
**MID-WEST NEW MEXICO
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM**



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2024-2025

May 2024

Community Needs and Community Action Plan 2024-2025

Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program (MWNMCAP) is committed to providing services to help empower and improve the lives of low-income individuals and families residing within Valencia, Socorro, McKinley, Cibola and Catron Counties. To this end, we have prepared an update to the 2024 - 2025 Community Action Plan. This plan outlines the issues effecting poverty within the service delivery areas and identifies proposed strategies and services to address the identified needs. In developing this plan, special consideration was given to feedback provided by low-income individuals and representatives of low-income individuals participating in CSBG activities. The needs identified reflect the feedback received through our Community Assessment Surveys, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Public Comments, information obtain during client intake and assessment, as well as information from the Statewide Community Assessment sponsored by the State CSBG Office and the Association of Community Partners. Also considered was the feedback received from individuals and families who have not yet recovered from the effects of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The Agency utilizes a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing and reporting client satisfaction data to the Board.

The Board of Directors and Head Start Policy Council continue to rely on the Chief Executive Officer, Head Start Director, Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Director of Operations and Supportive Services, and other staff for overseeing community assessment activities. As in past years, the Grantee Board and Policy Council continued to be actively involved in reviewing and approving the agency wide community assessment.

Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program continues to use a variety of mediums to identify community needs. A comprehensive annual assessment was conducted by the Agency for both CSBG, Head Start and Early Head Start activities. Information is shared between each of the agency's departments. Agency staff, worked closely with community partners in leveraging resources and identifying critical client needs. Numerous staff meetings were conducted to discuss the outcome of the assessment and to determine an appropriate plan of action needed to prioritize and address the identified needs. Additionally, information on needs was obtained from individuals who applied for CSBG services. Finally, the agency utilized information gathered from key sectors of the community. These sectors included community based, faith-based groups, private sector, public sector and educational institutions. MWNMCAP has developed the infrastructure required to help identify and address client needs. We will continue to utilize our Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Offices, Head Start/Early Head Start Centers, and administration office, as well as, community partners to address the needs identifies with the available resources.

We will continue to update our needs assessment of the service delivery area on an annual basis. We will also continue to identify and leverage resources required in addressing the needs. We will work closely with other human services agencies and community members in strengthening existing partnerships and developing new partnerships. We will also continue to address the issues of unemployment and under employment, inadequate education, transportation, inefficient or ineffective use of income, inadequate housing,

address emergency needs within our funding capabilities and utilize other resources and services and collaborate and/or coordinate our efforts and program with them to serve the population in need. Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program will continue to seek alternate funding sources to supplement existing resources. Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program will continue to communicate its activities and results to the community through the Agency's Annual Report and through information posted on the Agency's website.

In accordance with the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding requirements and other related State or Federal funding requirements, we submit the 2024 - 2025 Community Action Plan.

Historical Perspective

The Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program is a Grantee Agency celebrating its 58th year of successfully operating quality Head Start programs, Early Head Start Programs and Community Services Block Grant Programs in the five counties of Socorro, Valencia, Cibola, and McKinley, and Catron. In 2019, Mid-West New Mexico CAP began delivering an Early Head Start Program in Socorro, McKinley, Cibola and Valencia Counties. As anticipate this program will continue to grow as we expand our facilities to increase capacity to accommodate the need for his service.

The counties are located in the mid-western part of the state of New Mexico and cover an area of approximately 24,643 square miles or approximately 1/5 of the state. The Mid-West New Mexico CAP Agency service areas are rural in nature and there are diverse needs in each respective county. Resources have been available in most areas, but are limited, in small isolated communities. For example, Valencia County is closest in proximity to a metropolitan area and barring transportation issues offers resources that are more available.

The Mid-West NM CAP operates a Head Start program, with nine (9) centers throughout four (4) counties and operates the Community Services Block Grant program with four area offices. During 2019, Mid-West NM CAP began operating an Early Head Start Program for children ages 6 months to 2 years old. Early Head Start classrooms are located in Valencia, Socorro, Cibola and McKinley Counties.

The agency's governing body; the Grantee Board of Director's has eight (8) current members, consisting of representation from the five counties MWNMCAP serves. The Board includes representation from the Private and Public sectors as well as representation for low-income individuals. The Grantee Board's highest priorities are to review and revise, as needed the organizational structure, its leadership abilities, the policies and procedures that affect the organization to its highest level.

The Mid-West NM CAP grantee has established a Policy Council, a formal structure of shared governance through which parents can participate with authority in policy making and other decisions about the program as defined in the By-Laws that ensure clarity and consistency in function and purpose. The Policy Council representation consists of fifteen (15) members, the majority being more than 51% from parents of currently enrolled children from four counties. (Over 95% of Head Start/Early Head Start families meet

CSBG eligibility guidelines. Policy Council members advocate for low income individuals).

Mid -West NM CAP Grantee Board of Directors, Policy Council, staff, parents, and community partners are committed to having a shared vision and action plan for promoting quality Head Start/Early Head Start and CSBG program services. Appropriate oversight systems and internal controls have been established to help promote, monitor and evaluate program outcomes and to help ensure accountability.

Our goal is to bring a greater degree of quality social and educational competence for pre-school children from low-income families, in all of our service areas and assist low-income persons to become more self-sufficient and improve the conditions in which the lives of low-income persons are improved. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote children's development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being. The Head Start program is based on the premise that all children and their families share certain needs, and can benefit from a comprehensive early childhood education developmental program, in the areas of child health and developmental services, education and early childhood development, child health and safety, child nutrition, child mental health, family and community partnerships. CSBG services are made available to Head Start and Early Head Start families to help address their needs and compliment the Head Start services.

MWNMCAP began providing Head Start services in 1967. The program was formally issued a Certificate of Incorporation in 1968. Head Start is nationally known and recognized for its high quality, comprehensive programming, particularly for children and families living below the federal poverty level or with other risk factors. Today, all MWNMCAP programs are laid over the Head Start model and funding. No programs today would survive without this federal funding.

In 1998, Head Start reauthorization shifted the focus of Head Start from social competence to school readiness. School districts became major partners for MWNMCAP. Classroom space is also located in schools, benefiting children and families by establishing a relationship with formal educational institutions.

Currently, MWNMCAP is an organization with 120 staff, numerous community partners and 804 parent and community volunteers serving 587 children and families in Head Start/EHS and serving over 3,322 individuals in the Community Services Block Grant Program. The recent past has been challenging. The future promises more change and challenge. MWNMCAP and the Head Start programs it administers are at a pivotal point and face unprecedented threats and opportunities. At the same time, MWNMCAP serves a vital function in the community, with proven results. MWNMCAP has set forth this plan to secure its long-term future as a provider of comprehensive, high quality, early childhood education and family development programs along with the Community Services it provides to low income residents.

MWNMCAP's Mission

To Provide human services and activities which have a major impact on causes of poverty in the community or those areas of the community where poverty is an acute problem; and also, to assist low-income participants including the elderly, poor, children and families.

MWNMCAP Core Values

MWNMCAP **REACHES** to strengthen families and community by valuing:

Respect for and inclusion of all children and families, embracing differences in language, culture, ability, and economic status.

Every child's right to have a safe, nurturing childhood and to reach her/his full potential as a productive citizen.

Access to education, health, and safety resources for all children and families.

Comprehensive, collaborative partnerships among all stakeholders: children, families, and the community.

Highly qualified, diverse staff empowered by ongoing support and professional development.

Empower low-income persons to become more self-sufficient.

Stabilize low-income families and assisting them in achieving their potential by strengthening their support systems.

Critical Issues

Several critical issues face MWNMCAP. Federal and political changes at many levels will have an effect in the future. We may need to adjust our strategies as the U.S. Congress considers Head Start/Early Head Start and Community Services Block Grant resource levels. Additionally, the New Mexico Legislature has allocated additional funding to promote PreK services in the public schools. This will certainly have an adverse impact on Head Start enrollments across the State.

To successfully address critical issues, MWNMCAP must effectively communicate with organizational stakeholders, internally and externally, informally and formally. Ultimately, MWNMCAP's success depends on conveying who we are and how our programs benefit both those served and the community as a whole.

Identification of Major Poverty-Related Problems

There are numerous factors, which have contributed to poverty in the service delivery area. New Mexico along with the rest of the nation has experienced significant economic downturns. Rural communities are not immune from this economic downturn. This has served to intensify the issues that affect poverty.

The loss of jobs and reduction of work hours resulting from the recent COVID-19 pandemic, has had a long-term effect on individuals and families. The mandated closures of non-essential businesses left small business owners and their employees without a means to support themselves. Many of which were never able to recover from the shutdowns. Based on phone calls received by our admiration and local offices, there continues to be a high demand for rent and utility assistance. Many families are still several months behind on rent/mortgage and utility payments and are struggling to recover. The temporary resources provided by the CARES Act and the America Rescue Plan Act have all been exhausted.

Another ongoing factor that continues to keep people on the poverty list is that a single parent is head of household. Based on our 2022– 2023 CSBG Annual Report data approximately 17% of CSBG families with children served were comprised of single parents. Additionally, 46% Head Start/Early Head Start household served were single parents. Many of these parents do not receive financial support for their children, and thereby have to rely on public assistance. Programs such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) have stringent requirements that families must meet. In many instances, families have to find some type of employment to help provide for their families. Available jobs are usually entry level and are low paying.

Poor public education and/or training is another factor that contributes to poverty. In a recent WalletHub Survey New Mexico came in at as the 42nd most educated state in the country. Business and industry rely on a well-educated labor force before they commit to expanding or establishing a new business which would provide much needed jobs to our community. Approximately 36% of individuals served during 2022– 2023 reporting year who were 25 years of age or older did not have a high school diploma or GED. Those clients who completed their GED lacked refined skills or training needed to obtain a job that provided a living wage. (A living wage is the minimum hourly income necessary for a worker to meet basic needs. It affords the earner and her or his family the most basic costs of living without need for government support or poverty programs). The lack of jobs and employment opportunities was once again cited as being one of the top five (5) concerns and pressing problems faced by communities and families residing within our service delivery area. Approximately 45% of the families surveyed stated that being able to pay necessary bills was their number one concern.

Other areas of need identified were the need for assistance with food, housing, help with car repair, and employment. Many do not have adequate transportation to allow them to get to a job and they lack the recourses to repair their automobile. The fluctuating fuel costs and the large geographical area of the state that families are required to travel further complicate the transportation issue. Reductions in fuel prices rarely remain for extended periods. Public transportation in rural areas is limited or non-existent.

The lack of available and affordable childcare is a significant barrier in preventing low-income families from obtaining full time employment. A shortage of high-quality infant and toddler childcare for working families poses both a health and safety risk to babies whose parents work outside the home, as well as a missed opportunity to connect parents of young children to critical health services. Even if families are able to find appropriate childcare programs, the cost may present a challenge to families who do not qualify for subsidized care, but cannot afford the cost of licensed care. In August of 2019, Mid-West

NM CAP implemented an Early Head Start Program in Valencia, Socorro, Cibola and McKinley Counties which has provide some relief to this issue.

A major concern of many parents, especially single parents, is that of housing. Many have to rent or access low-income housing, if available, or live with parents or other relatives. If a particular job is obtained, many cannot afford to pay the high rate of rent since they are only earning a minimum wage. This may be attributed to lack of skills, education, and the absence of quality jobs. We noted that more families are sharing living expenses. Several families are living in one household and functioning as a larger unit.

Identification of Current Levels of Anti-Poverty Efforts

MWNMCAP will continue to communicate and collaborate with local human services agencies and organizations in the five (5) County areas to facilitate the coordination of services to needy families. MWNMCAP has established formal partnerships with federal, state and local public and private organizations in an effort to foster this coordination. We will continue to work closely with the New Mexico Department of Human Services, Income Support Division. ISD assists eligible low-income individuals and families through statewide programs of financial assistance, food assistance, employment assistance and training services. The specific programs administered by ISD to affect poverty include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance, and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Additionally, MWNMCAP will continue to work with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to help address the employment and training needs of eligible individuals. Special employment and training needs will be addressed through the local Workforce Investment Boards and their respective contractors.

MWNMCAP will also continue to address the need for food by continuing to partner with the Road Runner Food Bank, The Community Pantry, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Smith's, Wal-Mart, Albertson's, John Brooks, and Shamrock Foods and CISCO Foods. These partners either donated food, (via the food rescue program), or provided our organization the opportunity to procure food and tangible items at discounted rates therefore allowing us to purchase in bulk amounts. We will continue to maintain our relationship with other food pantries in the area and make referrals as appropriate.

MWNMCAP will provide a copy of the resources inventory to all individuals applying for assistance. The resource inventory will identify other resources in the community that may be available to meet the needs identified by applicants in those instances where MWNMCAP is unable to provide direct assistance. Individuals and/or families with identified needs will be referred to the appropriate agencies.

While the Mid-West NM CAP does not have dedicated case managers on staff, efforts will be made to introduce case management whenever possible. Staff will function in fashion similar to case managers through maintenance of case files and efforts to link the needs of low-income persons and families with available services and resources. Our agency will continue to rely on our respective staff in offices and/or Centers, along with volunteers, board members and parents of Head Start Children to help ensure delivery of services and assistance to low-income individuals and families in our services areas.

Selection of the Problems to be addressed in the CSBG Outcome Plan Form (ROMA) and National Performance Indicators

Based on a review of data gathered from clients, staff and community partners, through our Community Survey, we identified the issues which individuals and families are most concerned about. These are presented in order of concern.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Affordable Housing
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Road and Street Repair
- Crime
- Not Enough Jobs
- Lack of Community Resources
- Utilities
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Recreational/Social Outlets
- Child Education

MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS FOR FAMILIES

- Paying Necessary Bills
- Food
- Housing
- Help for Home or Care Repair
- Employment
- Health Care
- Transportation
- Managing Finances
- Dental Care
- Child Care

Mid-West NM CAP will leverage every financial resource available to address those problems that are most pressing to families. This will include but will not be limited to CSBG funds, Emergency Food and Shelter funds, and Restricted funds, (resulting from donations).

Mid-West NM CAP will seek to address Community Issues identified in the needs survey. Some we can address directly and others we will collaborate and/or coordinate our efforts with respective County/City entities and other State agencies and local organizations and community partners.

A full copy of the 2022-2023 Community Assessment Survey is included with our Community Action Plan.

The Determination of Measurable Goals:

The specific measures and expected outcomes supported with direct CSBG funding will be reflected in the Agency's Scope of Work. The Scope of Work will reflect the client's needs as identified in the Community Survey. The Goals and expected outcomes will be consistent with the new Community National Performance Indicators.

The ROMA Next Generation system will be used to measure, analyze and communicate performance. The Agency will move towards developing a culture of continuous learning rather than just a culture of compliance and reporting. The ultimate goal of our Agency is to generate robust results for individuals with low-incomes and to have a positive impact on the communities served.

The Selection of Strategies, Programs, and Activities

As a result of the assessment and information obtained through surveys and interaction with clients, we will continue to assist families by helping them to address their basic needs (food, shelter, and utilities). We will also address the transportation issue by assisting with minor car repairs. To this end, Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program's strategy is to first make sure that the basic needs of families are met by assuring that they have food to eat and are in a safe warm home. Food pantry activities and services will be maintained to help meet the needs of the community. Special consideration will be given to the needs of the elderly and disabled and those who have not recovered from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have continued to implement changes to the food distribution process to insure timely and efficient food distribution through our food pantries. We will continue to collaborate with local senior centers and local governments to promote our food programs.

Partnerships and linkages will also be maintained in each respective community to help identify safe and affordable housing. CSBG funds will be earmarked to assist families with utility assistance and/or rent and mortgage payments as applicable. We will leverage CSBG financial resources by applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Funds and through non-financial agreements with the Human Services Department's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)), Public Services Company's Good Neighbor Fund, Gas Company of New Mexico HEAT Program, Saint Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities and other community partners. We will continue to work closely with our community partners to conduct on-going education of our clients in the area of income management and health and nutrition, as well as related areas promoting self-sufficiency.

Strategic Goals & Objectives

To address the critical issues facing the organization and to move toward actualization of the MWNMCAP vision, MWNMCAP will pursue goals and objectives in five major areas.

Community Partnerships

GOAL: To become the community services "partner of choice" and build mutually beneficial, mission compatible partnerships that address rising needs, fill service gaps, and strengthen the quality and diversity of early childhood services.

Objectives:

- Work with other childhood service and human services leadership groups on community planning, needs assessments, coordination of early childhood service systems, and other efforts.
- Expand and analyze needs assessments to determine community needs and gaps in comprehensive early childhood services.
- Expand current and potential partnerships to address these identified gaps.
- Establish mission-driven criteria to define, promote, and assess current and potential partnerships that assure MWNMCAP's and partners' greatest contribution to the community.
- Aggressively pursue partnerships across demographic and geographic areas to improve visibility and delivery of comprehensive services to diverse communities.
- Establish "Friends of MWNMCAP," an advisory council/think tank of diverse community leaders who provide guidance, advocacy, visibility and support of all goals on an as-needed basis.

Comprehensive and Inclusive Services

GOAL: To ensure that comprehensive services, programs, and options are implemented to meet the needs of diverse families and communities allowing low-income persons to become more self-sufficient and include the reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities.

Objectives:

- Advocate for the pervasive use of comprehensive services.
- Expand (CSBG type) programs to meet the needs of unserved families and children in a wider socio-economic range. Priority will be given to ensure that basic needs are met.
- Ensure that culturally appropriate services are available to encourage enrollment and positive outcomes among underrepresented communities.
- Use and expand partnerships that increase cultural competence to enhance all aspects of comprehensive services to diverse populations.
- Increase availability and delivery of comprehensive services in all options.

Staff and Organizational Culture

GOAL: Strengthen organizational systems and practices to support an inclusive culture and high performing, mission-driven staff.

Objectives:

- Infuse mission, vision, and core values throughout the organization through education and discussion.
- Improve MWNMCAP's cultural competence to better serve children and families.
- Assess specific communication problems and develop/test new systems for interdepartmental, staff, and family communication.
- Design and implement a competitive compensation and benefits system to promote excellence, skill development, and accountability.
- Maintain a strong, easily understood, and readily implemented performance management system that builds accountability at all levels.
- Continue to effectively support, provide, and promote excellent staff development and learning opportunities to assure qualifications and credentials.

Communication/Community Relations

GOAL: To increase visibility of and communication about MWNMCAP's services, benefits, and outcomes among stakeholders.

Objectives:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan with key messages to increase understanding of the breadth, depth, and value of MWNMCAP services.
- Invest in technology and staffing necessary for communication efficiency and success.
- Develop and maintain current and emerging relationships with federal and state agencies to support current programs and to anticipate and respond to changes in the external environment.

Financial Growth

GOAL: To establish revenue-generating options that enhance current fundraising strategies, diversify MWNMCAP's funding base, and support MWNMCAP programs.

Objectives:

- Establish and support a MWNMCAP fund raising arm.
- Enlist broad support and involvement in MWNMCAP fundraising and revenue generation.
- Use current MWNMCAP resources and expertise in developing revenue generation ideas.
- Identify, evaluate, and implement new revenue-generating activities and programs.

- Prioritize partnerships that contribute to financial goals and offer funding opportunities to address service gaps.

Identification of Resources

The agency annually updates information of services and programs available to clients in our respective counties and makes them aware of resources and/or make referrals to social service agencies. We will continue to work with local political jurisdictions, legislators, County and City Officials in trying to obtain funding for programs, whether directly or indirectly to better provide services and programs to our low-income residents.

Historically, the Agency has applied for numerous grants and programs that promote capacity building, Head Start expansion, Head Start summer programming, youth mentoring and staff development. Other grant requests and proposals are submitted to private entities to further expand services in the way of utility assistance and food programs. These funding initiatives have become very competitive and have decreased drastically over the last few years.

Linkages and Coordination of Efforts and Services

The Mid-West New Mexico Community Action Program has developed strong linkages with the local human services providers in each community. This includes the Income Support Division of the Human Services Department, Housing Authority, Child & Adult Protective Services, Children Youth & Families Dept., Department of Workforce Solutions, Health and Behavioral Health Care Services, St. Vincent de Paul Society as well as with other organizations. Mid-West New NM CAP has continued to work well with the court system. We continue to serve as a worksite for community services participants. Coordination and collaboration with local School Districts will continue in areas of education, literacy programs, and collaboration of disabilities programs and services to children.

Evaluation:

The Grantee Board of Directors of the Mid-West NMCAP Agency with the assistance of the Chief Executive Officer and key management staff will utilize outcome measures identified in the Agency's Community Outcome Plan to monitor the effectiveness of the program. Outcome measures have been developed based on the information obtained through the Community Assessment, which includes feedback from community partners. Outcome reports will be posted on MyCloud on a quarterly basis. This information is formally reviewed with the Grantee Board at each quarterly meeting. The evaluation process will include on-going review of both financial and programmatic data.

The agency will utilize the Case Manager (NewGen) software program and Child Plus software in each respective county to measure outcomes and assessing the impact of the services provided. The Results Oriented Management and Accountability, (ROMA) process will be utilized in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Additional training will be conducted with staff to insure better understanding of all standards and to insure accurate reporting is accomplished. The agency will insure compliance with the organizational standards and performance measures implemented by the U.S. Department of Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services and the State of New Mexico CSBG Office.