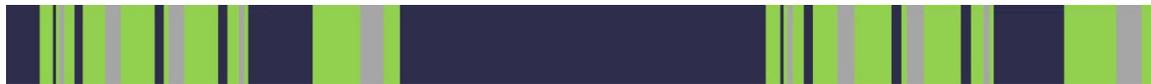


SFY 2019 CSBG Community Action Plan



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The SFY 2019 Community Action Plan is created to address the needs of low-income individuals identified in the 2015 Community Needs Assessment conducted by Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico (CAASNМ). Service areas include but are not limited to Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Sierra, Luna, and Grant Counties. Specific programs, actions and anticipated outcomes can be found in *EXHIBIT B CSBG Outcome Plan, SFY 2019*.

CAASNМ's Mission, Vision, and Values

Vision:

To create a community where opportunity exists for all to become self-sufficient.

Mission:

Building self-reliance for low-income New Mexicans by connecting our community to high-impact programs that encourage family wellness, empower families and bridge resources.

Values:

We BELIEVE:

- Families with limited resources are first and foremost people.
- People can guide their own lives and escape poverty.
- Everyone should have access to food, housing, education, employment, and clothing.
- A positive and consistent attitude toward behavior and learning is effective in guiding people toward a quality of life previously thought impossible.
- In being ethical and honest – doing what is right.
- We are a learning organization that values the contributions, collaboration, and can-do spirit of our staff, volunteers and Board of Directors.
- People need to be connected to their families and significantly connected to their communities.
- Innovation is necessary to foster our vision and mission.

History

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) began as grass-roots, community controlled groups in 1964 in conjunction with President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. CAAs were formed to mobilize communities, represent the poor, voice community concerns and insist on change. Today there are nearly 1,000 CAAs across the United States.

In 1965, CAA of Doña Ana County was chartered as a private, nonprofit corporation in New Mexico addressing needs that were important to our local communities through local resources. In 1991, CAA-Dona Ana County became Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico, Inc. (CAASNМ), expanding the reach of its many programs to include all of Southern New Mexico. CAASNМ has worked for over 50 years to lift Southern New Mexicans out of poverty through anti-poverty programs that build self-reliance. CAASNМ continues its legacy of service by focusing its efforts on high-impact strategies that enhance client self-sustainability through asset-building programs and connecting clients to valuable resources. In 2012, the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) selected CAASNМ as a Lead Local Organization, tasked with advancing economic development as part of a national effort. CAASNМ is the only designated Lead Local Organization in the entire state of New Mexico.

CAASNМ currently serves 20,000 clients per year by addressing the most challenging poverty issues our communities face. CAASNМ fights to improve the lives of low-income children, youth, adults, and families through four service areas: Family Empowerment, Community Connections, Bridging Resources and Family Wellness. These services are located in the southwestern New Mexican counties of Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Sierra, Luna, and Grant County with limited services in other southern NM counties and statewide. CAASNМ focuses its efforts to promote financial stability through evidence-based and asset-building programs. The agency has an established history of success in mobilizing communities, representing the poor, and voicing community concerns.

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico's Board of Directors maintains a strong degree of commitment, ethical standing, and proactive initiative in the interests of effectiveness and good governance. The Board of Directors sets priorities based on major poverty-related problems in Southern New Mexico. The Board works to enhance the organization's public standing and garner support from the community, reflecting the varied geographical, social, economic, business and cultural backgrounds of the communities CAASNМ serves.

The Board of Directors actively participates in the overall planning process for the organization and closely monitors program outcomes. The Board fully participates in the development planning, implementation and evaluation and approves the Community Action Plan (CAP) to ensure that it articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served. The current Community Action Plan was approved at a Board of Directors meeting **June 30, 2018**

The Board of Directors reviews and approves any data collection tools including needs assessments and surveys completed by CAASNМ and uses the results to monitor and strengthen programs and services directly and indirectly related to the CAP. Data is collected from NM Department of Labor and NM Health and Human Services Department monthly statistics and relevant state, national, and foundation reports. In addition, CAASNМ works with its community partners to receive reports that specifically define emerging needs in the five county service area of southwestern New Mexico.

In implementation of the CAP, it is also the Board's responsibility to protect organizational assets and provide proper financial oversight to maintain legal, ethical, and financial integrity. The Board assists in developing the annual budget and ensures that proper financial controls are in place for all program budgets.

IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY NEEDS

CAASNМ has defined poverty as *“the inability to participate in society – socially, economically, culturally and politically”*. Poverty is more than a lack of cash. Poverty is characterized by a lack of access to services, facilities and resources. Linked with negative conditions such as substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate nutrition and food insecurity, inadequate child care, lack of access to health care, unsafe neighborhoods, and under-resourced schools, poverty creates persistent social barriers that can allow members of a community to believe in and share despair, hopelessness, apathy, and timidity.

We know that residents in CAASNМ’s service area have not been immune to the effects of the lagging National economy. The combination of job cuts, home foreclosures, and rising costs for daily living expenses has forced more people into poverty in the last few years. The Board of Directors sets organizational priorities for anti-poverty efforts based on major poverty-related problems in Southern New Mexico. These priorities are based upon community needs assessments, Census information, relevant research, client in-put, information from other agencies and partners, information from staff, and other anecdotal information.

Community Needs Assessment

The need for assistance to low-income families in every southern New Mexico community is immense, yet the outcomes continue to be in stagnant. Though there are several organizations providing services, the need is greater than the entire community can meet. To identify the most pressing needs of the communities we serve and assess the strengths and resources available to meet them, CAASNМ uses data from community needs assessments completed every 3 years. The results have been compiled into comprehensive community needs assessment with qualitative and quantitative data for the five (5) counties that CAASNМ serves.

Demographic Data and Census Records

We rely on current Census information, relevant research, and other resources to inform us on current and emerging poverty issues and trends. We know from these sources that as of **January 2018** the federal Health and Human Services Department poverty guideline for a family of four is **\$25,100**. At this income level, almost **21.5** percent of the families in Doña Ana County are living below poverty level (U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2009-2013). According to New Mexico Voices for Children, New Mexico ranks 48th in Economic Well-being and 49th in Overall Child Well-Being (2017). They have also created a basic family budget calculator that indicates a family of 4 (2 parents 2 children) living at or below **\$37,584** is living in poverty in Dona Ana County.

With current research, we believe that close to 45% of the population of southern New Mexico lives in poverty (in contrast to the federal government’s statistics of closer to one-quarter of the population). Struggling families are often faced with cruel choices between housing, health care, food, and basic needs. Poverty impacts families within their various contexts.

At home, parents in poverty struggle to provide adequate housing and may be forced into homelessness. Inadequate access to quality food can lead to poor nutrition, hunger or obesity. Poverty and economic hardship are particularly difficult for parents who may experience chronic stress, which may result in child abuse and neglect.

In school, poorer children and teens are at greater risk for poor academic achievement and dropping out of school. Poor teens are more likely to participate in risky behaviors such as smoking or engaging in early sexual activity. Children born into poverty may be malnourished from the womb, which can lead to compromised cognitive ability and health issues that interfere with a stable learning environment. Inadequate education contributes to the cycle of poverty by making it more difficult for low-income children to lift themselves and future generations out of poverty.

Many neighborhoods where poverty is concentrated demonstrate high rates of crime. Unsafe neighborhoods may expose low-income children to violence that can cause a number of psychosocial difficulties, trauma, injury, disability, and mortality. Violence exposure can also predict future violent behavior in youth that places them at greater risk of injury and mortality and entry into the juvenile justice system.

These effects are combined to create communities with fewer skilled or educated workers, exposure to environmental contaminants, families with chronic health conditions, and developmental delays in children. A more insidious consequence of poverty in communities is the lack of a network of support to lead children in positive directions. This lack of opportunity creates a disproportionate share of intergenerational and persistent poverty, wherein families stay poor from one generation to the next.

Selected Demographic and Economic Characteristics of CAASN’s Service Area

| AREA OF COMPARISON | GRANT COUNTY | SIERRA COUNTY | LUNA COUNTY | DONA ANA COUNTY | HIDALGO COUNTY | NEW MEXICO |
|--|--------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| Population Estimate as of July 1, 2017 | 27,687 | 11,116 | 24,078 | 215,579 | 4,305 | 2,088,070 |
| 2017 Percentage of People 65 and over | 26.1% | 35.5% | 20.8% | 15.2% | 21.1% | 16.5% |
| 2010 Density Factor | 7.4 | 2.9 | 8.5 | 55 | 1.4 | 17 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Persons Per Square Mile | | | | | | |
| 2016 Estimate of Persons in Poverty | 22.8% | 27.0% | 27.6% | 25.6% | 26.7% | 19.8% |
| 2012-2016 Language other than English spoken at home | 28.8% | 19.5% | 51.5% | 51.0% | 41.4% | 35.4% |
| 2012-2016 High School Graduates, percent of persons age 25+ | 86.0% | 82.8% | 69.3% | 79% | 76.9% | 84.6% |
| Unemployment Rate (2010 - 2015) Avgs | 6.6% | 9.1% | 17.6% | 7.2% | 6.3% | 6.6% |
| Households Receiving SNAP (Food Stamps) | 13.69% | 11.3% | 20.69% | 15.06% | 20.01% | 12.7% |
| 2013-2014 Students ineligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program | 60.3% | 84.8% | 79.2% | 71.6% | 69.9% | 65.4% |
| 2017 Percent of Uninsured Persons | 7.8% | 10.3% | 13.8% | 12.9% | 10.8% | 10.8% |
| 2017 Percent Food Insecurity | 14.8% | 19.8% | 19.4% | 14.8% | 14.4% | 15.8% |

Source(s): *U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts*. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits. *New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions*, Economic research and analysis. *National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)*, Common Core of Data (CCD), 2009-10 School Universe data. *U.S. Department of Labor*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, April 15, 2016.; *U.S. Census Bureau*, New Mexico's Indicator-Based Information System (NM-IBIS) (2017), Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, 2015; Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap (2017).

Organizational Priorities

CAASNMs mission is to help individuals achieve economic success, and permanently end poverty for families of southern New Mexico. The agency's approach is rooted in positivity, openness, compassion, and persistence, giving clients hope and renewed excitement about improved economic conditions. We believe this approach will have a larger impact on the clients we work with and the community at large. The agency's priorities are two-fold. In the short term, this means helping families access the resources needed to meet their basic needs. In the long-term, this means helping families grow assets, gain new skills, increase educational achievement, and pursue entrepreneurship. Our focus will continue to be permanently ending poverty for families of southern New Mexico.

Priority 1: Provide services to low-income families as close as possible to where they reside.

Priority 2: Provide Emergency Assistance to low-income families when they need it most.

Priority 3: Stabilize the family to strengthen their current financial situation by increasing revenue and reducing expenses.

Priority 4: Teach families the skills they need to achieve their goals.

Priority 5: Help families develop assets to excel at achieving sustainable economic success.

CURRENT SERVICE GROUPS

While the economy continues to improve, certain aspects continue to take its toll on low income people. Assistance to this vulnerable demographic must continue to be addressed through programs such as benefits counseling and computer literacy.

Currently CAASNM conducts its work through the following initiatives, divided under the auspices of four service groups:

Family Empowerment: Helps families increase their personal assets through training, financial literacy and business development

Computer Literacy

- o Promotes computer literacy, Internet use, and increased statewide broadband use.
- o Prepares citizens for participation in economic and educational opportunities.
- o Provides assistance to Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs with various online tools.

Asset Development

- o Offers Free State and Federal tax preparation, tax education and workshops.
- o Individual Development Accounts for education, business or home.
Teaches entrepreneurship and small business skills to help the self-employed effectively run a small business.

Free Tax Preparation

- o IRS trained and certified tax preparers offer free tax preparation services in English and Spanish to people in Doña Ana County with simple returns.
- o Uses the tax preparation season for educating low-income people on the benefits of the Earned Income Tax Credit
- o Links tax refunds to asset-building activities like IDAs.

Financial Literacy

- o The financial literacy classes provide participants with the set of skills and knowledge that help them make informed financial decisions.
- o Participants learn about personal finance topics (bank accounts, mortgages, loans, current economic and financial affairs, saving, spending and managing debt)
- o People also learn about life skills (leadership and conflict resolution) that help them better manage their personal and professional lives.

Family Wellness: Keeps families healthy by providing supplemental funding for nutritional meals to children and disabled adults in home-based daycares and educating their caregivers

Child and Adult Care Program

- Upgrades the quality of food for children and disabled adults in daycare.
- Helps daycare providers cover food cost for each child claimed.
- Nutritious meal preparation and health practices are taught.

Healthy Kids Healthy Preschool

- Helps daycares develop healthy policies for their business.

Early Childhood Nutrition Education

- Provides Nutrition Education for pre-school children
- Train the Trainer: Provides training and resources for trainers

Bridging Resources: Connects families to community resources and benefits which can increase financial stability

Total Benefits

- Utilizes a computer tool to help families and individuals access billions of dollars of unclaimed benefits.
- Helps with government benefits, referrals and income tax benefits.

Coats For Kids

- CAASNМ partners with US Bank, Comet Cleaners and Bravo Mic
- Distributes over 4,000 coats a year to children under 12 in Dona Ana County

Community Connections: CAASNМ works with community partners to leverage resources and increase the impact of our services for our clients and the community (see section entitled 'Linkages and Coordination' below)

LINKAGES AND COORDINATION

CAASNМ has been an integral part of southern New Mexico for over 50 years building resources to sustain and expand the results we have achieved in helping clients address short-term needs and secure long-term benefits. In addition to the current programs operated by CAASNМ, the Board of Directors and the CEO prioritize linkages with state, county, and other non-profit organizations providing similar, complimentary or emergency services. CAASNМ has developed many linkages and partnerships in order to share lessons learned, be more effective as an organization, more efficiently deliver services, to maximize coordination of services, and increase the collective impact of organizations throughout the five county service area. When appropriate, referrals are made to other agencies.

We have mapped social services, resources and essential safety net programs in Doña Ana County, Grant, Sierra, Hidalgo, and Luna Counties. If funding can be secured, we hope to GIS map these services, in cooperation with these financially strapped counties that may not have the resources.

CAASNМ is currently working with: Human Needs Coordinating Council; NM CAP Association; Dona Ana Workforce Action Council; Workforce Development Board; Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance; two Council of Government(s) in our area; Voices for Children; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren; Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition; Colonias Development Council; Community of Hope; NM Center on Law and Poverty; NACAP; NCAF; many local faith-based organizations; several local banks including U.S. Bank and First American Bank; Memorial Medical Center; LCPS; SCORE, The Small Business Development Center at Doña Ana Community College, The Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and over 100 others.

CAASNМ also works with many state and federal agencies such as Department of Health; USDA Rural Development; Human Services Department; Children, Youth and Families Department; Environmental Improvement Agency, Housing and Urban Development; and many others.

CAASNМ continuously works with community leaders in business, social services, health, and education to share lessons learned and help clients address short-term needs and achieve long-term goals. Efforts are ongoing to develop new and build on existing relationships with community organizations and programs to link families with services close to home and school.

Evaluation, Measurement and Verification

CAASNМ's experience in project management means that we sweat the details and keep budgets and schedules tightly on track). Utilizing Results Oriented Management Assessment (ROMA) quantitative, qualitative, outcomes-based and process-based evaluation is an ongoing practice for CAASNМ. Our database and software systems allow us to collect, track, and analyze data to determine the effectiveness of the service, client outcomes over time, return on investment, and demographic patterns.

We evaluate:

1. how well the programs meet the needs of the people they are designed for, and how program delivery is experienced by clients—qualitative;
2. how successful we are in reaching and serving appropriate numbers of the target population—quantitative;
3. How effective our programs are in changing the lives of the people we serve—outcomes.
4. how efficiently the service/program policies and procedures, financial reporting mechanisms, work flow processes, organizational structure, communications, collaborations & partnerships operate—processes

This data is regularly compiled into reports for the Board and staff to review service delivery, financial reporting, and overall operations. This creates an objective view of the organization's current reality and helps us identify and overcome barriers to successful program implementation and success of the organization as a whole.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

1. Develop greater emotional support and connection to the community for the programs and services offered in CAANSM' five county service area.
2. Expand partnerships and continue comprehensive needs assessments with other service providers to eliminate duplication of services.
3. Expand support services for higher education, micro-lending and small business development which the data shows gives families the traction they need to move forward out of poverty.
4. Continue capacity-building efforts with staff and Board training.
5. Continue to implement more efficient and integrated internal operating systems for CAASNM programs and administration.
6. Continue efforts to mitigate philosophical differences with state and federal funders that focus on emergency and temporary services.
7. Think positively about pending budget cuts as an opportunity for revenue diversification and advocacy for policy change around funding to sustain these programs.

These keys to success are the foundation of CAASNM's *CSBG Outcome Plan, SFY 2019*.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Our team will integrate technology, grassroots outreach activities, collaboration, and hands-on assistance to help make sure families with the greatest economic need in our service area know about our programs and services. At every step of the way, CAASNM staff will be responsive to community feedback and will revise outreach approaches as needed. Outreach efforts will include the following public involvement measures:

Coordination with other Programs, Groups and Institutions - CAASNM will develop new and build on existing relationships with community organizations and programs to create greater exposure of enrollment activities and information.

Grassroots Outreach Methods – Staff will conduct outreach efforts and distribute informational material in English and Spanish directly to families through canvassing and at public venues as appropriate.

Notification of the Media and General Public - Press releases and notices will be sent local and regional media including newspapers, radio stations, and television stations, elected officials, chambers, public transportation providers, public interest groups, school districts, and libraries.

Special Events - CAASNM staff will attend and co-host special events, open houses and meetings as appropriate at accessible locations with comfortable settings during both non-work hours and regular work hours to encourage greater attendance.

Internet and Electronic Outreach - CAASNM's main website will provide the public with on-line access to enrollment locations, program guidelines, upcoming events and other pertinent information. Social media such as Twitter and Facebook will be used to provide greater exposure and video streaming where appropriate.

PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing on the CAASNM Plan for administering the Community Services Block Grant Program for state fiscal year 2019 was held at 12:00 p.m. June 13, 2018 at the CAASNM main office located at 3880 Foothills Rd. Suite A Las Cruces, NM 88011. Notices of the public hearing were published on the CAASNM website.

Respectfully Submitted:

_____ 6/30/2018
Mike Rudloff, Board Chair

_____ 6/30/2018
Dawn Hommer, CEO