

**Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency
Strategic Plan
2008 – 2013**

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I. BOARD APPROVAL of STRATEGIC PLAN

This Strategic Plan document was reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors at their regularly scheduled May 2008 meeting.

Richard J. Accoe, Board Chair

Katie Love, Board Secretary

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

II. ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency (SMCAA) is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency – part of a state and national network. Incorporated in 1986, it began providing human services to the residents of the rural southwest Michigan counties of Cass and Van Buren. In 1992, Berrien County was officially added to its service delivery area.

The agency is governed by an 18 member Board of Directors, bringing together equal representation of the public and private sectors and the clients who receive services. Policy and fiscal matters as well as programmatic and service issues are reviewed by those who have insights to provide meaningful guidance to the Agency.

SMCAA brings together federal and state grant funds as well as dollars from local, private and public sources. These resources are then directed into programs which aid the low income and otherwise disadvantaged throughout the age spectrum, from preschoolers to the elderly of southwest Michigan. The funds include dollars which are targeted at specific problems, as well as dollars which are more flexible in nature.

The Administrative office of SMCAA is in Benton Harbor, Berrien County, which is also where the food warehouse is located. Additional offices are maintained in Cassopolis, Cass County and Lawrence, Van Buren County. Community Service workers in all three county offices provide services to the clients including application for assistance and distribution of food commodities. These workers also refer to other agencies who provide services that SMCAA does not. The Agency operates homeless shelters for clients in all three counties.

MISSION

SMCAA exists to assist people in economic need and enable them to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency while respecting their diversity.

HOUSING VISION

Every person will have access to safe affordable housing. In order to accomplish this, SMCAA will support the development and maintenance of affordable housing in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. This will be done by providing a continuum of housing services and through collaboration and support of governmental units, agencies and organizations in the tri-county area.

VALUES

We believe that...

- As poverty reduction experts we must listen to our community and our clients and modify our services using that data to effectively empower the individuals and communities we serve to meet their self-sufficiency goals
- We must assess client needs on client-defined terms, partner with them in the service delivery process and hold them accountable for achieving their own outcomes because they are the experts of their own lives
- We must continually broaden our resource base in order to efficiently deliver goods, products, and services to our community and clients
- Our Board needs adequate information and knowledge to champion the Agency and help effectively chart our policy direction
- Our staff need the core competencies, based upon industry best practices, to meet client-defined needs and, to that end must continuously upgrade their skills

GOALS and STRATEGIES

Goal A: *Sustain and/or develop services using an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) framework that support our mission and respond to community needs.*

Strategy A1: Maintain awareness of community assets and needs

Objectives

A1.1 – Management staff will have working knowledge ABCD principles

A1.2 – Management staff will have access to copies of current community needs assessments

A1.3 – All staff will be familiar with both community and client assets

Strategy A2: Programs and services will support our mission and respond to community needs

Objectives

A2.1 – The agency's mission, current community data and demographics will be used to develop and modify program objectives and service outcome goals

A2.2 – Staff, clients, and other human service agencies will contribute to the agency's program development process

Goal B: *Sustain and develop adequate funding to support SMCAA's mission*

Strategy B1: Continually seek to keep administrative balanced and increase revenues

Objectives

B1.1 – Ensure administrative costs stay within appropriate, allowable range based upon industry standards

B1.2 – Increase annual unrestricted funding 5% by 2013

Strategy B2: Organizational processes will be efficient and effective

Objectives

B2.1 – Review and modify personnel policies every 2 years

B2.2 – Review and modify operational policies and processes every 2 years

B2.3 – Increase volunteer staff by 10%

Goal C: *Develop our Board and staff*

Strategy C1: Staff, board, and volunteers will know enough about agency processes, programs and services to perform their duties

Objectives

C1.1 – New staff, board, and volunteer orientation process will adequately prepare them for their position

Strategy C2: Staff and board professional growth and development will be based upon industry best practices

Objectives

C2.1 – Professional growth and development opportunities will help staff and board achieve their professional development objectives

C2.2 – Staff and board will have access to information about industry best practices and client-defined needs

Goal D: The issue of poverty will be a focus of local debate and action

Strategy D1: Improve the community's general awareness of poverty issues, poverty reduction best practices, our agency's mission, services, and state and national community action agenda

Objectives

D1.1 – Poverty awareness-raising events for the community will be held on a regular basis

D1.2 – Staff, board and volunteers will participate in national, state and local poverty reduction initiatives

Goal E: *Actively promote and increase client self-sufficiency*

Strategy E1: Improve our capacity to meet clients where they are and support them in achieving their self-sufficiency goals

Objectives

E1.1 – Staff will be prepared to help clients develop a personal self-sufficiency plan

E1.2 – Client self-sufficiency goal attainment will be measurable

E1.3 – Barriers that prevent clients from achieving their self-sufficiency goals will be addressed

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS DATA

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- The services we provide address a range of critical issues along the continuum: emergency assistance such as food, rent, utilities, and shelter; supportive services such as transitional/supportive housing, individual development accounts, credit repair and counseling, homeowner preparation; and energy and housing services such as energy education, weatherization, and housing development.
- SMCAA is part of a state and national network that gives us access to information on best practices, training and technical support, peer mentoring, monitoring and accountability.
- Community leaders, businesses and other human service agencies appreciate our vision, leadership, and transparent business practices.
- Our diverse staff is committed to the agency, evidenced by our high staff retention and their willingness to adapt, learn and grow. They are also resourceful and determined to find creative solutions in order to serve our clients.
- Members of the Board of Directors represent the consumers, public and private sectors of our three counties and are diverse ethnically, socio-economically, educationally, and geographically. Despite this diversity the Board works well together and frequently takes advantage of training and networking opportunities

EMERGING TRENDS

- Client needs are becoming more complex requiring more case management / more holistic methods and focused attention in order to help them achieve self-sufficiency while revenue streams for case management are scarce
- Income qualifications and eligibility guidelines required by funders are becoming more rigorous
- Nationally there is a general economic downturn and businesses are downsizing and/or outsourcing to other countries; In Michigan, businesses are leaving the state; local businesses are downsizing or closing
- Increasing number of foreclosures. Limited amount of affordable housing stock. Existing stock is older and in need of repair
- Energy cost of spiraling upward and impacting all heating utilities (i.e. electricity, propane and fuel oil)

- Baby boomers are beginning to retire and people are generally living longer
- Increased medical needs for low income individuals while Medicare and Medicaid coverages are being limited
- Rising costs of higher education
- According to an EPE Research center report, requirements for high school graduation are becoming more stringent, and the high school drop out rate is increasing due in part to “No Child Left Behind”
- Non-profit agencies are merging or consolidating in an effort to become “leaner & meaner”

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Berrien

2005 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA			
	BERRIEN COUNTY	MI	US
HOUSEHOLD RELATIONSHIP			
	Number	Number	Number
Population	158,224		
GENDER FOR HOUSEHOLDS			
	Number	Number	Number
Male	77,443	4,824,431	141,274,964
Female	80,781	5,041,152	147,103,173
AGE FOR HOUSEHOLDS			
	Number	Number	Number
17 or younger	40,310	2,512,663	73,131,688
18-24	13,904	898,593	26,295,690
25-44	39,168	2,718,251	82,023,068
45-64	42,113	2,541,574	72,167,164
65+	22,729	1,194,502	34,760,527
Average age (years)	37.90	36.64	36.40
RACE AND ETHNICITY FOR HOUSEHOLDS			
	Number	Number	Number
White alone	128,014	7,890,608	215,333,394
Black or African American alone	23,071	1,379,010	34,962,569
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	561	57,840	2,357,544
Asian alone	2,069	227,585	12,471,815
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	3,546	397,030
Some other race alone	1,147	151,670	17,298,601
Two or more races:	3,362	155,324	5,557,184
Hispanic or Latino	4,995	371,627	41,870,703
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE (\$ IN PREVIOUS YEAR)			
	Number	Number	Number
Median household income	38,567	44,667	41,994
Householder under 25	20,107	24,436	22,679
Householder 25-34	36,924	44,420	41,414
Householder 35-44	47,768	53,725	50,654
Householder 45-54	52,477	61,791	56,300
Householder 55-64	45,480	50,228	47,447
Householder 65-74	28,768	31,574	31,368
Householder 75 and older	20,049	22,114	22,259

Berrien County cont.

PER CAPITA INCOME BY RACE OR ETHNICITY (\$)

	Number	Number	Number
Per capita income	19,952	22,168	21,587
White	22,019	23,697	23,918
Black or African American	11,643	15,714	14,437
Native American	14,128	15,746	12,893
Asian	20,385	24,581	21,823
Native Hawaiian and Pacific islander	17,261	16,378	15,054
Some other race	9,655	13,253	10,813
Two or more races	10,182	12,637	13,405
Hispanic or Latino	11,042	13,889	12,111

Cass

2000 CENSUS DATA				
CASS COUNTY		MI		US
POPULATION				
	Number		Number	Number
Total population	51,104			
Square miles (land)	492.18			
Population per square mile	103.83		174.96	79.56
GENDER				
	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
Male	25,535	50.0	49.0	49.1
Female	25,569	50.0	51.0	50.9
AGE				
	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
15 or younger	10,680	20.9	21.8	21.4
16-24	6,135	12.0	13.7	13.9
25-44	14,086	27.6	29.8	30.2
45-64	13,276	26.0	22.4	22.0
65+	6,927	13.6	12.3	12.4
	Number		Number	Number
Average age (years)	38.00		36.18	36.22
RACE AND ETHNICITY				
	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
White	45,582	89.2	80.2	75.1
Black or African American	3,127	6.1	14.2	12.3
American Indian and Alaska native	420	0.8	0.6	0.9
Asian	275	0.5	1.8	3.6
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander	4	0.0	0.0	0.1
Some other race	598	1.2	1.3	5.5
Two or more races	1,098	2.1	1.9	2.4
Hispanic or Latino	1,233	2.4	3.3	12.5
Cass County cont.,				
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE (\$ IN PREVIOUS YEAR)				
	Number	Number	Number	
Median household income	41,264	44,667	41,994	
Householder under 25	23,321	24,436	22,679	
Householder 25-34	41,952	44,420	41,414	
Householder 35-44	47,650	53,725	50,654	
Householder 45-54	53,000	61,791	56,300	
Householder 55-64	46,093	50,228	47,447	
Householder 65-74	26,883	31,574	31,368	
Householder 75 and older	20,172	22,114	22,259	
PER CAPITA INCOME BY RACE OR ETHNICITY (\$)				

	Number	Number	Number
Per capita income	19,474	22,168	21,587
White	20,261	23,697	23,918
Black or African American	13,606	15,714	14,437
Native American	11,621	15,746	12,893
Asian	15,319	24,581	21,823
Native Hawaiian and Pacific islander	0	16,378	15,054
Some other race	11,842	13,253	10,813
Two or more races	10,501	12,637	13,405
Hispanic or Latino	11,322	13,889	12,111

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census; ePodunk

Van Buren

2000 CENSUS DATA

VAN BUREN COUNTY **MI** **US**

POPULATION

	Number	Number	Number
Total population	76,263		
Square miles (land)	610.86		
Population per square mile	124.85	174.96	79.56

GENDER

	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
Male	37,843	49.6	49.0	49.1
Female	38,420	50.4	51.0	50.9

AGE

	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
15 or younger	17,517	23.0	21.8	21.4
16-24	9,898	13.0	13.7	13.9
25-44	21,425	28.1	29.8	30.2
45-64	18,050	23.7	22.4	22.0
65+	9,373	12.3	12.3	12.4

	Number	Number	Number
Average age (years)	36.31	36.18	36.22

Van Buren County cont.,

RACE AND ETHNICITY

	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
White	67,051	87.9	80.2	75.1
Black or African American	4,001	5.2	14.2	12.3
American Indian and Alaska native	705	0.9	0.6	0.9
Asian	229	0.3	1.8	3.6
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander	9	0.0	0.0	0.1
Some other race	2,614	3.4	1.3	5.5
Two or more races	1,654	2.2	1.9	2.4
Hispanic or Latino	5,634	7.4	3.3	12.5

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE (\$ IN PREVIOUS YEAR)

	Number	Number	Number
Median household income	39,365	44,667	41,994
Householder under 25	26,494	24,436	22,679
Householder 25-34	41,430	44,420	41,414
Householder 35-44	46,975	53,725	50,654
Householder 45-54	54,358	61,791	56,300
Householder 55-64	40,728	50,228	47,447
Householder 65-74	26,243	31,574	31,368
Householder 75 and older	18,972	22,114	22,259

PER CAPITA INCOME BY RACE OR ETHNICITY (\$)

	Number	Number	Number
Per capita income	17,878	22,168	21,587
White	18,704	23,697	23,918
Black or African American	13,138	15,714	14,437
Native American	11,633	15,746	12,893
Asian	16,977	24,581	21,823
Native Hawaiian and Pacific islander	753	16,378	15,054
Some other race	11,275	13,253	10,813
Two or more races	10,062	12,637	13,405
Hispanic or Latino	9,587	13,889	12,111

[Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census; ePodunk](#)

**AGENCY CHECKLIST
ROMA NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**

Program or Activity	NPI	ROMA Direct Measure
Agency Capacity	5.1, 4.1	
Asset Formation	1.3, 3.2	
Board Membership	3.2	
Civic Involvement	3.2	
Community Enhancement - Facilities	2.2	
Community Organizing	3.2	
Emergency Services	6.2	
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	1.3	
Home Budget Management	1.3	
Home Ownership	1.2, 3.2	
Homeless Programs	6.2	
Housing	1.2, 2.1, 3.2	
Housing Rehabilitation	2.1	
Individual Development Accounts (IDA)	1.3, 3.2	
LIHEAP	6.2	
Partnerships	4.1	
Self-Sufficiency	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	
Shelter	6.2	
Surplus Food	6.2	
TANF	1.1, 1.2, 2.1	
Transitional Housing	1.2, 2.1	
Volunteers	3.1, 3.2	
Weatherization	1.2, 1.3, 2.1	

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

Goals

- A. Sustain and/or develop services using an asset based community development framework that support our mission and respond to community needs (NPI ____)
- B. Sustain and develop adequate funding to support SMCAA’s mission (NPI ____)
- C. Develop our Board and staff (NPI ____)
- D. The issue of poverty will be a focus of local debate and action. (NPI ____)
- E. Actively promote and increase client self-sufficiency (NPI __)

Strategies

- A1. Maintain awareness of community assets and needs
- A2. Programs and services will support our mission and respond to community needs
- B1. Continually seek to increase revenue and decrease costs
- B2. Organizational processes will be efficient and effective
- C1. Staff, board, and volunteers will know enough about agency processes, programs and services to perform their duties
- C2. Staff and board professional growth and development will be based upon industry best practices
- D1. Improve the community’s general awareness of poverty issues, poverty reduction best practices, our agency’s mission, services, and state and national community action agenda
- E1. Improve our capacity to meet clients where they are and support them in achieving their self-sufficiency goals

Performance Measures

<i>Objective A1.1 – Management staff will have working knowledge of ABCD principles</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
A1.1a -				

<i>Objective A1.2 – Management staff will have access to copies of current community needs assessments</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	

A1.2a -				

Objective A1.3 – All staff will be familiar with both community and client assets

Action	Responsibility	Progress Review		Completion Date
		By	Date	
A1.3a -				

Objective A2.1 – The agency’s mission and current community data and demographics will be used to develop and modify program objectives and service outcome goals

Action	Responsibility	Progress Review		Completion Date
		By	Date	
A2.1a -				

Objective A2.2 – Staff, clients, and other human service agencies will contribute to the agency’s program development process

Action	Responsibility	Progress Review		Completion Date
		By	Date	
A2.2a -				

<i>Objective B1.1 – Decrease costs by ___ %</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
B1.1a -				

<i>Objective B1.2 – Increase unrestricted funding by ___ %</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
B1.2a -				

<i>Objective B2.1 – Review and modify personnel policies every ___ years</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
B2.1a -				

<i>Objective B2.2 – Review and modify operational policies and processes every ___ years</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
B2.2a -				

<i>Objective B2.3 – Increase volunteer staff 10% by 2013</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
<i>B2.3a -</i>				

<i>Objective C1.1 – New staff, board, and volunteer orientation process will adequately prepare them for their position</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
<i>C1.1a -</i>				

<i>Objective C2.1 – Professional growth and development opportunities will help staff and board achieve their professional development objectives</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
<i>C2.1a -</i>				

<i>Objective C2.2 – Staff and board will have access to information about industry best practices and client-defined needs</i>
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<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
C2.2a -				

Objective D1.1 – Poverty awareness-raising events for the community will be held on a regular basis

<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
D1.1a -				

Objective D1.2 – Staff, board and volunteers will participate in national, state and local poverty reduction initiatives

<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
D1.2a -				

Objective E1.1 – Staff will be prepared to help clients develop a personal self-sufficiency plan

<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	
E1.1a -				

<i>Objective E1.2 – Client self-sufficiency goal attainment will be measureable</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	

<i>Objective E1.3 – Barriers that prevent clients from achieving their self-sufficiency goals will be addressed</i>				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress Review</i>		<i>Completion Date</i>
		<i>By</i>	<i>Date</i>	

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