

2011
Spring
Newsletter



Arizona Community Action Association
Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty

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Letter from the Director

Dear Members and Friends,

All of us are concerned about low and moderate income individuals, families and children experiencing very challenging circumstances right now. At the state level, the budget recently signed by the Governor will have devastating effects on so many, it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine where support will come from when churches and the greater faith community and non-profits are being asked to do even more than they have always done. Unemployment remains high, job growth is slow, and small businesses continue to close.

At the federal level, it seems that we learn about threats every day to funding for programs that have long been recognized for good performance and outcomes and have previously shared bi-partisan support.

At ACAA we are working every day to continue to educate our elected officials, business leaders and community members about the positive program impact, the success of families receiving temporary assistance as well as the negative impact of the cuts being realized or threatened.

We need your help and we need it NOW! Please contact Monique Barrios at mbarrios@azcaa.org, if you are willing to help spread the word, and/or encourage others in your community to do so. It is imperative that we persevere and ensure that the full story is told and understood as discussions are held and decisions are made that will harm so many Arizonans. Join us as we work to keep the awareness high and our families safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia".

Save the Date!

ACAA Membership
Meeting and Training

Friday, June 17th, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Crowne Plaza San Marcos
Resort

Chandler, AZ

Details coming soon!



Suggestions for our next
newsletter? Please email
them to info@azcaa.org!

"True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost."

– Arthur Ashe quotes (U.S. civil rights activist and professional tennis player, 1943-1993)

Save the Date!

Please plan to join ACAA on **Friday, June 17th** for an all-day Membership Meeting and Training at the Crowne Plaza San Marcos Golf Resort in historic downtown Chandler.

More information to come soon!

CSBG Funding for Community Action Programs is Vital to Communities

Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) help fund Arizona's Community Action Agencies, which served 156,000 men, women and children in 2010. Community Action programs in Arizona leveraged \$4.8 million in funds last year to \$45.4 million from other non-federal sources, including the private sector (1:12). This money:

- Impacts Arizona's 11 Community Action Agencies, which serve individuals, displaced workers and low-income people at risk
- Impacts 54,000 Arizona families
- Helps individuals and families in Arizona working hard through Community Action Agency case management to achieve economic stability through financial education, training and job placement.
- Supports 1,065 CAP agencies across the nation that currently serve 21 million Americans.

ARIZONA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS:

- Work.

- Through case management, individuals and families have established, or re-established, financial stability;
 - CAP programs and services provide services from rental and utility-payment assistance to emergency food to programs that teach families how to manage their money and save;
 - CAPs encourage, support and help individuals get off state and federal benefits;
 - 40% of clients utilizing CAP services in 2010 were employed full or part time. 14% were currently receiving unemployment benefits;
 - Address the issue of economic stability constructively for people looking for a hand up, not a hand out;
 - 87% of people served are living at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$27,938 for a family of 4, \$13,613 for a single);
 - 44% of people served in 2010 were children under the age of 18;
 - Community Action helped 64,689 seniors maintain independent living, 14,002 of whom were disabled.
- Are locally managed.
 - All decisions are made in Arizona communities by CAP board members;
 - Boards are 1/3 low-income individuals (people served), 1/3 elected officials and 1/3 private citizens, including business owners and operators;
 - CAP programs are community-based and address the strengths and opportunities of the community which the office is located.
- Create jobs:
 - Weatherization programming allows CAPs to subcontract work out to local contractors, many of whom were struggling to stay employed in the current economy. 71 jobs were created and 121 were saved using ARRA funding in 2010;
 - NACOG's Wheels to Work outcomes show 90% of participants secured meaningful employment or retained current employment, 50% reported an increase in credit rating, 45% returned to school for job training, and 45% were able to independently access medical care and childcare

- Provide financial stability for families.
 - EITC and VITA sites brought \$22,218,951 back to workers through 69,308 filed returns
 - A New Leaf's IDA program is currently assisting 47 individuals with investments in assets that will secure their future, such as home purchases, small business start up, or post-secondary education
 - Financial Education classes, such as WACOG's A Hand Up housing assistance program, which has counseled over 200 households facing foreclosure and enabled WACOG to provide educational workshops on foreclosure prevention and/or budgeting. As of September 30, 2010, WACOG reported 161 households received or were enrolled in one-on-one counseling.

Community Action Works: YouTube Video Showcases Families Helped by Community Action in Arizona

Last fall we told you about a series of community forums we conducted throughout Arizona. These forums were full of stories of incredible strength, perseverance, and desire to reach and accomplish goals.

Community Action played a role in all of these stories and they are too good not to share! ACAAA recently completed a video highlighting the stories of Stephen, David and Terry, and Tammy. We encourage you to view the video and share it with anyone who isn't familiar with the work of Community Action. The video can be found on our ACAAA website or by linking to our YouTube video channel below.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YubNVFWH-ys>

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Randy Murray Productions and the Kur Carr Group for their work developing the wonderful final product. Please contact them to find out more about their work helping local non-profit agencies.

Randy Murray Productions: <http://www.randymurrayproductions.com/>
Kur Carr Group: 602-317-3040

Proposed Block Granting on SNAP Risky for Arizona's Hungry

The bottom line for the 1 in 3 Arizonans considered working poor and the 1 in 6 individuals across the state considered "food insecure" is even fewer meals than they're able to afford today under House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan's budget plan.

Ryan's plan would cut SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) funding, formerly known as food stamps, by nearly 20%, or \$127 billion, over the next 20 years.

A new U.S. Department of Agriculture report that shows that SNAP funding has kept very large numbers of families from going hungry. Low-income families receiving SNAP spend more on nutritious food and food insecurity is reduced for thousands of American families through SNAP.

Although Congressman Ryan has proposed several options to the proposal, including converting the program to a block grant in 2015, he has not provided details in terms of timing or how the cuts would be determined.

Historically, Arizona individuals end up on the losing end of distribution formulas for block-grant type funding proposals. If you use LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) and CSBG as examples, the state's allocation is among the lowest in the nation. For families already struggling to feed their families, that is the worst news they could hear.

Currently, more than 1 million Arizona families in 454,468 households rely on SNAP, which helps low-income families make healthy food choices by putting more nutritious food on the table. SNAP also helps families become financially stable. Nearly 30% of participating SNAP households have earnings, and if they're healthier because they're eating smarter, they may need fewer sick days for themselves and their families.

The USDA reports that half of all new SNAP participants leave the program within nine months.

SNAP funding also generates economic activity in every community in the state. Every \$5 in SNAP benefits generates \$9 in community spending.

The Association of Arizona Food Banks (AAFB) recently reported that as many as 17% of meals are missing from the diets of Arizonans struggling with hunger, poverty and food insecurity.

Nutrition Assistance Community Organization Partnerships for FY12

Last year, ACAA undertook an exciting new approach to our existing Nutrition Assistance (formerly Food Stamps) outreach and education program. Through draw-down funding from USDA, we are able to partner with community and faith-based organizations statewide to provide Nutrition Assistance outreach, education, and enrollment opportunities.

ACAA provides financial and technical support for organizations throughout Arizona which help spread the word about Nutrition Assistance and provide resources for potentially eligible households to receive accurate information and apply for assistance in a safe and trusted environment.

If your organization is interested in becoming an outreach and enrollment partner for Federal Fiscal Year 2012, please refer to our website at <http://www.azcaa.org/nutrition-assistance-partnerships>.

We will be hosting a **mandatory information In-Service** in partnership with DES on **Tuesday, May 10th from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.**, which is your opportunity to learn more about this partnership and how to apply for the coming year. Final **applications will be due to ACAA by Wednesday, June 1st** for the fiscale year beginning on October 1, 2011. For more information or to RSVP to the In-Service, please contact Katie: kkahle@azcaa.org.

A huge thank you to the organizations which have already begun to partner with us for this important work: A New Leaf's MesaCAN, Catholic Community Services Pio Decimo Center, Community Food Bank, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, Neighborhood Ministries, Rio Vista Center, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, Tempe Community Action Agency, and WHEAT.

Weatherization Brings Hope and a New Job

Gloria Dunagan and her husband were living the American Dream.

In 1994 she and her husband started Dunagan Construction. They worked two jobs each until 1998, when they were making a profit, and the business was going strong enough to support the family.

"We were a two person team", says Gloria, "framing houses, building spec houses, we had framing crews, we were hiring 'subs', and we were doing well". Then, "when the recession hit", she said, "it was like someone pulled the rug out from under us".

This is an all too familiar story for many Americans in these challenging economic times. One day you are working and the next day you have no job and you are wondering how you are going to feed your family and make ends meet.

Gloria started to look for jobs immediately while her husband struggled to keep the business afloat. They began to sell equipment and use credit cards to keep the business going and to feed their family. It was a devastating blow and far from the '*dream*'.

Not giving up, Gloria, saw an advertisement for a 'Labor Compliance Specialist' with the Pinal County Community Action Human Resources Agency (CAHRA) in their Housing Department and applied. Gloria was hopeful, not only did she have years of experience in the construction business, but she was familiar with many of the government requirements for the program and thought the job would be a good fit. Gloria was offered the job, and today she works as the Labor Compliance Specialist for the Weatherization Assistance Program for CAHRA.

"We were almost out of hope", not only has the job turned their lives around, but it was a "big emotional lift" says Gloria. As she explains, "the emotional part of not having a job is huge, when everything is going wrong, and everything you worked so hard for is gone, having a job brings you peace of mind, a sense of stability...it is good to be needed".

For CAHRA, Gloria is one of five new employees hired with weatherization stimulus money. It is a good fit for both CAHRA and Gloria, and she has been part of the team that has weatherized 199 homes (as of March 2011) with the stimulus funding. For Gloria, the Weatherization Assistance Program has made a big difference in her life.

For more information on weatherization:

www.azcaa.org

www.azcommerce.com

www.energy.gov



- Jeff Greer - WAP Tech
- Arnold Zambrano - WAP Crew Chief
- Thomas Green - WAP Lead Tech
- Lucy Rangel - Housing Program Manager
- Gloria Dunagan - Labor Compliance Specialist
- Loretha Rushing - Administrative Assistant
- Rhonda richard - Intake Specialist

Home Energy Audits for \$99

SRP and APS are providing home energy audits through their Home Performance With Energy Star Program for \$99, which is a discount from the \$400 or more that contractors normally charge for an audit. The utilities offer rebates for certain work if auditors identify the need for it such as insulation and air duct sealing.

There is no obligation to make any repairs or pay for anything more than the \$99. For having an audit completed, you will be given ten (10) fluorescent light bulbs, a low-flow shower head, and faucet aerators worth \$50. Please contact SRP or APS to make an appointment.

AZ 2-1-1 Update

Community Information & Referral (CIR), an Arizona 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has recently been designated as lead entity and the provider of 2-1-1 services in Arizona. Persons in need will be able to call this easy-to-remember number, 2-1-1, to access information on shelter and food emergencies, and all health and human service resources.

CIR already has a history of being the key referral source for connecting people and services to respond to Arizona's burgeoning human needs. In 2010, CIR assisted offered free and confidential assistance to nearly 450,000 low to moderate income individuals - providing solutions for those in need of food, shelter, mental health hotlines, drug and alcohol treatment, child and adult protection, emergency healthcare, and all health and human services available in our communities. The about-to-be launched 2-1-1 system will build on this platform, but will greatly expand its emergency responsiveness and access to more Arizonans.

The implementation of AZ 2-1-1 will cost in excess of \$800,000 annually. To help meet this financial need, CIR has launched a fund-raising campaign, entitled "Finding Help – Finding Hope...2-1-1." The goal is to create a grass-roots movement of Arizona citizens to support the campaign, perhaps by donating "\$211 for AZ 2-1-1", or any other gesture of support.

For more information on how you can help promote this campaign contact Roberto Armijo, President and CEO, Community Information and Referral, 602-263-8845, ext. 211, rarmijo@cir.org

Tips on Pumping Gas

1. Only buy or fill up your car or truck in the early morning when the ground temperature is still cold. All service stations have their storage tanks buried below ground. The colder the ground the more dense the gasoline, when it gets warmer gasoline expands, so buying in the afternoon or in the evening – your gallon is not exactly a gallon.
2. When your filling up do not squeeze the trigger of the nozzle to a fast mode. If you look you will see the trigger has three (3) states: low, middle, and high. You should be pumping on low mode, thereby minimizing the vapors that are created while you are pumping. All hoses at the pump have a vapor return. If you are pumping on fast rate, some of the liquid that goes to your tank becomes vapor. Those vapors are being sucked up and back into the underground storage tank so you're getting less worth for your money.
3. Fill up when your gas tank is HALF FULL. The reason for this is the more gas you have in your tank the less air occupying its empty space. Gasoline storage tanks have an internal floating roof. The roof serves as zero clearance between the gas and the atmosphere, so it minimizes the evaporation.
4. If there is a gasoline truck pumping into the storage tanks when you stop by to buy gas, DO NOT fill up; most likely the gasoline is being stirred up as the gas is being delivered, and you might pick up some of the dirt that normally settles on the bottom.

National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference June 27 - 29, 2011

Online registration for the National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference is now available on the conference website at

<http://www.energyandutilityconference.org/2011%20Registration.html>.

The conference, which is presented by the **National Low Income Energy Consortium** and **National Fuel Funds Network**, will be held June 27-29 at the

Marriott Harbor Beach Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

AHEAD 2011: Applications Available May 2, 2011

The Access to Housing and Economic Assistance for Housing (AHEAD) Program supports economic development and housing projects during the critical development and early implementation phases. Through their members, AHEAD provides grants to fund projects that will:

- produce housing, services, and other benefits for low and moderate income households;
- results in the creation or retention of jobs; or
- facilitate public or private infrastructure improvements

For more information, please visit www.fhlbsf.com or call 415-616-2542.
