# Community Action, Inc. of Rock and Walworth Counties
## Strategic Plan, 2012 - 2015

**Our focus is to eliminate barriers to economic self-reliance. We will work to abolish longstanding cultural and environmental barriers that inhibit the growth and prosperity of the people we serve.**

**Mission**
At Community Action (CAI) we provide access and opportunity for those we serve and those who support our efforts. Through innovative programs and strong community partnerships we eliminate barriers, establishing clear pathways to economic self-reliance.

**Vision**
We fully leverage the commitment, talents and resources of our Board, staff and partners to ensure that individuals and families living in or close to poverty have access to the opportunities that enable them to pursue and achieve self-reliance. In doing our work we consistently affirm and cultivate the inherent potential of those we serve. We firmly believe in the capabilities of our participants and create programs that offer a ladder up, not a hand out. We understand our neighborhoods and communities will thrive only when all members have access to opportunities. We recognize that opportunity is not available equally in our communities and institutional barriers can be a road block to self-reliance. We have the courage to challenge policies and practices, within CAI and our communities, to ensure we are effective and accountable to those we are intended to serve.

**Values**
Strength and Interests of People - We believe that all people desire access to resources that will allow them to meet their basic needs. We believe people want access to opportunities that will empower them to reach their full potential. We believe each and every person possesses an array of strengths and that opportunities always exist to build upon those strengths.

Listening and Learning - The people we serve are our most knowledgeable resource. We will only be effective if we successfully engage and listen to them as we work with them to address the issues that impact their lives.

Relationships – Strong working relationships are critical to our success and these relationships must be built on a foundation of honesty, compassion and respect.

Dignity –We are sensitive to the beliefs, needs and capabilities of our culturally diverse customers and staff.

Collaboration – We recognize that developing partnerships and building collaborations are essential to building effective solutions and high quality programs.

Flexibility – We believe that real change can best be achieved when we challenge ourselves and the systems in which we work, to be creative and flexible.

Development –We have an environment that provides support, resources, and opportunities for high staff achievement.

Accountability – We understand that resources are scarce and the needs in our communities are great. We therefore believe we have an obligation to be good stewards and to utilize our resources strategically and thoughtfully.

**The Work Continues……**

**Outlined in the coming language of this plan are new core goals, core outcome measures and strategies for the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. What is hopefully not lost in the new language is the ultimate objective of moving families to economic self-reliance. Eliminating barriers to education and family sustaining employment, access to safe and affordable housing, quality childcare and preventative healthcare remain paramount in our service to the community.**

**Our commitments proclaimed in the previous strategic plan; completing the Merrill Housing Initiative, expanding the accessibility of First Choice, and the commitment to diversify our funding sources, just to name a few, carry over into the new Strategic Plan. The work of eliminating barriers to economic self-reliance continues. (See Addendum for a list of Continuing Priorities)**

**Program Framework**
**Client Niche**
The programs of Community Action will strive to effectively serve those individuals and families most likely to be living in poverty, including racial and ethnic minorities and single-parent households. We will also work to serve those families with multiple barriers to employment and sufficiency and those who are under- or unsuccessfully served by traditional mainstream systems.

**Self-Sufficiency Focus**
We acknowledge that poverty-related work can include assisting families to meet their basic needs; assisting families in working their way from poverty to self-sufficiency and challenging and supporting the work of communities to change the underlying conditions that cause poverty. Community Action is committed to investing most heavily on devising solutions that will effectively move individuals and families to self-sufficiency.

**Defining Self-Sufficiency**
Self-sufficiency includes having the capacity to meet the basic emotional, physical and financial needs of a household/family. For the purposes of our work we will define the income needed to achieve self-sufficiency as 200% of the federal poverty level.

**Building Self-Sufficiency: Our Beliefs and Programming Framework**
Self-sufficiency is a journey. The length of the journey depends on the individual, their community, their natural supports and the available resources to assist along the way.

## Core Goals

1. We will strengthen and enhance our service delivery system to ensure that programs effectively support constituents throughout Rock and Walworth Counties to achieve self-reliance.
2. We will build our financial strength with an emphasis on building discretionary financial resources and establishing self-sustaining program models.
3. We will provide culturally competent service delivery and serve as a role model for our community by promoting the importance of cultural competence within other organizations as a means to eliminate barriers that inhibit progress towards economic self-reliance.
4. We will provide an inclusive workplace environment that promotes lifelong learning, mutual respect and accountability for all employees.

## Core Outcome Measures

1. We will assist 100 families annually to achieve economic self-reliance
2. We will increase our private donor base by 25% by 2015
3. We will secure $600,000 in private donations annually by 2015
4. Every level of our organization will reflect the demographics of the communities we serve

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

## Goal #1

**We will strengthen our service delivery system to ensure that programs effectively support constituents throughout Rock and Walworth Counties to achieve self-reliance.**

**Strategy #1**

**We will incorporate Evidenced-Based and Best Practice Standards in our program design, service delivery and program evaluation models to ensure program quality and effectiveness.**

- Identify current gaps in service delivery
- Review staffing model and identify any gaps in staffing
- Ensure policies and procedures are in place and capture both regulatory requirements and quality practice standards
- Research and incorporate program models that ensure clients receive the best service possible.
- Provide ongoing training/education for staff on best practice models and concepts
- Utilize Best Practices to ensure objectivity when working with clients
    - Ensure that program implementation is faithful to the certified model (Fidelity)
- Integrate ongoing Feedback Mechanisms
    - Consumer Feedback
    - Outcome Measures
    - Internal Quality Controls
- Enhance agency-wide data-gathering strategies to enable the organization to measure program effectiveness.
    - Adopt standards and utilize established evaluation tools to measure program success.
    - Identify and implement a data tracking system that meets internal and external demands
    - Provide training so that staff are comfortable and competent in using the system
    - Explore/Develop procedures for sharing client data among programs

**Strategy #2**

**We will ensure continuation of key programs and build collaborations to enhance the service delivery system in rural communities, specifically Walworth County and outlying communities in Rock County.**

- Continue programs deemed critical to rural delivery system.
- Develop strategies to increase access and utilization of CAI programs
    - Build community/client advisory groups
- Explore service models and collaborations to provide access with specific attention to providing dental care options and access to affordable housing and family sustaining wages.
- Work with the schools to enhance educational opportunities for poor and minority youth

**Strategy #3**

**Enhance community engagement, particularly with non-traditional poverty partners (including consumers and employers) to build creative and collaborative poverty solutions.**

- Capitalize on opportunities to develop pilot projects to meet targeted needs
- Formalize collaborations to enhance service delivery systems
- Increase and strengthen relationships with employers to support and enhance self-sufficiency goals

## Building Blocks to Program Excellence

**Goal #2**

**We will build our financial strength with an emphasis on building discretionary financial resources and establishing self-sustaining program models.**

**Strategy #1**

**We will sustain our financial strength by focusing on accountability including effectively managing existing resources and future grant opportunities.**

- Ensure continuation of key funding streams and creatively manage those resources to achieve goals related to service delivery
- Work collaboratively with area service providers to secure and manage grant funding
- Explore and integrate self-sustaining and revenue generating service delivery models

**Strategy #2**

**We will enhance agency visibility and increase access to discretionary resources in order to support and sustain programming.**

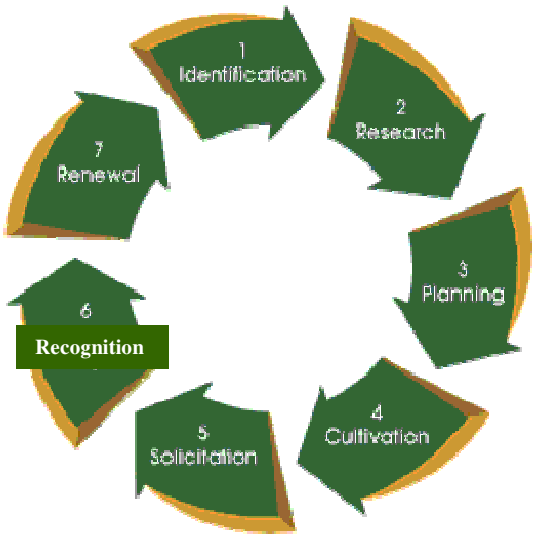
- Leverage both our work and evolving partnerships to build our reputation and fund development opportunities
  - Create opportunities to publicly recognize and acknowledge non-traditional poverty partners
  - Create opportunities to connect donors to direct needs of participants
- Utilize technology as a marketing a fund development tool by implementing e-fundraising and e-newsletter communication strategies and continually maintaining an up-to-date website

**Strategy #3**

**We will increase our private fund development capacity**

- Increase private donor base including the number of individual, corporate and foundation donors, as well the total dollars raised
  - Review Planning & Development staffing and job descriptions and identify any gaps in staffing.
  - Develop and implement strategies to increase individual giving by 2013
  - Create a donor recognition plan by 2013
  - Research, develop and implement a Planned Giving Program by 2014
  - Utilize social media outlets to increase donor participation
- Engage the Board in Fund Development activities
  - Enhance the capacity of the Board to act as effective ambassadors
  - Leverage existing relationships of Board members to establish strong fundraising committees in both counties
  - Utilize Board members to "open doors" to prospective donors
  - Track Board connections to prospects and develop a method for tracking their contacts with these prospects

## Fundraising Cycle




**Goal #3**

**We will provide culturally competent service delivery and serve as a role model for our community by promoting the importance of cultural competence as a means to eliminate barriers that inhibit progress towards economic self-reliance.**

**Strategy #1**

**We will develop standards of cultural competency to enhance our work environment for all employees**

- Identify additional and continuing strategies for building and supporting cultural competence
- Incorporate cultural competence as a performance standard for employees
- Provide ongoing training and educational opportunities for staff

**Strategy #2**

**We will improve our outreach to consumers from racial, ethnic and cultural minority groups**

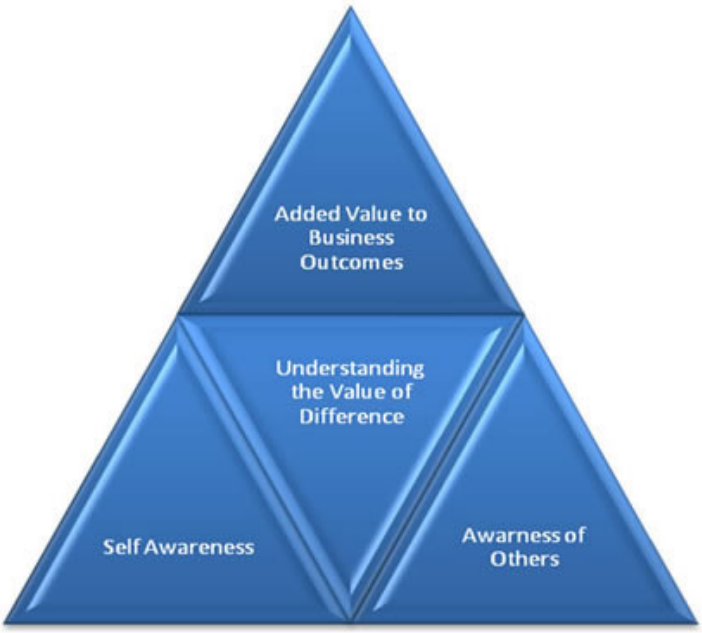
- Diversify the membership of our Consumer Advisory Board
- Increase usage of the language line and translate materials as appropriate
- Develop and implement targeted marketing campaigns to traditionally underserved groups
- Enhance partnerships with existing entities that represent underserved groups

**Strategy #3**

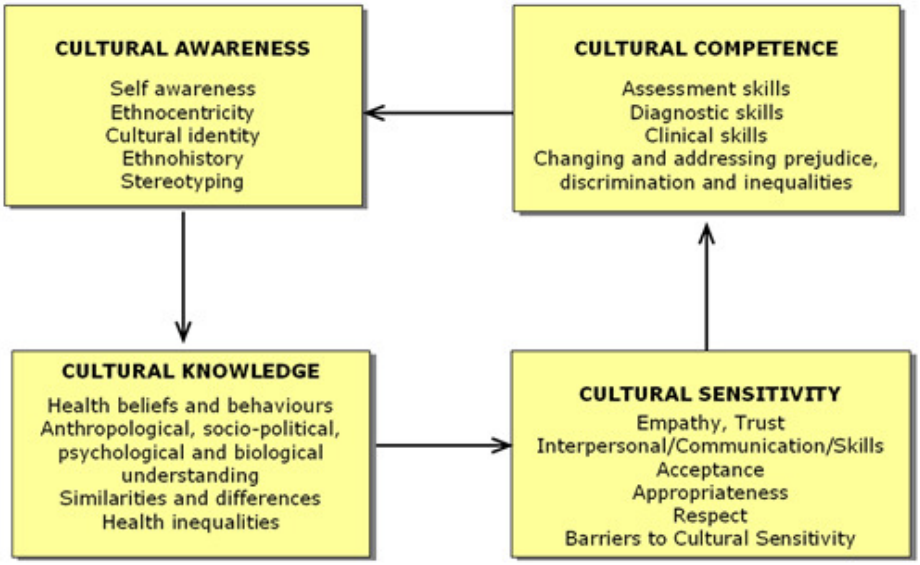
**Serve as a role model for partner agencies and provide support to community partners including administrative leadership, collaboration-building activities, and advocacy and special projects.**

- Work collaboratively with area service providers to increase utilization of best practices for culturally competent service delivery.
  - Work collaboratively to provide training and educational opportunities for ourselves and our partners
  - Influence service delivery models with sub-grantees
  - Work with partners to eliminate environmental and cultural barriers to service

## Cultural Competence: The Business Model




## Cultural Competence: The Lifelong Journey



**Goal #4**

**<u>We will provide an inclusive workplace environment that promotes lifelong learning, mutual respect and accountability for all employees.</u>**

**<u>Strategy #1</u>**

**We will support, sustain and develop our staff and leadership.**

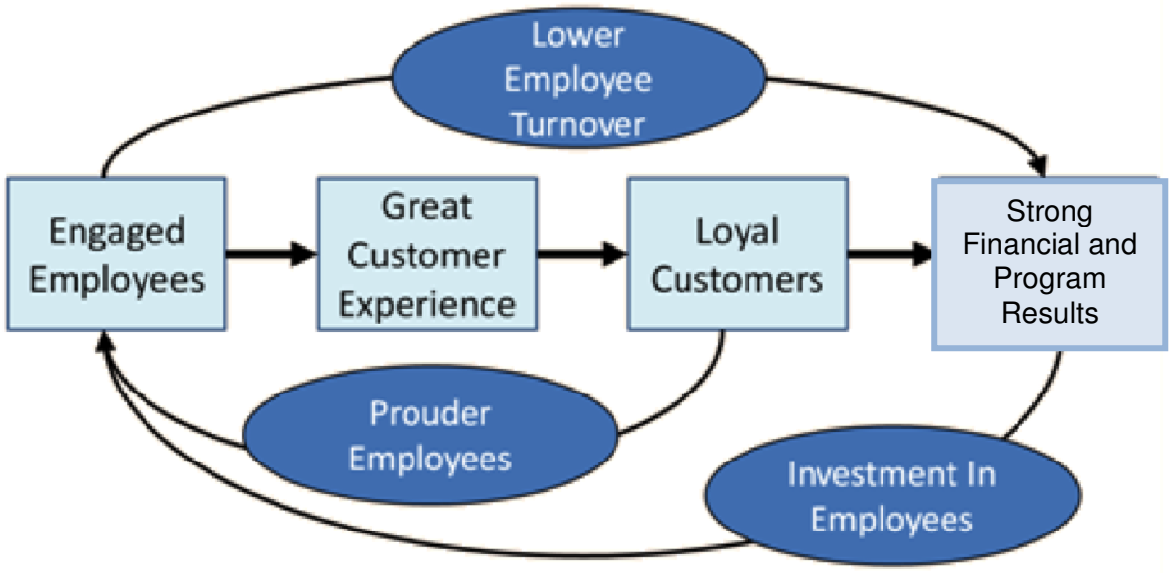
- Ensure support and inspiration for staff willingness to do the "hard stuff"; Appropriately manage and support staff in an environment of increasing participant demands
- Create targeted staff development opportunities focused on core identified needs including CAI services and goals, resources/system navigation, cultural competence, employability, management skills and leadership development
- Refine staff orientation process and utilize All-Staff Meetings to meet objectives

**<u>Strategy #2</u>**

**We will work to retain key staff to ensure program quality and enhance longstanding relationships with community partners.**

- Foster a positive work environment
- Clearly communicate career path opportunities
- Provide regular feedback in a variety of ways
- Develop reward and recognition opportunities
- Encourage balance between professional demands and need to focus on personal issues, friends and family.

# <u>Employee Experience Cycle</u>



**Addendum – Continuing Priorities**

- Merrill Housing Initiative – Complete rehabilitation and sales of current portfolio of homes; Evaluate ongoing strategies within the Merrill Neighborhood
- Expand First Choice space and clinic hours to increase access in Beloit; expand outreach to communities of color
- Enhance program quality in Community Kids to ensure a YoungStar rating at 4 or 5 for all rated programs; Continue to build fiscal discipline and monitoring to ensure financial sustainability
- Determine appropriate strategies for funding continuation of housing counseling services
- Enhance capacity to ensure work readiness and reach retention objectives within employment and training programs; Continue to build network of employer partners
- Build and enhance Human Resources structures and practices to enhance management skills and accountability, support staff and appropriately manage risk
- Stabilize fiscal staffing and build staff capacity
- Build and enhance internal quality control and monitoring functions
- Stabilize housing services staffing