Michigan Community Action, the state association for the 29 Community Action Agencies in Michigan, kept issues affecting people in poverty front and center throughout the year with advocacy, events and important outcomes. Community Action Agencies in Michigan helped 83,500 families and 170,000 individuals, leveraging $359 million in federal, state, local and private funds to provide lifesaving services in all 83 counties.
Joint efforts support low-income households

MCA distributed a $9 million Michigan Energy Assistance Program grant through the state’s 29 Community Action Agencies to provide heating assistance to 10,268 qualified households in all 83 counties.

Services included bill payment assistance, budgeting and energy use education. The grant helped demonstrate Community Action’s “wraparound” for self-sufficiency services, not only addressing the immediate situation, but also supplying the training, education and other supports to help families avoid similar crises in the future.

Also on the energy front, MCA continued its longtime participation in the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm (CTKMW), a group of nonprofit organizations and state energy providers that develop strategies for helping families avoid shutoffs or dangerous conditions.

CTKMW members met with federal and state lawmakers in 2017 to promote federal programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and their importance to low-income constituents back home.

MCA leader named to National Energy Board

Chere Coleman, MCA program and policy director, was elected to the board of the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC). Coleman assists its efforts to raise awareness of low-income households’ energy needs and foster private-public partnerships with NEUAC.

In July 2017, MCA co-sponsored a “How Housing Changed My Life” rally with Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness at the state Capitol.

Stories from people who had experienced homelessness and had been able to secure permanent housing through federal and state programs helped demonstrate the value of investments in affordable housing.

Events offer learning, recognition, networking

Volunteers, clients honored at Capitol event

Community Action leaders from across the state met with legislators during MCA’s annual Day at the Capitol event May 9. Five agency volunteers and five citizens who succeeded in moving out of poverty were recognized for contributions and achievements during the awards ceremony.

MCA recognized State Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) as Legislator of the Year for his involvement with Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency and presented its first Community Services Award to Central Michigan University Public Radio for the station’s Warm Hearts, Warm Homes campaign to raise funds for energy assistance.
Conference hosted international activist

Homelessness advocate Mark Horvath led the list of featured speakers at MCA’s 2017 Summer Conference at Crystal Mountain Resort. The founder of digital storytelling platform Invisible People stressed the importance of changing the narrative of homelessness and correcting the flaws in programs that help people experiencing homelessness.

Partnerships help with jobs

Unemployed men and women in Michigan found entry-level and skilled trades jobs such as carpentry, roofing and construction labor thanks to a partnership between MCA and Skilled to Build Michigan Foundation.

As work requirements for able-bodied Michigan adults to receive food assistance went back into effect on Jan. 1, 2017, MCA’s member agencies encouraged area job seekers to pursue the approximately 5,000 construction jobs that were unfilled in the state.

Radio campaign helps warm homes

Hundreds of mid-Michigan households received heating assistance thanks to a collaboration between MCA and Central Michigan University Public Radio. The Warm Hearts, Warm Homes campaign raised $68,000 in donations from Consumers Energy, Isabella Bank and radio listeners to distribute to households across central and northern Michigan.

Professional credentials achieved

CAA staff members may complete a Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers (NCRT) credential to help their agencies meet ROMA standards. To date, MCA’s statewide network includes 10 NCRT-designated staff members who are available to provide peer-to-peer training and support to agencies seeking to improve their performance.

Michigan added six CAA staffers to the ranks of leaders that have achieved the Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) credential, indicating the highest level of knowledge of Community Action history, best practices and ethics.

Training helps create leaders

In 2017 MCA sponsored its fifth cohort of Leadership Development Institute students, a nine-month-long curriculum tailored to the needs of Community Action Agency managers.

To date, 155 CAA staff members in Michigan have completed the program, creating a strong bench of future CAA leaders prepared to step into greater responsibilities at their local agencies.

MCA 2016 Financials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal, state, private grant programs</td>
<td>$20,918,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments, contributions, misc.</td>
<td>$525,946</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total revenue</td>
<td>$21,444,059</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries, wages, overhead, etc.</td>
<td>$21,370,675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information visit: https://mcac.memberclicks.net/mca-reports

LDI graduates pose with Rebecca Kraus (left) and John Stephenson (right).

In August 2017, MCA IT director Keith Schafer and member services specialist Maddy Kamalay toured five cities to provide training on changes to the national Results Oriented Management Accountability (ROMA) standards that measure and evaluate agency performance.
MCA names new 2017-19 directors

A new board of directors took the helm Oct. 1 to help lead MCA’s mission of alleviating the causes and circumstances of poverty. Jill Sutton, Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency, serves as president, following two-term leader John Stephenson, Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency. New board members included Michelle Williamson, Community Action Battle Creek, as secretary-treasurer; Doug McFadden, EightCAP, as CAA governing board officer; and Melinda Johnson, blue Water Community Action, as at-large officer.

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