2023

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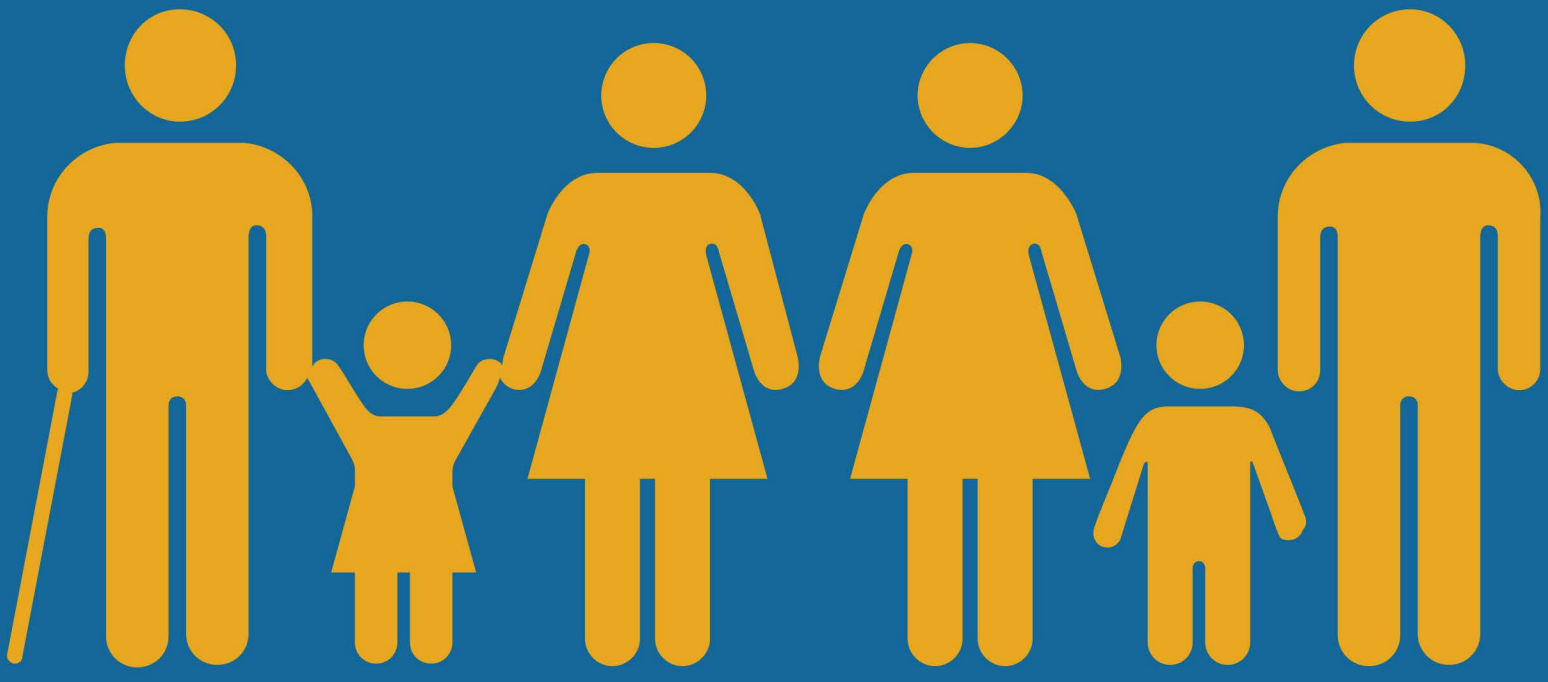
PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

NASCSP
National Association for State Community Services Programs

CSBG ANNUAL REPORT DATA USAGE CASE STUDIES



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CSBG
Community Services Block Grant

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Introduction

The network of 1000+ Community Action Agencies across America gather and use demographic, service rendered, outcome, and other data for decision-making and to tell the stories of the impact of their efforts on people with low incomes and the communities in which they live. This report highlights the perspectives of three Community Action Agencies regarding the use of the data collected and reported as part of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Annual Report.

This project is a joint effort of the National Association of State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) and National Community Action Partnership (NCAP) in support of a shared vision for the CSBG Network to increase its capacity to gather and use relevant, meaningful data to develop and implement strategies that will help meet the goals included in the National Community Action Network Theory of Change:

1. Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
2. Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
3. People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

Three local Community Action Agencies completed a survey that examined their experiences and engagement with the CSBG Annual Report. The results of this survey are the basis for the case studies presented in this report.

Agency Overviews

807 N. Providence Rd.
Columbia, MO 65203
https://cmca.us

CMCA's mission is to build relationships to empower people, strengthen resilience, and improve quality of life for all members of the community.

1420 South Norman C. Francis Pkwy
New Orleans, LA 70125
https://www.tca-nola.org/

The Mission of Total Community Action is to reduce poverty in our community through collaboration with other agencies and by providing human services, experiences and opportunities that assist individuals with low-income to achieve economic security.

6 Spruce Street
Sanford, ME 04073
https://yccac.org/

YCCAC's mission is to alleviate the effects of poverty, attack its underlying causes, and to promote the dignity and self-sufficiency of the people of York County, Maine.

The case studies that follow are based on responses to these questions provided by the three participating agencies:

1.) How does the agency utilize the CSBG Annual Report data alongside other datasets to set organizational goals and objectives? How do these goals align with the agency's mission and strategic plan?

2.) How does the organization collect and analyze the data included in the CSBG Annual report?

3.) How does the agency assess its impact and effectiveness using the data provided in the CSBG Annual report and other relevant data sets? Are there any specific metrics or indicators used to measure success?

4.) What specific methods does the organization use to analyze its data and turn it into information that can be used for decision-making? How is the information presented to decision makers?

5.) How does the agency involve staff members and stakeholders in the review and analysis of the program data? Is there a process for soliciting feedback and incorporating it into future decision-making?

6.) Can you identify any specific examples of how the agency has used the data from the CSBG Annual report or other relevant datasets to inform decision-making processes within the organization?

7.) Does the agency use the CSBG Annual report data to identify areas for improvement or identify gaps in service delivery?

8.) If you answered "yes" to the previous question, can you provide examples of how this has led to actionable changes within the organization?

9.) How does the agency communicate the findings and insights derived from the CSBG Annual report data to its stakeholders, including board members, funders, and the community at large?

10.) Are there any challenges or limitations associated with using the CSBG Annual report data alongside other relevant datasets for organizational management and improvement?

11.) If you stated that there have been challenges and/or limitations, please describe how the agency has addressed, or is addressing, these challenges.

12.) Can you identify any long-term outcomes or positive changes that have resulted from the agency's use of the annual report data alongside other relevant datasets and how using this data has contributed to the overall success and sustainability of the organization?

13.) Does the agency have any plans for future enhancements or modifications to its CSBG Annual report data collection and analysis processes? How does it plan to further leverage the data to improve organizational management and maximize impact?

Central Missouri Community Action

Columbia, MO | https://cmca.us

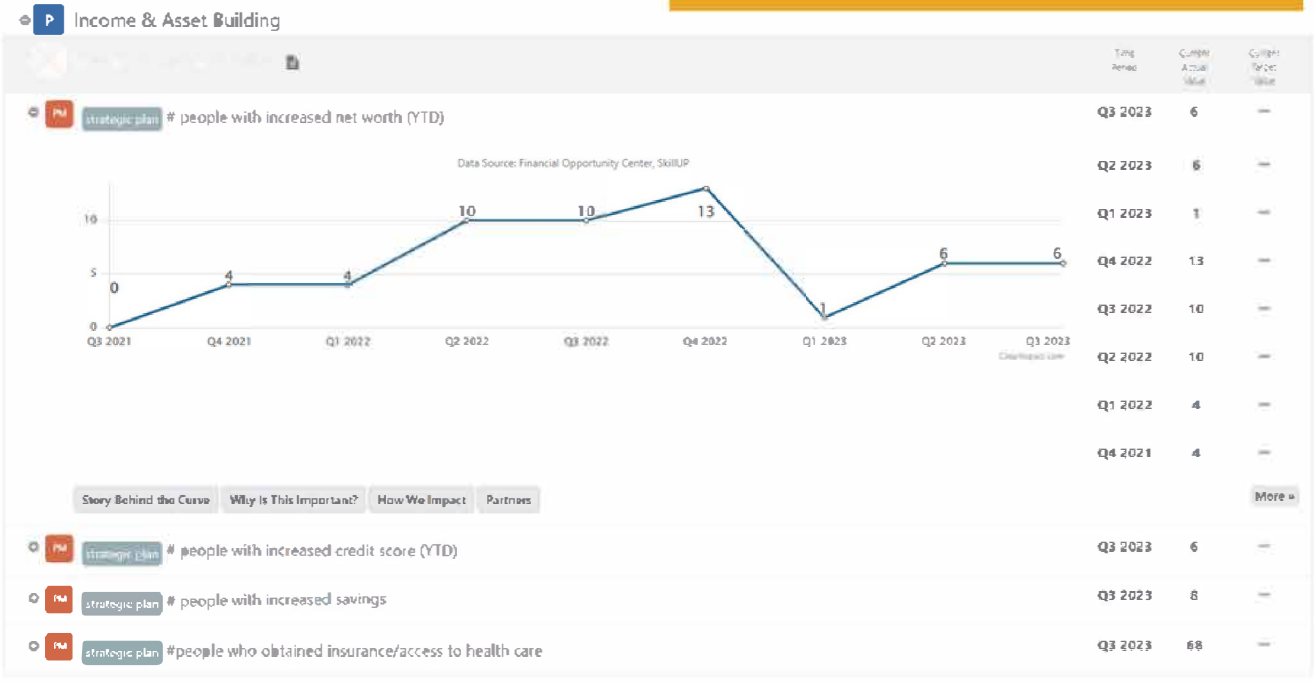
CENTRAL MISSOURI COMMUNITY (CMCA) HAS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED DYNAMIC TOOLS AND ROBUST PROCESSES FOR COLLECTING, ANALYZING, AND SHARING CSBG AND OTHER AGENCY DATA.

CMCA uses a Results Based Accountability (RBA) process for community assessments and strategic planning and uses PowerBI to assist staff with quarterly data analyses. Power BI is a "unified, scalable business intelligence platform"which can connect to and visualize data from multiple sources and databases.

CMCA has a set of agency impact measures that were identified using the RBA process. As a team, staff members review progress towards achieving these planned outcomes and assess the implementation of the agency's strategic plan several times a year. These assessments allow staff to gain additional insight into agency initiatives and programs.

Engagement with a variety of stakeholders is foundational to CMCA's data process. CMCA board members, staff, and community members, when appropriate, participate in a Community Assessment annual update, provide or receive updates on strategic plan progress, and develop success stories using member impact data.

CMCA is addressing the need to combine data from multiple databases by expanding its use of PowerBI to create a data dashboard highlighting these components of agency data.



Supporting a Data Focus

To support the CMCA data focus, a full-time staff member is tasked with data reporting and visualization. This staff member prepares the raw data for analysis by internal teams and for distribution to the broader community.

Other data-focused approaches deployed include data parties, data walks, data dashboards, and the visualizations created using Power BI. CMCA also supports an interactive PowerBI tool for public use on its website named the "Community Data Explorer" which makes key community-level data gathered during the CMCA Community Needs Assessment process available to the public.

Dissemination of information based on agency data is accomplished using multi-media tools which are targeted to a wide array of stakeholders including board members, funders, staff members, and the community-at-large. **Among the publications distributed by CMCA are "gratitude reports" for funders and community members.** Internally, CMCA develops presentations and reports for use by the agency board of directors and staff members.

Using data for decision-making is a crucial activity for Community Action Agencies. CMCA used data related to member needs and annual report data related to financial outcomes to inform the decision to pursue funding to become a Financial Opportunity Center, which has become one of the agency's most successful programs.

Central Missouri Community Action

Columbia, MO 65203 | https://cmca.us

CMCA's mission is to build relationships to empower people, strengthen resilience, and improve quality of life for all members of the community.

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Total Community Action, Inc.

New Orleans, LA | https://www.tca-nola.org/

TOTAL COMMUNITY ACTION, INC. (TCA) HAS DEVELOPED AN APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING THAT HAS CREATED OPPORTUNITIES TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE EXPANSION OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND THE CREATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL PROGRAMS TARGETING SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS.

The foundation for TCA's data processes is an **annual data analysis convening**. This convening takes place prior to the development of its Community Action Plan. TCA program and service leads meet to review and analyze the agency's annual report, community demographics, and customer satisfaction feedback and recommendations for improvements.

Assessments of progress towards achieving strategic plan objectives, agency fiscal data, identification of continuing or emerging community needs, and economic trends are examined and discussed. **TCA uses this information to revise program plans; design new services, strategies, and partnerships; and enhance TCA's ability to achieve outcomes.**

TCA prepares an annual impact brief, using the National Community Action Partnership data brief template, for distribution to the public. TCA also presents a more detailed data-to-goals-and-objectives annual report to its board of directors and funders. The metrics utilized in these reports are established in TCA's strategic plan and grant applications.

As is common among Community Action Agencies, TCA uses several program-specific data systems. Significant effort is made to integrate the data from these systems to reduce duplicated service and participant counts.

USING THE DATA

Analysis of agency data allowed TCA to identify and address a downward trend among formerly incarcerated persons (FIPs) in obtaining and maintaining employment. **After a careful review of the data, TCA identified a missing link in the employment process that had been critical to supporting FIP employment.** Modifications in the allocation of staff time and revisions to the service model are being implemented to address this deficiency. The resulting data will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of these changes in correcting the employment gap.

TCA has also used its data to determine that 90% of the youth engaged in its summer youth employment program were not able to sign their names. This data is supporting the development of new handwriting initiatives to address this gap caused by the lack of handwriting education in local public school systems.

Recent reviews of agency LIHEAP data for ineligible applicants, showed that the increase in wages created by the local living wage ordinance created an increase in the number of applicants who were less than $200 per month over the LIHEAP income eligibility limits.

Armed with this data and with the support of the New Orleans City Council, TCA was awarded a $3 million American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) award to assist individuals and families with incomes up to 300% of FPL.

TCA engages its staff, customers, and board members in every phase of the data process, from data collection through decision-making. Engagement includes a customer satisfaction survey, focus groups, and a community convening for planning. TCA staff members are directly involved in data collection, reviews, and analysis. Additionally, the governing board of directors and the Head Start Policy Council are actively engaged in data usage through the agency planning processes.

Total Community Action, Inc.

New Orleans, LA | https://www.tca-nola.org/

The Mission of Total Community Action is to reduce poverty in our community through collaboration with other agencies and by providing human services, experiences and opportunities that assist individuals with low-income to achieve economic security.

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York County Community Action Corp.

Sanford, ME | https://yccac.org/

York County COMMUNITY ACTION Corporation

YORK COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION CORP. (YCCAC) HOUSES 6 MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC DEPARTMENTS WHICH OFFER DOZENS OF PROGRAMS. THE AGENCY ENGAGES IN PROGRAM LEVEL PLANNING, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS TO ENSURE THAT EACH DEPARTMENT HAS A CLEARLY DEFINED SET OF METRICS AND INDICATORS TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROMOTE POSITIVE OUTCOMES.

The variety of programs offered by YCCAC means that the agency uses 6 major client/patient databases, as well as several smaller ones. The diversity and complexity of agency departments and programs requires each department and program to develop its own metrics and indicators. Some performance metrics are driven by contract requirements while others are influenced by engagement with agency customers and patients.

An agency-wide database bridges these different data collection systems to aggregate and align various program data for inclusion in the CSBG Annual Report.

The aggregation of data provides an agency-wide view of all agency performance measures.

The CSBG Annual Report is an example of quantitative program data used by YCCAC as part of its goal-setting processes. CSBG data is combined with other agency quantitative data, such as the YCCAC case management programs and agency performance measurement system. In addition, YCCAC gathers and analyzes qualitative data from staff and client/patient interviews.

When combined with the quantitative and qualitative data collected as part of its comprehensive community assessment processes, the agency has the ability to develop goals and implement service delivery strategies that support its mission and strategic plan.

USING THE DATA

With quality customer service as an agency focus, community assessment, programmatic, outcome, waiting list, and client demographic data has been used to develop Head Start change in scope applications, which allow for a shifting of resources to support younger and higher need children; to expand dental services; and to analyze and implement improvements in service delivery processes which have led to dramatically reduced waiting times for LIHEAP clients.

Information sharing within YCCAC occurs on a regular basis to allow direct service staff to assess programmatic performance, while other data reports are shared on a semi-annual and annual basis during assessment and planning processes. Data is used as part of the assessment and in formal planning and decision-making processes such as strategic planning.

To ensure high quality service delivery processes, each department implements continuous quality improvement practices of varying levels. The agency is working towards the development of a model that will create consistency of practice by deploying department level CQI teams trained in the intricacies of each program, including funder expectations.

In the near future, YCCAC is planning to use PowerBI to present department teams with data they identify in a format that can provide insight and prompt questions. The teams will engage in Plan-Do-Study-Act or Results Based Accountability cycles using agency data to improve outcomes, service delivery models, and other processes. The agency will use this department level work to build an agency dashboard with key metrics for senior staff and the board of directors.

York County Community Action Corp.

Sanford, ME | https://yccac.org/

YCCAC's mission is to alleviate the effects of poverty, attack its underlying causes, and to promote the dignity and self-sufficiency of the people of York County, Maine.

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Central Missouri Community Action Agency, Columbia, Missouri

Total Community Action, New Orleans, Louisiana

York County Community Action Corp., Sanford, Maine

NCAP also appreciates its continued partnership with the National Association of State Community Services Programs (NASCSP).

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