and private, for coordinated attack upon conditions of poverty affecting the inhabitants of the area.

OHCAC will continuously support economic self-sufficiency. It will encourage the provisions of services, and other activities toward developing employment and economic opportunities, improving human performance, individual and group motivation, productivity, housing and bettering conditions under which people live, learn, and work.

OHCAC will solicit, contract for, receive, administer, and disburse any funds, grants, bequests, devises, and other resources for the execution and implementation of specific or general programs in carrying out its purposes.

Low-Income Water Assistance Program

Robert Foreman, Director

740-387-1039 x 11

The Low-Income Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is designed to help income-eligible households in Crawford, Marion and Morrow counties with their water and wastewater bills. The program runs from October 25, 2021 through September 30, 2022. Eligible customers are those at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), **who have been disconnected (or have a disconnection notice), or either need to establish new service, or pay to transfer service.** Customers with a current medical certificate on file with their utility are ineligible to receive LIHWAP assistance until the medical certificate expires.

Ohio Heartland CAC began this program on December 13 and at the time of this printing staff have assisted over 100+ households.

Water and Wastewater Benefits:

Up to \$750 for water bill.

Up to \$750 for wastewater bill.

Up to \$1,500 for a combination water/wastewater bill.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact your local Community Action Center:

Crawford County: 419-468-5121, Ext. 1600

Marion County: 740-383-2154, Ext. 1300

Morrow County: 419-946-2009, Ext. 1900

Program Income Eligibility

Size of Household	12-Month Income Limit	30-Day Income Limit
1	\$22,540	\$1,852.60
2	\$30,485	\$2,505.62
3	\$38,430	\$3,158.63
4	\$46,375	\$3,811.64
5	\$54,320	\$4,464.66
6	\$62,265	\$5,117.67
7	\$70,210	\$5,770.68
8	\$78,155	\$6,423.70



Go to www.ohcac.org and click on the link for Employment on the upper right side and follow the link.