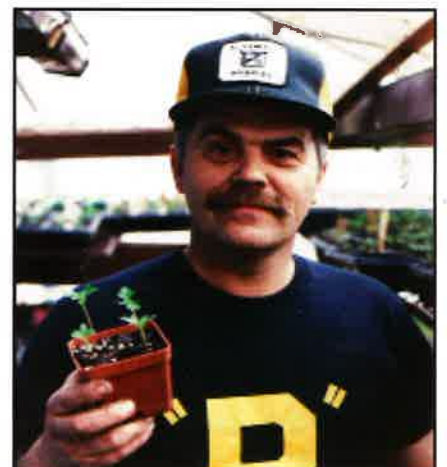


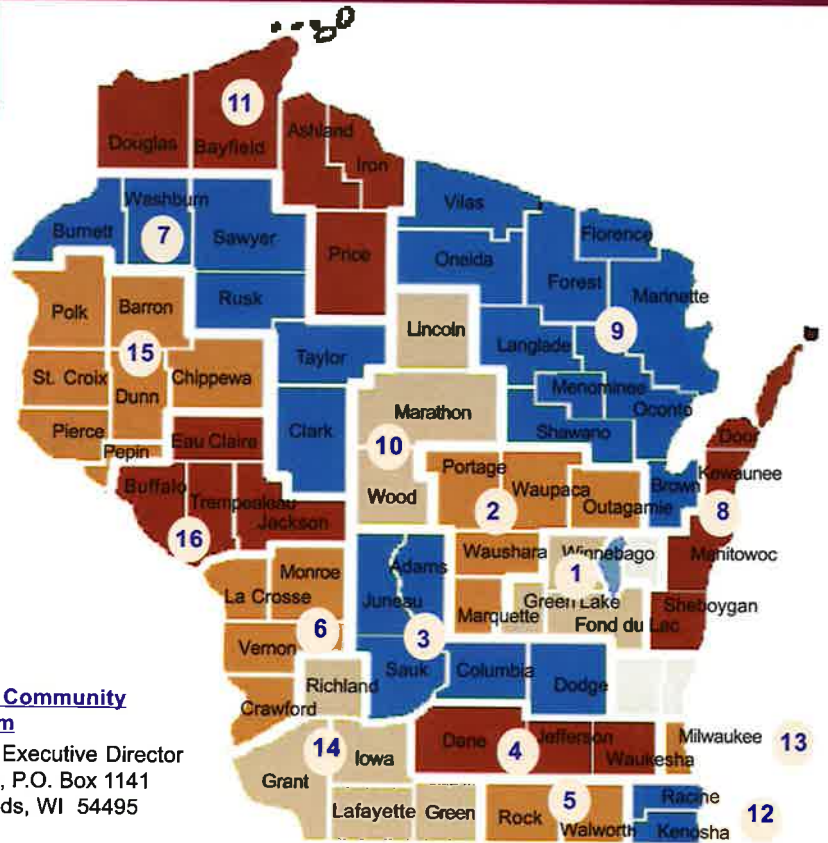


# Community Action in Wisconsin

*Creating Local Opportunities for Economic Self-Sufficiency*



# The Wisconsin Community Action Network



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## 16. [Western Dairyland Community Action Agency](#)

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# Poverty in Wisconsin

About 600,000 residents in Wisconsin live in poverty. Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) believes that all of us are vulnerable to poverty and that the costs and consequences of poverty have significant effects on everyone, whether poor or not. Poverty is the cause of unnecessary and preventable suffering among millions of Americans and thousands of Wisconsinites of all ages. The economic and social costs are enormous. We believe there are cost-effective solutions to poverty. Through efforts that create jobs that pay living wages with benefits, affordable housing, affordable health care, and education we can eliminate poverty. Please refer to our website, [www.wiscap.org](http://www.wiscap.org), for our report "Poverty Matters: Facing Poverty in Wisconsin" and more information on community action.

## How Do Community Action Agencies Help?

Every year, Community Action Agencies analyze their community's 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 agency is unique because its programs reflect the needs of their local communities which are prioritized by their local Board of Directors. These agencies are unique in their ability to deploy diverse program activities and services in meeting their mission.

In 2007...  
**302,151**  
very low-income and  
working poor residents of  
Wisconsin turned to  
Community Action  
for help!

### Of those residents...

- 77% are at or below the federal poverty level.
- 37% have no health insurance
- 12% are over 55.
- 45% are children.
- 58% are female.
- 71% are white.
- 29% are people of color.

To address the problems of poverty and create economic opportunity, Wisconsin's Community Action Agencies & Special Purpose Agencies mobilized \$196 Million in federal, state, local and private resources.

\$127 million - Federal    \$32 million - State    \$25 million - Private    \$12 million - Local

## 2007 Program Highlights

### 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. Towns, villages, and sanitary districts have received help with over 300 projects to date. During 2007, RCAP staff provided assistance to 23 communities implementing 28 water/wastewater system projects. WISCAP's Tribal Circuite Rider Program provides assistance to all 11 Wisconsin tribes. The WISCAP Watershed Initiative works with the Bad River and Red Cliff tribes, the Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency and the Bad River Watershed Association to improve water quality in the 1,092 square mile Bad River watershed area.



### Skills Enhancement

The Skills Enhancement Program helps low-wage workers obtain better paying jobs and improved access to employer health care by paying the tuition & fees, child care and transportation expenses so they can attend classes. Additionally, Skills Enhancement provides families with supportive services like personalized training plans, case management, referral and job search assistance. In the first 20 months of the program 11 CAAs enrolled 612 low-wage workers. Ninety percent of enrollees were women; 80% were single parents. The first 100 Skills graduates have experienced dramatic results – doubling their average incomes, and increasing their average earnings by over \$10,000 a year! Graduates' annual incomes have collectively increased by \$1 million a year. In addition, 70% of Skills graduates gained access to employer-sponsored health care – a 400% increase over their rate before entering the program. Skills Enhancement has proven to be a cost-effective investment that directly improves the economic self-sufficiency of Wisconsin's working poor.



## Affordable Housing

Long targeted by Wisconsin's CAAs as a priority need for helping low-income households towards economic opportunity, the problem of affordable housing grew to become even more relevant during 2007. Our member agencies were ready to step in, addressing many of the myriad problems associated with finding a safe and affordable home: growing foreclosures and burdensome sub-prime mortgages, a disconnect between income and rental costs, the need for more and better housing adaptable to community and employment needs, and homelessness. Member agencies, in 2007, helped nearly 4,000 persons obtain safe and affordable housing. They were responsible for the creation of 199 new safe and affordable housing units, continued to own, operate or manage over 1,500 units and, through rehabilitation efforts and weatherization, helped to preserve and improve over 5,500 dwellings. CAAs also helped 224 low-income individuals purchase a home and helped 39 households save their homes from foreclosure. Member agencies, actively participating in local 'continuum of care' programs designed to serve homeless populations and help them toward permanent housing, provided 2,006 households with temporary shelter and related support services during the year



## Energy & Home Weatherization

Wisconsin has, on a per capita basis, the largest low-income weatherization program in the nation – and CAAs are the primary provider of weatherization services to eligible households in our state. In 2007, CAAs weatherized 5,869 dwelling units, helping families to save, on average, over \$230 on their annual heating bills. The savings are repeated and magnified every year, directly helping to give a 'hand up', not a 'hand out' to low-income households. And, in these times of growing awareness on the need for conservation and improved energy efficiency, Wisconsin's low-income weatherization program is one of the state's single largest existing initiatives to save energy. Weatherization provides low-income households served by CAAs the opportunity to use as much as 15% less energy. Seven CAAs contract with their local county government to directly provide energy bill payment assistance to eligible low-income households. In 2007, these agencies, serving ten counties, provided over 154,000 persons with one-time bill payment assistance and provided crisis payments to an additional 19,332 households. Together, these efforts provided just under \$30 million in financial assistance to low-income households struggling to keep the power on and stay warm and healthy in their homes.



## Food Security

Thirteen CAAs distributed over 4.8 million pounds of federal commodities worth nearly \$2.4 million dollars to network of 235 participating food pantries, meal sites and shelters in 69 counties during 2007. Food pantries served a monthly average of 101,000 people, while meal sites and shelters served a monthly average of 81,000 meals. Food pantries in the network distributed an additional 16 million pounds of privately donated or purchased food to low-income households for a total distribution of 21 million pounds. Thirteen CAAs and three partner agencies distributed free vegetable seed packs to 6,000 food pantry households to grow home gardens. The Social Development Commission's Youth Food Program served over 2 million meals and snacks to Milwaukee children and the Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc.'s successful CAC Gleaners program distributed over 1 million pounds of prepared and perishable food in Dane County. Community Action representatives contributed to planning the Food Security Consortium's 1<sup>st</sup> Hunger Summit attended by 200 people.



## Creating Jobs & Businesses

The Wisconsin Community Action Network has been providing entrepreneurial training and business development services since 1989 through the Job & Business Development Program (JBD). Since that date JBD has created 1,720 new businesses and 5,248 new jobs with federal, state and private funding. In 2007 alone 11 CAAs operating the JBD program created 79 new businesses and 104 new jobs. Agencies provide low-income entrepreneurs with access to varied services including technical assistance to develop business, financial and marketing plans, access to grant and loan funds, business incubators, and a lease/purchase program. In addition, some CAAs assist existing businesses to expand, creating better paying jobs for hundreds of formerly low-wage workers. Two agencies maintain nationally recognized internet-based initiatives: an online Virtual Business Incubator, [www.vbi.biz](http://www.vbi.biz), and an online e-commerce marketplace at [www.wisconsincommonmarket.com](http://www.wisconsincommonmarket.com)



## Head Start & Youth Development

Seven CAAs provided Head Start child development services to 7,474 pre-school age children and their families during 2007. In addition, 7,017 adolescents and teens participated in youth development programs. WISCAP and the Wisconsin Head Start Association work together to promote collaborations between CAAs and Head Start Programs throughout our state.





# CAA Programs & Services

Program	ADVOCAP	CAP Services	CWCAC	CACSCW, Inc.	CA, Inc.	CouleeCap	Indianhead	Lakeshore	NEWCAP	North Central	Northwest	R/K CAA	SDC	Southwest	West CAP	WDEOC	CWAG	FRH	UMOS
<b>Housing</b>	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Transitional Housing/Homeless Shelters	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*
Rental Property Management/Development	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*			*
Rent Payment Assistance/Section 8			*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*		*	*			*	
Homeownership Programs	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*				*	*	*	*	*		*
Lead Abatement		*	*				*					*		*		*			
Home Repair Programs	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*		*	*
<b>Energy</b>	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	
Emergency Fuel Assistance Programs	*		*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*			*		*	
Weatherization Programs	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*			
<b>Food Security/Environmental</b>	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆			◆
Emergency Food Assistance	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*			*
Community Garden Programs	*			*			*		*	*		*		*	*	*			
Community Meal Prgms/Holiday Baskets	*		*	*			*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*			
Nutrition Education			*			*					*	*		*	*	*			
<b>Economic/Business Development</b>	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆			◆
Business Development	*	*	*			*	*		*					*	*	*			*
Business Revolving Loan Programs	*	*	*			*	*							*	*	*			*
Financial Literacy Education	*		*	*		*	*						*	*	*	*			*
Tax Assistance		*				*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*			*
<b>Education/Skills Enhancement</b>	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆			◆
Literacy Skills	*					*	*		*	*			*						*
Skills Enhancement Program	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*
Employment Training	*		*			*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*			*
<b>Physical/Mental Health</b>		◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆			◆
Women's Health				*					*					*		*			*
MA/WIC Programs									*	*	*	*		*		*			*
AODA/Mental Health		*	*			*		*					*						*
Dental Programs		*												*		*			*
Home Healthcare						*													*
<b>Parenting/Family Support</b>	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
Childcare Care/ Assistance/Referrals	*	*		*				*				*				*			*
Parenting Classes	*	*				*		*				*	*			*	*		*
Clothing Assistance				*		*	*	*		*	*	*		*		*			*
Violence Prevention/Victim Services	*	*					*						*			*	*		*
Legal Services						*			*	*	*								*
<b>Youth Services</b>	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
Education Skills	*	*	*	*		*	*		*	*		*	*	*		*			*
Fresh Start	*	*		*		*	*									*			*
Mentoring Program						*	*				*						*		*
Juvenile Justice/Violence Prevention		*					*				*		*			*	*		*
Homeless/Runaway Programs		*																	*
Employment/Livings Skills			*			*	*	*		*									*
<b>Headstart/Child Development</b>	◆	◆					◆					◆	◆	◆		◆			◆
<b>Transportation</b>			◆		◆	◆	◆			◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆			◆
Car Purchase Programs			*		*						*		*	*	*	*			*
<b>Senior Services</b>	◆		◆		◆	◆		◆	◆		◆		◆	◆		◆	◆		◆
<b>Refugee/Migrant Services</b>	◆	◆	◆						◆										◆

# What is WISCAP?

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association is the statewide voluntary association of Wisconsin's 16 Community Action Agencies 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.

The Association was incorporated on March 1, 1974 with the intent of its members that the cause of economic self-sufficiency for Wisconsin's low-income households would be strengthened by working together on issues of policy, resource mobilization, training & development and advocacy.

For over 30 years, WISCAP has served the needs of its member agencies through various ways: helping to identify and sponsor professional training in anti-poverty areas, facilitating quarterly meetings of Community Action Agency leadership staff and board members, serving as a conduit for resource development needs of its members, advocating for public policy conducive to the locally-developed goals of its member agencies and advocating for laws, rules and regulations which support economic opportunity efforts, community development, and locally-designed strategies and procedures.

WISCAP is organized as a private non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the Executive Director from each of its member agencies. Core funding for WISCAP is provided through member agency dues. Program and training funds are provided in part by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Federal Office of Community Services, Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Wisconsin Community Action Program Association

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The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association is a proud member of the Community Action Partnership. To learn more about CAP, please visit their website at [www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com).

## Vision 20/20

We believe that poverty matters and that we can do something about it! WISCAP and the Wisconsin Head Start Association together with the Wisconsin Council on Children & Families are joining forces to call for an end to child poverty by the year 2020.



Join us to end poverty! Find out more about the Vision 20/20 campaign and how to become involved in local and statewide efforts by visiting