

WISCAP

Wisconsin's Poverty Fighting Network

2018
ANNUAL
REPORT

POVERTY IN WISCONSIN

Approximately one in ten Wisconsinites live in poverty, with the elderly representing the fastest growing segment of the population. In 2018, the Department of Public Instruction identified more than 19,000 homeless children and youth throughout the state. The Federal poverty threshold, the traditional measure of economic distress, classifies as 'poor' a household of three earning less than \$21,330 per year. These numbers are staggering, particularly at a time the economy is widely regarded as healthy. We must ask, "whose economy?"

While unemployment remains low, housing costs have increased out of proportion to income; The annual earnings for a full-time minimum wage worker are just over \$15,000 a year - and those who are unable to work due to age or disability often must depend entirely on austere public benefit programs to meet their most basic needs. In addition, rapidly rising housing costs are dramatically increasing the financial pressure on low-income household budgets. In total, 306,000 low-income Wisconsin renters pay more than half their income for housing and 37.5% of Wisconsinites struggle to afford the necessities of child care, health care, housing, food, and transportation, according to the 2018 United Way ALICE Study of Financial Hardship.

Just as the conditions or causes of poverty are diverse and unique in each individual, demographic, and community - so are the solutions. Accordingly, we must craft policies and approaches that are appropriately responsive to these realities. The statewide network of local Community Action Agencies is uniquely positioned to address the grinding poverty that exists in our rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. Toward this end, WISCAP spent the past year listening carefully to the expressed needs of local communities in their fight against poverty and we have worked with our partners and lawmakers to identify solutions. The result of this process is the Wisconsin Opportunity Act, comprehensive anti-poverty legislation to be introduced in the 2019 Wisconsin legislature.

The day-to-day challenges of living in poverty are truly profound. The poor struggle with low-paying jobs, unemployment, high rents, homelessness, food insecurity, skipping doctor visits or needed medicines, and the lack of sick leave and retirement plans. Poverty inflicts a near-constant stress that silently assaults one's dignity, health and emotional well-being. The people of our state who struggle in these circumstances deserve our respect — and our boldest, most innovative efforts to find solutions.

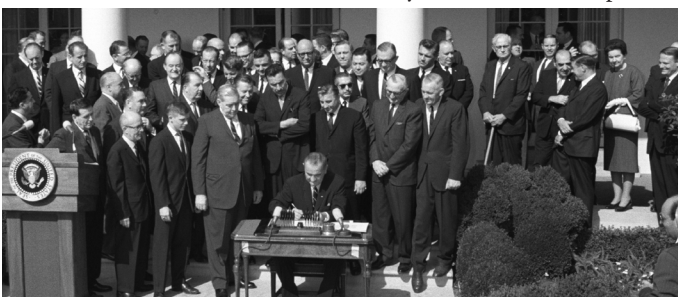

Brad Paul, Executive Director

ABOUT WISCAP

BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) is a statewide network of sixteen Community Action Agencies (CAA) and two special purpose agencies. Incorporated in 1974, WISCAP traces its origins to the historic "War on Poverty" and has throughout its history advocated for community-informed policies and greater resource mobilization for its member agencies and the people they serve.

The national network of community action – which includes over 1,000 community action agencies – reaches 99% of America's counties. WISCAP is one of 44 state associations and a member of the National Community Action Partnership.



WISCAP'S PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

- Introduction & passage of the Wisconsin Opportunity Act
- Reauthorize the federal Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG)
- Create a Wisconsin state supplement CSBG program
- Enact the federal Homeless Children and Youth Act
- Increase state funding for the Job & Business Development and Skills Enhancement Programs
- Expand state and federal resources to combat the opioid epidemic

POVERTY AWARENESS

Each year, WISCAP hosts the Poverty Matters! Conference, a statewide gathering of frontline workers, community stakeholders, low-income individuals, advocates, and multi-sectoral partners. In 2018, we partnered with WISCAP member agency the Social Development Commission in Milwaukee, bringing together over 700 participants from across the state to engage on the theme "Sharing Our Stories, Cultivating Our Solutions: Closing the Rural-Urban Divide."

HOW DO COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES & WISCAP WORK TOGETHER?

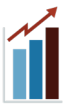
*Our **member agencies** exist to help people get out of and stay out of poverty.*

EDUCATION/SKILLS ENHANCEMENT



Education, training, and re-training have become all-important for those entering the job market and those already in the workforce.

JOB & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



The Job and Business Development (JBD) program provides low-income entrepreneurs with a variety of business development services and access to financial capital to start or expand businesses and create jobs.

ENERGY/UTILITIES



The programs operated by agencies conserve energy and conserve a low-income person's modest income. They can help people weatherize their home and pay high utility bills.

FOOD SECURITY



Thirteen of our agencies and three of our partners coordinate the distribution of millions of pounds of Federal commodities every year. They work with hundreds of food pantries, meal sites and shelters to help people access stable food sources.

HOUSING



WISCAP's member agencies produce affordable housing utilizing a number of programs. Many manage rental properties and administer homeownership and rental assistance programs.

FAMILY SUPPORT



Community Action Agencies can help parents obtain child care, parenting classes, legal services, violence prevention services and more.

HEALTH



Our agencies help thousands of people obtain health care services every year. This includes helping infants and children receive their age appropriate immunizations, medical and dental care.



Photo Credit: Community Action, Inc.

***WISCAP** is the association of 16 Community Action Agencies and two special purpose agencies.*

PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY



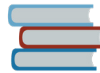
WISCAP works with our member agencies, community partners and legislators to develop innovative, comprehensive and effective solutions that increase household economic security and relieve conditions of poverty. As an agency and a network we advocate with local, state & federal government on public policy affecting low-income individuals in Wisconsin.

TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



We promote professional growth and competence of members through training. They identify their needs for training and education and throughout the year we provide opportunities for them to attend those sessions.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



WISCAP encourages, promotes, and stimulates the development of resources; which demonstrate progress toward the elimination of poverty.

POVERTY AWARENESS



Through conferences, publications, press outreach, research, and social media, we strive to increase public awareness of the struggles of low income people and solutions to poverty.

PROGRAMS



WISCAP manages the Job and Business Development Program and provides statewide administrative support to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) network.



Photo credit: Couleecap, Inc.

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS & SERVICES

	1 ADVOCAP	2 CAP Services	3 CWCAC	4 CACSCW	5 CAI	6 Couleecap	7 Indianhead	8 Lakeshore	9 Newcap	10 NCCAP	11 NWCSA	12 RKCAA	13 SDC	14 SWCAP	15 West CAP	16 WDEOC	FRH	UMOS
Education / Skills Enhancement	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Adult Literacy Skills	x	x					x			x			x		x			x
Skills Enhancement Program	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		
Financial Literacy Education	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x				x
Employment Training	x		x		x		x		x			x	x	x				x
Economic / Business Development	•	•	•			•	•		•				•	•		•		•
Business Development	x	x	x			x	x		x				x	x		x		
Business Revolving Loan Programs	x	x	x			x	x							x		x		
Energy / Utilities	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Emergency Fuel Assistance Programs			x						x						x	x		x
Weatherization Programs	x	x	x		x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x		
Telecommunications Assistance				x					x		x							
Food Security / Environmental	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Emergency Food Assistance	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		x
Community Garden Programs	x	x			x		x				x			x				
Community Meal Prgms / Holiday Baskets	x		x		x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x			
Nutrition Education	x		x		x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x				x
Housing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Transitional / Supportive / Emergency Housing	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x	x	x		x
Rental Property Management / Development	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x			x	x			
Rental Assistance Programs	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x
Homeownership Programs	x	x	x			x	x	x	x					x		x		
Foreclosure Assistance	x								x								x	
Housing Revolving Loan Fund	x	x					x	x	x					x		x	x	
Home Repair Programs	x	x				x			x				x	x		x	x	x
Headstart / Child Development	•	•					•							•		•		•
Parenting / Family Support	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Childcare Provision/Assistance/Referrals		x			x								x	x		x		x
Parenting Classes	x	x			x		x						x	x		x		
Support, Referral and Advocacy	x	x	x					x	x		x		x					
Clothing Assistance			x	x	x	x	x				x			x		x		
Fatherhood Initiative	x	x			x							x	x			x		x
Violence Prevention/Victim Services	x	x					x						x					x
Legal Services											x		x					x
Physical / Mental Health	•	•			•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Women's Health									x			x		x				
Health Education	x				x		x		x		x	x	x	x				
MA/WIC Programs											x	x		x				
AODA / Mental Health		x				x	x	x					x	x				
Dental Programs														x				
Home Healthcare							x											
Refugee / Migrant Services		•												•				•
Senior Services	•	•	•		•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Tax Preparation Assistance		•									•		•					
Transportation	•	•	•			•			•					•	•	•		•
Car Purchase Programs	x	x	x			x			x					x	x	x		
Youth and Young Adult Services	•	•	•		•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Education Skills	x		x		x		x		x	x			x			x		x
Fresh Start	x				x											x		
Mentoring Program					x		x		x	x			x	x				x
Juvenile Justice / Violence Prevention					x								x					x
Homeless / Runaway Programs		x							x		x							
Employment / Living Skills	x		x		x		x		x			x	x					x

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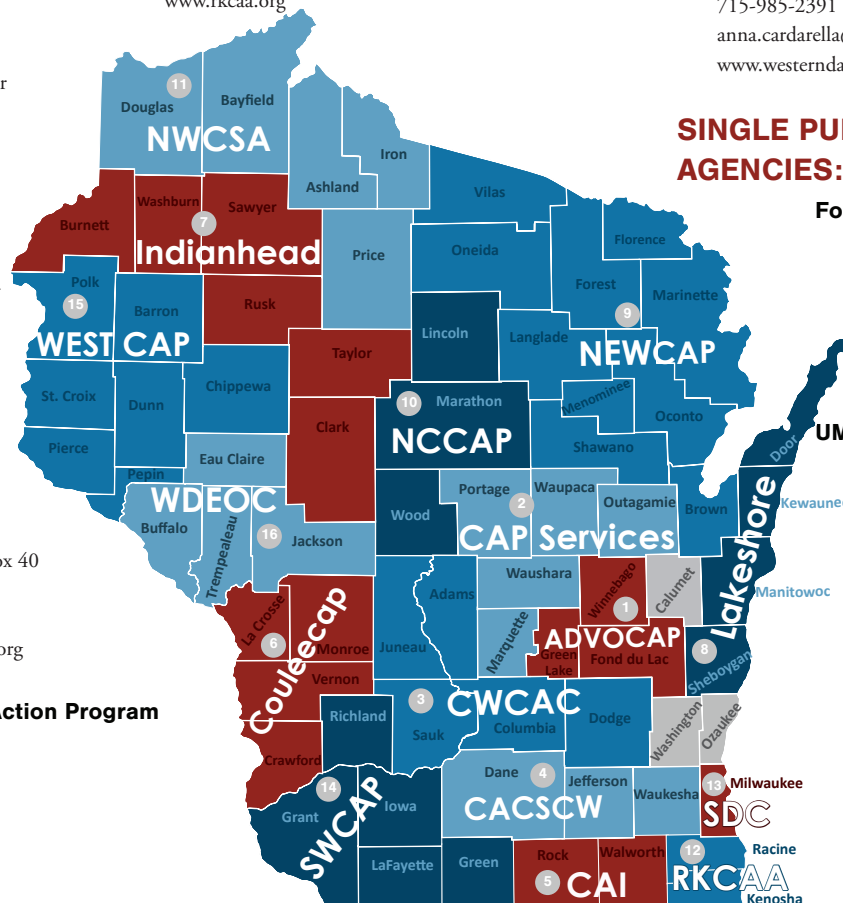
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STORIES

COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.



Darnell faced numerous transportation barriers over the course of two years. He owned two unreliable vehicles that broke down constantly and large areas of Walworth County lack public transportation. This often forced Darnell, his wife Kissa, and their eight-year-old daughter to walk in the unpredictable Wisconsin weather for many of their basic errands. In addition, the family was spending a

disproportionate amount of money on a carpool just to get to work.

Through a friend, Darnell learned about the Work-N-Wheels program at Community Action Inc. of Rock & Walworth Counties (CAI). During the application process Darnell demonstrated an ability to monitor his expenses and properly budget his income. He was approved and within only a few months of applying, he was driving a reliable vehicle.

Darnell thanks CAI staff for giving “great, reliable advice” during the process of the loan. Although life can be as unpredictable as the weather in Wisconsin, Darnell and his family are an example of hard work, patience, and a little faith paying off.

NORTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

Ted was the owner of a thriving small business in the Marshfield community. But when the housing market crashed he lost his business and his home life spiraled out of control. When Ted came to North Central Community Action Program (NCCAP) he was homeless and struggling with a methamphetamine addiction. He was sleeping between garages and a storage unit where he stored his belongings.

Eventually, Ted was able to enter NCCAP’s Transitional Housing Program. There NCCAP staff worked with Ted to connect him to Food Share, Badger Care, and address other basic needs. With a NCCAP case worker’s help, he began to get his life back on track; first seeking mental health support and dealing with a pending felony charge related to possession of methamphetamines and drug paraphernalia. Ted saw an AODA & Mental Health counselor, completed the required court assessment, and began to work the four phases of the Drug Court Program.

The Transitional Housing Program allowed Ted to recover and gain sobriety. The stability and assistance the program offered helped Ted: obtain his Driver’s License; reestablish relationships with family; hold down a job, pay past bills off; volunteer at a community site, open a savings account; purchase a car; secure auto insurance; complete welding classes; and start to write and play music, something he had previously done. He also completed the Drug Court Program in 18 months.

Within two years, Ted exited from NCCAP’s Transitional Housing program and into his own home. He has since maintained steady employment at a living wage and now leads multiple AA meetings. Additionally, he is still an active volunteer at the local Community Arts Center and serves on the NCCAP board of directors, representing one of the board’s low-income designations. Ted looks forward to enrolling in school to become an AODA counselor.

ADVOCAP

Arletta Re’nea Allen discovered ADVOCAP when she and her four sons were living in a local shelter. ADVOCAP was able to provide Arletta and her family with rental assistance and individualized case management to help secure stable housing. In addition, her children were enrolled in the ADVOCAP Head Start program, which she credits for successfully preparing them for school.



Given the opportunity, Arletta actively engaged with her case manager and the family received support from ADVOCAP staff, local support groups, and community resources. They ultimately lived in three different rentals through ADVOCAP’s affordable housing options, including an agency-owned rental and the Section 8 program. Over the last 18 months in the program, Arletta was paying 100 percent of the rent. At the same time, the agency’s Fresh Start program had been building a new four-bedroom, two bath home. ADVOCAP’s Affordable Housing Director approached Arletta and asked if she had interest in buying the house. Arletta said, “My boys and I drive by that house every day on the way to school. I told them that someday we would live there! Do you think we really can?” That same year, the family closed on the house.

From the beginning, Arletta set high goals for herself, and set an example for her children to do the same. She landed a job in the banking sector with the goal of returning to school to obtain a degree, which she did after enrolling and graduating from a two-year Leadership Development program at Moraine Park Technical School. She then enrolled in a 4-year bachelor’s degree program at Marian College. In May 2019 she graduated with a degree in Organizational Communication and a minor in Business. She is the first person in her family to graduate from college and the first to own her own home. Arletta is now working with the ADVOCAP Business Development Department to start her own business.

Arletta credits ADVOCAP and the wider Fond du Lac community for the support they gave her family. She is returning this support by giving back, volunteering for the African American Partnership, the Women’s Fund, Boys N Girls Club, Feed 100 Families, Life Enforcement and the School Supply Program.



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Front cover attribution

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