

# COMMUNITY ACTION IN IOWA



**IOWA DIVISION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES**

**2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

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“Because it is right, because it is wise, and because, for the first time in our history, it is possible to conquer poverty, I submit for the consideration of the Congress and the country, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.”

*-President Lyndon B. Johnson*

## COMMUNITY ACTION



In 1964, Community Action was introduced with the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act. The Act was the centerpiece of the "War on Poverty", and was a major thrust of the "Great Society" legislative agenda of the Lyndon Johnson administration. The ambitious purpose of the Economic Opportunity Act was to mobilize the human and financial resources of the nation to combat the causes and consequences of poverty in the United States.

The Economic Opportunity Act developed and provided funding for a nationwide network of community action agencies. Community action agencies create, coordinate, and deliver an array of comprehensive programs and services to people living in poverty. These programs and services reduce conditions of poverty, revitalize communities, and enable low-income families and low-income individuals to secure opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient. Today, there are more than 1,000 community action agencies throughout the United States.

Community action agencies are private nonprofit and public organizations. They are governed by a uniquely structured tripartite volunteer board of directors, comprised equally of elected public officials, private sector representatives, and low-income representatives. This structure is designed to promote the participation of the entire community in assessing local needs and attacking the causes and conditions of poverty.

In FFY 2018, Iowa community action agencies assisted over 123,000 households and 308,000 individuals; administered over \$200 million in federal, state, local, and private funding; and received over \$19 million in government and business in-kind services and donated items. These agencies also partnered with over 5,100 public and private organizations that provide programs and services to low-income Iowans; and were assisted by over 12,000 volunteers – contributing over 356,000 hours of service and support to their local communities.



## **DIVISION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES**

The Division of Community Action Agencies (DCAA) is located within the Iowa Department of Human Rights and is the focal point for community action agency activities within Iowa government.

The purpose of the DCAA is to strengthen, supplement, and coordinate efforts to develop the full potential of each citizen by recognizing certain community action agencies and supporting certain community-based programs delivered by community action agencies.

The DCAA administers four anti-poverty programs: Community Services Block Grant Program, Weatherization Assistance Program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency program.

### *The Promise of Community Action*

*“Community Action changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.”*

# COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) is funded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. These federal funds are distributed to Iowa's 17 community action agencies, which create, coordinate, and deliver many programs and services to low-income Iowans. The CSBG funds the central management and core activities of these agencies. The agencies use the funds to mobilize additional public and private resources to combat the central causes of poverty in their communities and to assist low-income families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and ensure their basic needs are met. In FFY 2018, Iowa's CSBG funding was over \$7.7 million.

Iowa's community action agencies provide the following activities to help low-income Iowans:

- Remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency
- Secure and retain meaningful employment
- Attain an adequate education
- Make better use of available income
- Obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment
- Obtain emergency assistance to meet the immediate and urgent family needs
- Achieve greater participation in the affairs of communities
- Address the needs of youth in low-income communities

In FFY 2018, Iowa's community action agencies provided services to over 123,000 households and 308,000 individuals. Characteristics of the households and individuals served by Iowa's community action agencies:

- 62% were households living at or below 100% of the federal poverty level
- 60% received food assistance from Iowa's Food Assistance program
- 41% were infants, children, and youth aged 0 to 18
- 24% were single parent households
- 19% were individuals (aged 25 and above) without a high school education
- 18% were individuals with a disabling condition
- 14% were individuals without health insurance

For more information about Iowa's Community Services Block Grant Program, please visit our website:

<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/csbq>



# WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Division of Community Action Agencies (DCAA) administers the federal grant program – Weatherization Assistance Program. This is the nation’s largest residential energy efficiency program. The program reduces the burden of energy costs to low-income and fixed-income persons, particularly the elderly, disabled, and families with children, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes and ensuring their health and safety. In PY 2018, 1,162 homes were weatherized.

Professionally trained technicians in the program use a computerized energy audit to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective energy-saving measures that should be applied to the house. Typical measures include sealing air leaks, installing insulation in attics, walls, and crawlspaces, tuning and upgrading heating systems, and installing low-cost energy conservation measures.

The program also conducts a health and safety check on every home weatherized. This consists of inspecting all combustion appliances for carbon monoxide and for the proper venting of gases. Unsafe furnaces are repaired or replaced. Homes are also inspected for other possible health and safety problems such as mold and unsafe electrical wiring. Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are installed in all homes.

The Weatherization Assistance Program partners with Iowa’s Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). While LIHEAP provides crisis relief by helping clients who have an immediate need for financial assistance with energy costs, the Weatherization Assistance Program provides clients with long-term financial relief by reducing the amount of energy their homes use. It addresses the core problem that low-income clients have with respect to their energy burden.

Besides the benefits of reducing low-income households’ energy use (houses weatherized in PY 2017 saved an average of \$262 in first-year fuel bill costs) and ameliorating many health and safety problems in the homes, the program also provides these additional benefits:

- Provides households with education in energy-saving practices
- Increases the comfort in the homes that are weatherized
- Reduces the nation’s dependence on foreign oil
- Reduces carbon emissions and other air pollutants
- Preserves housing stock for low-income households

In PY 2018, the DCAA received \$5.4 million from U. S. Department of Energy, \$7.2 million from LIHEAP, and \$6.5 million from the investor-owned utility companies.

For more information about Iowa’s Weatherization Assistance Program, please visit our website:

<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/weatherization>



# LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Division of Community Action Agencies administers the federally funded Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is designed to assist qualifying low-income households in the payment of a portion of their winter heating costs, and to encourage energy conservation through client education and weatherization. All households applying for LIHEAP are simultaneously making application for weatherization assistance. The program provided assistance to over 83,000 Iowa households in FFY 2018.

LIHEAP payments are weighted to award higher benefits to targeted households. These households include the elderly, disabled, working poor, and households with children under six years of age. Additionally, benefits are weighted to account for a household's level of poverty. Households certified eligible for LIHEAP (those at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines) are protected from disconnection of gas or electric service from November 1st until April 1st under Iowa's winter moratorium law.

Beyond regular assistance payments, LIHEAP has two additional components: Assessment and Resolution and the Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP). Activities covered under the Assessment and Resolution component include delivering client energy conservation education, referral to outside services, family needs assessment, budget counseling, vendor negotiation, household energy use assessment, household energy use planning, and low-cost energy efficiency measures. The ECIP component provides immediate assistance to alleviate life-threatening situations. Assistance payments are made for repair or replacement of a furnace or heating system, obtaining temporary shelter, purchase of blankets and/or heaters, emergency fuel deliveries, purchasing or repairing air conditioning equipment when medically necessary, purchasing fans, and transporting clients to cooling centers during times of extreme heat.

For more information about Iowa's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, please visit our website: <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap>

## FFY 2018 LIHEAP FACTS AND FIGURES

- Iowa received \$54.8 million in federal funds
- The average statewide LIHEAP benefit was \$470
- 97% of households assisted by LIHEAP do NOT receive TANF assistance
- 68% of households assisted live in single family homes
- 56% of households assisted are below 100% of the federal poverty level
- 53% of households assisted has a disabled member
- 34% of households assisted has an elderly household member
- 20% of households assisted has a child under 6 years of age



# FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FaDSS)

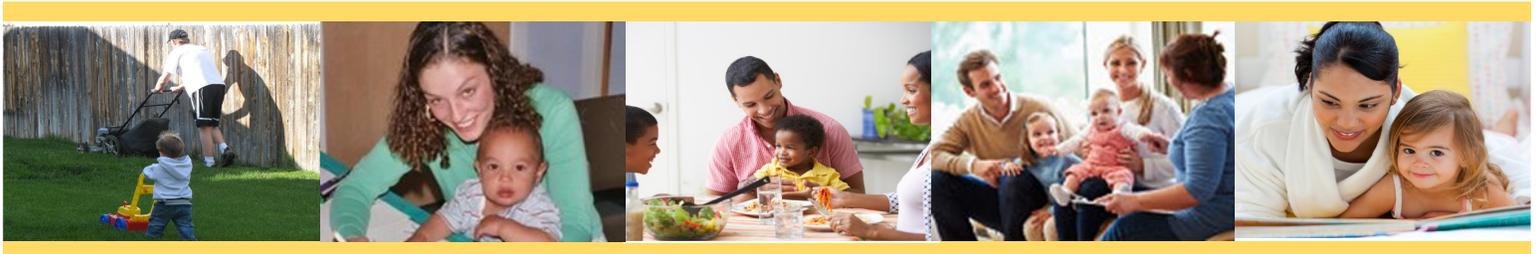
Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) grant program was created by the 1988 Iowa General Assembly to assist Family Investment Program (FIP) families with significant or multiple barriers reach self-sufficiency. FaDSS provides services that promote, empower, and nurture families toward stability and economic self-sufficiency. The foundation of FaDSS is regular home visits with families using a strength-based approach.

The FaDSS program is administered by the Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Community Action Agencies. The FaDSS Council serves as an advisory body and awards grants for the FaDSS program. The Council consists of fourteen members and two members from each chamber of the general assembly serving as ex-officio members. The Council meets at least four times per year.

FaDSS is provided in all of Iowa's 99 counties through a network of seventeen agencies (community action agencies and other public and private non-profit organizations) with approximately 86 Certified Family Development Specialists. Specialists are mandatory child abuse reporters, and subject to criminal and child abuse background checks. Over 90% of specialists and supervisors have a post secondary degree and are required to complete ten hours of additional training each year.

FaDSS is an evidenced based, holistic, strength based, home visiting program that focuses on preventive services and facilitates long-term family change for families receiving FIP benefits. In PY 2018, FaDSS served 2,840 families. A total of 5,240 individuals completed the program during the year, including 3,072 children. FaDSS families earned total wages of \$6,767,880 resulting in a FIP savings of \$1,110,222.

During PY 2018, FaDSS was funded through an appropriation of \$6,192,834 in TANF and state of Iowa general funds. In addition, local and in-kind funds of \$1,523,323 were provided to supplement FaDSS services.



## The FaDSS program provides:

- Activities to increase work preparedness
- Goal setting and goal attainment skills
- Parenting skills development
- Child protection services
- Families with links to informal and formal connections within their community
- Assessment of family strengths
- Budgeting skills development
- Role modeling of healthy behaviors
- Self-advocacy skills development
- Assistance to communities throughout Iowa to respond to low-income families facing multiple issues in a strength based manner

For more information about Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency program, please visit our website:  
<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/fadss>

# FaDSS PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES (SFY 2018)

## **Increased Employment**

- 19% of FaDSS households had at least one adult employed at program entry. At exit, 51% of households had at least one adult employed.
- 1,072 families were involved in activities designed to increase work preparedness skills. These activities, provided by FaDSS, included resume writing, mock interviews, and assistance with completing job applications.

## **Increased Income**

- Families that improved their level of employment at exit had an average monthly family income of \$1,622, an increase of \$1,041.

## **Decreased Family Investment Program (FIP) Payments**

- At entry, families averaged \$429 in FIP payments. At exit, the average FIP payment for families was \$141, a decrease of \$288.

## **Achievement of Education Goals**

- 136 adults that exited the FaDSS program achieved a change in their education status.
- FaDSS assisted families in achieving major educational goals:
  - 46 families completed a certification program
  - 41 families completed some college courses
  - 35 families completed a GED/HS Diploma
  - 12 families completed an Associate's Degree
  - 2 families completed a Bachelor's Degree

## **Increased Access to Services and Treatment: Domestic Violence**

- 244 FaDSS families that exited the program had experienced domestic violence.
- 81% of those families accessed necessary and appropriate assistance. The FaDSS program assisted 70% of families with accessing domestic violence assistance.

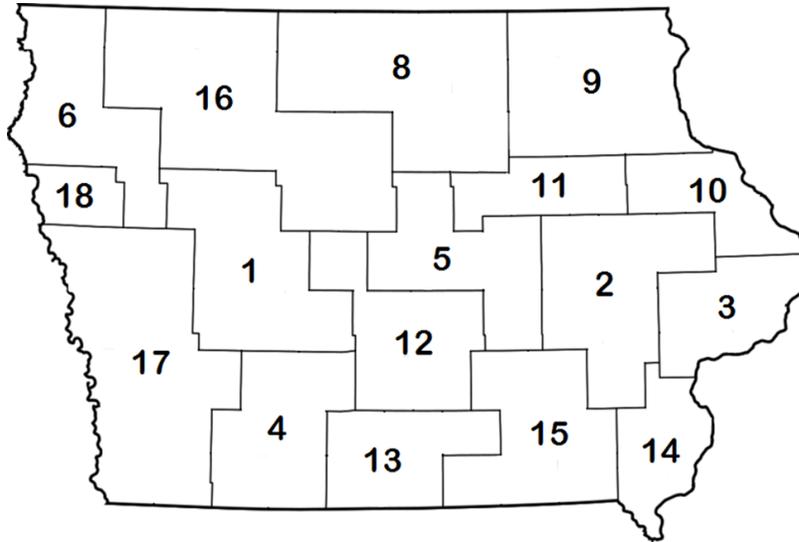
## **Increased Access to Services and Treatment: Mental Health**

- 649 adults that exited the program had a substantiated mental health issue.
- 85% of those adults with a mental health barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 54% of adults gaining access to treatment.

## **Increased Access to Treatment: Substance Abuse**

- 219 adults that exited the program had a substantiated substance abuse issue.
- 88% of those adults with a substance abuse barrier accessed treatment. The FaDSS program assisted 54% with gaining access to treatment.

# COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES IN IOWA



- 1. New Opportunities, Inc.**  
**(712) 792-9266**  
Counties served: Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie, and Sac
- 2. Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, Inc.**  
**(319) 393-7811**  
Counties served: Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington
- 3. Community Action of Eastern Iowa**  
**(563) 324-3236**  
Counties served: Cedar, Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott
- 4. MATURA Action Corporation**  
**(641) 782-8431**  
Counties served: Adair, Adams, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union
- 5. Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc.**  
**(641) 752-7162**  
Counties served: Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek, Story, and Tama
- 6. Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.**  
**(712) 786-2001**  
Counties served: Cherokee, Ida, Lyon, Plymouth, and Sioux
- 8. North Iowa Community Action Organization**  
**(641) 423-8993**  
Counties served: Butler, Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, and Worth
- 9. Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation**  
**(563) 382-8436**  
Counties served: Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek
- 10. Operation: New View Community Action Agency**  
**(563) 556-5130**  
Counties served: Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson
- 11. Operation Threshold**  
**(319) 291-2065**  
Counties served: Black Hawk, Buchanan, and Grundy
- 12. IMPACT Community Action Partnership**  
**(515) 274-1334**  
Counties served: Boone, Jasper, Marion, Polk, and Warren
- 13. South Central Iowa Community Action Program**  
**(641) 774-8133**  
Counties served: Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, Wayne
- 14. Community Action of Southeast Iowa**  
**(319) 753-0193**  
Counties served: Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa
- 15. Sieda Community Action**  
**(641) 682-8741**  
Counties served: Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren, and Wapello
- 16. Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.**  
**(712) 859-3885**  
Counties served: Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Hamilton, Humboldt, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Webster, and Wright
- 17. West Central Community Action**  
**(712) 755-5135**  
Counties served: Cass, Crawford, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby
- 18. Community Action of Siouxland**  
**(712) 274-1610**  
County served: Woodbury

# COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

The Commission on Community Action Agencies was created by legislative action and is composed of nine members who are appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Iowa Senate.

The purpose of the Commission is to review the progress of programs of the Division of Community Action Agencies.

## COMMISSIONERS (as of June 30, 2019)

<b>Anna Brown</b>	DeWitt
<b>Kelly Busch</b>	Creston
<b>Anna Hilpipre</b>	Brooklyn
<b>Ajit Kumar</b>	Clive
<b>John Murphy</b>	Dubuque
<b>Leland Shipley</b>	Nodaway
<b>Mary Whisenand</b>	Des Moines

Ex-Officio — **San Wong**, Director (Iowa Department of Human Rights)

## DIVISION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES STAFF

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