



'POVERTY MATTERS'

LOW-INCOME CITIZENS

SPEAK TO COMMUNITY ACTION in WISCONSIN

Nearly 8,000 low-income people participate in Community Needs Assessments

Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) help low-income households become economically self-sufficient and, in the process, help local communities grow and nurture their economic health. Community Action Agencies give direct voice to their low-income customers. Low-income representatives make up 1/3 of CAA agency Boards of Directors. Low-income households participate in identifying priorities, service design and provision, and evaluation of program operations.

In addition, every three years, the 16 Community Action Agencies in Wisconsin conduct a "community needs assessment" to identify the needs and barriers to addressing poverty directly from low-income households. When 'poverty matters', the voice of low-income households matters above all else.

In 2007, over 7,700 low-income families and individuals in Wisconsin made their voice directly heard by identifying to their local Community Action Agency the problems they need to overcome in working toward economic self-sufficiency. Statewide, from over 1,800 low-income persons in southeast Wisconsin to over 1,200 in the rural areas of upper northwest Wisconsin, low-income households told CAAs the most urgent and most pressing needs and problems in their community. Resoundingly and across the state, the voices of low-income people said:

Living Wage Jobs Matter!
Health Care Matters!
Affordable Housing Matters!
Education and Training Matters!
Transportation Matters!

Community Action Agencies mobilize to address these needs, identifying resources and designing services around the low-income individuals and local circumstances unique to each area. From car purchase programs to weatherization and housing assistance, from skills enhancement training for living wage jobs to providing financial literacy and asset building services, from addressing emergency needs - such as food, clothing and shelter for the homeless - to supporting dental clinics and neighborhood health centers, the voices of low-income households seeking economic self-sufficiency are integral to the operation of Wisconsin's Community Action Program network.

WISCAP works on behalf of our member Community Action Agencies to advocate for policies and programs responsive to the voices of Wisconsin's low-income families and households.

WISCAP together with the Wisconsin Council on Children & Families and the Wisconsin Head Start Association have launched "Vision 2020"—a campaign to End Child Poverty in Wisconsin by the Year 2020! Please visit the Vision 2020 website at www.2020wi.org for additional information and join the Vision 2020 campaign!