



2017 Annual Report

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency



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Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency

HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES
Serving Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties



Executive Director
Arthur C. Fenrick

Dear Friends of Community Action

We are pleased to share with you the Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency (SMCAA) Annual Report highlighting agency activities, accomplishments and financial data for fiscal year 2017. We are indebted to our donors, volunteers and community partners, who along with our board, staff and program participants make up an amazing force in helping to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty.

SMCAA is committed to collaborating with community partners throughout Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties, which provides an avenue to combine resources and knowledge to further help local communities. Our local network of hundreds of community partners include federal, state, local funders, churches, cities and townships, and other non-profits.

SMCAA continues to listen to the communities that we serve through local guidance, advisory councils and community needs assessments. Through this process, SMCAA effectively explains how the priorities in our strategic plan meet the proven needs in the community as we continue to fight the effects of poverty by providing support services to this vulnerable population.

Please join us on this journey as we each do our part to support children, families and seniors, as we help move them from surviving to thriving. Although we may not see an end to the war on poverty, as President Johnson had envisioned, Community Action agencies across the nation will continue to focus on impacting successful outcomes for as many as we possibly can.

Together we truly make a difference Helping People and Changing Lives!

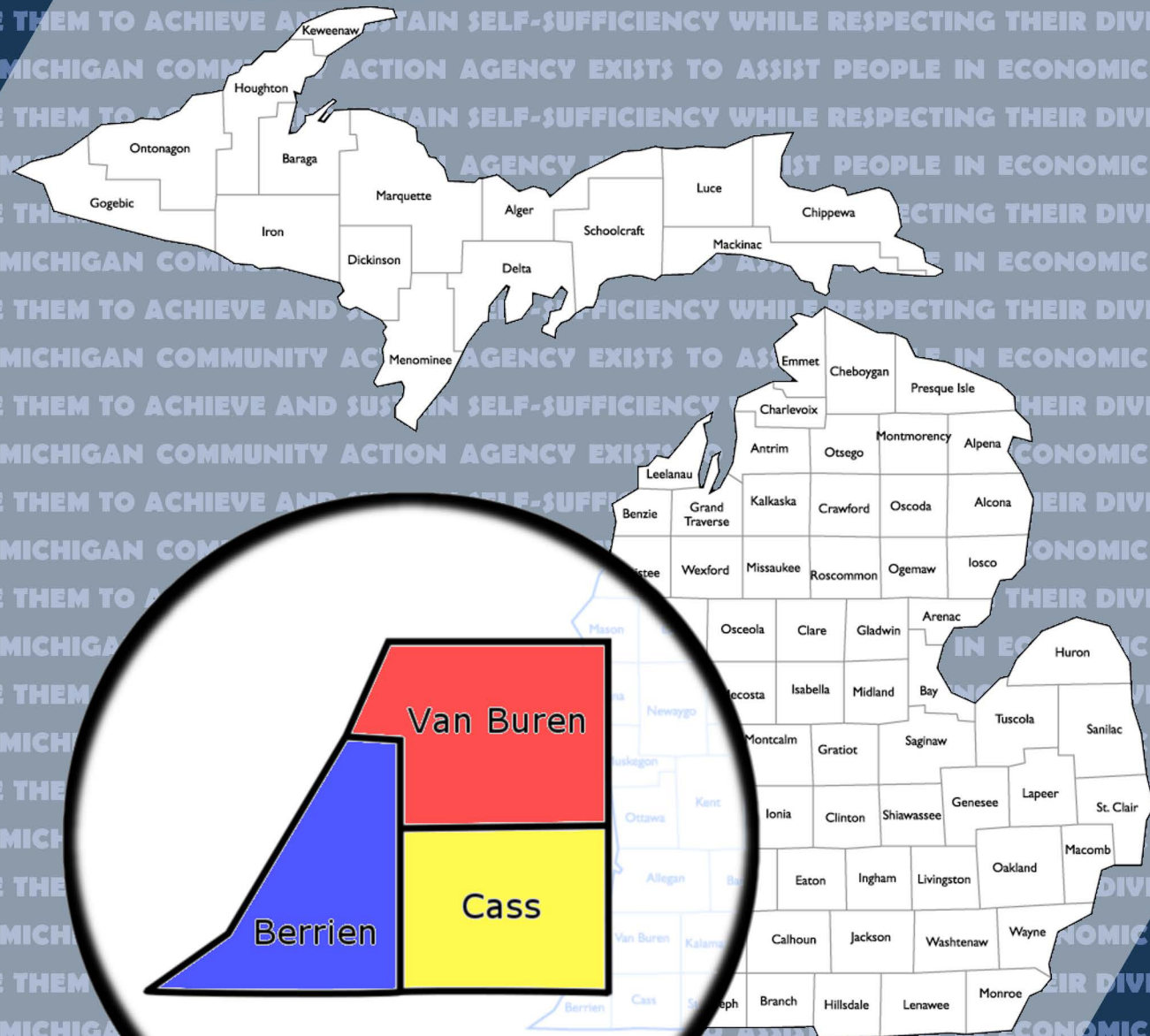
Sincerely,

Arthur C. Fenrick, CCAP
Executive Director

Minnie Warren
Board Chair



SMCAA's Primary Service Area

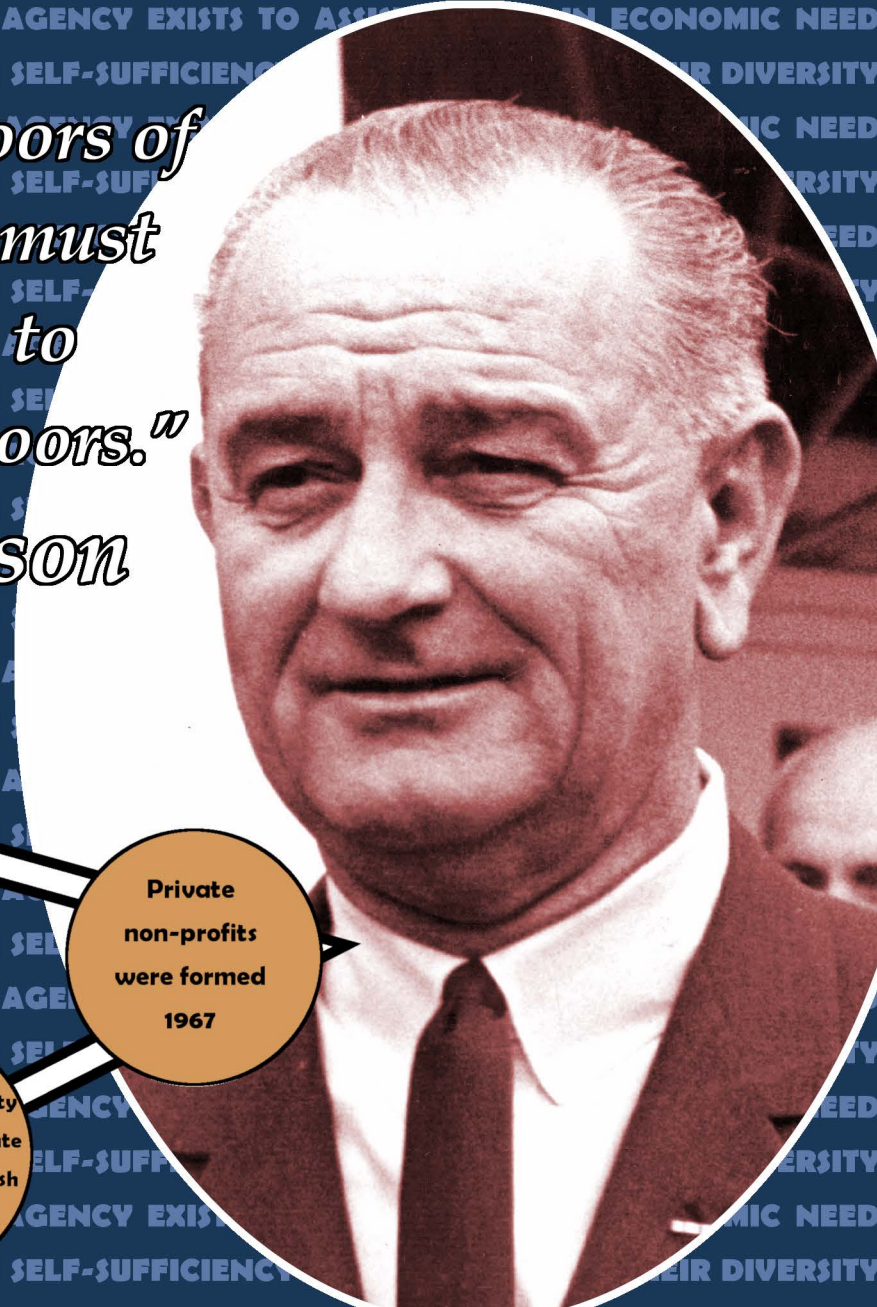


Visit SMCAA at any of these locations:

<p>Administrative Office 185 E Main, Suite 303 Benton Harbor, MI 49022</p>	<p>Cass County (DHHS) 325 M-62 Highway Cassopolis, MI 49031</p>	<p>Van Buren County (DHHS) 57150 CR 49064 Lawrence, MI 49064</p>	<p>Warehouse 331 Miller St Benton Harbor, MI 49022</p>	<p>Family Shelter 210 E Delaware Decatur, MI 49045</p>
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"We must open the doors of opportunity. But we must also equip our people to walk through those doors."

-Lyndon B. Johnson



The “War on Poverty” spearheaded by President Lyndon B. Johnson, began a multitude of programs designed to help economically disadvantaged people work toward self-sufficiency. We continue this journey as we administer federal, state and local contracts that have been developed to respond to needs of local people residing in our regional service district. As you will see throughout this report, our programs range from homeless prevention, emergency heat and utility assistance, food support, home empowerment, and family programs. We continue to listen to local guidance through our advisory councils and community needs assessments which allow us to adapt our services to meet identified needs. We continue to fight the effects of poverty by providing educational support, case management, financial assistance, and more.

Board of Directors

Berrien County

Don Meeks - Treasurer

Juliet Johnson

Corey Christopher - Vice Chair

Cass County

E. Clark Cobb

Minnie Warren - Chair

Michael Franks

Van Buren

Gail Patterson-Gladney

Kathy Lyons - Secretary

David Fernandez

Every county served has three board members that each represent either the public, private, or community sector.





Executive Summary

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 preschooler to the elderly of southwestern Michigan.

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency (SMCAA) has been providing services to low-income families in Southwest Michigan for over 35 years. The current portfolio of services includes Emergency Assistance, homeless programs (including shelter), individual and asset development, weatherization and housing development.

Emergency Assistance for low-income families and individuals includes: emergency and commodity food, utility, rent/mortgage, and other miscellaneous assistance, and emergency shelter in Van Buren and Cass Counties. Through Community Development programs, SMCAA helps individuals and families find and secure housing using a variety of tools including: Permanent Supportive Housing and homeless services in Cass, and Van Buren Counties; Homebuyer Education Workshop and Financial Capability counseling. The Weatherization and Housing Development program provides Weatherization, Energy Education, Homeowner and Rental Rehabilitation, and emergency repairs for homes of low-income residents. This is done by SMCAA acting as the third-party administrator for Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph and Van Buren Counties MSHDA Housing Resource Fund Grants.

SMCAA serves Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties through a variety of programs. According to the most current census data (www.census.gov) the population of our service area is 280,832. In Berrien County the population is made up of 154,010, median income is \$45,980 and 16.7% persons in poverty. In Cass County the population is made up of 51,599, median income is \$47,991 and 12.9% persons in poverty. In Van Buren County the population is made up of 75,223, median income is \$47,141 and 16.5% persons in poverty. In Berrien, Cass and Van Buren, reduced and free lunches is over 50% of the student population according to community commons data base.

In fiscal year 2017 SMCAA serviced 5,146 unduplicated families and individuals through programs and services that we offer.



Family Agency

Community

ROMA

eliminate poverty and economic inequality

Community Action’s goals are to eliminate the causes of poverty, increase self-sufficiency of individuals and families, and revitalize communities. Without good management of resources and services, this could not be achieved.

To ensure good management at all levels, the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) has been working with local, state and national partners to create “**ROMA Next Generation**”.

What is?

ROMA Next Generation

- ROMA Next Generation (NG) is a system for continuous quality improvement to enable the network to measure, analyze and communicate performance.
- ROMA NG will help Community Action at local, state and national levels shift to a culture of continuous learning rather than compliance and reporting culture.
- Ultimately, ROMA NG will help the CSBG Network generate robust results for individuals with low-incomes and the communities served.

Assessment

Community needs and resources, agency data

Evaluation

Analyze data, compare with benchmarks

Planning

Use agency mission statement and assessment data to identify results and strategies

Achievement of Results

Observe and report progress

Implementation

Services and strategies produce results



SMCAA conducted a Client Satisfaction survey and 90% of the surveys had a positive response rate, the clients seem to be happy with the services the agency provides and the interactions with agency staff.

“It is my hope that programs such as Homebuyer Education continue to be offered to those truly in need of that extra nudge to get them on the correct path. That little guidance to show the light when goals seem so out of reach. The reward, I believe, is one worth the cost.”

-Mr. C



SMCAA assists low-income families and individuals with programs that enable them to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency.

IN 2017 SMCAA ACCOMPLISHED:

SMCAA Community Service programs empower the poor to take control of their own lives and to provide services that will help to lead to self-sufficiency.



- 48,436** Food boxes provided through CSFP, TEFAP and Pantries
- 270** Families and Individuals with Deliverable Fuel Funds
- 650** Families and Individuals with Utility shutoffs

SMCAA provides support and information to the community that we service. We are constantly connecting people to resources & solutions toward breaking the cycle of poverty.

- 10,710** Information and referral
- 12,614** Volunteer hours



SMCAA provides a mix of housing support services to our vulnerable populations. For participants experiencing homelessness, trained case managers assist in locating and securing appropriate housing and help plan for successful long-term independence.

Mr. W. and his son were homeless. They entered SMCAA's Homeless Shelter. Through case management, it was discovered that Mr. W. was experiencing some mental health issues. He was referred to Van Buren County Mental Health for an evaluation. Mr. W. and his son qualified for SMCAA's Supportive Housing Program. They moved into a two bedroom home and SMCAA paid a portion of their rent. The family lived in the home for 8 years and now have moved into their own project based town house. They are maintaining and working toward sustaining self-sufficiency.



- 118** months of rental assistance paid to help house homeless veterans and homeless families
- 2511** Bed nights in our homeless shelter
- 43** Participants received Homebuyer Education/ Financial Capabilities



"I would like to thank everyone at SMCAA for all their help, from propane assistance, to the weatherization program and to all those who worked on my home. My house is so nice and warm; I have been able to turn my thermostat down by 4 degrees and my home is not so drafty. I saved \$20.00 in the first month on my electric bill. The guys that worked on my home were very nice and they cleaned up after themselves. Thank you very much for all you do."-Ms. C

Weatherization

SMCAA Weatherization Assistance Program provides (funds to install measures that reduces the client's total residential energy costs and enhances the health and safety of residents) free home energy conservation service to low-income homeowners and renters. This Service reduces energy use and may lower utility bills, making homes more comfortable and utilities more affordable.

Building Performance through:

Energy Conservation Measures

- Reduction of air leakage between heated and unheated areas
- Duct Sealing/Repair/Sealing
- Insulation- Attic, Exterior Wall, Knee Wall, Band Joist, Floor, Perimeter Insulation
- Infiltration (reduces the exchange of air through cracks and gaps in the outside shell of the dwelling)
- Setback Thermostat



Health and Safety Measures

- Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- Smoke Detectors
- Clothes Dryer Vents
- Furnace Repair (Provides repairs and improvements to home heating systems)
- Water Heater Repairs
- Indoor Air Quality (testing and evaluating the kitchen and bath fans)

Electric Base Load Measures

- Refrigerator Replacement
- Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFL's)

47 Homes Weatherized

Home Repair through CDBG funding

The Housing Rehabilitation Program exists to help eligible homeowners low to moderate income household's repair their homes to achieve decent, safe and affordable housing. Each year a limited amount of funds is available for the program. Households must not exceed income levels set annually by HUD. In addition to income limits, you must also meet other eligibility requirements.

Repairs may include:

- Accessibility needs & modifications
- Bathroom repairs
- Electrical repairs
- Furnace repairs/replacement
- Plumbing repairs
- Roof repairs only
- Hot Water Heater Repairs or replacement

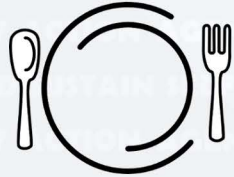


Throughout the past 35 years, SMCAA has developed programs based on the individual needs of each community served. Every three years, a Community Needs Assessment is performed to evaluate the needs of the community and anticipate which programs would support these issues. The last assessment showed that the best supports for the future of southwest michigan communities are:

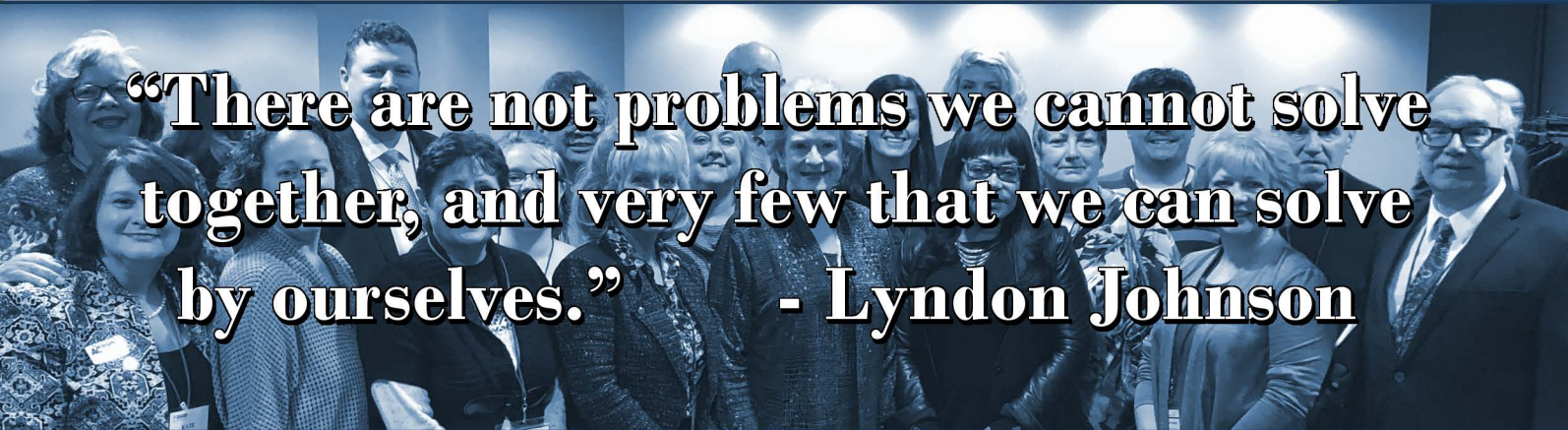
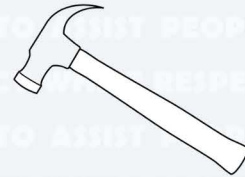
Utility Assistance



Food



Housing Repairs



“There are not problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves.” - Lyndon Johnson

SMCAA has over 156 community partnerships from every sector. These partnerships are critical to ensure that customers are receiving the widest range of assistance; that resources in the community are maximized and that there are coordinated efforts to reduce the causes and conditions of poverty.

For example:

Fifth Third and Chemical Bank serve as for-profit partners for the Homebuyer Education and Financial Capability programs.

SMCAA collaborates with Whirlpool to purchase energy efficient refrigerators at a reduced price for our weatherization program.

SMCAA partners with Whirlpool employees who volunteer their services and assistance in our warehouse. For example: more than two dozen Whirlpool Corp. employees took part in a team-building exercise that simultaneously solved a few kinks in the packing line for our commodity food program.

The agency partners with various faith-based organizations through pooling finances and referring clients to SMCAA programs. This better serves the clients because the agency has the ability to track their progress and provide access to other applicable programs.

The homeless resource staff continues to build positive relationships with landlords to ensure community members have options when overcoming housing obstacles.

Fiscal
Year 2017
Use of
Funding

Helping People, Changing Lives.



CSBG \$ 648,879

(Community Services Block Grant)
Core funding for Community Action
Supports other programs

Weatherization/LIHEAP \$ 605,694

(Low Income Home Energy Assistance)
Home energy audits
Energy conservation measures for low-income residents

Food Assistance \$ 230,706

Senior Food Assistance(CSFP)
Low-income food assistance(TEFAP)

Utility Assistance \$ 914,872

Metered fuel assistance for low-income residents
Deliverable fuel assistance for low-income residents

Housing Assistance \$ 118,870

Permanent Supported Housing
Homebuyer and Financial Education

Other Programs \$ 71,926

Michigan Enrolls

**Donations/In-kind/
Local Resources** \$ 93,654

TOTAL \$ 2,684,601



**YOUR GIFT TODAY,
MAKES TOMORROW POSSIBLE!**



It's easy to Donate!

Make checks payable to:

SMCAA

185 E. Main St. Ste. 303

Benton Harbor, MI 49022

LEAVE A LEGACY

It's never too early to start planning for your legacy. Bequests offer the priceless benefit of leaving a legacy for the causes closest to your heart and helps safeguard your desire to continue making a difference. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give and is as easy as inserting the sample language below into your will or living trust.

"I give, devise, and bequest to the Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Federal ID#38-2415106 the sum of: (\$ _____) to be used for its general purposes. Optional wording sample-(_____) of my residual estate."

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency welcomes the opportunity to speak with you about your charitable interests and encourages you to talk with your professional advisor about how a planned gift can be part of your will or living trust. For more information, please call our Executive Director at (269) 925-9077.