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Agency Mission

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency is dedicated to empowering people to make a positive change by coordinating and administering resources.

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency strives to be the voice in our communities and our governments for those most in need.



Missourians to End Poverty

Bringing the Community Together to End Poverty

Food Health Education Energy & Housing Family & Economic Security

2011 Poverty Summit

“Empowering Communities for Economic Opportunity”

Nearly one in five Missourians lives in poverty, and that figure may be getting worse. With that in mind, more than 400 representatives of more than 30 organizations representing the public and private sector gathered in Jefferson City Tuesday, June 14th to discuss how to focus on fighting poverty and its effects. The occasion was the Poverty Summit sponsored by a coalition calling itself Missourians to End Poverty.

The group participated in workshops to discuss ideas of how to address housing, hunger, education, health energy and family and economic security in their communities.

Lieutenant Governor Peter Kinder told the group that 926,000 Missourians live in poverty, the 15th highest rate in the country. He says that figure comes from 2009 and with a lackluster recovery from the recession, those numbers have likely gone up in the state. He praised the group for being able to think “outside the box” in its reactions to the problems brought on by poverty.

Former state lawmaker Pat Dougherty of the St. Louis Archdiocesan office says groups in all segments of society are going to have to work together to end poverty and its effects. “It is business, it is individuals, it is charities, it is foundations, it’s not for profits, it’s churches, it’s governments. We’re all part of this human family. We all have a part to play.”



Kristi Hart, WCMCAA Community Services Specialist, and Rebecca Lynn, Step Up to Leadership Graduate, study materials provided to Poverty Summit participants.

Elaine West, executive director of the Missouri Association for Community Action Incorporated said Tuesday’s summit acted as a learning experience for people in the field. “These are people who are involved in their communities and they come here and they talk about what has worked and what hasn’t, and hopefully the good ideas can spread all around the state,” said West.

Community Needs Assessment RESULTS are available now!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the community needs assessment process allowing WCMCAA to collect valuable data!

The Community Needs Assessment is a tool to identify the most significant needs in the community, and; therefore, the basis for accessing, planning and developing agency strategies to address those needs in the most effective way possible.

- Statistical data was collected from the Missouri Association for Community Action's Community Needs Assessment web based tool and other resources such as: Missouri Kids Count, National Center for Chronic Disease Control, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Highway Patrol, etc...
- **Over 500 Community Needs Assessment Surveys were collected.**
- Staff identified trends and resources available in the community.

Both statistical data and survey results were analyzed to identify and access trends of the entire service area. Results were also compared by county, age of survey respondents, and relationship of survey respondents to the agency (staff, client, board member, elected official, etc...) to note distinct needs identified by each population.

Needs were prioritized based on the following criteria:

What is the depth of the issue in the community?

What is the impact of the issue in the community?

What current resources are already available in the community (outside the agency) to address the issue?

What is WCMCAA's current ability to impact this issue?

What is WCMCAA's potential to impact this issue in the future?

How would addressing this issue impact the Community Action mission to decrease poverty?

Highest Priority Need

Need to increase **employment** opportunities within the area.

High Priority Need

Need for dependable and affordable **transportation**.

Need for affordable access to **health care** and **prescription drugs**.

Need to decrease incidence of **child abuse and neglect** and the effects on children.

Need for affordable, quality **child care** available for families during varying work schedules.

Need for affordable **housing** options.

Need for **parenting education**.

Need for **in-home health care** for the elderly and disabled.

Need for **financial management** education and resources.

Need to increase access to **GED, vocational and college education**.

Moderate Need

Need to decrease **teen pregnancy** rates and the long term effects of related issues.

Need to address low-income households' struggle to pay **utility expenses**.

Need to increase **dental providers** in the area that provide affordable access to **dental care**.

Need to decrease **obesity** rates and **diabetic** related issues through access to **affordable nutritious food** and **nutrition education**.

Need to address **housing repair** issues.

Need to decrease **substance abuse** and the related issues affecting families and the community.

Need to increase the availability of **emergency shelters**.

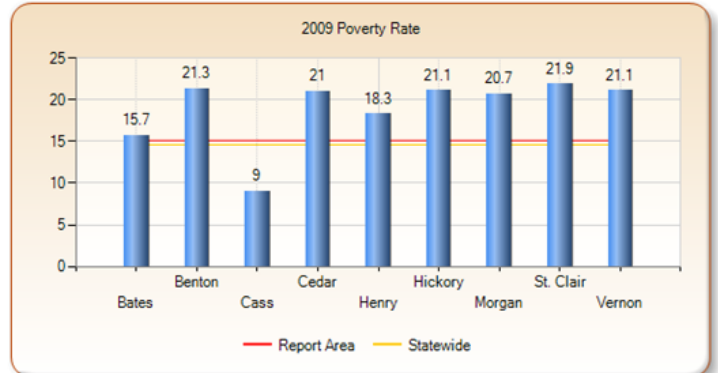
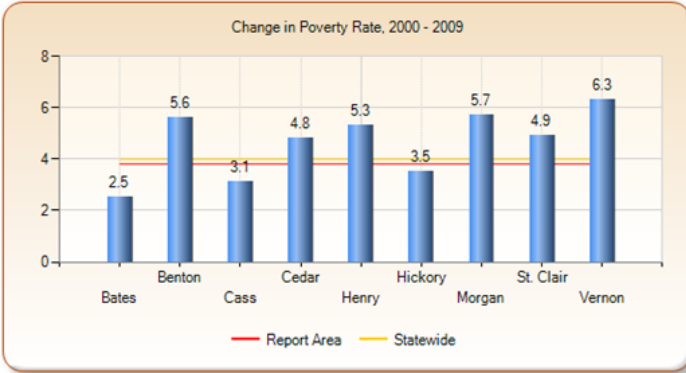
Mild Need

Need to increase **high school graduation** rates.

A Few Facts To Consider...

Poverty Level:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau poverty rates are increasing.



According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in January 2011 the highest **unemployment** in the service area was 15.2% in Morgan County. Cedar (9.1%) and Vernon County (8%) were the only counties below 10%.

Results of the WCMCAA Community Needs Assessment Survey show **90.4%** of respondents felt that **employment** is an issue, ranking the top three employment issues as: 1) *Unable to find jobs in the area* 2) *Lack of good paying jobs with benefits and* 3) *Long commute to jobs.*

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show 64.8% of respondents felt that **transportation** is an issue in their community, ranking the top three transportation issues as: 1) *Lack of public transportation* 2) *Cost of buying or down payment on a car* 3) *Lack of credit to buy a car.* Note: *Transportation is identified as an issue regarding employment, education and health care.*

Results of the WCMCAA Community Needs Assessment Survey show that **83%** of respondents believe that **affordable health care** is an issue in their community ranking the greatest issues as 1) *Cost of health insurance* 2) *High cost of pre-prescriptions and* 3) *High deductibles and co-pays.*

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, in 2010, there were 102 **methamphetamine** incidents within the nine county area. *Cedar County reported 61 of those incidents.*

Per Kids Count in Missouri 2010 data, the service area is ranked among some of the highest in the state regarding **child abuse and neglect.** Of the 115 counties in the state, WCMCAA counties ranked as follows:

County	State Ranking of 115 Counties
Bates	49
Benton	62
Cass	9
Cedar	114
Henry	54
Hickory	109
Morgan	73
St. Clair	56
Vernon	110

Note: In Cedar County, in regard to parent education topics Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention was ranked as the most needed.

For a complete Summary of the WCMCAA 2011 Community Needs Assessment Results, please visit our website at www.wcmcaa.org or e-mail your request to mmount@wcmcaa.org.

Step Up to Leadership

Congratulations to all of the Cass County participants who recently graduated from the Step Up to Leadership program provided by WCMCAA. Participants were: Amanda Adams, Shannon Ausmer, Amy Bennett, Susan Bradford, Sarena Brown, Rick Dawson, Traci Gibson, Kimberly Halbert, Shannon Hiser, Pam Jackson, Rebecca Lynn, Scott Morris, Janice Murkin, Cinthia Rew, Ron Sifuentes, and Misty Smithey.

Step Up to Leadership is a 12 week training designed to help individuals build self-confidence along with the skills and knowledge to assume leadership roles in their community. The Step Up to Leadership Curriculum is hands-on learning. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences so they can apply them to their own situations and learn from one another. Incorporating the experiences

that participants share with the class as a whole, the instructor uses various techniques to facilitate resolutions to real-life problems. Topics covered included:

- value of grassroots participation
- team building
- self-awareness and empowerment
- planning for your passion
- collaborative leadership
- diversity
- legalities and practicalities of being a board member
- meeting manners and matters
- conflict as opportunity
- public speaking
- funding your passion
- making a commitment to public service and leadership



Upon completion of the course, participants are eligible to apply for a mini-grant to support their passion in the community. The mini-grant award recipient in Cass County for 2011 was Rebecca Lyn, whose proposal was to support the Just 4 Me Harrisonville's Summer Food Assistance Program for children.

I am very grateful that I was invited to participate in the Step Up to Leadership class. The class and people involved were both motivating and inspirational. They helped to get me moving in a positive direction.

Rebecca Lynn

Step Up to Leadership training is currently being provided in Warsaw, Missouri.

Initial funding of Step Up to Leadership was provided by Community Services Block Grant administered through the Missouri Department of Social Services. A big thank you for all of the community support (guest instructors, donations, space, encouragement to participants, etc...). Your continued support makes the Step Up to Leadership courses possible.

For questions regarding the Step Up to Leadership course, please contact Jamie Oberly, at 660-476-2185 ext. 1207 or joberly@wcmcaa.org.

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Missouri Health Net Outreach and Enrollment

As the economic downturn of the last several years has developed and continued, WCMCAA has focused efforts to reach out to new populations of low-income and/or struggling community members. In addition to nurturing existing collaborations within the community, WCMCAA has developed or renewed strategies to inform those in need of the services available.

United Way of Greater Kansas City shares this mission and has provided a grant of \$20,000 to West Central Missouri Community Action Agency to conduct outreach to identified populations that will result in enrollment in publically financed health insurance for eligible but un-enrolled individuals.

A special thank you to the Cass County Family Support Division for their commitment to support the efforts of the WCMCAA Women's Health program and to be available to staff for general questions regarding the eligibility and the enrollment process as they arise. This partnership ensures that clients receive consistent and complete information and can navigate the application process as smoothly as possible.

In April of this year, Shea Robinson was hired as Enrollment Clerk to conduct Outreach and Enrollment in Cass County. Ms. Robinson is working to build on relationships in the community in order to connect with eligible community members and provide needed assistance for successful enrollment. Outreach programs have been conducted at Life Choice and Mill-Walk Mall in Harrisonville. Scheduled events / locations include: Hillcrest Transitional Living and Belton Back to School Fair. Look for other outreach events to be scheduled soon.



Anyone with questions or in need of enrollment assistance can contact Shea Robinson at the WCMCAA Belton Women's Health Clinic located at 119 Congress Street or by calling 1-816-322-5012.

How Can We Build on Our Community Strengths to Ensure Opportunities for All of Our Citizens?

The WCMCAA 2011 Community Needs Assessment Survey responses identified

- **Volunteers**
 - **Community / Family Orientation of Small Towns and**
 - **Faith Based Community**
- to be the top strengths in the area.

Our Hearts Go Out To Our Friends in Joplin As They Travel the Long Road To Rebuilding Their Community.



On May 22, the city of Joplin suffered a devastating EF5 tornado. John Joines, Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Security Corporation of the South West Area (the Community Action Agency serving Joplin and the surrounding area), stated, "I know you have all seen the pictures on the television. I can only say that they in no way depict the absolute destruction that this storm left in its path. Several of my staff, including myself, spent all night Sunday night and Monday morning in the affected area transporting patients in our Head Start buses from triage locations to make shift hospitals and moving emergency personnel between locations in the city. I saw it all, and I am still seeing it every time I close my eyes."

Several WCMCAA Staff members were able to provide assistance to ESCSWA in processing Housing applications. Those who traveled to Joplin stated, that it was an honor and a privilege to assist. "After meeting the people and seeing the volunteers working to clean up and rebuild; it gives you a sense of hope that Joplin will rebuild and be a stronger community than before. I'm thankful I went and would do it again in a heartbeat." stated Stephanie Hlade, Antioch Hills Site Manager.

WCMCAA receives Full Employment Council, Inc. Outstanding Community Partner Award



WCMCAA was recognized recently by the Full Employment Council (FEC) as an Outstanding Community Partner in the Cass County Region. **WCMCAA was selected because of a unique partnership with FEC that has helped to put the unemployed in the Greater Kansas City area back to work.** The award was presented May 24th during the FEC's annual Jobs in the Business Sector (JOBS) luncheon.

West Central has partnered with the Full Employment Council for more than 20 years serving the Cass County Community. FEC partners with WCMCAA by providing contracts to serve the unemployed, underemployed, disadvantaged young adults and dislocated workers through the Workforce Investment Act programs. West Central has

two Employment and Training offices in Cass County (Harrisonville and Belton). WCMCAA and FEC have partnered with the Division of Workforce Development (DWD) by locating a DWD staff member in Cass County to serve the Missouri Employment Training Program, Unemployment Insurance Profiling, Four-Week Reporting and to assist with Workforce Investment Act Core enrollments.

WCMCAA Employee of the Quarter

EMPLOYEE OF THE FIRST QUARTER

Brenda Budd

Employed from April, 1998 to May of 2002 as a Co-Teacher/Driver. She was rehired in September 2004 as an Assistant Teacher at Nevada Head Start.

IN THE WORDS OF THE PERSON NOMINATING HER:
She is a vital asset to the Nevada Head Start. Her leadership and knowledge put her above the rest. She works extremely hard and is very dedicated to her job.



Amos Jackson, President and Chief Executive Officer, presented Mrs. Budd with her award during the Spring All Agency Staff Meeting.

EMPLOYEE OF THE SECOND QUARTER

Wilma Overstreet

Employed in June of 2006 as an In Home Service Aide in Benton County.

IN THE WORDS OF THE PERSON NOMINATING HER:

Much could be learned from this aide who provides quality care through longevity, dependability and commitment. She is very sensitive to her clients needs. I am nominating her for her excellent care and dedication to making the world a better place for so many.



Amos Jackson, President and Chief Executive Officer, presented Mrs. Overstreet with her award during the Spring All Agency Staff Meeting.



Miss Ali



Stockton Head Start's Bright Star



A very special "Thank You!" to those who have made donations to Stockton Head Start in memory and celebration of Miss Ali.

Mary Alice "Ali" Gerlt (Weber), 58 Humansville, died Saturday May 6, 2011 in her home. She had a successful career as a sales professional and was clever enough to retire early. Her true passion was supporting Stockton Head Start, where she was fondly known as *Miss Ali*.

Miss Ali volunteered at the Stockton Head Start Center for the past 11 years. She was always there to organize fun events for the children and devoted herself to make sure children had special holidays and supplies to begin school. The children adored her.

While she was in intensive care, she received a carving of an angel called Brite Star, which fit her spirit. When you look into the sky at night and see a bright star, remember Miss Ali. Those whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before. They are now wherever we are.



The Promise

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.



Calendar of Events:

Back to School Fairs are Scheduled! Check Out the Calendar on our website for a complete list of date, locations and contact information.

Missourians to End Poverty meets the *Fourth Wednesday of each month*. For more information, please visit www.communityaction.org.

WCMCAA Governing Board Meetings are held the *Fourth Thursday of each month*.

WCMCAA Featured on **95.3 KDKD Speak Out** - *Second Monday of each Month*.

Community Empowerment Meetings in each of the nine county service area are held monthly.

WCMCAA Head Start Centers hold monthly **Family Enrichment events**.

Please see the WCMCAA calendar of events on our website for more information regarding these and other WCMCAA activities.

www.wcmcaa.org



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If you or someone you know, would like to be added to the WCMCAA Newsletter mailing list or e-list, please contact Malia Mount, Development and Communications Director, at 660-476-2185 ext. 1106 or e-mail mmount@wcmcaa.org.



West Central Missouri Community Action Agency

*If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day.
If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.*

What if there are no fish in the pond?

Serving: **Bates, Benton, Cass, Cedar, Henry, Hickory, Morgan, St. Clair and Vernon Counties**
Limited Services Also Available in: Barton, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, and Saline

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WCMCAA is a member of the National Community Action Partnership
and Missouri Association for Community Action.

