OACAA *Briefing*

February 2013

OACAA News

Congratulations Best Practice Award Winners!

On January 30, 2013, the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA) along with The Ohio State University's John Glenn School of Public Affairs bestowed five Community Action Agencies with Best Practice Awards, with one agency receiving two awards.

OACAA and the John Glenn School have developed the Best Practice Awards to honor innovative and effective Community Action Agency programs that measurably meet the needs of clients, families and communities by helping low-income people become more self-sufficient. The Best Practice Awards serve as a showcase for unique Community Action Agency efforts that make a measurable and life-changing difference. A panel of judges selected by the Glenn School evaluated each nomination independently and assigned points based on their assessment of each nomination.

The agencies receiving Best Practice Awards and their winning programs are as follows:

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency - Roosevelt Transitional Housing Program
The Roosevelt Transitional Housing program provides transitional residential living assistance for low-income families with pre-school aged children. The program offers a 16 week training program and intensive case management to help residents achieve self-sufficiency.

Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area - Youth Empowerment Center
The Youth Empowerment Center is a multi-dynamic support system designed to help low to moderate income youth ages seven through 18 reach their potential. The YEC offers skill building, homework help, community service, and various culturally enriching activities. Each child also takes part in financial literacy activities and college experiences. Monitored computer access and school supplies are also offered. Each child receives a Youth and Family Specialist to act as a life coach and a liaison between the family and CAPGDA as well.

Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area - Youth Empowerment Center Community Garden
The YEC Community Garden program is a 24-week educational program that teaches 20-30 youth and their families about planting and eating healthy food, caring for the environment, social skills and community involvement. The curriculum is specifically designed to allow the students to learn through hands-on interaction with the garden.

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Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action - Learn & Work Program
Learn & Work is a volunteer work experience program for families receiving cash assistance through Ohio Works First. The program helps participants identify their skills and interests and provides them with the opportunity to learn new skills that can be applied to both short- and long-term volunteer and employment opportunities, while simultaneously providing case management and comprehensive wrap-around services designed to help move them toward employment and self-sufficiency.

Supports to Encourage Low-income Families (SELF) - Butler County Microenterprise and Microloan Program
The Butler County Microenterprise and Microloan program is a partnership between SELF, BizTech and Neighborhood Housing Services to help low and moderate income individuals learn how to start a new business and the opportunity to apply for small business loans. The program provides 15 weeks of classroom education that culminates with the development of a comprehensive business plan. Participants also have access to a business center and SELF's other social services programs.

WSOS Community Action - 21st Century Learning Centers New Directions After School Program

Through a grant from 21st Century Learning Centers, WSOS has partnered with Fremont City Schools to provide an after school program for elementary school students designed to keep kids safe, improve their academic achievements and help working families, with an overarching goal of assisting students in meeting state standards in reading and math. The program offers academic enrichment activities, homework assistance, tutoring, art and music instruction, recreational activities, cultural programs, environmental awareness, employment training and college visits, field trips, alcohol, drug and teen pregnancy prevention. Parents also receive financial literacy services and activities to engage them with their children. The program is also offered over the summer.

"These programs showcase outstanding achievements in Community Action," stated Philip E. Cole, Executive Director of OACAA. "They aid low-income people in becoming more self-sufficient and are practices that other CAAs can learn from. Congratulations to all of this year's winners."