



# 2016 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 2016. 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 which provides an avenue to combine resources and knowledge to further help local communities. The network of hundreds of community partners spans to include federal, state, local funders, city and township and other nonprofits.

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.

The heritage of Community Action can be found here in our region as we reach out to thousands each year while our peer agencies do the same throughout the state and nation. Although we may not see an end to the war on poverty, as President Johnson had predicted, we will continue to focus on the growth of Community Action impacting successful futures for many. Join us on this voyage and do your part to support children, families and seniors, as they move from surviving to thriving, while navigating the systems of care provided by the public or non-profit social service organizations in your community.

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

In grateful appreciation,

*Arthur C. Fenrick*

Arthur C. Fenrick  
SMCAA Executive Director

*Minnie Warren*

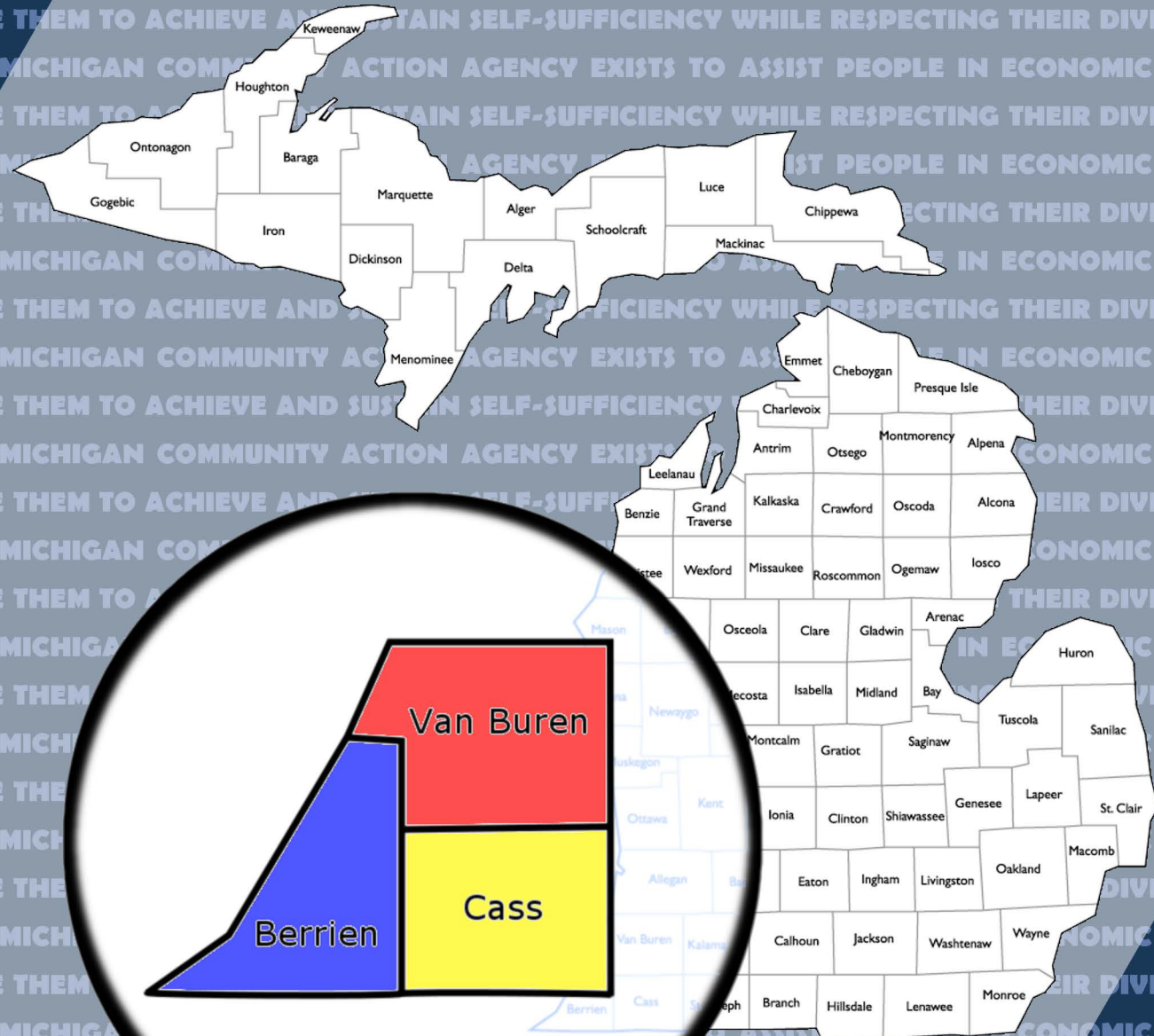
Minnie Warren  
SMCAA Board Chair

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency (SMCAA) exists to assist people in economic need and enable them to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency while respecting their diversity.





# SMCAA's Primary Service Area

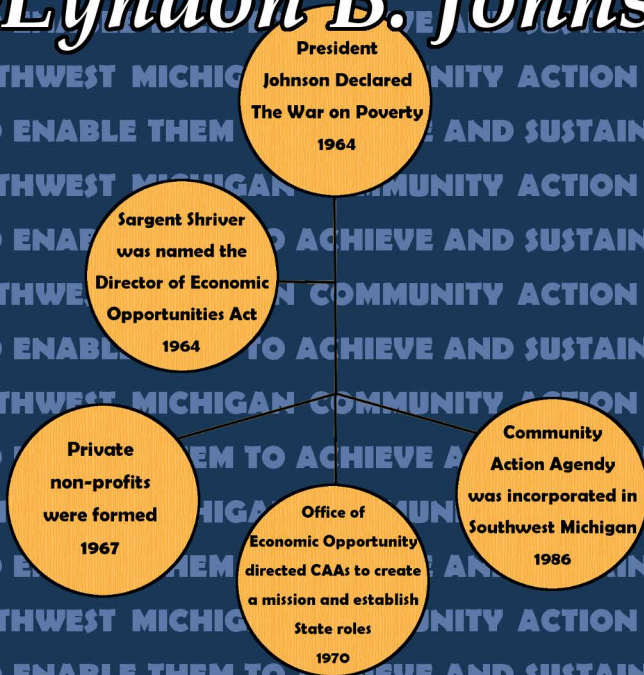
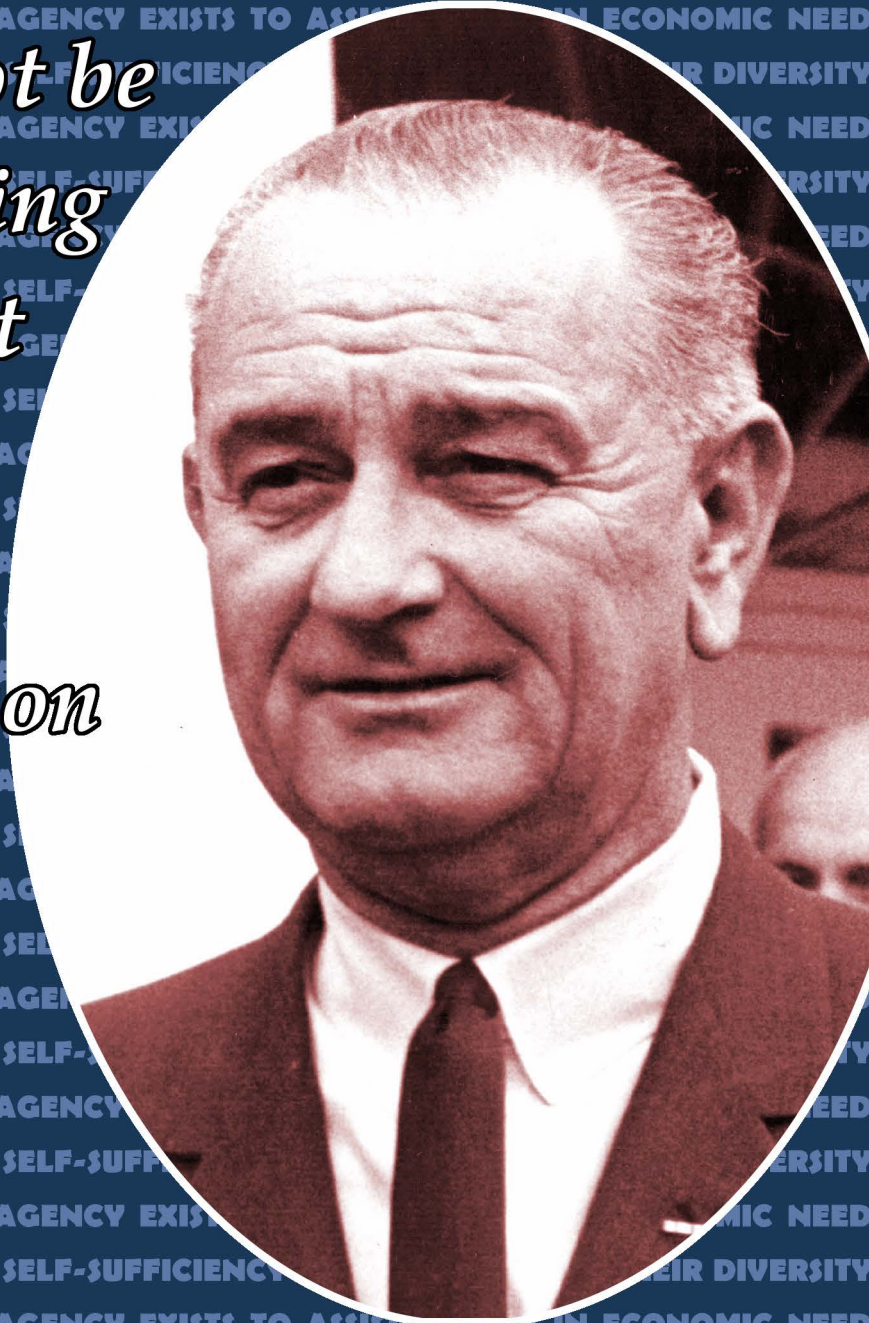


## Visit SMCAA at any of these locations:

<b>Administrative Office</b> 185 E Main, Suite 303 Benton Harbor, MI 49022	<b>Cass County (DHHS)</b> 325 M-62 Highway Cassopolis, MI 49031	<b>Van Buren County (DHHS)</b> 57150 CR 49064 Lawrence, MI 49064	<b>Warehouse</b> 331 Miller St Benton Harbor, MI 49022	<b>Family Shelter</b> 210 E Delaware Decatur, MI 49045
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*“Poverty must not be a barrier to learning and learning must offer an escape from poverty.”*  
-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 a wealth of early childhood 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.





# Executive Summary

The agency is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors, bringing together equal representation of the public and private sectors and the clients who receive services.

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 30 years. The current portfolio of services includes Emergency Assistance (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; housing counselor provides Homeownership 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 the aforementioned programs. According to the most current census data (the 2010 Census) the population of our service area was 290,026. The population is made up of 162,556 or 55% from Berrien County, 51,118 or 18% from Cass County, and 76,352 or 27% from Van Buren County. Households living in poverty are Berrien 16.2%, Cass 13.4% and Van Buren 16.7% according to community commons data base. In Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties reduced and free lunches is over 50% of the student population according to community commons data base.



ECONOMIC NEED  
THEIR DIVERSITY  
ECONOMIC NEED  
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ECONOMIC NEED  
THEIR DIVERSITY



*"I had a call from a client that was here for help with her electric bill. As I was doing the application I noticed her Social Security was very low. I mentioned to her that she should be eligible for SSI and asked if she had applied. She said no one had ever told her about it. She is now getting SSI and can pay her rent without asking her daughter for help. She wants SMCAA to know she appreciates all the help she gets!"*

*– Nancy, SMCAA Community Service Specialist*



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

# IN 2016 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.**



- 40,809** Food boxes provided through CSFP, TEFAP and Pantries
- 379** Families and Individuals with Deliverable Fuel Funds
- 624** 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.**

- 9,555** Information and referral
- 14,646** 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.**

*"It is my hope that programs such as the one that has helped me 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."*


*-Corey, attended Homebuyer Education and has since become a board member.*



- 83** months of rental assistance paid to help house homeless veterans and homeless families
- 2809** Bed nights in our homeless shelter
- 37** Participants received Homebuyer Education/ Financial Capabilities

*Scott was residing at the Crisis Center in March. He has a mental health disability, his mother was his payee and helped him pay his bills. His mother became ill and passed away. Since she was his payee his money was tied up in an account with only his mother's and his sister's name on it. Scott sister did not pay his bills and he was evicted from his apartment. His sister would not help him. Scott was referred to SMCAA from the Crisis Center to see if we could help with housing. Our Housing Specialist worked with Scott and now he receives Supportive Housing funding from SMCAA to assist him with paying for his monthly rent. Scott has had stable housing for the last 12 months and he has been keeping up with his mental health appointments, as well.*





Sunny was on Section 8, because his income increased he was no longer eligible for the program. He told his worker that he would like to purchase the house he is renting and his landlord would sell it to him. His Section 8 worker referred Sunny to SMCAA Homebuyer Education workshop. Sunny attended our workshop and purchased his home in the winter of 2015. In the summer of 2016 he came in to sign up for Weatherization.

*“You are a good friend to have and thank you for all the help, you are a good person. You are very informational. What I have learned from you I will be able to pass on to others that maybe in need.”*

-Sunny

**SMCAA Weatherization Assistance Program provides 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.**

**38 Homes Weatherized**

**Whenever possible, the agency takes advantage of training opportunities for staff and board members. This is consistent with national organizational standards and good management practices.**

**1,074**

**Hours of Staff Training**

**86**

**Hours of Board Training**



Throughout the past 30 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 the Southwest communities are:

### Utility Assistance



### Food



### Housing Repairs



The agency continues to move toward truly comprehensive services- breaking down program walls by creating bridges. The staff are working to incorporate financial literacy into the emergency assistance programs to get families out of crisis and into a more long-term outlook.

**SMCAA has over 153 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 Home Empowerment 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 2016  
Use of  
Funding

# Helping People, Changing Lives.



**CSBG \$ 713,998**

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

**Weatherization/LIHEAP \$ 673,413**

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

**Food Assistance \$ 248,822**

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

**Utility Assistance \$ 772,164**

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

**Housing Assistance \$79,993**

Permanent Supported Housing  
Homebuyer and Financial Education

**Other Programs \$ 90,072**

Michigan Enrolls

**Donations/In-kind/ \$ 74,120**

**Local Resources**

**TOTAL \$ 2,652,582**





**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.