



'POVERTY MATTERS'

**WISCONSIN COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES CONTRIBUTE TO
ECONOMIC RECOVERY & PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO FAMILIES**

Efforts Lead To Creation of Over 200 Jobs and Services to 4,500 Individuals

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), signed into law by President Obama on February 19, 2009, is designed to jumpstart the U.S. economy, create or save millions of jobs and address national needs - while supporting unprecedented levels of transparency, oversight and accountability. Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies (CAAs), whose purpose is to help low-income households become economically self-sufficient and, in the process, help local communities grow and nurture their economic health, are fully committed to making ARRA work and, as the state's largest non-governmental recipient of stimulus funding, fully engaged in that effort.

Governor Jim Doyle has said: "Wisconsin is moving federal recovery funds to create jobs for hardworking people in the state while ensuring that the use of funds is open, transparent and accountable. The Office of Recovery and Reinvestment is working with communities, local governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to put recovery money to work here in Wisconsin to protect shared priorities like preserving quality education for our children and growing Wisconsin's economy."

"Wisconsin is moving federal recovery funds to create jobs for hard-working people in the state ..."

Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies have **created 225 jobs** with ARRA funding in the first quarter of reporting (through September 30, 2009). Many of these jobs are employment specialists, housing counselors and community service advocates - designed to **provide needed services** to victims of the economic recession.

"... while ensuring that the use of funds is open, transparent and accountable."

Community Action Agencies are **locally governed, non-profit corporations**, answerable to a Board of Directors consisting of local government, community and low-income persons. CAAs have been the epitome of efficient, transparent, accountable operation during their 40+ years of existence. The very nature of their Board structure keeps them accountable and CAAs also undergo yearly audits conducted by independent auditing firms.

"The Office of Recovery and Reinvestment is working with communities, local governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to put the recovery money to work here in Wisconsin to protect shared priorities ..."

Wisconsin's Community Action network is using ARRA funding for programs as diverse as the needs of the low-income people they serve. CAAs are receiving ARRA funds through the Community Services Block Grant which allows them great diversity to attack local problems as determined by their Boards of Directors. Many CAAs also receive ARRA funds for weatherization, Head Start, numerous housing initiatives and other already-existing federal programs.

The Community Action network reported serving, through the first quarter, **4,604 persons** with ARRA funds: including **519 with employment and training services**, **780 with emergency food**, **823 with health care** and **2,008 with housing assistance**.

Some of the **innovative projects** CAAs are undertaking locally with their ARRA funds are:

- ✓ Business development expansion & assistance to child care businesses (Western Dairyland EOC)
- ✓ Foreclosure assistance (Western Dairyland EOC)
- ✓ Transportation for elderly & disabled (NEWCAP)
- ✓ GED testing, child care co-payments & employment support (North Central CAP)
- ✓ Creating a health referral and education center (SDC)
- ✓ Lindsay Heights Economic Development - green jobs and youth build (SDC)
- ✓ Expanding domestic violence services - (UMOS)
- ✓ Head Start transportation (UMOS)
- ✓ Micro-enterprise grants up to \$5,000 (Community Action Coalition)
- ✓ Garden-based youth entrepreneur program (Community Action Coalition)
- ✓ Emergency services for 9,800 individuals (Northwest CSA)
- ✓ Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Sites (Northwest CSA)
- ✓ Expansion of fatherhood and skills enhancement programs (Community Action, Inc.)
- ✓ Home Rehabilitation (Community Action, Inc.)
- ✓ Financial literacy (Lakeshore CAP)
- ✓ Food pantry capacity building (Lakeshore CAP)
- ✓ Expanded youth employment opportunities (Central Wisconsin CAC)
- ✓ Public transportation (Indianhead)
- ✓ Mental health initiative (Indianhead)
- ✓ Housing expansions, including retrofits (Westcap)
- ✓ 'Jump Start' car purchase programs (Westcap)
- ✓ Emergency shelter, dental, legal services, foreclosure assistance (Couleecap)
- ✓ Expansion of summer youth employment (Racine/Kenosha CAI)
- ✓ Inmate Community Work Project (Racine/Kenosha CAI)
- ✓ Americorps house construction & trail work (CAP Services)
- ✓ Head Start Family Development (CAP Services)
- ✓ Economic development in food production, green jobs & health care (Southwest CAP)
- ✓ Refugees & dislocated workers programs (Advocap)
- ✓ Foreclosure prevention (Advocap)

CAAs provided **support to 25 other non-profit organizations** in local communities during this time frame and **assisted 38 economic development projects**.

Wisconsin's CAAs are committed to helping Wisconsin benefit from ARRA funds and to ensuring that low-income households receive the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency inherent in the recovery.

Please enjoy the many workshops at the 'Poverty Matters' conference featuring the activities of Wisconsin's Community Action Network.

For your convenience, they are: A2 ... A4 ... B5 ... C1 ... C5 ... D2 ... E2 ... and E3.