

# Wisconsin Community Action

## *2005 Annual Report*



**Wisconsin Community Action Program Association**

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# Community Action....creating local op

WISCAP is the statewide voluntary association of Wisconsin's 16 Community Action Agencies, which are officially designated in 69 counties, and 3 special purpose agencies with statewide anti-poverty missions: the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, the Foundation for Rural Housing, and the United Migrant Opportunity Services.

Every year, the Community Action Network analyzes community needs to identify strategies that will work best in attacking poverty; with a full-scale 'community needs assessment' every three years to identify major poverty problems and needs of local residents and their communities. Each association member is unique because its programs reflect the needs of their local communities which are prioritized by their Board. Because the problems of poverty are complex, so, too must be the solutions. These agencies are unique in their ability to deploy diverse program activities and services in meeting their mission.

## 428,432

### very low-income and working poor residents of Wisconsin turned to Community Action for help in 2005!

#### Of those residents....

- 25% have no health insurance
- 13% are over 55.
- 49% are children.
- 57% are female.
- 55% are white.
- 45% are people of color.
- 95% live in households withof the poverty threshold.
- 75% were very poor and live in households with incomes less than the US Federal Poverty Threshold.

To address the problems of poverty and create economic opportunity, Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies & Special Purpose Agencies mobilized \$172 Million in federal, state, local and private resources.

\$112 million - Federal

\$28 million - State

\$21.8 million - Private

\$10 million - Local

## Communities in Action.....

### Energy & Home Weatherization

Weatherizing a home is more important today than ever for a low-income family seeking self-sufficiency. During the past year, energy bills – on average – rose more than 23% and, for those with less than 150% of the federal poverty income, this increase was magnified even more. Wisconsin's CAAs met this challenge in the past year, weatherizing or rehabilitating more than 5,000 dwelling units. CAA weatherization accounted for over 60% of all units weatherized in the state during 2005. Weatherizing a home in Wisconsin will produce an average savings on energy bills of \$230 per household per year. Since 1995, the CAA network has weatherized more than 30,000 homes, resulting in an annual energy cost savings of \$6.9 million! CAAs also provided fuel assistance and help with utility payments to over 30,000 households.



### Helping Rural Communities

Since 1992, WISCAP's Rural Community Assistance Program has provided training and on-site technical assistance to small, low or moderate income, rural communities on matters and issues related to water and wastewater systems development. Over 300 towns, villages and sanitary districts have been served to date. In addition, WISCAP is partnering with Northwest Community Services Agency in expanding community and economic development efforts in Bayfield, Ashland and Iron Counties. During 2005, RCAP staff provided assistance to 40 communities implementing water/wastewater system projects. WISCAP's Tribal Circuit Rider Program provides water/wastewater training and technical assistance to Wisconsin's 11 Tribes.





# portunities for economic self-sufficiency

## Skills Enhancement Program and Job Opportunities

During late 2005 WISCAP and eleven member agencies expanded the Skills Enhancement Program, which will assist 480 working poor individuals to gain new job skills in order to increase their earned income by an average of \$4.00 per hour and gain access to employer-sponsored health insurance. In other employment and training programs, the Community Action Network assisted about 1,500 unemployed individuals to obtain jobs. Another 718 obtained job skills, 248 obtained certificates for a GED/HSED/AB5 and 159 completed post-secondary education.



## Food Security & Health

In 2005, 13 CAAs distributed nearly 6 million pounds of surplus food commodities worth over \$3 million dollars to 228 food pantries, meal sites and shelters in 69 counties. The pantries served an average of 88,000 low-income people each month, while meal sites & shelters served an average of 78,000 meals each month! CAAs and WISCAP obtained hundreds of thousands of pounds of additional food from other sources and linked families to other key assistance programs. All 16 CAAs implemented special health & nutrition projects with \$150,000 in funding from the WI Department of Justice that benefited thousands of low-income households in 65 counties. In addition, SDC's Youth Food Programs served over 2 million meals and snacks to Milwaukee children attending summer food sites, after school programs, Head Start and family day care homes. WISCAP, CAP Services & West CAP continued their partnership with DHFS to develop the ACCESS website ([access.wi.gov](http://access.wi.gov)), a project that enables families to check their eligibility for health & nutrition programs via the internet, then apply for and manage those benefits online. Almost 9,000 people were assisted in gaining access to health or dental care.



## Affordable Housing

WISCAP's statewide network provides a multitude of housing-related services. Our member agencies own and operate over 600 units of affordable housing and manage an additional 1,000 units. In 2005, CAAs helped over 200 families purchase a home and counseled another 100 families in the prevention of mortgage defaults. Through weatherization and other housing rehabilitation activities, just under a half million dollars in increased assessed value of low-income housing was created in the average community, to the benefit of the household and the local tax base. Our network works to ameliorate homelessness through active participation in local 'continuum of care' efforts which are funded by the State of Wisconsin. CAAs provided services to over 5,200 homeless individuals.



## Creating Jobs and Businesses

The Wisconsin Community Action Network provided entrepreneurial training and business development services creating 1,579 new businesses and 5,045 new jobs in Wisconsin since 1989! A total of 63 businesses and over 155 jobs were created in 2005. Agencies provide entrepreneurs with access to a wide range of services including business training and technical assistance, access to loan funds and financial assistance, a lease/purchase program, and two nationally recognized technology-driven initiatives: a Virtual Business Incubator (at [www.vbi.biz](http://www.vbi.biz)) and online e-commerce opportunities at [www.wisconsincommonmarket.com](http://www.wisconsincommonmarket.com).



## Head Start & Child Development

Seven CAAs provided Head Start child development services to nearly 11,538 pre-school age children and their families during 2005. In addition, these and other CAAs provided childcare, helped 1,135 parents improve their parenting skills, literacy skills training and other services to help low-income families. WISCAP and the Wisconsin Head Start Association are working together to promote collaborations between CAAs and Head Start Programs throughout our State.



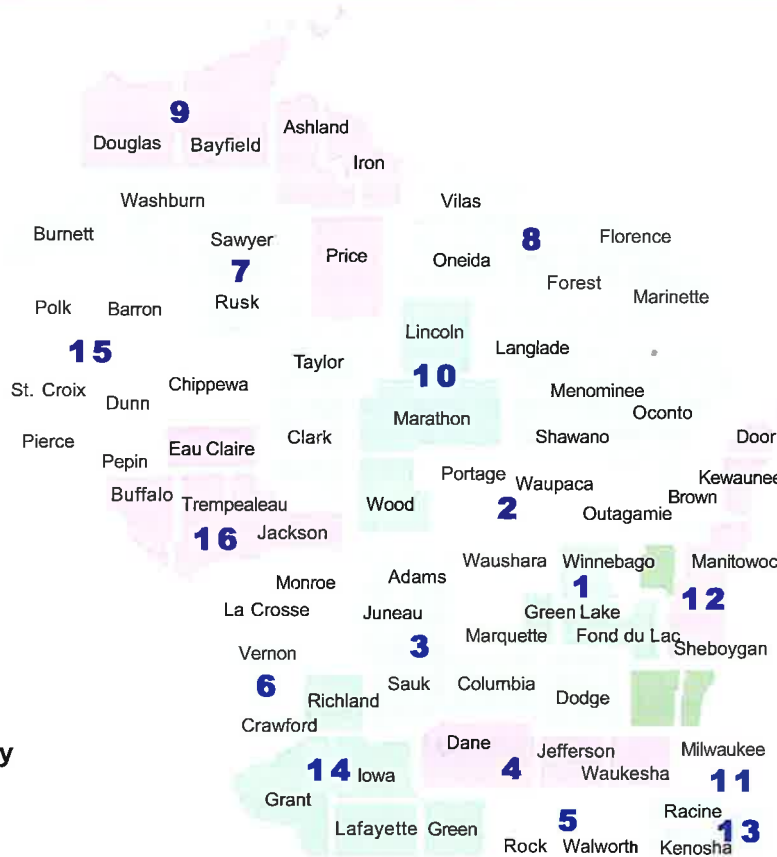
## Financial Education & Tax Credits

Over the past several years, the network has helped more than 1,100 low-income families and individuals open an Individual Development Account (IDA) at participating financial institutions in Wisconsin. These families have deposited more than \$1 Million of their personal savings into their IDAs. Over 1,000 families have "invested" their IDA into the purchase of a home, the start-up of a business, the pursuit of a degree or invested in other "assets"! During 2005, several CAAs provided budget counseling, financial literacy training or tax information and assistance to over 10,000 individuals.



# The Wisconsin Community Action Network

## Community Action Agencies



- 1** **ADVOCAP, Inc**  
Michael Bonertz  
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19 W. First St.  
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- 2** **CAP Services, Inc.**  
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- 3** **Central WI Community Action Council**  
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- 9** **Northwest Community Services Agency**  
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- 10** **North Central Community Action Program**  
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- 11** **Social Development Commission**  
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- 13** **Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency**  
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**15** **West Central Community Action Agency**  
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**16** **Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council**  
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## Special Purpose Agencies (Statewide)

### Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups

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### Foundation for Rural Housing, Inc.

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### United Migrant Opportunity Services

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