

Piece by Piece

moving people out of poverty

Missouri Association for Community Action
Executive Director's Report
January 9 – 10, 2008

Piece by Piece ... Moving People Out of Poverty

theme of the CAA legislative event on January 16, 2008 ...

Brief update on legislative day

- 19 Community Action Agencies participating
- 103 Community Action Agency participants registered
- 18 Community Action Agencies will showcase their services at State Capitol (agencies setting up exhibits between 8 and 10 am)
- Press conference scheduled for 10 am in Hearing Room 1 in State Capitol
- 10:30 am meeting with LuAnn Madsen and Phil Wright, Governmental Consultants
- CAA meetings with Missouri Legislators between 11 am and 2 pm
- CAAs will distribute information packets that includes the 2007 Annual report and directory to Legislators
- Ice cream and cookies served by CAA Legislative Committee from 2 to 3 pm
- 42 legislators responded they will participate in "Life on the Edge ... Where Does the Money Go? "
- 5 pm reception begins in Gallery 2 at 102 High Street
- 5:30 pm Simulation begins
- Dessert served at 7:30

The purpose of January 16 will be to increase elected officials understanding of families who are working at one or more jobs and "living on the edge" of poverty. We also want to get a commitment from Legislators to consider the realities for working families as they make policy decisions during the next few months.

The press release (in meeting packet) is urging Missouri Legislators to act quickly and pass a supplemental appropriation for UTILICARE at the maximum level of \$6.4 million. You may want to remind Legislators that Missouri's heating costs have risen over last year by 12.2 percent for natural gas and 24 percent for propane.

Another fact you could talk about ... Most consumers use 3-4 percent of their income for energy bills. People with limited incomes, who receive federal energy assistance, are using about 12 percent of their income.

During the meetings with Legislators, CAAs can provide a brief description of services they provide and at least one description of a real family from their legislative district with emphasis on families working but living on the edge of poverty.

61 Missouri Families Increase Their Assets

MACA is in the process of closing out the first 5 year Missourians Building Assets grant through the Office of Community Services and transferring participants to the 2006-2011 MBA grant. This first grant was an incredible learning experience and opportunity.

Overall, 61 participants across the state completed all the project requirements and purchased assets. Agencies have assisted 5 participants in becoming small business owners. Those businesses range from cleaning service and hair salons to a market garden farm and a child care center! In addition, 7 participants elected to attend college and 49 purchased homes.

While much of the credit belongs to each individual who saved their funds and attended their financial literacy classes, MACA staff would like to thank each and every case manager who works on this program. Your support and efforts are vital to the success of each participant. Thank you for going above and beyond!

Funds for CAA Network to Assist Homeless or Near Homeless

At the December 21, 2007 Missouri Housing Development Commission meeting MACA learned that the commission approved funding of almost \$967,000 from the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) to the Community Action Network for Homeless Prevention and Rental Assistance. MACA was approved to receive over \$700,000 of these funds for homeless prevention statewide. This is a tremendous increase from last year's \$300,000 and is vital in helping prevent Missouri's most vulnerable populations from becoming homeless.

Over the past year, Missouri CAAS have used MHTF dollars to pay housing and utility deposits for individuals who were living in cars, tents or other substandard arrangements, and they helped many disabled Missourians avoid becoming homeless. In addition, some funds were used to replace broken windows and complete other basic repairs so that families could afford to heat and cool their homes effectively.

Recipients of MHTF dollars have been able to receive up to \$1000 per year in funds, but the average amount used is only \$411 per household...a small dollar amount when compared to the high return of keeping families in their homes.

Although the Missouri Housing Trust Fund dollars are not high-impact in ensuring that all families and communities thrive...they are a critical support and one that Community Action Agencies need to help the families with immediate crises.

Food for Thought: MHDC staff, at this meeting, reported they had received funding requests for over \$20 million for different projects but had only received a little over \$4 million into the HTF this year. For MACA and other Community Action Network members to receive such a large portion of the available funds demonstrates how effective the CAA Network is in utilizing those funds to help families and individuals in need!

New Information Systems Applications Specialist

On December 18th, Kawajalyn Collins re-joined MACA as a full time employee. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems from Lincoln University and Chancellor Certificates from University of Missouri-St. Louis in Internetworking with Routers and also in Web Programming & Databases. She and her husband Roderick have a 12 year old son named Deon and Kawajalyn enjoys crafting gift baskets and wreaths, and helping others. Currently she volunteers at Hospice of Mid-Missouri, Wolfner Library for the Blind and Mentally Handicapped, and Salvation Army. She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a community service organization.

Please join the MACA office in welcoming Kawajalyn back!

Developing Leaders to end poverty in Missouri

Through the MACA/CSBG Partnership we will be offering scholarships to Missouri Community Action Agencies for the following conferences ...

- Community Action Capital Development Enterprise Conference April 7-10 in Chicago (registration date is 3/8/08)
- Grassroots and Groundworks Conference, May 28-30, Minnesota
- CAP Annual Conference, August 25-30, Chicago
- 2008 Assets Learning Conference (IDA), September 11-13, Washington, D.C.
- MACA Annual Conference, October 1-3, Lake Ozark
- NCAF 2008 Energy Programs Leveraging Conference, November 11-13, St. Petersburg, FL

More detailed information will be sent to CAAs by Patti Magruder. There is an expectation this year that scholarship recipients will share information gained at these conference with their peers. Sharing best practices and lessons learned will strengthen the network. This may be done by scheduling time on MACA meeting agendas just as MCADA is doing with Merline Anderson reporting on the 2007 Energy conference during their January 9 meeting. Articles may be printed in the MACA newsletter and posted on the website so more members can benefit. If you have ideas for a peer information exchange protocol, Patti would be interested in hearing from you.

Missouri Participating in Shared Community Products Project

MACA along with nine other state CAA Associations is exploring ways to increase the publics understanding of how systems impact families with limited incomes. Our goal is to help others understand poverty is not an individual's problem but a problem that belongs to everyone.

The ten states are pooling funds to produce a range of written materials suitable for print and internet-based distribution that will focus on systems. The target audience will be policy makers and opinion leaders, which will include a broad group of people. We expect to have several products available for state and local use over a period of one year.

A RFP was released Friday, January 4 with proposals from writers due January 25. Please contact the MACA office if you are interested in receiving the RFP.

National Campaign to Reduce Poverty ... Rooting Out Poverty: A Campaign by America's Community Action Network

Penny Miles, our representative on the Community Action Partnership Board of Directors, will be absent from the MCADA January 9 meeting because she will be present when CAP releases the **Rooting Out Poverty** report in New Orleans during their conference. Members of MCADA will receive a copy of the report during their January meeting.

Jeannie Chaffin, CSBG, one of the Steering Committee members of the National Conversation on Poverty and Economic Security, will review the report with MCADA members on January 9. Copies are available for all CAAs so be sure you get a copy. It includes excellent information, easy to read and understand and very appropriate for use in Missouri. Be sure to notice this is the result of a joint partnership between CAP, NCAF, CAPLAW and NASCSP.

Election of At-Large Board Members

Building and maintaining a strong association with the capacity to organize communities and develop leaders to end poverty in Missouri will be the main focus of the MACA Board for the next few years.

The names of ten MACA members were submitted for the At-Large Board membership in December. Since there were only ten names for the At-Large Ballot an election was not required. Once the MACA Board has accepted the report these individuals will be seated in March and begin working closely with other Board members in this exciting time when we are focused on transforming MACA.

2nd Round of Training for Internal ROMA Consultants

January 10, 2008 is the revised date for accepting nominations and IRC applications for the 2nd Internal ROMA Consultant training project. MACA will notify those accepted by January 18, 2008. The first training session is scheduled for February 11-12, 2008 in Columbia. For more information, please contact Julia Vargas in the MACA office. More detailed information of meeting times, locations and expectations will be sent to the participants with their notification of acceptance.

***United in Purpose, the Missouri Community Action Network will
inspire and engage people to ensure that all families and
communities thrive***

On the Calendar

MCADA Meeting

January 9 ... Jefferson City

MACA Board Meeting

January 10 ... Jefferson City

Energy and Housing PA Meeting

January 15 ... Jefferson City

Community Action Network "Life on the Edge" for Missouri Legislators

January 16 ... Jefferson City

Community Action Network Legislative Day at State Capitol

January 16 ... Jefferson City

Outreach Personnel PA Meeting

January 23-24 ... Jefferson City

Outreach Managers PA Meeting

January 24-25 ... Lake Ozark

ITPA Meeting

January 24-25 ... Lake Ozark

MIS/IRC Meeting

January 28-29 ... Jefferson City

Internal ROMA Consultants PA Meeting

January 30-31 ... Columbia

Admin Support PA Meeting

February 6-7 ... Lake Ozark

Internal ROMA Consultants Training

February 11-12 ... Columbia

MCADA Meeting

February 13-14 ... Jefferson City

Family Self-Sufficiency Scale Training

February 19-20 ... Columbia

Poverty Simulation for Grant Makers Health Conference

February 27 ... Los Angeles, CA

Internal ROMA Consultants Training

March 11-12 ... Columbia

MCADA Meeting

March 12 ... Jefferson City

MACA Board Meeting

March 13 ... Jefferson City

Elaine West, MACA Executive Director