

# Annual Report to the Community 2012



City of Rockford Human Services  
A Community Action Agency Engaging All  
Citizens In Building Stronger Communities

## Executive Director Message

The core values and methods of operation of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) is “Maximum, feasible participation” of those most immediately affected by poverty with those in all sectors of the community to remove barriers and create opportunity. These values and methods are among those required of all who seek to impact poverty at whatever level or scale. This past year has been another solid year of accomplishment in spite of great

challenges for our community. As staff of the local Community Action Agency for Boone and Winnebago Counties, we owe much to our many partners and collaborators in this work. It continues to be a humble privilege to serve with the City of Rockford and Human Services Department teams whose goal is to make our community a better place for all.

*George Davis, Executive Director*

## Board Chair Message

Our local Community Action Agency (CAA) has successfully made it through another year of trying times of budget cuts and dwindling resources. However, the CAA continues to deliver services to citizens in Winnebago and Boone Counties with the same level of professionalism and integrity as they always have in spite of the economic downturn. As Board Chair, I respect and appreciate their continuous efforts to be agents of change for the “equity”

of those living in our community which was so eloquently described by Angela Blackwell Glover as “just and fair inclusion in a society where we can all prosper.” I am honored that I can say the Community Action Agency of the City of Rockford exemplifies what is a necessary part of helping people help themselves because people need people.

*Crystal Walker, Board Chair*

## Board Members

Alderman Frank Beach

Victory Bell

Mayor Fred Brereton

Ron Clewer

Darrell Jones

Alderman Tom McNamara

Martha Moore

Sandra Mulligan

Donny Parham

Vera Passmore

Bill Pysson

Alderman Ann Thompson Kelly

# Family of Distinction

The City of Rockford Human Services Department nominated the Robbins Family (Zachery, Julia, baby Benjamin) for the Family of Distinction Award in recognition of their many accomplishments towards self-sufficiency.

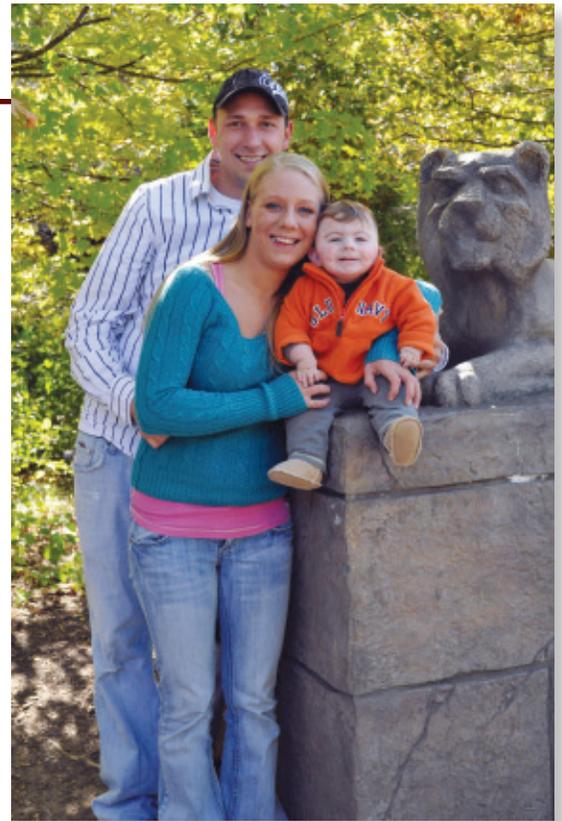
Zachery and Julia were referred to the Department's Community Services Division by the Winnebago Health Department following the birth of their son Benjamin. Benjamin was born with CdLS, Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, a genetic disorder causing a range of physical, cognitive and medical challenges.

Following the birth of Benjamin, Julia was not able to return to work due to their son's needs. The family was struggling both financially and emotionally. Community Services staff enrolled the family in housing assistance for deposit and first month's rent through the RHSP (Rental Housing Support Program). The family was able to move into a nice apartment with an affordable monthly rent. Additionally, the family applied for LIHEAP and the ComEd Hardship Program to assist with utility bills.

The family was referred to Early Head Start and received weekly home visits to support Ben's overall development, assistance with defining and supporting family goals, and linkages with community resources. Ben was also enrolled in Early Intervention services that provide support therapy for children with developmental delays.

Zachery has been able to find full time employment and the family moved to a larger home, where Zach is able to begin serving as a Volunteer Fire Fighter.

An Early Head Start Teacher and therapists with Child & Family Connections Early Intervention provide support for Ben's development four times a week. Early Head Start has also offered links to Gigi's Playhouse, a social connections and parent child play group for children with special needs. Julia makes the commitment to attend Early Head Start play groups to provide Ben the opportunity to interact with other children.



The relationship and support system that has evolved is a testimonial to the dedication and hard work of both the Robbins Family and the City of Rockford Human Services Department, a Community Action Agency.

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## Services Provided...

The City of Rockford Human Services Department, a Community Action Agency serving Boone and Winnebago Counties, is comprised of the Community Services Division and the Head Start/Early Head Start Division. The collaborative work of the agency's staff assisted the Robbins family with the following:

- ◆ Early Head Start
- ◆ Rental Housing Support Program
- ◆ ComEd Hardship Program
- ◆ Community Linkages
- ◆ LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)



*In Julia's words, "When we went to the appointment with our CSBG case manager, we received more help than we could have ever imagined. If we had not received the assistance that we did, we can honestly say our lives would be very different and we would not be where we are today. Zach, Benjamin and I are very appreciative to all of the people that have helped us."*

# Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

CSBG supports a variety of locally developed initiatives to positively affect the causes and conditions of poverty.

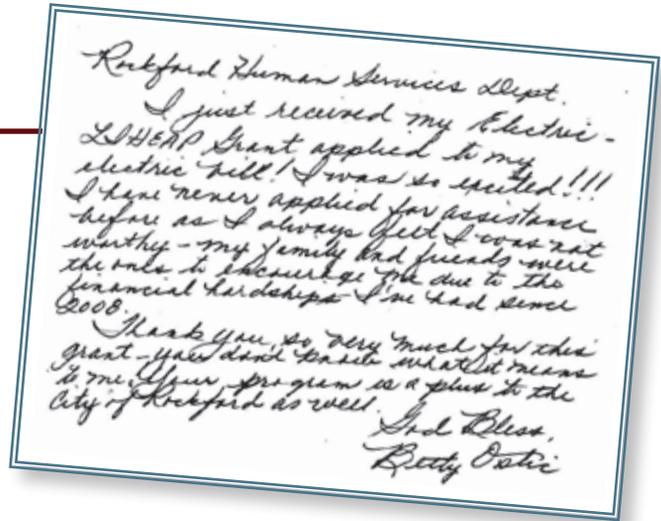
- ◆ 3188 people served in 2012
- ◆ 15 individuals successfully employed through the Small Business Loan Program
- ◆ 263 people received emergency financial assistance for a crisis beyond their control
- ◆ 372 individuals volunteered in the Community Gardens Program



# Energy Assistance

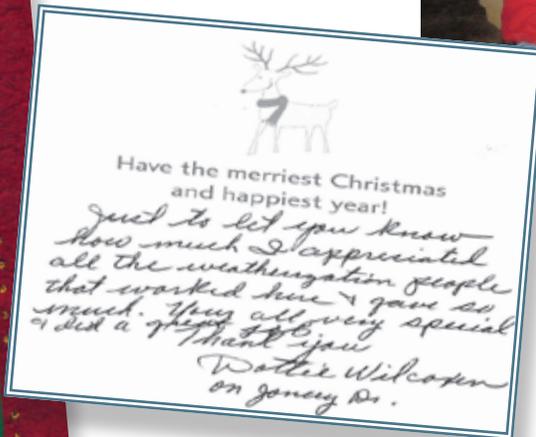
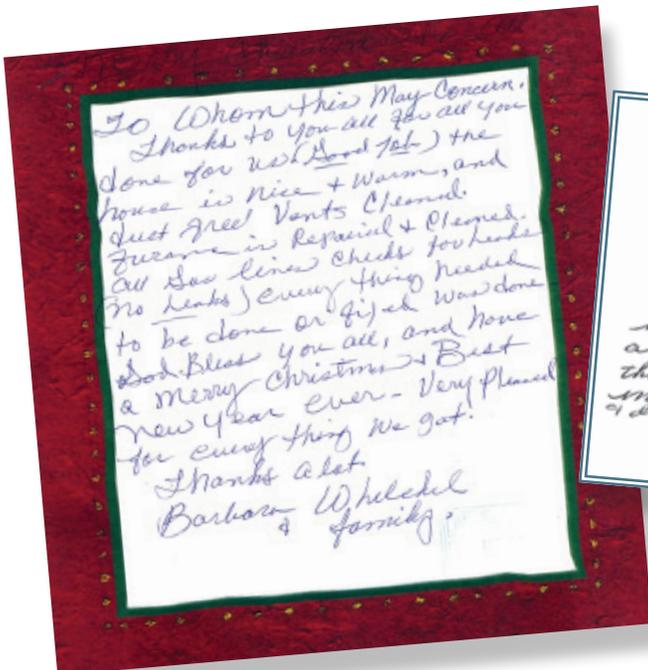
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides energy assistance to households with an undue energy cost burden.

- ◆ Served 6,961 individuals in Boone and Winnebago Counties during the last program year
- ◆ 4,885 of those were senior and disabled citizens



# Weatherization

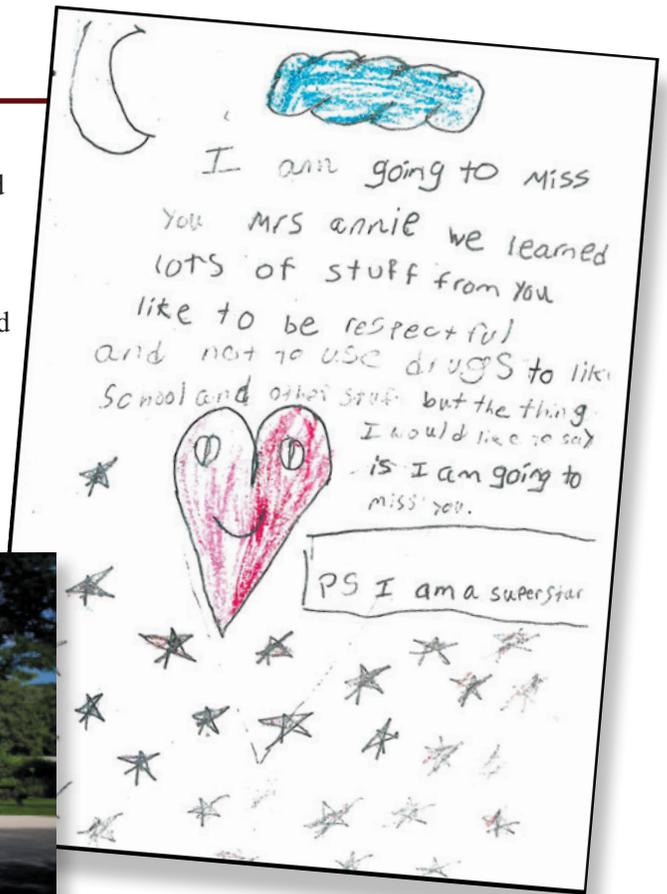
Weatherization provides air sealing and heating and ventilation services in order to make homes more energy efficient and reduce utility costs. In 2012, 695 homes and units in multi-family housing were weatherized.



# Community Health & Prevention

Too Good for Drugs is a comprehensive drug and violence prevention program designed to mitigate risk factors and build protection within the child. "Too Good" develops a framework of social and emotional skills through the development of goal-setting, decision-making and effective communication in addition to peer pressure refusal, pro-social bonding, conflict resolution and media literacy. "Too Good" builds the basis for a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment.

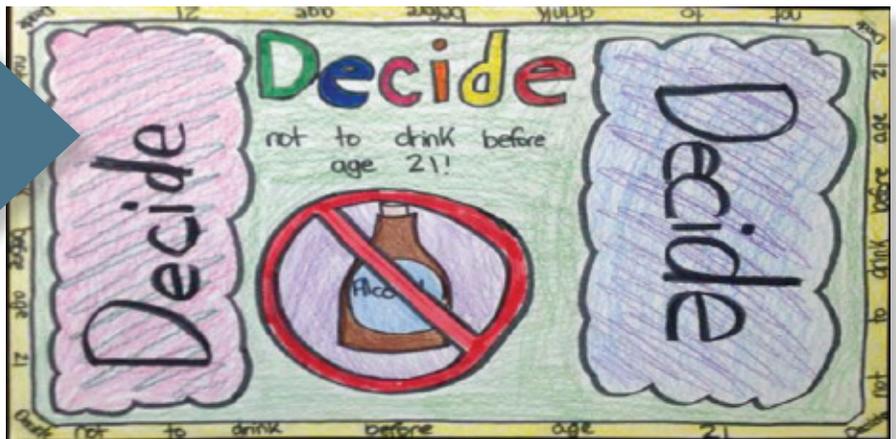
**Over 300 youth received "Too Good for Drugs" curriculum**



## Social Norms

Social Norms marketing is based on applying marketing principles and techniques that highlight and amplify images and messages that truthfully reflect positive norms that benefit society. Social Norms has been presented in Jefferson, Auburn, East, and Guilford High Schools, and Barbour, Ellis, and RESA Schools. Over 2600 youth received these messages in 2012.

**Winning poster of the Middle School Campaign**



## Head Start/Early Head Start

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**E**arly Childhood Education - Teachers serve as educators and partners with families. They focus on a child's individual development, and ongoing child assessments are shared with parents to review progress and set goals. A variety of experiences and materials promote children's development in key areas.

### *Head Start (Three to five years of age)*

Funded Enrollment: 591

Children Served: 677

### *Early Head Start (Birth to three years old, and pregnant women)*

Funded Enrollment: 92

Children Served: 153

Pregnant Women Served: 11

### *Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHVP Pregnant women and children ages birth to three years old home visiting program)*

Children Served: 26 infants/toddlers

Pregnant Women Served: 3



## Head Start/Early Head Start Health Services

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- ◆ 100% of enrolled children had an ongoing source of continuous and accessible, routine, preventive and acute medical care
- ◆ 94% of Head Start children and 92% of Early Head Start children were determined by a health professional to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age
- ◆ 100% of Head Start children and 79% of Early Head Start children had an ongoing source of continuous and accessible, routine, preventive and acute dental care
- ◆ 98% of Head Start children completed a professional dental exam during the operating period or within the last 12 months

## Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Involvement

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**F**amily Fun Nights are held regularly at the site level. Family-centered events are fun and informative and all members of the family are welcome to participate. Sixteen Family Fun Nights were held in 2011/2012 with 2601 children and families participating in the events.



# Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Involvement

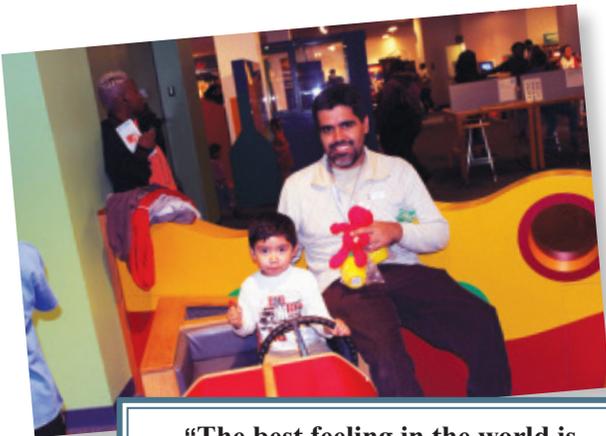
Parent education and training is provided at the site level and through community resources. Topics include family literacy, health, child development and self-sufficiency. Twenty-five parent education events were held during the program year and 252 parents participated.

Head Start Parents:

- ◆ Participate in their child's education and development
- ◆ Make decisions and offer suggestions that will contribute to program quality
- ◆ Volunteer in the classroom and on field trips
- ◆ Develop their skills as their child's first and most important teacher and advocate



## From a Parent's View...



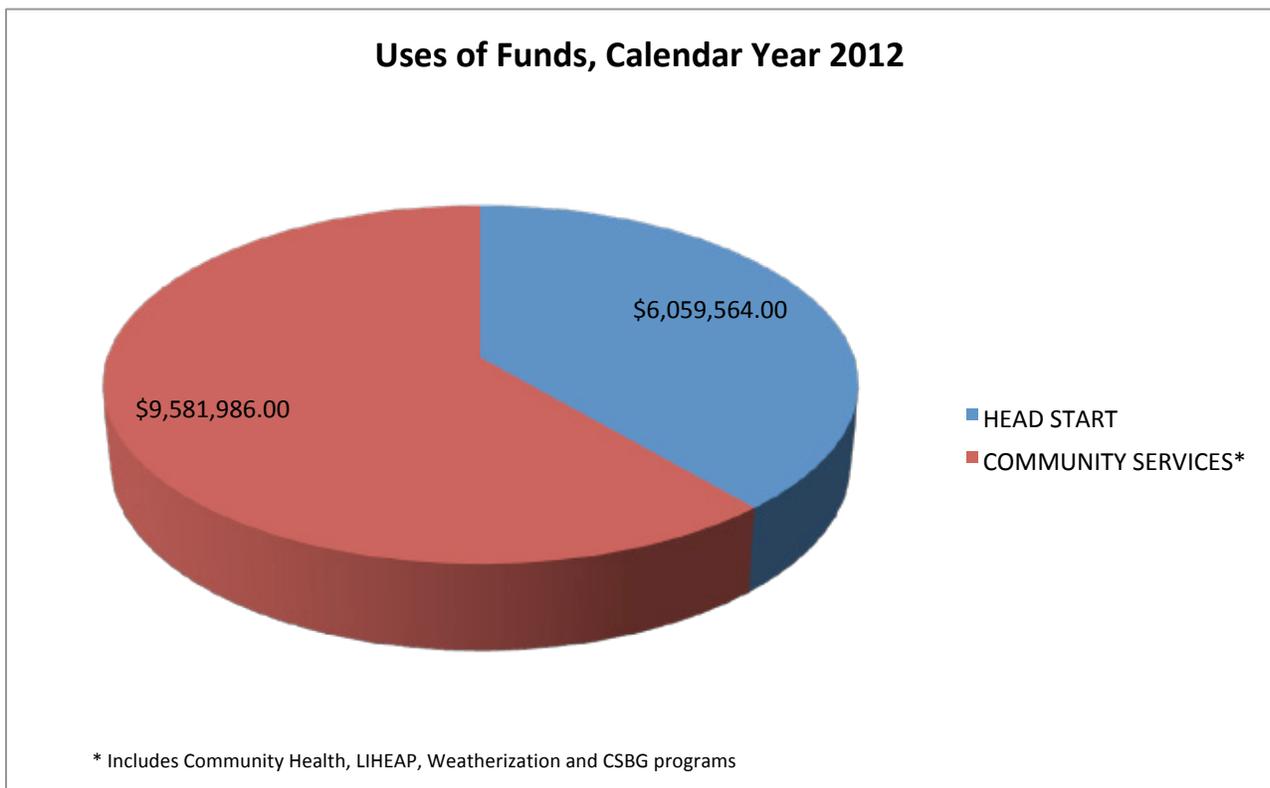
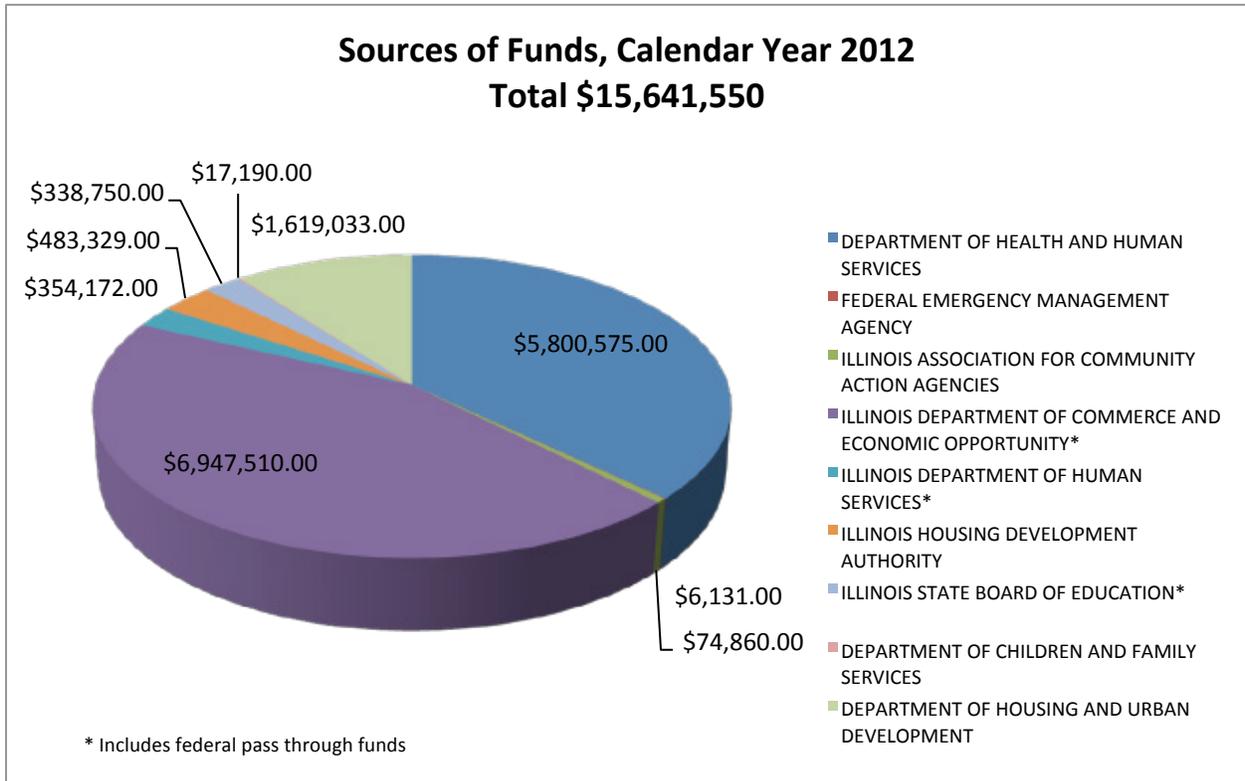
**"The best feeling in the world is knowing your child is ahead in life already, that they have a chance at success in life. When you see something new that they've learned, it's an incredible feeling."**

"My daughter was three weeks old when I met her teacher. I learned so much about newborns that I never knew, since this was my first child. Staff are very friendly and inspire you to follow your dreams. They are honest and they help you as much as they can. Because of Early Head Start, I learned to start teaching my daughter at home and helped her to develop social skills too. She will be three years old this year and is ready to engage with other children in a Head Start classroom. She knows her full name, the ABCs, colors, shapes, songs and many more things. She loves reading. I am thankful for this wonderful program."

"When I first found out I was pregnant, I didn't know what to do. I was referred to Head Start from another agency. I was afraid, nervous, and very unsure of myself. Head Start helped me to meet people who had some of the same challenges I had. I met new friends who had children and broke out of my shell. I became involved in Policy Council and Head Start has equipped me with many skills to help myself and my family. I'm also involved in my community and the neighborhood group. If I look at my life today in comparison with where my life was five years ago, there's no comparison."



# Financial Report





612 North Church Street  
Rockford, IL 61103

Contact the office at:  
Administration - 815/987-5782  
Community Services - 815/987-5711  
Head Start/Early Head Start - 815/987-5480  
TTY - 815/987-5718

Or visit our web link:  
<http://www.rockfordil.gov/human-services.aspx>

***The City of Rockford Human Services Department is the designated Community Action Agency for Winnebago and Boone Counties. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are multi-faceted human service delivery systems capable of locally administering short term and long term human services programs. CAAs work to engage elected and appointed public officials and agencies, private sector representatives and organizations, and low income residents in collaborative efforts to address the causes and conditions of poverty.***

## Services we provide...

- ◆ Community Health & Prevention: Drug Free, Social Norms, Rockford Alcohol Free Teens (RAFT), Beverage Alcohol Sellers Servers Education Training (BASSET), Summer Food
- ◆ Housing Assistance & Support: Continuum of Care, Homeless Prevention
- ◆ Community Action Programs: Community Gardens, Scholarships, Self-Sufficiency, Case Management, Neighborhood Engagement, Home Maintenance & Repair, Business Loans, Boone Youth Tutoring & Leadership
- ◆ Energy Assistance Programs: LIHEAP/PIPP, Weatherization, Client Education, Home Energy Evaluation
- ◆ Child development and education, family social services, health and nutrition, special needs services, parent/family education

Head Start: Pre-school children ages three to five years old

Early Head Start: Pregnant women and children ages birth to three years old

MIECHVP (Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program): Pregnant women and children ages birth to three years old home visiting program