

Lorain County Community Action Agency

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2008-2011



Making a **Difference**

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William T. Locke, Executive Director

About Lorain County Community Action Agency

Since Lorain County Community Action Agency was created over four decades ago in 1966, we have acted as a provider for a wide range of public and private resources, programs and policies which give individuals the opportunity to improve the quality of life for them, their families and their communities. Today, the agency serves over 10,000 clients each year in the areas of early childhood education, educational services, energy services, housing and community development, and emergency services.

Our Mission

To serve and empower Lorain County residents in need

Our Vision

To be a pillar of hope, building stable foundations and uplifting families and communities through advocacy, education, and collaboration

Our Values

- Community We believe that forming partnerships and collaborations that remove barriers, promote well-being, and create opportunities for county residents in need gives us purpose
- Communication We believe that sharing information in a timely, easy-to-understand way with those direct impacted is a demonstration of our commitment to making a difference.
- Effectiveness/Excellence We believe that our agency and the services we deliver genuinely benefit low-income individuals and families, so we take pride in efficiently making their priorities our priorities
- Integrity..... We believe in fair, ethical behavior and fiscal responsibility
- Respect We believe showing regard for others—which includes celebrating individual strengths and contributions, actively listening to each other, promoting learning and personal development, and trusting in a person’s ability to help themselves—is fundamental to the agency fulfilling its mission
- Teamwork We believe we create positive work environments and make the biggest impact when everyone works together to focus on achieving outstanding results

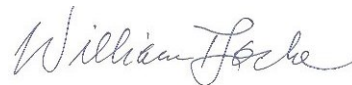
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Agency's strategic planning process allowed the Board and management staff the opportunity to thoughtfully review our mission, vision, and value statements. The review was conducted with the thought of developing a strategic plan that would make a major impact on the population that we serve. The 2008-2011 strategic plan reflects the Agency's new visionary leadership and the dedication of the current staff. This plan reflects how our vision and dedication will come together for the good of those in poverty; those overcoming poverty; and create opportunities to prevent poverty.

You will note that the plan's goals are straightforward with objectives that clearly support them. You will also note that each goal and objective gives meaning to "serving and empowering Lorain County residents in Need"----our Agency's mission.

We proudly share this strategic plan with you hoping that you can become a part of our efforts to move Lorain County in a positive direction.

Sincerely,



William T. Locke

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of LCCAA's Board of Trustees and the agency, I am pleased to present this new, board-approved 2008-2011 strategic plan. As you read this plan you will learn more about what Community Action means and the power it has to serve. I am struck each day by the need I see in our community. This plan demonstrates the Board's and the Agency's ongoing commitment to address that need and to being a beneficial influence in our county as long as we are needed.

Sincerely,



Robert Weir

About America's War on Poverty and Community Action

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson and the Congress of the United States proclaimed a national "War on Poverty" by enacting the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. To assist in fighting his "War on Poverty", local Community Action Agencies were created to provide a wide range of human services at the community level to help individuals build self-sufficiency and rise out of poverty. The agencies exist as nonprofit private and public organizations. Today there are approximately 1,000 Community Action Agencies serving the poor in every state as well as Puerto Rico and the Trust Territories. 96% of America's counties are serviced by Community Action Agencies.

Since 1994, recipients of Community Service Block Grant monies, predominately Community Action Agencies, have been guided by six broad anti-poverty goals established under the Government Performance Result Act of 1993. In accordance with the act, the Monitoring and Assessment Task Force implemented the Results Oriented Management Accountability (ROMA) goals shown below.

National ROMA Goal 1

Low-income people become more self-sufficient.

National ROMA Goal 2

The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.

National ROMA Goal 3

Low-income people own a stake in their community.

National ROMA Goal 4

Partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low-income people are achieved.

National ROMA Goal 5

Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

National ROMA Goal 6

Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

10 Poverty Truths

- 1 The number of people who are poor by official government standards is 36.5 million (2006).
- 2 Poverty is not limited to a small minority of our citizens. More than half of all Americans will experience poverty for at least one year during their adult lives (ages 20-65). (Mark Rank, *One Nation, Underprivileged.*)
- 3 59% of persons earning less than \$10 an hour do not have healthcare coverage (Jilian Mincer, CNN December 2004)
- 4 Most people spend about 30% of their income on housing, but low-income workers often find themselves spending more than twice that amount.
- 5 In 2005, the average welfare check for one parent with two children was \$478 a month.
- 6 2/3 of people living in poverty work an average of 1.7 jobs
- 7 The 2005-06 high school graduation rate for Ohio's economically disadvantaged students was 75%, compared to 89.1% for non-disadvantaged students.
- 8 In 2006, 30.6% of Ohioans—3.4 million people—had incomes below 200% of poverty (\$41,288 for a family of 4), considered the minimum needed to avoid serious economic hardships.
- 9 Per a 2007 hunger study by Second Harvest, on any given day 18% of our nation's children experience hunger.
- 10 In early 2008, nearly one in ten Ohioans—1.1 million people—received food stamps, the highest number in the state's history. Of this total, 78% are not public assistance recipients, an indicator of the growth of the working poor population.

Measuring and Defining Poverty

Officially, the standard used to measure poverty is based on “poverty thresholds” published annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. Using a formula developed in the 1960’s, poverty thresholds are set using minimum necessary food budgets for families. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services uses the thresholds to create “poverty guidelines” to establish eligibility for government-subsidized services. In 2008, a family of three is considered to be living in poverty if it has an income of less than \$17,600 a year. For a family of four, the poverty level is less than \$21,200.

This measure defines poverty as hunger. However, poverty as the minimum-needed income to feed a family is a gross simplification of a much larger, complex social issue. This is especially true given poverty’s far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, states and our nation. At its core, poverty excludes people. It impacts quality of life and opportunities. A person in poverty routinely experiences:

- Deprivation of basic needs: nutritious food, safe housing, healthcare, and transportation
- Barriers to education
- Barriers to employment
- Barriers to building assets

Responding to the Need

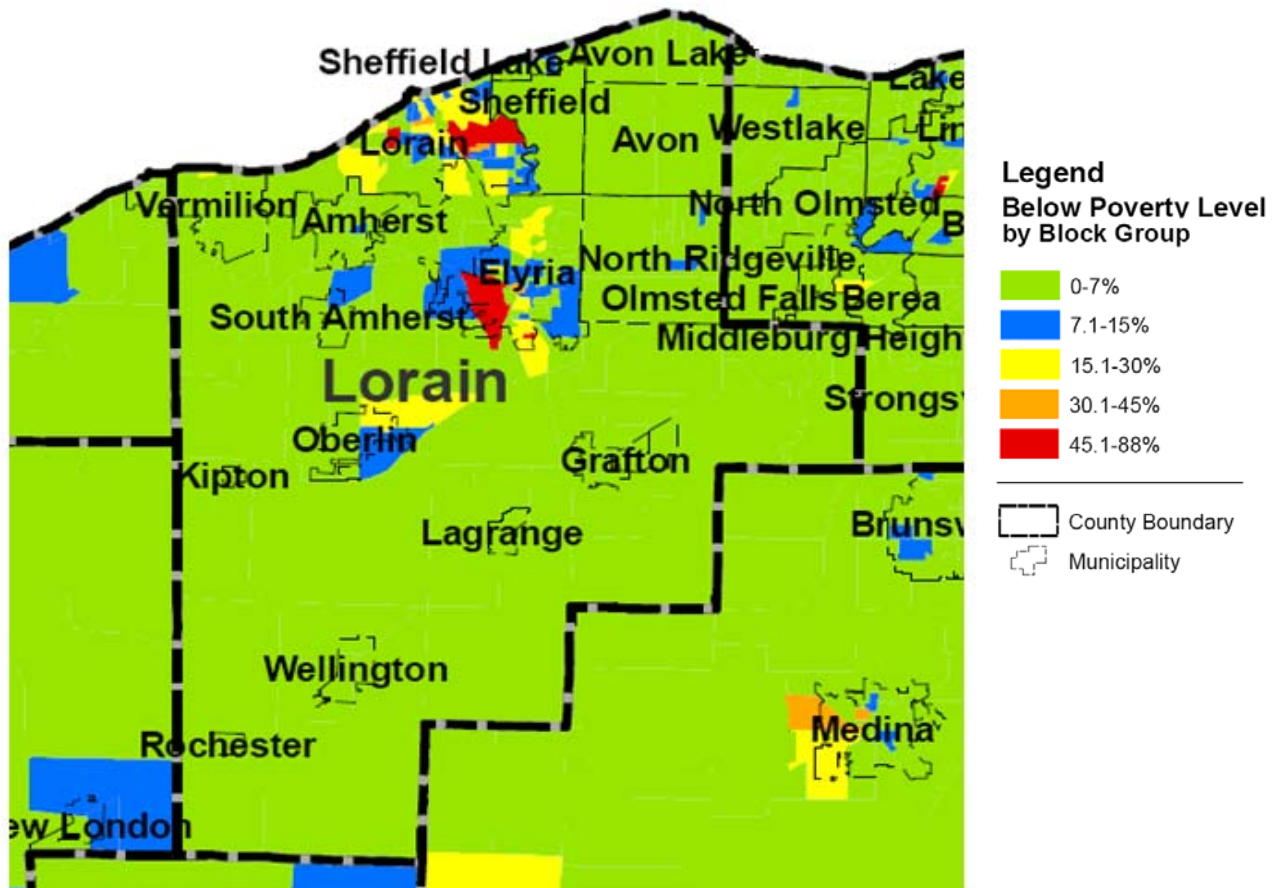
In Community Action, we interweave programs to address the deprivation and the barriers; we work within our communities partnering and collaborating to extend access to services; and we continually strive to make our communities stronger to provide better opportunities for the residents within those communities. LCCAA programs include:

- Community Development
- Down Payment Assistance
- Early Learning Initiative
- Emergency Food Pantry
- Emergency Home Repair
- Family Learning Center – Family Literacy
- Family Learning Center – GED Services
- Financial Literacy Training
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Home Equity Conversion Mortgage Counseling (Reverse Mortgage)
- Home Owners Training/Spanish Home Owners Training (HOT/SHOT)
- Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)
- USDA Childcare Food Program
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Earned Income Tax Credit
- Workforce Investment

Poverty levels are tracked by the US Census Bureau. Using data provided by the 2000 census, the distribution of poverty in Lorain County is mapped below. In 2000, **13.3%** of all persons in Lorain County lived at or below the federal poverty line, though clearly areas of the county experience much higher incidences than the average. In 2005, through its American Community Survey, the US Census Bureau found that **27.8%** of all persons in the City of Lorain lived at or below the federal poverty line.

Percentage of Total Families Living Below the Poverty Level

Prepared by: The Center for Urban and Regional Studies - Youngstown State University
 Source: US Census, 2000



LCCAA Strategic Focus Areas to Meet Current Client Needs and Ensure Future Needs May be Addressed

Data and information taken into account during planning includes:

- 2007 Community Need Assessment
- Program Self Assessments
- 2007 Annual Report
- County Overview: Census Data, Demographics and Trends
- Results Oriented Management Accountability Reporting and Annual Program Results
- Fiscal Reports

The Agency identifies five strategic focus areas that must be addressed to achieve the mission and vision of our organization. As shown below, each focus is supported by at least two objectives.

1.0 Implement Quality Systems Agency-Wide

Improve agency's core systems to enable programs to flourish and become centers of excellence

Objectives

- 1.1 Implement process management focusing on processes to support agency program delivery
- 1.2 Focus on selective hiring and developing employees to achieve technically competent and knowledgeable staff
- 1.3 Achieve accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children

2.0 2X Resource Growth

Increase annual agency funding from \$10 million to \$20 million

Objectives

- 2.1 Create agency in-kind program that generates 25% of total agency funding
- 2.2 Grow "Friends of LCCAA" to generate \$100,000 per year
- 2.3 Implement Resource Development Office to efficiently pursue competitive grant opportunities

3.0 Documented 30% Increase of County Residents Served Through Programming and Referrals

Service—both of agency programming and services in the community—increases

Objectives

- 3.1 Implement a systematic, tracked referral program
- 3.2 Promote agency and programming for increased knowledge and utilization of services provided
- 3.3 Improve community needs assessment and client data management

4.0 Community Development

Create a sustainable, agency-supportive program that brings business and jobs into our community

Objectives

- 4.1 Create and sustain for-profit and non-profit businesses
- 4.2 Create community collaborations
- 4.3 Promote sustainable housing

5.0 Consumer Education

Help county residents become financially savvy, exercise buying power, and build assets

Objectives

- 5.1 Foster client asset building and protection
- 5.2 Promote client financial self-sufficiency

Plan Authorization and Implementation

This plan was submitted for review and approved by the Agency's Board of Trustees on July 24, 2008. Implementation of the plan will be done through completion of action planning completed prior to plan approval.

For questions regarding the plan, please contact William T. Locke, Executive Director or Jackie Boehnlein, Director of Strategic and Organizational Development at (440) 245-2009.