



Greetings ACAA Member,

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**Save the Date -
ACAA Annual
Conference**

Where: Phoenix
Airport Hilton

When: May 14th -
15th

**Arizona
Hunger and
Homelessness
Awareness Week
Kick-Off**

Where: Phoenix City

Letter from the Director: Changing the Face of Poverty

We are facing difficult times as a community, as individuals within our community and as social and human service providers working to provide assistance and access to services for Arizonans throughout the state. These are also times in which we are provided opportunities to succeed in ways we have not before, and to work together in ways we have not previously, or have not in a very long time. The stock market is at an all-time low, unemployment rates are climbing every day, food and utility costs are at an all-time high, gasoline prices are high, and the mortgage foreclosure experience in Arizona is higher than in most other states and expected to climb. Individuals and families who have never needed help are seeking assistance, while families who are living in poverty continue to need our communities' help. In the best of times, social and human services are under-resourced. In times such as those we face today, resources will continue to be cut – the State after all faces another 1.2 billion dollar deficit, which affects cities, counties, community agencies, and members of our communities throughout Arizona. So what are the opportunities? ACAA convened a meeting of our community partners who share a common purpose, a common goal - - to help individuals and families to prosper, have access to the tools and resources that allow all of us to be self-sufficient, financially stable, and secure. Over 70 individuals representing organizations throughout the state, including representatives of state agencies, the Governor's Office, and the faith community, attended the first meeting to brainstorm ways to work together, dropping all barriers to communication and collaboration in order to serve. We have held a second meeting to report our progress and continue to brainstorm our ongoing challenges. **We agreed on four priority areas for our immediate focus: food; utility assistance; rent and mortgage assistance; and transportation.** Four sub-committees were established in order to focus our discussion and develop an action plan: donations; direct service/navigator; data collection; and messaging to the greater Arizona community what the issues are facing Arizonans, and how to ask for support for those needing assistance at this point in time. Another opportunity provided by our current economic situation is an opportunity to educate the greater Arizona community about the issues of poverty, how the face of poverty is changing, the need for more supportive public policies, and the need for adequate resources to be available to help families and to enhance communities. While the first meetings have been great, progress is being made, but this is just the beginning. We are all committed to

Hall Plaza

When: Monday, Nov.
17th, 9:00 am

working together, truly together, in order to help members of our communities survive these very difficult times, while staying as secure as possible, and accessing available resources in an efficient and effective manner. If you are not currently involved, but would like to be, please let me know and we will include you in all future meetings and discussions, and also include you in achieving our goal of enhancing services and support available throughout Arizona.
Thank you for all you do.

Cynthia Zwick
Executive Director

New Changes to the Farm Bill Mean More Benefits to Food Stamp Recipients

The Food Stamp Program underwent some changes in the newest Farm Bill, which went into effect on October 1, 2008. The most obvious and notable change came to the name of the program, which has changed from the outdated Food Stamps to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

In addition to the name change, the minimum benefit level was raised from \$10 per month to \$14 per month, and will be indexed for inflation going forward.

The following eligibility changes may impact people in need as well as those currently being served by the program in Arizona:

- ~ Combat Pay: Combat-related military pay is not considered in a household's income.
- ~ Dependent Care: The cap on the amount of dependent care deductions a household can claim has been removed, so that all costs for dependent care can be deducted from the applicant's gross income.
- ~ Standard Deduction: The minimum standard deduction has increased to \$144, impacting an estimated:
 - ~ 60% of elderly
 - ~ 33% of participants in households with earnings
 - ~ 30% of participants in households with children

If you have questions, or would like to schedule a training event for your staff, volunteers, or clients, please contact Katie Kahle at kkahle@azcaa.org.

Weatherization Month Spotlight from Gila County Housing Services Department

The Gila County Housing Services Department hosted several home tours in Globe-Miami to show how the leverage fund sources to provide more comprehensive repairs on low-income homes in Gila County.

The tour featured 3 homes which have recently been successfully rehabilitated by leveraging multiple fund sources. Without leveraging utility, state and federal dollars, these homeowners would have received "band-aid" repairs and consequently not had their homes rehabilitated to meet health and safety conditions, building code and realizing increased energy efficiency.

Attending this tour were Dr. Fred Karnas, Director of Arizona Department of Housing, Cynthia Zwick, Executive Director of ACAA, Ann Kirkpatrick, newly elected Representative of Arizona's 1st Congressional District, Julie McNeely-Kirwan, Jeff Michlik and Steve Irvine of the Arizona Corporation Commission, Shirley Dawson and Jose Sanchez of the Gila County Board of Supervisors, and Mike Pastor, newly elected County Supervisor for District 2. During the tour, participants were able to observe a blower-door test. Gabe Eylicio, Rehab Specialist, explained how the test allows him to determine what type of repairs are necessary to ensure that the home is properly sealed to ensure the installation of the new appliances does not increase the homeowners energy usage. All participants were very impressed with the knowledge and skills of the Housing Services Department staff.



Arizona's Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week Kick-off

Join other concerned citizens on Monday November 17th, 2008 in educating the public and policymakers regarding the current status of hunger and homelessness in Arizona to kick-off Arizona's Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

The event includes a food drive to benefit: Desert Mission, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, and United Food Bank which serve the Valley.

Please bring a donation of canned food!

Schedule

9:00 A.M. Meet at City of Phoenix City Hall Plaza, 200 W. Washington St.

9:15 A.M. Leave City Hall

10:00 A.M. Walkers arrive at Capitol

10:15 A.M. Speakers at Capitol

Speakers:

Councilman Greg Stanton, City of Phoenix

Jackie Taylor, Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness
Ginny Hildebrand, Association of Arizona Food Banks
Brenda Combs, Grand Canyon University Governor's Proclamation

New funding for LIHEAP

In September 2008, Congress approved LIHEAP funding at the authorized level of \$5.1 billion which, with a release of emergency contingency funding and a leveraging award, amounts to approximately \$31 million in funding for federal fiscal year 2009 for Arizona compared to \$8.1 million in 2008. Soon after the LIHEAP increase was approved, the Community Action Agencies met to discuss a process to deliver this funding. Agencies have observed a significant increase in the need for assistance as a result of this economic downturn as well as an increase in energy costs. It was agreed among the representatives of the Community Action Agencies and approved by DES to increase the LIHEAP eligibility limit from 150% to 200% of the federal poverty level and to increase the maximum benefit amount from \$400 to \$640. These changes will take effect November 1, 2008.

Our sincere thanks go to those of you who have helped support the LIHEAP advocacy efforts. As you can see, our efforts have paid off and this increase in funding will provide relief for many additional households during this difficult time. It is still important that we continue to advocate and communicate the need for energy assistance to our elected officials as the need in Arizona continues to exceed available resources.

Save the Date - ACAA Annual Conference

The ACAA Annual Conference is scheduled for May 14 - 15th at the Phoenix Airport Hilton. The conference will cover many topics related to case management, energy policy and renewables, financial stability and wellness - community and individual. The conference will also offer CEUs for those interested.

Proposition 200 A Resounding "No!"

Proposition 200, titled Payday Lending Reform, was soundly defeated on November 4th by a 59% to 41% margin. Considering the amount of money the Yes for 200 campaign committed (\$14-15 million), our winning is being considered as one of the biggest upsets in voting history! We at ACAA would like to thank you all for your efforts towards defeating this proposition and for your going out to vote against Payday lenders.

New Website

The Home Energy Assistance Fund has recently launched its home page and on-line donation page. The page provides information to people interested in supporting the Fund and will provide the opportunity to receive donations on-line via credit card. People who are seeking assistance will also be able to find information about receiving assistance and utility customer discount programs.



Home Energy
Assistance Fund
Aid. Educate. Conserve.

Please visit the website at www.homeenergyfund.org

ACAA Welcomes a new Business Manager!

Jennifer Kolikoff has joined ACAA as the Business and Program Manager. She had previously served as an accountant with Suffolk County, N.Y. Department of Finance and Taxation. Jennifer's experience also includes positions as a Senior Accountant with Reckson Associates Realty Corporation, as a Tax Consultant to Heidelberg Publishing Services, and a Staff Accountant for Linotype-Hell Company, and as a Staff and ultimately Senior Accountant with Ernst & Young, all in New York. Jennifer is also a Certified Public Account in New York State. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Accounting from Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y. and an Associates Arts Degree in Interior Design from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

ACAA Welcome Two Interns!

Melissa Jensen -

Melissa graduated in 2005 from the University of Utah with a degree in Spanish. She was able to study abroad in Spain for one year and later volunteered at an orphanage in Honduras for about three months. Melissa has been able to volunteer at various places and in so doing became aware of many social issues at both local and international levels. Melissa plans on graduating in May with a Masters degree in Social Work from Arizona State University, at which time she plans to find a position in research and economic development as a means of poverty reduction.

Bill Kuennen -

Born and raised in Iowa, Bill Kuennen received his degree in accounting from Loras College in Dubuque, IA. After completing school Bill did a year of voluntary service through the Jesuit Volunteer Corp in Phoenix, working with homeless families at Central Arizona Shelter Services Vista Colina Family Shelter. When his year of

service concluded, Bill having enjoyed his experience, continued working at Vista Colina before taking a case management position at UMOM New Day Centers, a homeless family shelter in Phoenix. Bill remained at UMOM for three years before beginning the Masters in Social Work program at Arizona State University in the fall of 2007. His first year, he completed an internship in adoption with Family Service Agency, and now will be spending the next two semesters at ACAA. Bill enjoys spending time with his friends, watching and playing a variety of sports, reading, and spending time with his lovely wife, Katie.

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