

## **Fighting poverty: Putting the Community Services Block Grant and Minnesota Community Action Grant to use**

The Community Services Block Grant and Minnesota Community Action Grant promote economic security and help break the cycle of poverty by providing funding for services, support and skill development, and information to Minnesotans with low incomes. The Minnesota Department of Human Services issues these funds to 24 Community Action Agencies and 11 tribal governments that are designated as eligible entities in the federal Community Services Block Grant Act.

### **Delivering a broad range of services**

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The statewide network of 24 Community Action Agencies and 11 tribal governments deliver services throughout Minnesota. Grant funds are used to focus local, state, private and federal resources on supporting families and individuals with low incomes to attain the skills, knowledge and motivation to become economically secure. In Federal Fiscal Year 2017, \$7.6 million in federal Community Services Block Grant and \$3.9 million in Minnesota Community Action Grant funding provided core resources for Community Action Agency programs.

Community Action Agencies are locally governed nonprofits. Community members with low incomes make up at least one-third of each of the Community Action Agencies governing boards, with local elected officials and representatives from the private sector comprising the balance of the board.

Each agency assesses needs, establishes priorities, determines strategies to respond to poverty issues, and delivers a broad range of services and activities with a measurable impact on poverty. Services target the following broad areas: Employment, education, income management, housing and homelessness, emergency services, food and nutrition, self-sufficiency, health and connections with the community.

### **Achieving goals**

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Community Action Agency grantees participate in Results Oriented Management and Accountability, a performance-based initiative that promotes greater effectiveness and demonstrates Community Action results. Created in 1994 and enhanced in 2016, this system is guided by three strategic goals.

- Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
- Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
- People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

### **Making a difference in Minnesotans' lives**

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In Federal Fiscal Year 2017, Community Action Agencies:

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- Served 440,100 people and 172,600 families with low incomes, and produced a wide spectrum of outcomes (see [2019 Minnesota Community Action Annual Report](#) for detailed outcome information)
- Engaged more than 20,500 community volunteers in nearly 1.8 million hours of volunteer service
- Leveraged, with Community Services Block Grant and Community Action Grant funding, nearly \$297 million in other program funding, including Head Start, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Weatherization Assistance Program, employment and training, transportation, and food and nutrition services
- Served seniors aged 55 and older, who made up 24% of those served.

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For accessible formats of this publication or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to [dhs.info@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.info@state.mn.us), call 651-431-4000, or use your preferred relay service.

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