

January/February 2011



New TV PSAs Call on Americans to Serve Their Communities

As thoughts turn towards giving back this holiday season, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) today released five new public service announcements calling on Americans to strengthen their communities and our nation through service to others. **READ MORE** [http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/releases_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=1914]

Social Innovation Fund Subgrants

The Social Innovation Fund is moving more than \$12 million in federal and private investments into some of the cities hardest hit by the economic downturn. Three grantees of the Fund recently awarded the first round of subgrants to support 61 community-based nonprofit organizations working to provide workforce training, job placement,

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Know someone who might like *Your Care Connection*?

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Community Action Agencies

Care Providers looks to strengthen relationship with CAAs

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are non-profit private and public organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. Community Action Agencies help people to help themselves in achieving self-sufficiency. Today there are approximately 1000 Community Action Agencies, serving the poor in every state as well as Puerto Rico and the Trust Territories.



CAAs are a primary source of direct support for the more than 34.5 million people who live in poverty in the United States. The majority of CAA program participants are extremely poor, with incomes below 75 percent of the federal poverty threshold, or \$9,735 for a family of three.

What CAAs Do

Because each CAA is governed locally, each provides a different mix of programs and services. The following represent the percentages of Community Action Agencies that deliver these services:

- Community Coordination - 94%
- Emergency Services - 91%
- Education - 89%
- Food/Nutrition - 84%
- Family Development - 68%
- Employment Training/Employment- 63%
- Income Management - 53%
- Budget Counseling Transportation - 49%
- Housing - 46%
- Economic Development - 39%
- Health Care - 29%

Source: Community Action Partnership
www.communityactionpartnership.com

Volunteers Make a Difference—and You Can, Too

According to the Community Action Partnership, each CAA has an average of 813 volunteers at the agency every year. Here are some other volunteer facts from Volunteering in America:

- 1.6 million more volunteers served in 2009 than in 2008.
- 63.4 million volunteers contributed 8.1 billion hours of service in 2009.
- 2009 saw higher volunteer rates among women, individuals who are married and those who were employed.
- The top four activities for service are fundraising, collecting or distributing food, providing general labor or transportation, and tutoring or teaching.

How can you help?

- Donate gently worn clothing. Or better yet, pick up items for a local agency.
- Donate blood. Or better yet, organize a blood drive at work or in your neighborhood.
- Support your local police department. Or better yet, join Volunteers in Police Service.
- Become a volunteer reader. Or better yet, organize a Reach Out and Read book drive.
- Visit All for Good [www.allforgood.org] to search volunteer opportunities by zip code.

WINTER DRIVING SAFETY

Last winter we saw snow in all 50 states. So even if you hail from traditionally warmer climates, these winter driving safety tips from the Indiana Department of Transportation just might come in handy this year, where the nation's already seeing record lows.

Speed: When accelerating on snow or ice, take it slow to avoid slipping or sliding.

Distance: Give yourself space. Leave extra room between you and the vehicle in front of you.

Brake: Brake early, brake slowly, brake correctly and never slam on the brakes. Give yourself plenty of room to stop.

Control: When driving on ice and snow, do not use cruise control and avoid abrupt steering maneuvers. When merging into traffic, take it slow.

Vision: Be aware of what's going on well ahead of you. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that split-second of extra time to react safely.

Federal Interagency Improves Access to Transportation

United We Ride provides service to underserved

Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, health care, education, community services and activities necessary for daily living. The importance is underscored by the variety of transportation programs that have been created in conjunction with health and human services programs and by the significant federal investment in accessible public transportation systems throughout the nation.

Ironically, for most people who need transportation help, the creation of more programs has resulted in several unintended consequences. Transportation services are often fragmented, underutilized or difficult to navigate, and can be costly because of inconsistent, duplicative and often restrictive federal and state program rules and regulations. And, in some cases, narrowly focused programs leave service gaps, and transportation services are simply not available to meet certain needs.

The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) recognizes that transportation can be the major obstacle for people with disabilities, older adults, children and youth, and other populations that need various social and health services. Interagency partnerships are essential to coordinate travel needs to help increase the quality of life for these populations as well as for agencies to provide their services effectively and efficiently.

United We Ride (UWR) is a CCAM federal interagency initiative aimed at improving the availability, quality and efficient delivery of transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities and individuals with lower incomes. UWR recognizes that transportation is not a choice but a necessity. Without ready access to transportation, simple daily activities for many Americans may be a challenge or nearly impossible to accomplish. UWR is committed to supporting a comprehensive, coordinated, human-service transportation system through its education, technical assistance and funding initiatives. For more information about UWR initiatives, please contact the National Resource Center on Human Service Transportation at 1-800-527-8279 or visit the Web site at www.unitedweride.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?

Care Providers Insurance Services writes Property & Casualty for Community Action Agencies. Ask your agent for a quote at your next renewal so you can compare the broad coverage and competitive pricing that Care Providers has to offer. Ask your agent to call Priscilla at 800-761-7072, ext. 1313.

Have You Heard

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financial literacy services, and other resources to help individuals achieve long-term financial security. **READ MORE** [http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/releases_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=1915]

Weatherization FAQs

In August 2010, the Department of Energy solicited questions and comments about the weatherization process from individuals and organizations. Those FAQs were followed up with answers from experts from the Department's Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program. **READ MORE** [<http://blog.energy.gov/blog/2010/08/30/response-weatherization-questions>]

Baby It's Cold Outside *Getting your house ready for winter*

Preparing your home for winter means planning ahead. Here's some advice from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on winterizing your home:

- Clear rain gutters
- Repair roof leaks
- Cut away loose tree branches
- Insulate pipes
- Allow faucets to drip a little to avoid freezing
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them
- Learn how to shut off water valves in case pipes burst
- Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof



Leaving town? Take these added precautions from the University of Wisconsin's Learning Store to get your home ready for winter while you're away:

- Disconnect outdoor hoses
- Turn off exterior water valves and sprinkler systems
- Drain pipes and consider filling them with non-toxic antifreeze
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors
- Set the thermostat to no lower than 55° F—for day and nighttime hours
- Seal drafty windows and doors
- Close exterior vents and flumes
- Empty, clean and dry the refrigerator and freezer. Leave doors ajar to prevent mildew
- Take advantage of nature's free heat source—the sun—and keep some curtains and blinds open

WAP Funds CAA Efforts

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Funds are used to improve the energy performance of dwellings of needy families using the most advanced technologies and testing protocols available in the housing industry. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) provides funding to states, U.S. overseas territories, and Indian tribal governments, which manage the day-to-day details of the program. These governments, in turn, fund a network of local community action agencies, non-profit organizations, and local governments that provide these weatherization services in every state, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and among Native American tribes.

To learn more about the Weatherization Assistance Program, visit the DOE website [<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/>] or click on any of these links:

- WAP Frequently Asked Questions [http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/pdfs/wap_faqs.pdf]
- WAP Funding Opportunity Announcement [http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/pdfs/eecbg_foa.pdf]
- WAP Fact Sheet and State-by-State Allocations [http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/pdfs/wx_recovery_fact_sheet.pdf]