



A diamond is a chunk of coal
that is made good under pressure.

~ Henry A. Kissinger

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CAPCIL Annual Report

Metamorphic

| 2017



COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Message from CAPCIL Leadership

Metamorphic rocks form when they are subjected to high heat, high pressure, hot mineral-rich fluids or, more commonly, some combination of these factors. In 2017, CAPCIL continued to define what makes the Agency

special, and what makes the people spectacular. The year was packed with high pressure and high heat. But as Henry Kissinger said, "A diamond is merely a chunk of coal that is made good under pressure." As CAPCIL has refined its mission and the pursuit of that mission, it has garnered a better understanding of how important strong partnerships are to grow and succeed.

Mostly 2017 was about determining which partnerships needed to be nurtured, which needed to be reassessed, and which new partnerships needed to be built. The year marked the end of a five-year relationship with the Logan County Board as the Public Transportation Pass-Through Operator. Some existing relationships with funding sources, like Corporation for National and Community Service, needed to be nurtured to ensure future successes. New relationships with faith partners, opioid warriors, State Farm (fondly known as "The Farm"), Thrift Store aficionados, Food distributors and donors were built. As CAPCIL continued its work on the Board's priority to develop and pursue innovative programming, the importance of healthy, and mutually respectful partnerships was undeniable in 2017. Throughout the metamorphosis, CAPCIL was lead by a Governing Board that imparted the wisdom that Agency has come to rely on them for. The CAPCIL team was always reminded that when the weight of the poverty war sits on the shoulders of those on the front lines, diamonds are being made. Diamonds are made under the weight of mountains.



It is the mission of CAPCIL, in partnership with communities in our service area, to empower persons with low income and the aged by creating and implementing poverty-fighting initiatives for those in crisis and those that endeavor a life of lasting independence.



Alison Rumler-Gomez and Steve Lobb

The 2017 Vision

The mission of Community Action has long been to aid the impoverished in their *own* battle against deficiency. CAPCIL was one of the first champions in the “War on Poverty” declared by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. Over time, CAPCIL grew its ability and commitment to serve its clients by providing programming that address the consequences of poverty. We did, and still do, offer programs like Energy Assistance, Coats for Kids, and other emergency services. In 2017 the Agency dedicated resources to pursuing the strategic priority of the Board and the Executive Director, to reduce CAPCIL’s dependency on State and Federal dollars. To continue to ensure the vision of low income individuals playing an active role in developing and implementing solutions to improve their unique situations, CAPCIL needed financial resources to provide for services that have not historically been costs allowed under grant standards. Building Agency capacity and financial stability was imperative to be able to continue the work.



Client Management Services and the Hand-Up Project

The Client Management Services Department was created in 2015. CAPCIL adopted the philosophy that we would better understand how to help the customer escape poverty when we better understand the whole person or the whole family. A centralized intake system was created. In 2016, all customers had a single point of contact who was knowledgeable in all programs. From there, referrals were made within the Agency to coordinate services. If clients opted to participate in the Hand-Up Project or enroll their child in the Head Start Program, they were assigned a Family Service Worker who helped the customer assess his/her own poverty scenario and assisted them in creating a 12-month service plan on which they work together. But 2017 was the first year where the partnership with CAPLUCK allowed us the data mining capabilities to really tell the story of these families. The systematic attack on the poverty problem in a family was happening, but 2017 was the year where we were finally able to effectively capture, analyze, and learn from the data we had collected.



The Jobs for Life class is a foundational Self-Sufficiency course offered as part of the Hand-Up Project. The basic premise of the program is that there is inherent and intrinsic value for a low-income person to contribute to society through work. It teaches the values of self-respect and dignity. Financial Peace University is a financial literacy course that helps students understand how to create and keep a budget. As our clients begin the pursuit of self-sufficiency, they lose social service aids. This program teaches participants how to manage that transition successfully. The cumulative dollar amount of public benefits families received upon entering the Hand-Up Project in 2017 was \$1,065,575. The amount families were receiving in December 2017 was reduced by over \$137,000. Two of the families that participated in the Hand-Up Project are no longer receiving **any** public benefits. Over one year, the Hand-up Project was

able to reduce the welfare benefits of this group by thirteen percent (13%). It was a remarkable year.

In Logan County, new relationships with the City of Lincoln and Logan County Board were fostered in order to make this type of success possible. The Hand-Up Project was a great success, but there were funding gaps. Those funding gaps were filled through the generous support of our Pilot Program, Strengthening Working Families (SWFI). The Strengthening Working Families initiative allowed additional client support to be poured into working families who needed access to additional training, professional attire to start new jobs, temporary child care while pursuing education, and fuel to get to and from required classes. By all measures, this Pilot was a huge success.

[LINK](#) to the Hand-Up Project Page

Head Start, A birth to five program

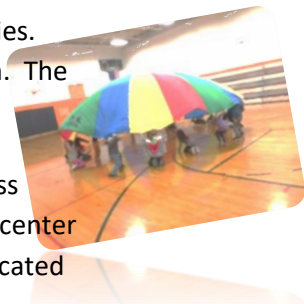
Jenifer Deweese had been with the Agency for the better part of a decade when she was named Head Start Director in 2016. She successfully moved from classroom teacher to the management team. As a new Director, Jenifer was able to identify areas where change and expansion would better serve our customers.

The Program was funded for 268 children, and Head Start began its 2017/2018 school year at 100% fully enrolled for the first time in four years. Head Start also closed the calendar year in December fully enrolled. Ninety percent of the Head Start children served met income guidelines and fourteen percent (14%) of the children served were children with disabilities. Early Head Start is now operating four center based classrooms and is serving 32 children. The remaining 58 children/families are served in the home-based option.

Head Start utilizes 3 checkpoints per year in the fall, winter and spring for school readiness purposes. Center based 3-5-year-old children and 4 checkpoints for home based and 0-3 center based are conducted each year. The assessment data garnered from this online tool indicated that over 80% of children meeting or exceeding standards.

The push to improve overall health and wellness of the family remained a 2017 focus. The seven goals for family and community engagement are woven into each family partnership agreement:

- Family well-being (career readiness, financial literacy, housing counseling)
- Positive parent/child relationships
- Families as life-long educators
- Families as learners
- Family engagement in transitions
- Family connection to peers and community (volunteerism)
- Families as advocates



Community Action Head Start also continued its pledge to ready its child participants for school by ensuring that not only are the educational benchmarks reached prior to Kindergarten, but that the children also have required health and wellness checks completed.

[LINK](#) to the Head Start, Birth to Five Page

Transportation Department

CAPCIL provided its notice to terminate its service as the Pass-Through Operator for Logan County's Logan Mason Public Transportation Program in 2017. The changes in the Government Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) added a sizable administrative burden to the Agency, and it proved to be an unwanted and unsustainable resource drain. CAPCIL will continue to serve as the Grantee for the Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland Senior Transportation Program in 2018. Ridership remained strong throughout the 2017 calendar year, and overall costs to the Program were managed well, but CAPCIL consistently experienced long delays for large program reimbursements, and that, in addition to the drain on the Agency's administrative team, was cause for the termination.

Nutrition Services

Senior Nutrition has been a staple of the CAPCIL service portfolio for many years. In 2015, the budget impasse prompted the Agency to make some substantial changes to the Service Delivery model. We procured a temperature controlled truck that allows us to deliver hot meals throughout the day and over hundreds of miles with each trip. We reduced staffing expenses, fuel and insurance costs, mileage reimbursements, and did not compromise the quality of the meals in any way.

The improved management practices resulted in a Senior Nutrition Program that now operates on a balanced budget. In Fiscal Year 2017, Senior Nutrition served over 30,000 home delivered meals and over 7400 congregate meals. This Program has now operated for the last two fiscal years in the black and continues to receive excellent reviews from the customers on both the quality of the meals as well as the quality of their wellness checks from staff and volunteers. We know that many of the homebound seniors who receive our services find great comfort in their visits with our staff and volunteers.

Becky Leamon, Nutrition Services Director, also was awarded a Subaru vehicle for delivering meals. She received in excess of \$40,000 in additional grant funding to support the Program, and through those awards was able to serve more than 5000 additional meals from the 2016 Fiscal Year.

[LINK](#) to Nutrition Services Page

Volunteer Services Department

The Volunteer Services Department was also created in 2015. The Agency has been a long-time partner with Corporation for National and Community Service, the organization that funds Foster Grandparents. Foster Grandparents (FGP) are essential to the mission of Community Action. FGPs assist children in the classroom with their literacy and math skills on a volunteer basis, and are paid a small stipend for the volunteer activities. The program not only provides much-needed educational supports for pre-school and community organizations, but it also supports CAPCIL's mission of ensuring seniors have a sense of value

and independence. The in-service training and recognition program ensures an element of socialization that helps to keep seniors in their own homes living healthy and productive lives.

In 2017, CAPCIL experienced its first on-site monitoring visit in over 6 years from the funding source. The visit was a great learning experience, and the Agency was able to utilize the monitoring visit as an opportunity to fortify the relationship with the funding source and demonstrate its commitment to evolving and improving with the help of CNCS.

Breann also tackled the challenge of creating volunteer opportunities across the six-county service area. She developed descriptions of duties, worked with each Outreach office to ensure supports and oversight, recruited volunteers, worked with probation offices to serve as Community Service sites, and increased our pool of volunteers exponentially. Last year, 64,000 volunteer hours were logged by Volunteers at CAPCIL. That is a twenty-three (23%) increase in the number of hours attributed to the volunteers at the Agency in just one year.



Volunteers assist in critical ways at the Agency...from rocking crying babies, delivering home delivered meals, helping to clean and maintain our facilities, and work in our thrift store. We couldn't do it without them!

Energy Assistance and Weatherization

The Illinois Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to assist eligible low-income households pay for winter energy services. LIHEAP provides a one-time benefit to eligible households to be used for energy bills. In 2017, CAPCIL serviced over 2000 households across five counties where we provide the services for LIHEAP and Weatherization funded by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The delivery of these services looked dramatically different in 2016 than in years past. CSBG had always been a supplemental funding source for this Program, but the continuation of the CSBG funded self-sufficiency programs created a funding squeeze for LIHEAP. The program was supported through LIHEAP funds only in 2016 and that forced staff members to travel more and adapt to tracking and reporting systems that were not integrated or easily managed across multiple site locations. In 2017, a new Department Director was hired, Anita Russell. Anita had

been with the Agency for several years, working in the LIHEAP Program for most of her tenure. She really came in, evaluated the changes that had been made, improved what needed improvement, and fostered several needed partnerships to smooth out the rough patches the Agency had to work through as a result of the service delivery changes.

Fiscal Picture and Administration

The rocky political climate of 2017 in Illinois reminded us all that a rainy day will eventually come. The Agency, while dramatically improving the operational and programmatic efficiencies, determined that an intentional effort must be made to acquire unrestricted revenue that serves as an emergency fund and provides for operational needs. We also recognized that for the long-term health of the Agency, it is wise to have staff and resources dedicated to working on the effort to raise awareness and funds throughout the year for all areas of the Agency.

The Agency Development Department was formed and Katie Alexander took the reins. Katie had successfully Directed the CSBG Program, and was the founder of the Hand Up Project. She brought with her vast knowledge of the programming, a deep passion for the mission, and the skills to launch the Department. In the first year of the Department, the Agency found it somewhat difficult to raise funds that were completely unrestricted. However, under Katie's direction, the critical partnership with the City of Lincoln and the Logan County Board was born to give life to the SFWI pilot initiative. In total, the City of Lincoln and the Logan County Board provided \$60,000 in support for the Pilot Program.

Martin Ryan, HR Director had an impactful start to his career at CAPCIL. His assignment was to increase employee engagement (loyalty to the Agency and its mission) and reduce the amount of time positions remained vacant. In an employee satisfaction survey from 2017, CAPCIL team members reported that 99% of them were, "committed to fulfilling the mission of CAPCIL." In that same survey, 93% of the CAPCIL staff reported that their "really liked" or "loved" their job.

Agency Operations Director, Ryne Komnick, was a star again 2017. As a veteran to the organization, he picked up the pieces as they fell and helped to put them back together. He stepped into a mentoring role for the new Weatherization Coordinator, Tony Culp. He also worked tirelessly with the Agency Development Department to make the fundraising events flow flawlessly. He also assisted in developing plans for client workstations to roll out in each outreach site location in 2017.

While the 2017 audit has not yet been completed, early reports indicate that the Agency will be finding-free again this year thanks to CFO, Kathy Inman. In 2017, Kathy continued to develop new reports to assist the Agency in improved cash-flow management projections. She also revised internal controls and expanded the use of an integrated accounting systems so that payables, grant budget management, invoicing, employee time-keeping and payroll are all housed in one efficient tool.

[LINK to most recent Agency Audit](#)

[LINK to most recent Form 990](#)

