



**Executive Director
Andrew J. Devany**

CONNECTIONS
Quarterly Newsletter
June 2021

**From the Desk of Our
Executive Director**



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Is it possible that we are finally seeing the light at the end of the Covid tunnel? Or, is it just my wishful thinking? After all this time I want to believe the former rather than the latter. But... what lies ahead in my vision?

In my vision I see: Board meetings that will allow for Zoom participation but not require it, full Head Start classrooms with enhanced safety measures and increased Early Head Start opportunities, additional funds and continued rental assistance through 2021, a changing Weatherization program with additional units required and additional funds available, and a lesser requirement for masks as vaccinations increase. It is not a perfect vision of the good old days, but it is better than what we have been through in the past fifteen months.

I also see a greater appreciation for Community Action and Head Start, and the work that you do and have continued to do throughout this challenging time. Your resourcefulness, dedication, and caring attitudes have gotten us through this very difficult time.

It has been a stressful time when we had to be prepared for daily unanticipated interruptions and changes. I truly hope that the stress will lessen in both your job and your daily life.

I am personally starting to get around more to centers and to Head Start/Early Head Start sites – something that I have tried to refrain from during the pandemic. Early on at the outset of the pandemic I tried to visit sites throughout the four-county area for various reasons. However, it got to a point that when I went somewhere the site would call and tell me that they had to close because it had been determined that the site had been affected by a health department quarantine policy. After it happened three times I figured someone was obviously telling me to stay away, and I took the hint.

My hope is that some, if not all, of these issues are behind us for the most part. Thank you to the OHCAC staff. You have done and you continue to do an admirable job. You have made it work.

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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

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Executive Director
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Coordinator
740-387-1039 Ext. 1121

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740-387-1039 Ext. 1109

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HEAP Director
Energy Programs
740-387-9703 Ext. 1201

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

BOARD MEMBERS

Our last day for Head Start classes was May 20, 2021 and our last day for Early Head Start will be on June 30, 2021. We truly appreciate the dedication from all of our employees this year in keeping our classrooms operating during a pandemic and meeting the needs of the children and families that we serve in our four county program area.

We have made several changes to our 2021 – 2022 Continuation grant based on discussions with our program specialist at the Office of Head Start and on data we have gathered in regards to full day programming. We are planning to convert 80 half-day Head Start slots in Marion County into 32 Early Head Start slots. The total number of Head Start slots in Marion County will be decreased by 61 half day slots. We will add one Early Head Start Center in Crawford County in Bucyrus, one Early Head Start Center in Morrow County in Mt. Gilead and two Early Head Start Centers in Marion County. Our registrations are going very well for next year and a complete number of registrations are listed below:

# NEEDED	COMPLETE REGISTRATIONS	
	County	Head Start
Marion HS-147 EHS-48	126	25
Crawford HS-88 EHS-16	43	5
Morrow HS-40 EHS-16	23	5
Richland HS-202 EHS-32	103	11
TOTAL = HS-529 EHS-96	295	46

We initially received \$558,043 in COVID-19 funding that we received in June of 2020 to purchase PPE, install dividers, cleaning supplies and fencing to keep children safe while parents were dropping them off outside. We have applied for a CRRSA (COVID-19) grant totaling \$191,115 which is one-time funding to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. We have also applied for a supplemental grant entitled the American Rescue Plan (One Time funds) which totals \$759,778. We are planning on using the one-time funds to enhance our playgrounds, air conditioning systems and exit routes for many of our buildings by adding additional doors, sidewalks and fencing, where appropriate. We appreciate the funding we have received and intend to use the funds to provide safe areas for the staff and the children and families that we serve at Head Start and Early Head Start.

Marion County

- Marilyn Schraff
- 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

- Fawn Mollenkopf
- 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 1201

Happy Spring/Summer from the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) department!

The following is an overview of the 2021 Winter Crisis Program (2021WCP) and other energy programs offered November 1, 2020 through April 15, 2021...

Crawford County: 588 households, Marion County: 706 households and Morrow County: 462 households for a combined 1,756 households served through the 2021WCP.

Included in this total, we were also able to assist with over 30 furnace repairs.

We expended \$630,886 in total benefits through the 2021WCP.

In addition to the 2021WCP, staff also completed 4,560 Regular/State HEAP applications which includes mailed in and Queue (Online) applications; and 3,788 PIPP Plus applications.

These totals for the 2021WCP season were lower than we typically see during this time. However, there were many other programs our families were able to utilize to assist with their utility needs.

We had 3 additional energy programs; 108 applications completed through the **First Energy Fuel Funds**, 155 applications completed through the **Columbia Gas Fuel Funds**, and 15 applications completed through **AEP, Neighbor 2 Neighbor Fuel Funds**.

We have no definite information to report at this time for the 2021 Summer Crisis Program (2021SCP) other than it will probably be a similar program as last year's 2020SCP. Please call your local county CAC for more details on the 2021SCP around mid-June. Also, watch our website and OHCAC's Facebook page for more information.

Call the automated appointment hotline at **419-718-0047** to make your 2021 Summer Crisis Program/HEAP/PIPP Plus appointments **or** to **schedule online** go to: app.capappointments.com using Google Chrome.

BIRTHDAYS

July

Sommer Ziegler	2
Melissa Peters	2
Cydney Morris	2
Julie Turner	3
Dona Kochman	3
Phyllis Tufts	3
Kelly Bautista	5
Jamie Wilson	8
Rachelle Emory	8
Angela Paul	10
Addison Stonebutner	11
Toni Burnk	11
Kriston Moore	12
Dennis Hardie	13
Kaitlynn Crowl	14
Deborah Herdman	14
Susan Booker	16
Patty Brown	18
Amy McClain	18
Jamie Clark	18
Miranda Bowden	20
Ellen Zaebst	22
Heather Thompson	23
Shannon Ayers	27
Thea Coyan	28



Crawford "Egner" Center
Tammy Crabtree, Center Director
419-468-5121 x-1619

The Crawford County office is staying busy with the multitude of programs we offer. Our Food Pantry remains open to all of Crawford County. Recipients must be at or below 200% poverty ratio. Call 419-468-5121 x-1600 for more details.

We will once again be offering the Back-Pack Program during the Summer Feeding Program with the Galion City Schools. We provide each child that participates with the Summer Feeding Program a bag of food for the weekend. This program runs for eight weeks during the summer.

Crawford County can assist with rent, mortgage, utilities, car repair, and prescription assistance. Call 419-468-5121 for more information about our various programs.



Morrow Neighborhood Center

Sara Herrera, Center Director
419-946-2009 x-1905

Everyone at the Morrow County Center is excited to welcome the summer season and let go of the trials of the past year. Winter Crisis Program was a great success and 2021 regular HEAP programs are winding down. Summer Crisis program will be kicking off in July and intake staff are eager to assist Morrow County with their cooling needs.

The CDBG and CAA-HRG programs are in full effect. All staff members have been doing great at coming together to understand these programs and assist our clients in ways we have not been able in the past. Car repairs, internet service, water and trash bills, rent/ mortgage payments, and utility assistance are all available through the Morrow County Center.

The personal needs pantry is open and serves area residents with toiletries and household items. Individuals can call the Morrow Center on Wednesdays to request assistance.

Prescription assistance and medication lockboxes are also available.

BIRTHDAYS

August

Tiffany Antrim	1
Stacie Stout	3
Kaitlyn Thompson	3
Heather Evert	5
Sonya Young	6
Linda Hartle	7
Tracey Rector	8
Maria Noakes	9
Sara White	9
Hailey Batross	10
Shirley Edwards	11
Peggy Gwinner	11
Laura McClure	12
Kimberly Baker	17
Debra Varner	20
Bethany Dorsey	21
Jennifer Cole	22
Kim Mahler	22
James Thurston	22
Nicole Burkhart	23
Janice Blozy	24
Amy Kitchin	25
Nicholas Scheff	26
Amethyst Gary	27
Katelynn Seitter	31



Home Weatherization Assistance Program

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

Despite all of the setbacks due to the pandemic, because of the hard work of staff the Energy Office has been able to be in a good position to reach all of its goals. Community Connections ended its grant year in May and we were able to spend the initial awarded grant, as well as additional funds.

The HWAP grant year ends at the end of June. We are still on track to potentially reach our goal for units completed. We were able to complete all of our initial inspections by the middle of May.

We are on track meet all of our goals with the EPP program, which also ends at the end of June. We are continuing to assist AEP clients that have been waiting for a refrigerator due to that program ending, and we are continuing to assist HHWP with their final inspections.

We are looking forward to the new grant year, and working to serve more clients!

Here are some tips to prepare your home for the Summer:

Clean gutters and drains

Cleaning the gutters and drains is often the last item on the to-do lists of most people, but it's an important task before getting into summer. Debris such as leaves and mud can clog the drains and once it piles up, it can lead to leaks into the walls and roof. Clearing any possible build-up from your gutters goes a long way toward lowering the risks of water damage.

Guide water away from your property

Even if your drains and gutters are clear, the water that has remained from the winter season may be getting into the leader pipes, draining at the edge of your house, and flowing into your basement. It's imperative to have trenches dug and underground pipes installed to get roof water away from your property. You should also ensure all landscaping is slanting away from your property.

Check out the deck and patio

Driveways, pavements, and decks need maintenance from time to time. Fixing and sealing any broken joints or crevices in the stonework can prevent a much bigger problem from arising. You should also have decks and wooden handrails stained and sealed to protect them from insect damage, decay, or splintering.

Seal those leaks

Seal any gaps or cracks you see around your door or window by applying caulk. The outcome will be a more comfortable house and improved energy efficiency. You should also replace all worn doorstops.



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

September

Elizabeth Felicia- Deeter	1
Monica Creamer	5
Rachel Skaggs	7
Laura White	9
Bryanna Horner	10
Jenny Myers	15
Watt Selmon	15
Rachel Elliott	16
Brian Henderson	17
Alexandria VanGundy	19
Mckenzi Bradshaw	19
Maria Black	20
S. Phil Adams	24
Nicole Davis	28
Jaime Householder	29

wishing you
the **BEST**
birthday
ever!

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

As we continue to make a difference for so many in our community, I am reminded there are still good people in the world. When speaking to tenants, they have been so appreciative for their landlord working with them when times got tough. Many individuals had never needed assistance before the pandemic and didn't really know how to start. Landlords are grateful for the assistance we can provide through the grants we have received. Many landlords told me they also struggled and our assistance was a huge help to them.

We were able to complete 327 tax returns through a drop off service. This was not ideal as many questions arise during preparation of the return, but we made it work. Again, people were so kind and just grateful that we could get them in. With the help of the IRS, we were able to provide some free websites where individuals could complete their own returns and request their missing stimulus payments.



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.

Fiscal Factoids

Anita Major, Fiscal Office Manager

740-387-1039 x-1103



Check your pay stubs. Help Me Pay You Correctly.

Please review your taxes and your deductions on your pay stubs to verify they are as they should be. Also, look at your leave balances. Are your accruals correct? If you notice anything you don't understand, please call or email me and I will be happy to go over it with you.

Bits from Benefits

Bev Kuenzli, Benefits/Assist. Office Manager

740-387-1039 x-1104

Hello All!

Just a friendly reminder to everyone about the 2021 Annual Orientation/In Service Day. Please don't plan vacation or a personal day on Wednesday, August 4, 2021. The meeting will be held by Zoom and will start at 9:00 AM. Attendance will be taken.

Have a Safe and Happy Summer!





National Community Action Foundation

Connecting Communities to Washington Since 1981

**FY2022 Written Testimony for the Record
Community Services Block Grant
Department of Health and Human Services**

**David Bradley, Chief Executive Officer
National Community Action Foundation**



The following is testimony submitted by our Community Action Representative in Washington, David Bradley. After reading the enclosed testimony, I wanted to share it with all of our staff, Board members, and friends. It is an easy read, and it succinctly explains all the good work that Community Action does every day all across the United States to assist those in need and lessen the conditions of poverty.

Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the National Community Action Foundation on FY2022 funding for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. We respectfully request an appropriation of no less than \$800 million for CSBG, and we urge you to include bill language establishing 200% of poverty as the eligibility criterion for CSBG-funded services in FY2022.

We first want to thank you and the Subcommittee for your longstanding bipartisan support of this program. Through difficult budget years and regardless of which party controls Congress or the White House, this Subcommittee has fought for CSBG. You have recognized the importance of this program as a central component in local antipoverty efforts and made it possible for the nation's Community Action Agencies to pursue their life-changing work. We deeply appreciate your leadership, courage and confidence in our network.

The National Community Action Foundation represents the nationwide network of more than 1,000 local anti-poverty agencies, known as Community Action Agencies or CAAs, that are authorized by and receive core funding from CSBG. These agencies operate in virtually every county in the United States and, for more than 55 years, have worked to address poverty by administering a full range of comprehensive, coordinated and locally driven programs. CAAs provide a critical first stop for those in need and help people address both immediate crises and long-term barriers that keep individuals and whole families in poverty. Moreover, the Community Action network stands ready to give immediate help whenever a crisis or unforeseen event impacts the lives of low-income people and communities. Our nation's CAAs were among the first to step up at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and have been on the front lines continuously ever since, responding to an unprecedented level of need.

Poverty has many causes and consequences but most government programs for low-income people focus narrowly, on a specific need like hunger, housing, skills development or early childhood education. Addressing one critical need, however, may not resolve all barriers to economic security for many poor individuals and families. Community Action Agencies look at poverty holistically, first identifying the range of problems facing low-income people in their communities and then finding or creating comprehensive solutions. Community Action is the only federal program with the overarching goal of reducing poverty at the local level, regardless of cause or condition.



National Community Action Foundation

Connecting Communities to Washington Since 1981

As authorized by CSBG, the Community Action approach begins with a comprehensive assessment of local needs and a strategic plan to meet those needs, in partnership with other community organizations and without duplication of effort. CAAs compete for a wide range of public and private resources and use their limited CSBG funds to fill gaps, respond to emergencies and support essential functions that have no other funding source. CSBG makes it possible for local agencies to cost-efficiently administer such programs as Head Start, LIHEAP, nutrition assistance, home weatherization, job training, homeless assistance and many others including services for veterans, seniors and people with disabilities. As a uniquely flexible funding source, CSBG allows CAAs to create opportunities especially suited to local conditions and to experiment with innovative initiatives, evaluate their effectiveness and build capacity. The nation's modest federal investment in CSBG has made possible this national infrastructure of local agencies that improve the lives and economic security of millions of poor people each year.

Congress also relies on the Community Action infrastructure in times of crisis and has provided emergency funds to CSBG on multiple occasions in response to natural or other disasters that affect poor communities. Congress appropriated an additional \$1 billion for CSBG during the recession of the late 2000s and most recently, included an additional \$1 billion for CSBG in the CARES Act, to help address the myriad needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, as part of the CARES Act, Congress also increased CSBG eligibility to 200% of the poverty line during FY2020 and FY2021, from the current law level of 100% of poverty or 125% at state option.

The COVID-19 pandemic shocked the nation by revealing the fragile line between self-sufficiency and dependence. Within weeks of the first business and school closings, families that never previously sought help from government or social service agencies formed long lines at food banks. Community Action stepped up immediately, before CARES Act dollars were available and while still converting their own agencies into virtual workplaces. Agencies quickly assessed local needs and responded with food, housing, emergency assistance and supplies, transportation, access to medical care and other solutions to the spiraling needs caused by the pandemic. As conditions evolved, CAAs addressed longer-term needs for income support, employment services, business development, help for children and families coping with remote learning and more. Throughout the process, agencies worked with local governments and community partners to identify problems, design solutions and adapt methods of delivery to the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic.

The Community Action network has been a key partner in the nation's efforts to emerge from COVID-19 through testing, contact tracing and vaccination. In the normal course of their work, CAAs promote public health and extend the reach of the nation's public health system. They regularly connect people with screening, testing and treatment for infectious diseases. They provide health education to children and families through programs like Head Start and nutrition assistance; they improve the health and safety of living conditions for low-income seniors through weatherization and energy assistance; they protect homeless veterans and other vulnerable people through emergency services and shelter. CAAs help people find and keep jobs, increasing access to health insurance, and connect those who are eligible with public health programs. Our agencies have deployed all these skills, abilities and resources in the fight against COVID-19. Among their many activities right now, CAAs are working to ensure vaccinations for low-income people, including minorities, rural residents and others who may be isolated.



Given the scope of need, CARES Act dollars have been essential in Community Action’s wide-ranging and continuing response to COVID-19. Moreover, the higher CSBG eligibility level established by the CARES Act has been invaluable in helping our agencies meet the crushing demand for assistance, preventing arbitrary “benefit cliffs” and helping people get back on their feet.

We believe it is essential to continue the nation’s investment in strengthening local communities and ensuring every American has the foundation and support for growth and success. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made this challenge more urgent. As the needs within low-income communities continue to outpace available resources, we urge you to increase the federal Investment in this low-cost, high-impact program and appropriate a minimum of \$800 million for CSBG in FY2022. We also request that you extend the critically important CARES Act eligibility criteria for CSBG through FY2022 and recommend the following language:

“INCREASED POVERTY LINE. – For purposes of carrying out the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) with any funds appropriated for fiscal year 2022 for such Act, the term “poverty line” as defined in section 673(2) of such Act (42. U.S.C. 9902(2)) means 200 percent of the poverty line otherwise applicable under such section (excluding the last sentence of such section) without regard to this subsection.”

Thank you for considering our requests that will enable Community Action to continue its crucial work in FY2022. We remain deeply grateful for this Subcommittee’s long and steadfast support for the Community Services Block Grant and its nationwide network of local anti-poverty agencies.