

Community Action, Inc. of Rock and Walworth Counties

Strategic Plan, 2014 - 2017

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.

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.

Six National ROMA Goals

Goal 1. Low-income people become more self-sufficient. **(Family)**

Goal 2. The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. **(Community)**

Goal 3. Low-income people own a stake in their community. **(Community)**

Goal 4. Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved. **(Agency)**

Goal 5. Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. **(Agency)**

Goal 6. Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems. **(Family)**

Family Goals

Goal #1: CAI will offer a range of services designed to assist low-income consumers to become more self-sufficient; we will prioritize services targeted to needs identified by consumer stakeholders including employment, education, housing stability and financial literacy. (ROMA Goal 1)

Strategy #1

We will maintain a portfolio of effective programs in employment, education, training, childcare and housing stability which will assist 250 households to gain the skills or resources necessary to become more self-sufficient.

- We will ensure that programs are tied to the community needs assessment and meet the mission of CAI
- We will provide early learning childcare options that meet the needs of low income families
- We will provide resources that are directed at at-risk youth to ensure high school completion
- We will provide employment training, services and job placement to chronically unemployable individuals
- We will partner with demand occupation employers to develop employment opportunities for participants

Strategy #2

We will provide effective career path planning to move people from poverty to economic self-reliance by setting goals and helping them obtain adequate skills through various job training opportunities (i.e., short term trainings, certifications, and soft skills training) with the ultimate outcome of placing participants in living wage jobs.

- Provide classes to educate participants on effective financial management.
- Help participants develop communication skills in order to enhance opportunities for employment
- Assist participants with resume development
- Partner with employers to provide training opportunities that lead to job placement
- Pursue partnerships with employers in demand occupation fields.
- Explore opportunities to provide employment services to a broader array of income eligible individuals

Strategy #3

We will improve client outcomes by working with partner agencies to ensure that basic needs are met so that participants can focus on obtaining living wage jobs.

- Identify partner organizations that provide basic services (i.e. food, clothing, emergency shelter, utility and rental assistance)
- Keep information current on services available by building or maintaining partnerships with agencies that provide basic services
- Work with participant to identify existing needs
- Make referrals to agencies that provide needed services
- Follow-up with program participants to make sure needs are continually met

Strategy #4

We will 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
- Work with partner organizations on collaborative grant opportunities to strengthen partnerships and support capacity building

Goal #2: We will explore opportunities to increase prevention and early intervention programming as a strategy to maximize resources and reduce poverty, and the impacts of poverty, for the families we serve. (ROMA Goal 6)

Strategy #1

We will provide services to at-risk youth to promote high school completion or attainment of GED, enrollment in post-secondary education and/or increase job-readiness skills.

- Continue to provide early childhood education for low-income youth through Community Kids Learning Centers
- Focus on employment and volunteer opportunities for youth
- Provide ongoing access to reproductive health education and services for youth through First Choice Health Center
- Partner with other organizations to provide tutoring for youth struggling academically
- Work with Juvenile Diversion Programs to provide alternatives to incarceration
- Expand partnership with School District of Beloit to continue providing mentoring for African-American males
- Continue to support Fresh Start Program

Community Goals

Goal #1: We will enhance and promote our service delivery system in Walworth County with an emphasis on providing services in Delavan and Lake Geneva. (ROMA Goal 2)

Strategy #1

We will enhance Walworth County Partnerships to ensure that Walworth County residents have access to services that promote economic self-reliance.

- Work with existing partners including Walworth County United Way, to identify human service organizations in Walworth County that serve our target population and designated areas of service
- Utilize existing staff and Board connections to identify opportunities for ongoing collaboration
- Dedicate staff to attend meetings and schedule presentations to promote services
- Explore collaborative opportunities with key partners to expand dental and/or medical access in Walworth County.
- Actively seek joint funding opportunities to enhance partnerships.
- Work in collaboration with Walworth County, Open Arms and other key community partners to explore and implement options for increasing dental care access in Walworth County
- Position ourselves as the provider of choice in the development of community based anti-poverty programs.

Strategy #2

We will provide an array of housing services to ensure that Walworth County Residents have access to affordable housing.

- Explore options for developing affordable permanent or permanent supported housing for Walworth County Residents
- Continue to offer Rapid Rehousing and transitional housing opportunities
- Provide emergency shelter through Twin Oaks
- Continue to provide Weatherization services throughout Rock & Walworth Counties

Goal #2: 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. (ROMA Goal 2)

Strategy #1

We will serve as a role model for our community by providing culturally competent services as a means to eliminate barriers that inhibit progress towards economic self-reliance.

- Develop and implement targeted marketing campaigns to traditionally underserved groups
- Enhance partnerships with existing entities that represent underserved groups
- Work collaboratively with area service providers to increase utilization of best practices for culturally competent service delivery.
- Provide training and educational opportunities for ourselves and our partners
- Work with partners to eliminate environmental and cultural barriers to services

Agency Goals

Goal #1: We will ensure that programs are developed, assessed, and modified as needed in order to maximize family self-reliance outcomes (ROMA Goal 5)

- **Outcome Measures**

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 program resources including staffing, training, tools and equipment
- Ensure policies and procedures are in place and capture both regulatory requirements and quality practice standards
- Utilize Best Practices to ensure objectivity when working with participants and Ensure that program implementation is faithful to the certified model (Fidelity)
- Build integrated systems, processes and technology that enable the agency to deliver effective, accessible services with accountability, excel in customer service, and exceed customer and stakeholder expectations
- Implement a structure to measure and report customer satisfaction across all programs
- Utilize approved program standards tool to assess the overall performance of at least 3 programs annually

Goal #2: We will effectively manage transitions of key staff positions with a priority on internal cultivation of staff. (ROMA Goal 5)

Strategy #1

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

- Clearly communicate career path opportunities
- Provide regular feedback in a variety of ways
- Encourage balance between professional demands and need to focus on personal issues, friends and family.
- 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
- Develop Human Relations Team to promote positive work environment and celebrate success.

Goal #3: We will provide an inclusive workplace environment that promotes lifelong learning, mutual respect and accountability for all employees. ROMA Goal 5)

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
- 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
- Ensure that Consumer Advisory Board has representation from both Counties
- 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 technical assistance as partners incorporate culturally competent policies and practices.

- Work collaboratively with area service providers to increase utilization of best practices for culturally competent service delivery.
- Provide training and educational opportunities for ourselves and our partners
- Work with partners to eliminate environmental and cultural barriers to service
- Ensure Board reflects the populations that we serve by pursuing candidates from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Goal #4: We will build our financial strength with an emphasis on building assets and discretionary financial resources. (ROMA Goal 5)

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
- Stabilize fiscal staffing and build staff capacity
- Strengthen the financial understanding of program staff to ensure they are trained to manage budget performance

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 both traditional and social media to promote volunteer and donor opportunities
- Utilize both traditional and social media to highlight program success

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
- Develop and implement strategies to increase individual giving
- Create a donor recognition plan
- Research, develop and implement a Planned Giving Program
- Utilize social media outlets to increase donor participation
- Engage the Board in Fund Development activities
- Utilize Board members to “open doors” to prospective donors
- Update Board of Directors on the financial viability of the organization through regular fund development reports

Goal #5: We will maintain a strong Board of Directors that ensures full Board participation in planning and decision making. (ROMA Goal 5)

Strategy #1

Provide ongoing opportunities for Board education and engagement

- Provide regular Board Education sessions to keep board up to date on programs and services and enhance the capacity of the Board to act as effective ambassadors
- Implement regular orientation and training to ensure that all members are trained regarding governance and legal duties, CSBG standards and ROMA requirements.

Strategy #2

Enhance Board engagement in committee and recruitment activities in order to ensure a full and engaged Board of Directors

- Ensure Board committees have community member participation in order to strengthen the pipeline of volunteers for the Board
- Strengthen Board recruitment practices including enhanced engagement of Board members in seeking volunteers for committees and the Board

Outcome Measures

1. We will assist 250 households annually to become more self-sufficient.
 - a) #families who will experience an increase in household income
 - b) #individuals who will be obtain employment
 - c) #individuals who will receive training to improve employability
 - d) #individuals who will graduate from high school or obtain GED
 - e) #individuals who will receive financial literacy education.
2. We will maintain Unrestricted Net Assets of at least 5% with a growth goal of 10%
3. We will increase individual donor base by at least 10% each year
4. We will increase private contributions by at least 25% annually
5. We will ensure that Board vacancies are filled within 90 days of notice
6. We will achieve Quorum at 95% of Board and Board Committee Meetings
7. We will provide reproductive health services and education to 3000 youth and adults annually
8. We will provide early childhood education for 200 youth annually
9. We will work with community partners in Walworth County to establish ongoing Free or MA eligible dental service access by 2017
10. We will increase the number of Walworth County Partners by 50% by 2017
11. We will build the capacity of staff to fully integrate the full cycle of ROMA in Agency planning and assessment processes