



Community Action Program of Lancaster County

AGENCY PROFILE 2006

Mission Statement

To stimulate a better focusing of all available local, state, private and federal resources upon the goal of enabling low income families, and low income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain the skills, knowledge and motivations and secure the opportunities for them to become self-sufficient.

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HISTORY AND PURPOSE:

The Community Action Program of Lancaster County was founded and incorporated in 1966 as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization by a group of community leaders, chaired by the late Richard Oblender, and in cooperation with the Lancaster County Community Council, a predecessor to the United Way of Lancaster County. The organization was developed by these leaders to respond to the unmet needs of the urban and rural poor of Lancaster County. The major obstacles faced by the founders of the program were the denial by certain community leaders of the presence of poverty in their community. In addition, many felt that all poverty was limited to minority families residing in the southeast area of Lancaster City. In addition, many felt that poverty was the direct result of personal failing and that no program would prove useful to eliminating poverty in the community.

The goals of Community Action Program are fourfold. First, it is to be an organization that mobilizes resources, both public and private, to deal with the causes of poverty, not merely its effects. It is not Community Action's role to simply provide financial assistance to the poor, or to foster greater dependency; but rather, it is to enable the poor to move out of poverty.

Second, Community Action is to be a program which provides services, assistance and other activities of sufficient size and scope to give *"the promise of progress to the elimination of poverty through the development of employment opportunities, the improvement of human performance, productivity and motivation and the bettering of conditions under which low income families live, learn and work."*¹

Third, Community Action seeks to strengthen the community's capabilities for planning and coordinating federal, state and private sector resources related to the elimination of poverty. CAP seeks to work collaboratively with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to increase opportunities for low-income families to become self sufficient.

Finally, Community Action is to be developed, conducted and administered with the *"maximum feasible participation of the poor"*. Participation means both the training and employment of the poor in service delivery jobs as well as their participation on policy-making groups, including the CAP Board of Directors. Through this participation, it is believed that low income persons can also be included in other community institution policy making groups, including elective offices.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The corporation is governed by a 21 member Board of Directors, representing both city and county elected and appointed public officials, organizations representing community interest groups and the private sector. In addition, one-

¹ Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

third of the Board is comprised of persons representing low-income people. Organizations wishing to be represented on the Board of Directors may petition for inclusion.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Despite the decline in the federal government's support of the War on Poverty, the Community Action Program has remained committed to its original mission of focusing greater public and private attention on the multiple problems facing Lancaster County's urban and rural low income families. Examples of this are:

- the establishment of a **County Housing Authority** through direct petition to the Governor;
- the development and implementation of the first rural **human services transportation** system;
- the founding and development of the **Welsh Mountain Medical and Dental Center**, a community based primary health care facility;
- the founding of the **Housing Development Corporation** of Lancaster County;
- the establishment of the first **civil legal services program** for low income families in Lancaster County;
- the establishment of the **Lancaster County Office of Aging** in cooperation with the Lancaster County Commissioners and the United Way and the establishment of the first Senior Centers in Lancaster County;
- the development and implementation of the first **home weatherization program** for low income families in Pennsylvania;
- the development of the first program to provide **subsidized child care** to low income working parents in Lancaster County;
- the establishment of **Child Care Information Services** under the aegis of the Lancaster County Commissioners;
- the establishment of one of the first **domestic violence Shelters** in Pennsylvania and the only one in Lancaster County and the establishment of a **Domestic Violence Legal Clinic** and a **Transitional Housing** program for victims of domestic violence.
- Formation of CAP Housing Corporation to develop affordable rental and for-sale housing for low and moderate income families in Lancaster County

- Establishment of a distribution center which provides specialized specialized infant formula to high-risk infants who are participating in the WIC program in Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia and New Jersey.

FACILITIES:

In January, 2003, CAP completed a new 46,000 square foot headquarters facility, located at 601 South Queen Street in Lancaster. In addition to housing CAP's administrative services, the new building is a "one-stop" human service center for the City of Lancaster, including such services as the Women, Infants and Children Program; Outreach and Information and Referral Services; emergency energy and emergency housing assistance, Child Care Information Services, including child care subsidies; the Lancaster Family Center; CONTACT Lancaster and the Lancaster Senior Center. The facility also houses a Lancaster City Police Neighborhood Policing office, with four full-time police officers covering the surrounding neighborhood.

CAP also operates over thirty other facilities around the City and County of Lancaster. Many of these facilities offer multiple services as well as housing other programs such as Child Care, Head Start, Domestic Violence related services and other programs for low income individuals and families.

FUNDING:

Despite the decline in direct federal anti-poverty funding, CAP has been successful in carrying out its mission to "mobilize and utilize resources, both public and private". In 1966, CAP was funded by an initial grant of \$75,000 from the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity; since then, its annual budget has grown to over \$34 million annually. Its staff has grown from one part-time person in 1966 to over 375 full and part-time persons. In addition, the agency utilizes literally hundreds of volunteers in various roles throughout the agency.

Currently, the agency receives grants and contracts from:

Federal government:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Federal Emergency Management Agency

State government:

- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- Pennsylvania Department of Health
- Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare
- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
- Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
- Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture

Local government:

- Lancaster County Commissioners
- Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency
- Lancaster County Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation
- Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority
- Lancaster County Office of Aging
- Lancaster Employment and Training Agency
- City of Lancaster
- School District of Lancaster
- Lancaster Lebanon Intermediate Unit

Private Sector sources:

- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- PPL Utilities
- United Way of Lancaster County
- Milton Eisenhower Foundation
- Lancaster County Community Foundation
- Workforce Investment Board of Lancaster County
- Housing Development Corporation
- UGI Utilities, Inc.
- Columbia Gas
- Corporate and individual contributions
- Churches and civic organizations
- Pennsylvania Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program

POVERTY IN LANCASTER COUNTY:

Poverty exists in every municipality in Lancaster County. According to the 2000 Census, 470,658 people reside in the County. Of that number, 7.8% (or 35,553) live in poverty. Poverty is highest in African-American (28.7%) and Hispanic families (38%). Of the 5,569 families who live in poverty, 3,060 are families headed by single females.

The greatest numbers of low income individuals are located in the City of Lancaster, Lancaster Township, Manheim Township and the Borough of Columbia. The greatest percentages of poverty occur in the City of Lancaster (21.20%), Millersville Borough (16.4%), Leacock Township (15.4%), Earl Township (15.0%)

and and in the Solanco areas of Fulton (13.7%), Little Britain Township (13.6%) and Bart Township (13%).

The census also shows that 13,261 children live in poverty in the County, while 3,999 senior citizens live in poverty. In terms of housing costs, the census showed that over 42% of all families pay more than 30% of their household income for gross rental costs.

AGENCY PROGRAMS:

Outreach Services: This program serves as the agency's primary link with low income neighborhoods and insures poor families access to the agency's and the community's human and social service network. With offices and staff located in Manheim, Columbia, Quarryville, Elizabethtown, Ephrata and the Welsh Mountain/Eastern Lancaster county as well as in Lancaster City, the outreach program provides **case management, information, referral, follow up and advocacy services** to low income and elderly families. The goal of these services is to assist low-income families to move towards **self-sufficiency** and away from dependency upon public assistance.

Each of the Human Service Coordinators works closely with community civic organizations and local church groups to better coordinate the delivery of locally funded emergency assistance programs in their respective communities. In addition, the outreach program also coordinates the delivery of the countywide emergency assistance programs listed below.

- **Emergency Energy Assistance Program:** This program provides direct financial assistance to low income families who face life or property threatening situations as a result of their being without adequate resources with which to purchase heating fuel or to sustain utility services. It is funded by a variety of public and private resources including the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the Department of Public Welfare, the United Way of Lancaster County, PPL Utilities, Inc. and UGI, Inc.
- **Emergency Housing Assistance:** CAP serves as the single operating agency for emergency assistance programs serving the homeless, families living in shelters or families facing homelessness in Lancaster City and County. Funds are used to assist families facing imminent eviction to maintain their current residence, and to assist families living in shelters to find permanent housing. In addition to emergency assistance, the program provides long term case management services to participating families to insure that the housing crisis does not re-occur.
- **Customer Assistance Programs:** CAP serves as the operating agency for two utility customer assistance programs. First the **OnTrack** program is funded by PPL and provides for forgiveness of electric utility arrearages in addition to equal monthly payment of

electric bills based upon family size and income. Similarly, the **LISHP** program is funded by UGI Utilities, Inc. and provides equal monthly payments for gas utility services as well as long term forgiveness of back bills. CAP provides initial intake into these programs as well as long term case management to insure that customers meet their monthly financial obligation and to assist them with any problems which may arise.

CONTACT Lancaster Helpline: On July 1, 2004, CONTACT Lancaster Helpline became a component of the Community Action Program.

CONTACT Lancaster HelpLine provides a "caring presence" to the residents of Lancaster County through the operation of a 24-hour Help Center.

Experienced, well trained volunteers respond to callers non-judgmentally and non-persuasively. All calls are confidential, anonymous and free of charge.

No one chooses the time or place to experience a problem. In the midst of a difficult or overwhelming situation, a person may feel desperate and abandoned. CONTACT serves as an easily accessible, sometimes life-saving resource. CONTACT is a safe place to vent frustrations and hurts, to explore options or to ask for a referral. Anyone can call CONTACT with any problem, at any time.

In addition to its general helpline, CONTACT Lancaster HelpLine offers the [Teen Line](#), [Kids Line](#), and [Deaf CONTACT](#) helplines, as well as the ancillary services of [Reassurance CONTACT](#), [Answering Service](#) and [Information and Referral](#).

CONTACT Lancaster Helpline is an accredited member of [CONTACT USA](#), a national association of crisis helplines in 60 cities throughout the United States. In turn, [CONTACT USA](#) is a member of [Life Line International](#), an association of over 225 helplines in the US, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, India and Fiji.

Food Distribution Programs: This program distributes federal surplus commodities to eligible low income families through existing community operated food pantries and uses State Food Purchase Program funds to distribute bulk purchased foods to supplement these volunteer-operated food pantries and emergency and congregate feeding programs. The agency maintains a central warehouse for the storage and distribution of these foods to participating organizations.

CAP also operates the **Special Infant Formula Program** for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and West Virginia. This program purchases special infant formula at a wholesale price and ships it directly to families with infants who are unable to consume regular formula due to serious physical problems, food allergies and other problems. By purchasing such formula in bulk and distributing it from a central location, many thousands of tax dollars are saved and more children can

be served than through a retail store/pharmacy based program.

Lancaster City Senior Center: This Senior Center, operated under the supervision of the Outreach Program, provides two nutritious meals per day to an average of 60 Senior Citizens as well as a variety of social, educational and recreational programs. The Center operates five days per week from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Lancaster County Office of Aging funds the services.

Columbia Senior Center: This Senior Center, also operated under the supervision of the Outreach Program, provides two nutritious meals per day to an average of 40 Senior Citizens as well as a variety of social, educational and recreational programs. The Center operates five days per week from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Lancaster County Office of Aging funds the services.

Domestic Violence Services of Lancaster County: This program provides protective residence and crisis-oriented counseling (through a 24 hour telephone hot line) for **victims of domestic abuse** and their dependents. In addition, the program provides services to children of victims as well as extensive public education programs. Finally, DVS operates a volunteer training program for persons wishing to assist the program in its work with women and their children. Also part of the DVS program are:

- **Domestic Violence Legal Clinic:** This program provides specialized legal advocacy and direct representation of victims of domestic violence.
- **Bridge Housing:** This transitional housing program is an outgrowth of the Shelter for Abused Women. This facility, officially opened in May, 1997, provides ten apartment units for victims of domestic violence. Women and their children live in the facility and participate in an extensive program of self sufficiency provided by full-time staff and volunteer mentors. Issues such as education, job training, employment, child care, family budgeting, finding permanent affordable housing and other life skills are an integral part of the program. Women may reside in the facility for up to 18 months after which they move into permanent housing.

Child Development Program: This is largest program of CAP and operates a number of programs for children and parents from low income families. The **Head Start** program provides a range of services to low income parents and children including education, nutrition, health and dental screening and treatment and mental health services. The program offers both center based programs in major population areas as well as home-based programs in the more rural areas of the County. A major theme of Head Start is parent involvement, which encourages the participation of parents in the planning and operation of the program as well as in other community decision making institutions. Currently, the program serves nearly 810 children annually.

CAP's **Child Care Centers** provide subsidized child care to children of low income parents who are working full time or enrolled in full time training or education programs. The agency directly operates child care centers at the Head Start Family Advocacy Center on High and Laurel Streets, and at the CAP Queen Street Center. These services are offered on a sliding fee scale, with the fee determined by family size and income. The services are designed for low income parents who could not otherwise afford the cost of private day care and thereby enables them to remain off public assistance rolls and to retain full time employment.

Family Center: This project was originally established in collaboration with the County of Lancaster and the School District of Lancaster to provide comprehensive and holistic services to low-income families with children ages 0 to 3. This program now operates several components.

- **Parents as Teachers Program:** This is a parent development program that provides research-based developmental information, activities and support to parents of children birth to 36 months of age. Services are provided through bi-weekly home visits with certified Parent Educators.
- The **Fatherhood Initiative** seeks to strengthen the roles of fathers in the development and parenting of young children. Working with both custodial and non-custodial fathers the program provides education in a variety of parent education aspects as well as on-going support groups for fathers (Foundations of Fatherhood). The Long Distance Dads portion of the Fatherhood program is offered in both the Lancaster County Prison and the Youth Intervention Center.
- **Parent Child Home Program** The PCHP is a research-based home-based program targeted at families with children at risk of educational disadvantage. The program reaches families who, because of isolation and poverty, may not be participating in group or center-based literacy or school readiness programs. Families with children ages two and three are visited twice weekly for two years. Each week the Home Visitor brings a new book or toy, which remains with the family permanently. The Home Visitor, using carefully selected books and toys, models for the parent and child together, verbal interaction and parenting techniques through reading and educational play.
- **Supportive Services** are provided through the Family Center for residents of several housing complexes owned and managed by the Housing Development Corporation. These include Duke Manor, Oak Bottom Village, and Oswego Village. Resources and services are provided to assist families in overcoming needs and working to foster cooperation with residents to increase sense of community.
- **Family Development Program:** This is an outreach program based in Martin Luther King and Lafayette Elementary Schools. Staff provide intensive case management, information, referral and follow up services to families referred by school personnel. Peer groups are organized to

improve student self-esteem, develop social skills and learn mediation and conflict resolution.

- **Full Service Community Schools Program** is funded by the Milton Eisenhower Foundation to increase the availability of human and social services to at-risk children and families within the school facility. CAP serves as the lead agency in this effort, but works to involve other needed human services in the program such that parents and students may access these services in the school building. The program currently operates at Lincoln Middle School in the School District of Lancaster.
- The **Nutrition Education Program**, funded by Penn State University, was implemented on March, 2002. This program provides nutrition education services to families being served by the agency's Head Start, WIC and other programs. The program is designed to improve the level of nutritional knowledge of low income families.

Supported Work/Work Experience Program: This program provides **basic work skill training, job search and retention skill training and life skills education** to persons over the age of 17 who have either dropped out of high school or who have limited reading and math skills and who have a poor work history or none at all. Basic work skills which are emphasized include time and attendance expectations, supervisor/employee relationships, personal grooming, job acquisition and retention skills and other employer expectations. In addition, participants are provided with Adult Literacy skills that are taught through referral to the local Adult Education Program and emphasize basic reading and math skills. The program also offers assistance to persons seeking to earn their equivalency diploma. After successfully completing the initial twelve weeks of the program, the participant is provided with job placement assistance or assistance seeking further skill training.

The CAP program serves as a major point of entry into training and employment for low-income individuals who lack a high school education and who have no appreciable work history or marketable job skills. A component of this program is the **Supported Work Program**, which provides services to persons transitioning from welfare to work.

Energy Conservation Center: This program provides a wide range of **energy conservation** services to low and moderate income families to assist them in reducing their heating bills. One component of the program provides full weatherization grants for low-income people and partial grants for moderate income families. Activities under this component include the installation of insulation, storm windows, weather-stripping and caulking and the stopping of other sources of cold air infiltration. These programs are financed by contracts with PPL Utilities, Inc., UGI Utilities Inc., Columbia Gas and the County of Lancaster's Community Development Block Grant program.

The Energy Conservation Center has also worked with PPL to implement its

Renewable Energy Program. The ECC was responsible for the selection and installation of domestic solar hot water and photovoltaic systems on the homes of 40 low income families in Lancaster County.

Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC): This program provides direct financial assistance in the form of **food vouchers and nutrition education to low and moderate income pregnant or breast feeding women, as well as infants and children.** Each participant must be determined to be at nutritional risk by a professional nutritionist or health care provider. These food vouchers are used for the purchase of prescribed foods such as milk, juice, eggs, cheese, infant formula and fortified, low-sugar cereals. In addition, the program provides the participant with on-going nutrition education designed to improve the eating habits of the family, especially as it relates to pregnant women and young children. Presently, the program has over 8,500 Lancaster County women, infants and children enrolled.

Child Care Information Services: In December, 1991, the Lancaster County Commissioners designated CAP of Lancaster County as the Local Management Agency for the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant. This federal legislation established a new system for providing **affordable child care** to children of low income working parents. In addition to increasing funding for child care, the legislation created a "parent choice" system for child care. To assist families in locating child care providers, the program provides resource and referral services to all Lancaster County residents free of charge. The services include educating parents to the importance of selecting quality child care for their children. The parents select the child care that best fits their needs. If the parent needs additional help, the agency maintains a database on all State approved child care providers who completed a survey, which identifies all types of care being offered. The agency can generate with a child care referral list of 3 - 7 child care providers that match their child care needs. Based on additional needs of the family, the staff refers families to other social service agencies.

Families who work a minimum of 25 hours per week and meet the income guidelines and program requirements are eligible for subsidized child care. The family pays the child care provider of their choice a weekly co-payment, a fee that is determined by income. The child care providers also receive a monthly subsidized child care payment from the agency. For families who received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the agency continues subsidizing child care costs as long as the family meets the work and income/program requirements.

The program also offers resources to all Lancaster Child Care Providers through an onsite lending library, monthly newsletter, and business development counseling, training and technical assistance.

CAP Housing Corporation: In 1991, CAP of Lancaster County established a housing development component which is geared to the production of affordable housing units for working families and older individuals. While other effective

housing development organizations exist within the County, it has become increasingly clear that the demand for affordable housing has far outstripped the ability of existing organizations to produce new units. Of particular importance to CAP is the production of these units in areas of Lancaster County where little subsidized housing is available.

CAP acquired its first two single family dwellings in Lancaster City which were completely rehabilitated and sold to **low income first-time home buyers**, through financing from the City of Lancaster and the Bank of Lancaster County.

In 1992, Meridian Bank donated its Columbia branch office (formerly the Columbia Trust Company) to CAP. CAP renovated the upper two floors of the building to house its Columbia outreach office as well as **four one-bedroom rental units for senior citizens**. The first floor space is commercial space. The **Loreto building** was named in honor of Mary Loreto, former CAP Board President and long time member of the CAP Board of Directors. Mrs. Loreto has been a forceful advocate for the needs of the poor in Columbia.

CAP serves as the Managing General Partner in the **Nissly Chocolate Factory Apartments**. This project provides **28 units of affordable rental housing** for senior citizens in Mount Joy Borough. Partners in the project include the County Redevelopment Authority, Fulton Bank, Union National Community Bank and Dauphin Deposit (now M&T Bank).

CAP also completed 10 units of transitional housing for victims of domestic violence known as **Bridge Housing**. CAP was awarded a special federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to purchase, renovate and operate this program. Additional funding commitments from both the City and County and the Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership (LHOP) were received to purchase and renovate the property. Tenants pay only 30% of their gross income for rent and agree to fully participate in a program designed to improve their self-sufficiency through education, job training and a wide range of other supportive services. The County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the United Way of Lancaster County also provide financial support for the supportive services portion of this program.

Old Market Apartments, located in the Borough of Ephrata, was completed in 1999. This project provides 11 units of affordable rental housing to families. It was funded with support from Farmer's First Bank, Ephrata National Bank, the County of Lancaster, and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, LHOP, and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's Affordable Housing Program.

Walnut Street Apartments in Lititz was completed in April, 2005. The project is made up of 18 family two and three bedroom units. The project was developed in cooperation with Community Basics, another community based housing development organization.

Duke Manor Apartments are co-owned with the Housing Development Corporation. This 80 unit complex was originally constructed in the mid-1960's. It was purchased by CAP and HDC in order to prevent it from being converted to market rate apartments. Residents are provided with deep subsidies in order to provide housing to low income families.

CAP Housing is also involved in a **single family housing** renovation and re-

sale program in the City of Lancaster. Under this program, CAP purchases homes which have been condemned or foreclosed and renovates them, and then re-sells them to first-time home buyers. CAP Housing works with the City of Lancaster and the Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership to operate this aspect of its affordable housing program.

Construction began in December, 2005 on **Golden Triangle Apartments**, a 58-unit Affordable Housing development in Manheim Township. Occupancy is expected to occur in the fall of 2006. This project is being developed by a partnership of CAP Housing and Community Basics, Inc.

The CAP Housing Development component is currently seeking additional opportunities to provide affordable rental and for-purchase housing to low income families in Lancaster County.

Revised: July, 2006