

CELEBRATING

50

YEARS

**OF SERVICE TO JEFFERSON,
JENNINGS, AND SCOTT COUNTIES**



OHIO VALLEY OPPORTUNITIES

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION:

Opening doors through individualized, comprehensive services and community partnerships that empower low-income individuals and families to improve their quality of life.

OUR VISION:

To provide quality services that empower low-income individuals and families to become financially stable, realize their full potential and become participating citizens and leaders in the community in which they live.

OUR VALUES:

OVO strives to be a model organization. We embrace the diversity of our employees, volunteers, clients, stakeholders, and community partners and are committed to building strong organizational ties with families and community partners. Through good stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to us, we provide outcome-based quality services.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIRPERSON

We are very proud to celebrate our 50th anniversary as a Community Action Agency. It has been a privilege to serve Jefferson County, Jennings County, and Scott County since 1965! As we accomplish this wonderful milestone, we pay homage to our past and look eagerly toward our bright future. Each day, we continue to work toward the fulfillment of the mission that has guided us for 50 years; to help reduce the barriers that prevent low-income people from reaching self-sufficiency.

Throughout 2015, OVO's programs and services helped people reach goals: securing and maintaining employment, improving nutrition, securing adequate and affordable housing, and eliminating crisis situations. Our innovative linkages to other community agencies also continued to assist us in helping people to achieve self-sufficiency. Our tri-partite Board of Directors, comprised of representatives from the public, private, and low-income sectors, guided our policies and procedures as well as our strategic direction for future planning. In addition, we continued to assess the needs of our communities and responded accordingly in the design and delivery of services and support.

Again this year, our Head Start Program helped to promote kindergarten readiness and long-term educational success for more than 200 children. Our Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) prevented homelessness, largely for seniors and people with disabilities, and ensured that people had an affordable and safe place to live. Our Weatherization Assistance Program permanently reduced the high costs of home utilities and kept people safe and warm by weatherizing homes throughout our region. Our Energy Assistance Program kept utilities from being disconnected resulting in untold benefits in safety and comfort for thousands of people this year. Finally, our Administrative oversight of the resources that are entrusted to us ensured that we met required standards for excellence and applicable laws.

As we move forward into our sixth decade of operations, we look forward to continuing to provide necessary services to those in most need, strong community partnerships that maximize access to these and other services, excellence in leadership from our staff and Board of Directors, and the opportunity to serve new clients and populations.



Elaina Freeman
Executive Director



David Sutter
Board Chairperson

YEAR IN REVIEW

2,259 households served • 4,357 individuals assisted • 56 air conditioners distributed to at risk households • 404 households received crisis funding to avoid disconnection of services or to reconnect after disconnection • 83% of households served were elderly and/or disabled

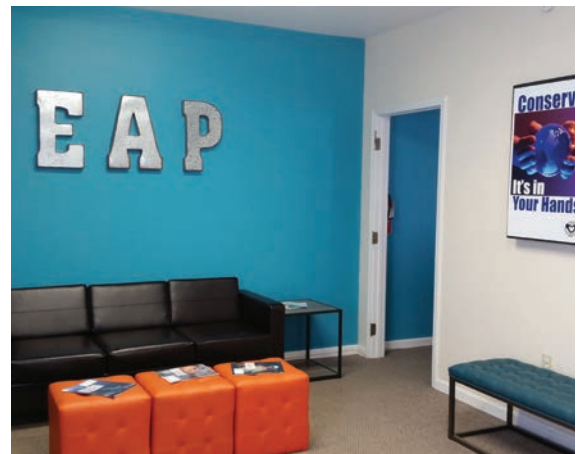
RUBY AND KENNETH'S STORY:

Ruby and Kenneth were getting by as best they could on a fixed income. But when their three young grandchildren came to live with them, it became significantly harder to make ends meet. In January, the family fell behind on their utility bills and were only days away from having their gas shut off. With temperatures in the teens, a night without heat for this family would be devastating. Kenneth contacted OVO to apply for the Energy Assistance Program. With their disconnection date quickly approaching, OVO staff sprung into action, setting Kenneth and Ruby up for an appointment for that very day. Once they came to the office to apply, staff were able to assess their application and determine their eligibility for the program. An emergency pledge was sent to their gas company as well as their electric provider, and Ruby and Kenneth were able to maintain heat and electricity for their family. Not only did OVO's assistance help them get caught up on past due bills, but they had a remaining credit on their account that was able to help them get through the following month as well. Additionally, OVO staff noticed that their bills were unusually high and were able to refer the family on to our Weatherization Assistance Program to get help with insulating their home and lowering their energy bills.

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

Improved Client Experience

By reorganizing workspaces and client areas, we improved our client experience while visiting our offices. We created a new Energy Education Training Center (pictured at right), where clients can access energy conservation materials, view our Energy Education video, and complete the corresponding client survey. Relocated staff offices provide privacy during appointments and ensure confidentiality of client information. These improvements in organization provide our clients with the best possible customer service experience while applying for our services.



Updated Technology

By updating technology utilized in this program, we were able to better serve our clients and improve program efficiency. Laptops now aid our staff in being mobile in order to travel out into the counties and process client applications. Tablets allow our clients to view our new Energy Education training video and complete client surveys during appointments out in the counties. A television at our Administration Office shows clients our new video in our Energy Education Training Center. These technology upgrades further improve our ability to provide superior client service and, in making our staff mobile, maximize accessibility to our program.

Increased Access to our Program

With the release of the new OVO website, the Energy Assistance Program was able to customize the program's own page in order to increase client access to our services. On this new page, clients are able to view our income guidelines to see if they are eligible and can download our application. The new website has been especially helpful in helping those in a crisis situation by providing them with instant online access to the application. The launch of the OVO's Facebook page has also provided the community with important program updates such as start dates and program deadlines.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US

During our 2015 Client Satisfaction Survey, our Energy Assistance Program rated **100%** in client satisfaction. Our staff rated a **perfect score** in customer service, knowledge, and timeliness in processing applications. Additionally, our Energy Education Program rated 8 out of 10 for helpfulness.

WHAT OUR STAFF ARE SAYING ABOUT US

During the 2015 Employee Satisfaction Survey, staff in the Energy Assistance Program reported **100%** satisfaction working in their department and for Ohio Valley Opportunities. Staff stated that what they liked best about working in the Energy Assistance Program was **"the people that I work with make our sometimes difficult jobs more enjoyable"** and **"easing the burden off families' shoulders."**

SPOTLIGHT ON PROJECT JOULES

In 2015, OVO was excited to delve into new programming by providing an after school youth program for teens for the first time. Project **JOULES** (Jump On Using Less Energy Service) was a youth-led energy education initiative focused on educating the community on the incentives of energy conservation. The project also provided youth with meaningful work experience and educational workshops on teen issues, career planning, energy conservation and efficiency, and leadership development.

Youth participants in Project JOULES were recruited from families receiving Energy Assistance during the 2015 Winter Program. Through Project JOULES, youth were able to engage in community projects that focused efforts on energy education as well as developing valuable leadership and career skills. The youth were instrumental in creating, storyboarding, and providing talent for the updated Energy Education Training Video. This video is the project's primary legacy and stands as a permanent update to our Energy Education Program.

Project JOULES was also able to develop over 40 community partnerships that provided valuable resources and workshops for the youth. For example, Indiana Kentucky Electric Corporation (IKEC) provided a two day workshop on energy production that included an onsite tour of the power plant. Community businesses and public and private organizations provided workshops on entrepreneurship, public speaking, crime prevention, career exploration, health and fitness, and college preparation to assist these youth in planning for the future and getting involved in their community. By working with the City of Madison, the project was able to secure a Mayoral Proclamation of April 2015 as Energy Conservation Month. OVO is incredibly proud of the project's successes and the youth's hard work, dedication, and growth through the course of program.



WHAT'S NEXT

Client Flow

In 2016, we will continue progress made in making the best possible experience for our clients when visiting our office. In order to assist individuals and families applying for our services, we will focus on transitioning the majority of our applications to mailings. For many of our clients, transportation can be a barrier to accessing much needed services. Whether they are homebound due to a disability or do not have a vehicle or other reliable transportation, we want to make our application process as simple and accessible as possible to all those in need. By utilizing the mail in order to send and receive applications, we will assist more people in applying for our services. We will also guarantee appointments are available for crisis applicants, in order to process them quickly to avoid disconnection of services.

Deployment of Energy Education Video

The new Energy Education Training Video was completed during the 2015 program year and was premiered at the Annual Energy Assistance and Weatherization Fall Conference hosted by Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. The video was only made available on a limited scale during this program year. Beginning with the 2016 Program Year, the video will be fully deployed with a DVD copy provided with each application and shown at our office for face-to-face applicants. We will also have videos available on flash drives as another excellent outreach tool.

Partnerships

In order to increase access to services and to best serve our clients, we will be strengthening community partnerships. In the 2016 program year, we will be working with new potential partners in determining resources and opportunities for growth. We will be partnering with local housing developments to host enrollment events for residents. We will be strengthening existing partnerships with our utility providers to increase referrals of their customers in need to our services and to assist clients in securing necessary documents for eligibility. These improvements in our existing partnerships and the forging of new ones will increase access to our application, identify new clients, assist applicants in gathering necessary documentation, and increase access to other valuable community resources.

YEAR IN REVIEW

285 total vouchers available • 251 families recertified • 479 inspections completed • 56 new families were housed under the program • 2 families transitioned to home ownership • 279 individuals added to the waiting lists

RITA'S STORY:

After her husband's disabling injuries on the job, Rita's family struggled to make ends meet. Bills were piling up, and they were nearing eviction from their home. When the family was approved for a Section 8 rental voucher, things began to look up. Rita says,

"Because of the help I was able to get, I was able to pay bills and finish raising our children. Section 8 was a hand up and not a hand down. Now, we have one daughter happily working and married with a child of her own. Our son is at the Art Institute. Our youngest is still in high school and hoping to get into college. Because of Section 8, I was able to get a job that has become a career and live my dream of becoming a chef! Not by being able to go to college when I had babies I had to care for but by helping me pay the rent so I could work my way up from the bottom to the top."

Rita now has a job she loves, and her children are launching successful careers of their own! After a promotion at her work this year, her family was able to transition off the Section 8 Program, and they no longer receive any type of public assistance. Furthermore, since her family has shown they are capable of making payments, their landlord offered to sell them the house they have been renting. Rita is now a proud homeowner!

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

Helped People Get Housing Faster

With updates in standards at the state level, OVO was able to make changes in how we process paperwork that streamlined processes and made our program more efficient. For example, the ability to request background checks for our clients allowed us to more quickly determine eligibility and issue a voucher faster to families. Updates to some of our necessary forms assisted our clients in completing them faster and reduced the processing time by weeks. All of these changes allowed us to better serve our clients and help families find a new home faster.

Updated Tenant Education

Every client that receives a voucher attends a Tenant Briefing that educates new tenants on our program requirements and expectations. In 2015, our staff updated this presentation, which ensures that all clients are receiving consistent information and that our staff are highlighting all necessary program requirements. During this update, we were also able to add tenant education to the briefing to include topics such as the qualities of good tenants, communicating with landlords, and tenant expectations. This new presentation will help our clients be successful tenants and be sought out by good landlords.

Opened the Waiting Lists

For the first time in three years, we were able to open all three county waiting lists. From April 13-17th, we received a total of 279 applications from individuals and families seeking a rental voucher. During this week, OVO was able to coordinate an agencywide services fair to coincide with the opening of the waiting lists. This fair allowed clients coming to our office to not only submit their application for Section 8 but to also receive information on and apply for our other services, such as enrolling their preschoolers in Head Start and applying for Energy Assistance. We were excited to accept so many applications and look forward to the opportunity to assist these families in moving into a new home!

WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US

Our Section 8 staff received a **100%** satisfaction rating for all surveyed categories, including helpfulness, friendly and courteous service, and timeliness in responding to client questions and concerns. Additionally, **100%** of our clients stated they would highly recommend our program to a friend.

"I love my home." -Chris, Section 8 Tenant

*"What Section 8 means to my family and I is unmeasurable."
-Joseph, Former Section 8 Tenant and Current Homeowner*

*"Thank you for such a great program and my son and I being able to live in a house of our own."
-Jerica, Section 8 Tenant*

*"This program has changed my life. This program has brought light to me on my darkest days and because of it I will be able to achieve my goals."
-Brenda, Section 8 Tenant*

WHAT OUR STAFF ARE SAYING ABOUT US

During the 2015 Employee Satisfaction Survey, **100%** of staff in the Housing Choice Voucher Program reported being very satisfied working for OVO and in their department. What staff liked best about working in their department was *"helping people" and that their "supervisor is very open to improving the process and listening to ideas."* Staff also strongly agreed that morale was high in their department and completely agreed that their job made a difference in the lives of others.

GARY'S STORY:

As a disabled veteran living on a pension, Gary had difficulties keeping up on his housing expenses. So, he was very excited when he received his Section 8 voucher and could begin his house hunt. He was approved for a one bedroom home but was having a hard time finding a rental that fit within the required payment standard.

Based on OVO's assessment of the rental market in his area, our staff determined that clients seeking one bedroom units had difficulty in finding housing within the payment standard. We researched policies and procedures and made a plan to submit a request for an increase in the payment standard for one bedroom apartments.

In August 2015, the program director submitted a formal request to the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, who administers the program at the state level. That same month, we were notified that our payment standard for all three counties had been increased by 10% not only for one bedroom units but for all unit sizes!

With this increase in the payment standard, Gary was able to find a great one bedroom townhouse that he can call home. His landlord is also happy, since she is receiving reasonable rent for the home. She is so pleased with her experience with the program that she is interested in leasing more of her rentals under the Section 8 program. Gary now has a home he loves, and OVO staff will continue to work with and support him. With OVO's assistance and advocacy, clients like Gary can now more easily find new, affordable homes for themselves and their families.

WHAT'S NEXT

Landlord Recruitment

OVO is committed to providing our clients with the maximum amount of housing opportunities with the highest quality possible. Recruiting excellent landlords with rental properties throughout our counties is vital to meeting this goal. Throughout 2016, we will focus on landlord recruitment by holding New Landlord Presentations to educate landlords interested or new to the program. We will also instate a beautification award to reward our best landlords and properties and to educate the community and potential landlords on the quality of Section 8 rentals.

Landlord Education

To ensure our program's success, it is important that both tenants and landlords are aware of and meeting their responsibilities under the program. In the coming year, we will implement a Landlord Education series, to assist landlords already participating in the program in learning best practices as property owners on such topics as lease enforcement and their legal rights. We can also teach property owners ways in which OVO's support can help our landlords be successful and have the best possible experience participating in the Section 8 Program.

Increase Access to Additional Resources

The ultimate goal of our programs here at OVO is to assist our clients in reaching their full potential and self-sufficiency. Therefore, we will be assisting our tenants in accessing other community resources that can help them move toward these goals. We will be educating our clients on employment support services, financial literacy, and homebuying resources to help them transition to home ownership.

YEAR IN REVIEW

226 children and families served • 127 children transitioned to Kindergarten •
816 volunteers engaged • 100% Average Monthly Enrollment • 84.6% Average
Monthly Attendance • Estimated 50% of eligible children served*

*Based on information collected from US Census Bureau, 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B17001

SHELBY'S STORY:

Shelby is four years old and is living with her grandparents. She was very excited for the opportunity to go to preschool. With the family's income, she qualified for Head Start. Unfortunately for Shelby, getting to preschool was a hurdle to her attending. Due to their home's location, Shelby was too far out in the country to use one of the Head Start bus routes to help her get to school. Additionally, her grandparents have been in poor health for several years and were unable to drive her to the nearest Head Start Center. Thankfully, OVO staff were able to assess Shelby's situation and work with her family to get her enrolled in the program's newly created Home-Based option. In order to best serve her needs, rather than attending a Center-Based classroom, OVO's Home Visitor came each week to facilitate Head Start curriculum in Shelby's home. She has made huge strides in her reading skills and is now able to write her own name! Not only has she learned a lot in her own home, but she also gets two field trips a month to one of the Head Start Centers to learn and play with the other children enrolled in the Home-Based program. She loves the time spent with the other kids, and it has greatly benefited her development of important social skills. Shelby's grandparents are so thrilled with her growth and are thankful for the flexibility this enrollment option has afforded them. Shelby transitioned into Kindergarten in the Fall of 2015 and has been doing incredibly well. Her family attributes her success to the skills she learned in our preschool and are confident that Shelby is ready for academic success in the years to come thanks to OVO Head Start!

SPOTLIGHT ON THE NEW HOME-BASED PROGRAM

OVO is committed to making quality early childhood education accessible to all low-income families in our community. Unfortunately, some of our families face obstacles that make accessing this valuable service difficult. Due to living in rural parts of the county, lack of openings in our classrooms, or family issues, some children are unable to enroll in our program when classes are only offered at our Center locations. In order to meet the needs of these families, OVO created and implemented a Home-Based Head Start Program. Through this option, a Home Visitor works directly with parents and guardians in their own homes to provide educational materials and activities, individualized lesson plans to meet the child's developmental needs, and social support services to connect the family with other community resources.

During the 2014-15 school year, eight children and families were successfully enrolled and served through the Home-Based option. This program has been highly effective at targeting children and families that would otherwise be unable to attend preschool. We have been able to serve families in remote and rural areas where bus routes are unable to reach. We have also enrolled families in high demand areas, where Center-based openings are limited.

One of the greatest successes of the Home-Based program is the Center field trips. These socialization activities allow children enrolled in this option to interact with their peers and experience a formal classroom environment. Twice each month, children enrolled in the Home-Based program are able to visit a Head Start Center to do learning activities and games with other children. Pictured above is one of our Home-Based preschoolers practicing art and fine motor skills with a shaving cream activity. We are so pleased for this new way in which we can assist families in meeting their individualized needs and provide quality education to children in our community.



WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US

During the 2015 Head Start Family Survey, we received a **96% or higher** satisfaction rating for **all services** surveyed to include family, community, educational, and special needs services. **100%** of parents and guardians stated that their children were more prepared for kindergarten and that they had learned the process to transition them to the next step in their education. Ninety percent of parents participated in home activities, which was the most common way for them to be involved in the program. Overall, **99%** of Head Start families agree they would recommend this program to a friend or family member.

"The staff, teachers and even the cooks really care about these children. They go above and beyond helping the students as well as the parents and guardians."

-Karen, Head Start Parent

"Wonderful people, attitudes and support. Quality education, great family support."

-Bill, Head Start Parent

"It is an amazing school. All three of my children have attended at least two years and are very well prepared for Kindergarten."

-Tammy, Head Start Guardian

WHAT OUR STAFF ARE SAYING ABOUT US

During the 2015 Employee Satisfaction Survey, **89%** of Head Start employees were satisfied working in the Head Start department, and **92%** reported satisfaction working for Ohio Valley Opportunities. The most commonly cited answers for what staff stated they liked best about working in Head Start were **"working with the children and families"** and **"teamwork."** We received a **perfect score** for staff training necessary for the job.

Community Support

Our Head Start Program is fortunate to receive an incredible level of community support. Our program has a total of 816 volunteers throughout the year. Of our total volunteers, 41% were current or former Head Start parents or guardians. With community support, we were able to match our federal Head Start grant with \$445,626 in donations, volunteer time, supplies, services, and local funds.

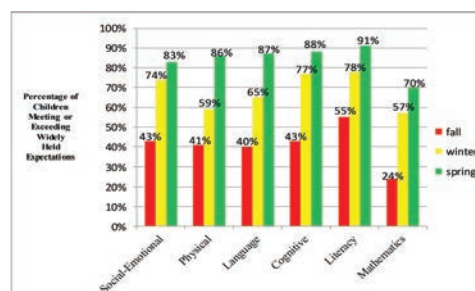
Increase Access to Mental Health Services for Children

OVO forged a new partnership with Project LAUNCH, operated by One Community One Family, to assist in fully implementing the Conscious Discipline® Program. It is an evidence-based, social-emotional program that assists in managing behavior, teaching children to self-regulate, and moving children toward an emotionally healthy classroom environment. Through this partnership, Project LAUNCH provided materials and resources, onsite training, and registration and travel fees for three staff to participate in the national conference on Conscious Discipline. With the assistance of this new partnership, OVO has become a model program throughout the state for implementation of this great program.

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

School Readiness

In order to gauge the success of our curriculum, teaching strategies, and education goals, our program aggregates and formally analyzes Child Outcomes data three times throughout the year. The 2015 results are summarized in the chart below. Based on these outcomes, we made adjustments to ensure maximum learning potential for each child. Parents were also involved in the educational process by participating in two Parent/Teacher Conferences and two Education Home Visits in order to develop educational goals and learn about their child's progress in Head Start. School readiness goals were developed around the five essential domains of the Head Start framework, parent input, and recommendations from local school systems. A total of 127 children transitioned to Kindergarten in May 2015.



Health Services

As a comprehensive child and family program, health goals are an integral part of our services. Of the children enrolled, 99.6% were determined to be up-to-date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care according to the Indiana Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule for well child care. Five percent of children were diagnosed with a chronic condition needing medical treatment; 100% of these children received treatment for such conditions. One hundred percent of enrolled children were determined to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age. Additionally, 87% of children received preventive dental care; 19.6% were diagnosed as needing dental treatment; and 70% of those identified children received dental treatment.

Family Support Services

A total of 204 families received family support services during the 2014-15 school year. Family Fun Night events engaged families in preparing their children for kindergarten, learning about community resources, increasing their knowledge about health services for children, and expanding their parenting skills. Our Family Support Specialists are also available to work with families on the goal-setting process to strive toward self-sufficiency, and 86% of families took advantage of this valuable service. Of our families served, 58% had at least one working parent.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

OVO Head Start provided early childhood education, health, and family support services for 226 children and families. We operated 11 classrooms in four Centers and one Home-Based program. Two classes provided full day classes five days per week; one class provided full day classes four days per week; and eight part day classes operated four days per week. Forty-four children (19.5%) were diagnosed with a documented disability and received special education services. Transportation services were provided to 153 children. Three of our four Centers operate as Licensed Child Care Centers and were active participants in the Paths to QUALITY (PTQ) Program Rating System, which is administered by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. The Licensed Centers operate at PTQ Level 3. Our fourth Center is located at Southwestern Elementary School in Hanover.

WHAT'S NEXT

Improve Classroom Environment and Quality

It is always our goal to provide the highest quality education and positive environment possible to our children and families. By utilizing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®), we are able to measure the quality of our classroom environment and interactions. This rating system helps us to identify areas of improvement in order for us to strengthen our child outcomes. In the coming year, we will be providing additional training to assist our staff in implementing best practices in their classrooms. We will also be creating a new staff position to provide onsite coaching and mentoring for teaching staff. Although we will continue our ongoing classroom observations and evaluations, we will be partnering with another Head Start provider in the region to provide objective, external CLASS observations to verify our results and determine strategies for improvement.

Expand Use of Technology

Here at OVO, we strive to make technology an integral part of our students' learning experience and our teachers' work environment. The utilization of the latest technology allows our program to run more efficiently, better utilize staff time, and support children's school readiness skills. In 2016, we will be providing our staff with appropriate technology training to ensure full utilization of data management systems used to track necessary indicators and children's outcomes. We will also increase access in the classrooms to updated technology, such as individual tablets and multi-touch table PCs. With the increased use of technology in public schools, this focus on technology will help our preschoolers be more prepared for their academic careers.

Fully Implement Conscious Discipline

Our program has made excellent strides in the implementation of the Conscious Discipline Program throughout all of our classrooms. We will continue this process during the next year in order to support all of our students' social-emotional learning and to create positive learning environments. We will be providing our staff with additional training to ensure they are confident in their knowledge and skills of the program. We will also increase access to classroom materials and resources that support its full implementation. Finally, to ensure our staff receive the maximum level of support, we will be providing additional coaching and onsite monitoring in our Centers.

MOST RECENT REVIEW BY ADMINISTRATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF)

The FY 2013 Onsite Monitoring Review identified one area of non-compliance related to 1304.40(a)(1); the grantee did not engage in a collaborative partnership-building process with parents to identify family goals, necessary services, and other supports. Upon ACF Follow up Review, the non-compliance was corrected. Based on CLASS Observations conducted during the December 2012 Federal Review, the grantee exceeded the minimum requirements for each Domain (Emotional Support-4, Classroom Organization-3, and Instructional Support-2). However, the grantee fell among the lowest 10% of the Emotional Support Domain and therefore, has been determined to re-compete for funding as required in the Head Start Act of 2007. In addition, the grantee ranked among the highest 10% of Instructional Support.

RESULTS FROM CLASS™ OBSERVATIONS-DEC. 2012

Domain	Score
Emotional Support	5.4231
Classroom Organization	5.4103
Instructional Support	3.3718

OHS CLASS Descriptive Statistics, 2013 National Distribution of Grantee-Level Domain Scores			
Domain	Lowest 10%	Median (50%)	Highest 10%
Emotional Support	5.5417	5.99	6.44
Classroom Organization	5.0556	5.62	6.17
Instructional Support	2.1061	2.71	3.35

OVO INTERNAL OBSERVATION-2015

Domain	Score
Emotional Support	6.51
Classroom Organization	5.86
Instructional Support	5.49

OHS CLASS® Descriptive Statistics, 2015 National Distribution of Grantee-Level Domain Scores			
Domain	Lowest 10%	Median (50%)	Highest 10%
Emotional Support	5.6562	6.04	6.37
Classroom Organization	5.2708	5.82	6.28
Instructional Support	2.2261	2.78	3.69

YEAR IN REVIEW

427 families served • 1,370 individuals assisted • 15,491 individual services provided • 12 year anniversary • 6 hours of English and computer classes offered every week

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

La Casa Amiga celebrated its 12th anniversary this year. It is exciting to now see children having grown up through the program, attending our bilingual activities, celebrations, and field trips. Many of our first families now have teenagers preparing for college or adults that have children of their own that are participating in our program. We continue to offer many classes to assist our families in improving their English and computer skills. We hosted 4 hours of classes on Tuesdays and 2 hours every Thursday. On each Wednesday, we have a bilingual story hour and provide help with homework for the children. La Casa Amiga is fortunate to have incredible community support. Financial contributions from the Jefferson County United Way, Hanover College International Club and Spanish Club, fundraising events, and other private donors provide the resources necessary to continue to provide much needed services to our clients. We also have numerous volunteers that donate countless hours to make our classes, outings, fundraisers, and festivals a resounding success. This past year, we strengthened our partnership with Hanover College in securing more volunteers and resources for our program. Many professors encourage or require their students to donate time and talents to La Casa Amiga. This year, one of the college's political science courses partnered with the program to discuss immigration. Dr. Shirley Kloepfer, the program's director, lectured to the class and assisted in arranging personal interviews with La Casa Amiga families. We are thankful for the community support that allows us to assist our Spanish speaking residents in accessing much needed services and helping them to more fully engage in their community.

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

Symbolic Migration of the Monarch Butterfly Project

In 2015, the children of La Casa Amiga started a new project, the Symbolic Migration of the Monarch Butterfly. The program unites children across North America. Our children created personal butterflies and a class butterfly with pictures, little gifts, notes, and postcards of Madison, and these items were sent by mail to Mexico. The children were also able to follow progress over the internet. In April of next year, we will receive a package from our counterparts in Mexico with pictures, notes, and gifts.



Hanover College Intern

During the summer, La Casa Amiga had Miss Teresa Wicsynski, an undergraduate student from Hanover College, as an intern. During her internship, Teresa assisted with bilingual story hours, field trips, English classes, the summer tutoring program, and the garden project. She was also provided valuable technical support in implementing the program's new Smart TV, provided by an educational grant awarded by the Jefferson County Community Foundation. At left is a summer tutoring session led by Miss Wicsynski.

15th Annual Hispanic Cultural Awareness Day

The 15th Annual Hispanic Cultural Awareness Day took place on September 19th. The festival featured dance groups, live music, delicious food, and informational booths. This year's festival was dedicated to Jane Jacobs, a long time supporter of the festival and member of the La Casa Amiga Advisory Board. The festival collected \$1,000 in donations to help support La Casa Amiga and its services.



LA CASA AMIGA



YEAR IN REVIEW

53 homes received weatherization services • 98 individuals served • 1 of 6 agencies in the state to participate in Healthy Homes Pilot Program • Over 80% of households were homeowners • 9 homes rehabilitated under Healthy Homes Program

DOUG'S STORY:

Doug is proud to be still living in his own home at the age of 79 but maintaining his monthly housing costs and keeping up with repairs around the house has gotten harder over the years. His retirement barely covers his bills each month. So when his furnace broke in the fall, Doug had no way to pay for getting it fixed. So, he reached out to OVO for assistance. Since he had already been approved for our Energy Assistance Program, he was eligible to receive Weatherization services and was referred on to that program. One of our home inspectors visited his home and assessed its weatherization needs. During the inspection, our auditors found mold in Doug's attic. Usually, mold or other health and safety concerns would mean a house was deferred until the client could fix the issue him or herself. Thanks to the new Healthy Homes Program piloted by OVO during 2015, OVO was able to cover the costs of mold mitigation and perform the necessary work to get his home ready to be weatherized. Our program was then able to replace Doug's furnace and install much needed insulation in his home. With the work completed, not only is Doug's heat back up and running, but his home is now air sealed, which will help lower his monthly energy bills, and mold free, which makes for a healthier home for Doug.

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

Healthy Homes Pilot

OVO was selected as one of six programs in the state to pilot a new weatherization initiative. The Healthy Homes Program provides assistance to deferred homes in accessing weatherization services. Homes that have health and safety concerns or structural issues do not qualify for weatherization until these problems have been mitigated or corrected, which causes homes to be deferred. The Healthy Homes Program allowed OVO to provide minor home rehabilitation services, such as mold mitigation and structural repairs, in order to prevent homes from being deferred and to expand weatherization opportunities in our community. The success of the six pilot programs across the state led to the decision to fully fund this program statewide for the 2016 program year!

New Partnership

New standards enacted in 2015 required Weatherization providers to have a different individual complete the initial and the final inspection of a home. To meet this new requirement, OVO partnered with a neighboring Community Action Agency, Southern Indiana Economic Opportunity Corporation (SIEOC), to pilot a new shared staffing program. Under this partnership, OVO's final inspector field staff divides his time between the two agencies. This arrangement ensures compliance with this standard and reduces costs for both agencies. This new partnership went exceedingly well and has established a best practice across the state. We look forward to continuing and strengthening this partnership in the years to come.

Quality Control Inspector Certification

Under new Department of Energy standards, every home weatherized is required to have a final inspection completed by a quality control inspector. This certification requires rigorous study of an extensive body of knowledge, and those seeking it must sit for an examination. The Quality Control Inspector Certification is noted as one of the most difficult in the field of weatherization. Both of OVO's field staff were able to pass their exams and receive their certifications well before the deadline for this new requirement. OVO is proud of the success of our staff in securing this credential and look forward to the improved inspection services it will allow us to provide our clients!

Energy Savings

The release of the latest Weatherization Production Report ranked OVO as number one in the state for natural gas energy savings! Furthermore, we were ranked as one of the lowest across the state for cost per home. We are pleased that we are able to provide excellence in service to our clients, maximize their energy savings, and do so while responsibly using the funds entrusted to us.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US

Our Weatherization Program received a *perfect score* for client satisfaction in 2015. Client satisfaction was based on the following categories: their customer service experience setting up the initial audit, professionalism of our contractors, and their expected energy savings. Additionally, *100%* of clients reported receiving energy education during the weatherization process. Our program also received excellent client feedback through client testimonials and thank you letters throughout the year.

"We do not have the correct words for our gratitude, appreciation and thanks for making our home not only weatherized but supplying us with central heat/ac. Now that we no longer have to "babysit" the woodstove, we are able to seek much needed employment."

-Willis, Weatherization Client

"Thank you all for all the improvements you did to my home. I have never asked for help before and this was so appreciated. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel."

-Jackie, Weatherization Client

"Contractors and crew were excellent! Would highly recommend to everyone! Awesome experience-Thank you all for everything-Greatly appreciated."

-Betty, Weatherization Client

WHAT OUR STAFF ARE SAYING ABOUT US

During the 2015 Employee Satisfaction Survey, *100%* of employees in the Weatherization Assistance Department reported satisfaction working in their department and for Ohio Valley Opportunities. Staff stated that what they liked best about working in the Weatherization Program was that *"everyone gets along, we help each other out."* All department staff reported they completely agreed that their jobs made a difference in the lives of others, and all were satisfied with their direct supervisor.



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR NEW WEATHERIZATION VANS

We are excited to introduce our new Weatherization vans. Between doing energy audits, going out to job sites, and completing final inspections, our Weatherization technicians put a lot of miles on our vehicles. In 2015, the time had come to replace our existing vans. OVO is excited to announce that our new vans are not only incredibly functional and will assist our staff in transporting necessary testing equipment but are also fuel efficient. After upgrading our vehicles, our Weatherization Program has had an approximate 50% reduction in transportation costs due to increased gas mileage. These savings reduce our overhead costs and increase funding available for services. Additionally, we are pleased to be practicing energy efficiency while on the road as well. In the following program year, we will be adding decals to these vans to assist with community outreach. Potential clients will see our contact information as we travel throughout the tri-county area.

WHAT'S NEXT

Contractor Recruitment

OVO's Weatherization Program is looking forward to procuring contractors in the next program year. During this process, we will be doing outreach in the community to recruit new contractors. We plan to increase our number of mechanical contractors from one to two. This increase will allow us to maximize our HVAC service capacity and help us to more quickly and efficiently complete onsite projects. We are excited about the increased opportunities for weatherization services and improvements in client outcomes this process will bring.

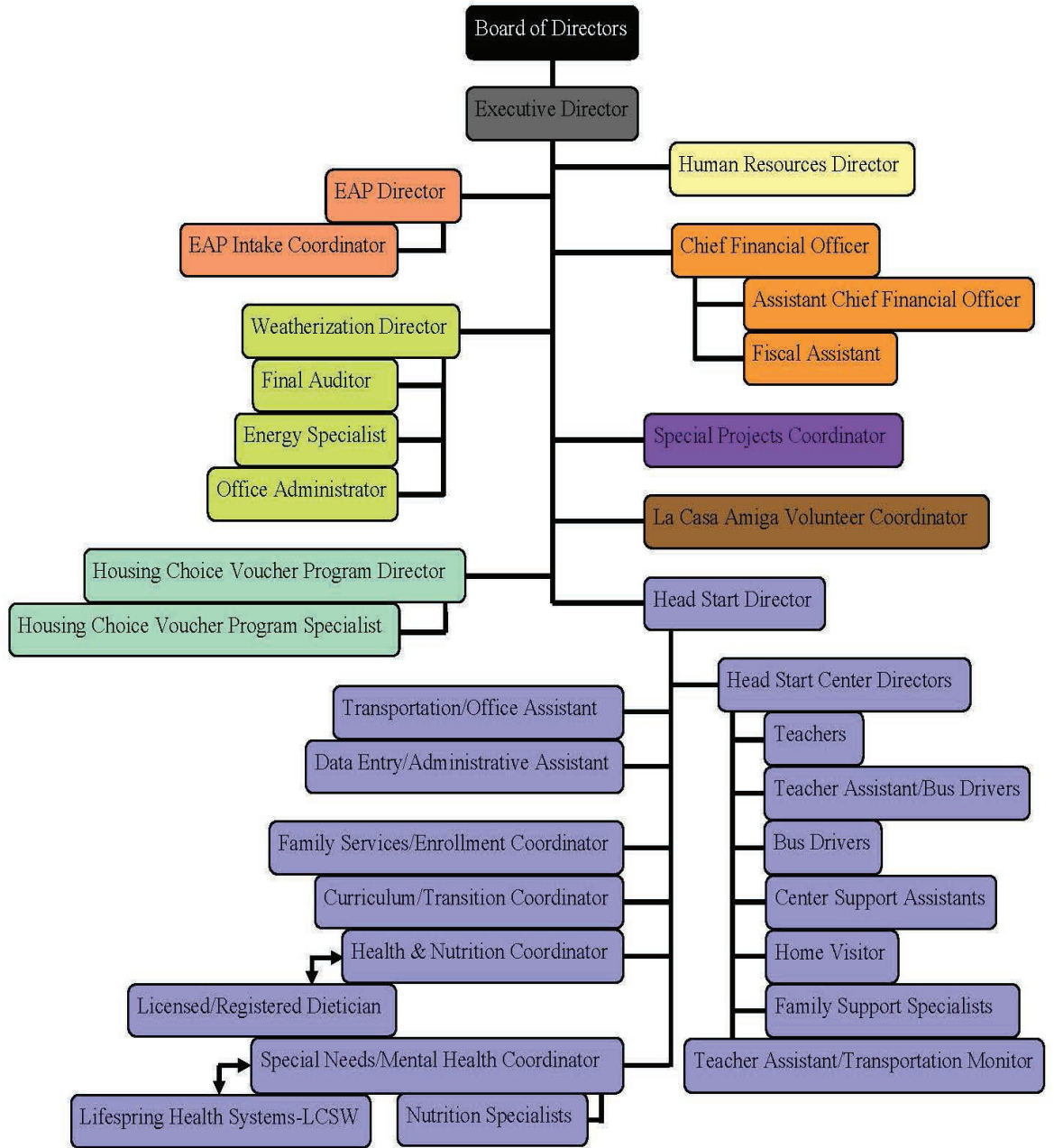
Outreach

In order to raise community awareness and identify new clients, our Weatherization Program will be increasing outreach efforts. We will be including a Weatherization Program informational flyer in the Energy Assistance application to inform incoming clients of additional services for which they qualify. We also plan on applying decals to our new Weatherization vehicles to let people know about the program as we travel for inspections throughout the community.

Client Survey

We love to hear valuable feedback and testimonials from our clients. In 2016, we will be updating our client survey in order to get more detailed information on our clients and their experience with our program. We will also be moving this survey to an online platform that allows our staff to more easily review results and gain useful insights on our client base.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paige Barrett (Private, Jefferson)

Tonja Caudill (Public, Scott)

Angie Donnell (Low-Income, Jennings)

Melissa Frisque (Low-Income, Jefferson)

Bob Getz (Low-Income, Jefferson)

Leigh Koehler (Public, Jefferson)

Rhonda Lusk (Private, Jennings)

Cheri Massey (Private, Jennings)

Mary Murray (Private, Jefferson)

Andrea Nay (Low-Income, Scott)

Joe Ragsdale (Public, Jennings)

Kathy Stevens (Low-Income, Jefferson)

David Sutter (Public, Jefferson)

Dennis Thomas (Low-Income, Scott)

Leah Ungru (Private, Jefferson)

Chris Wakeman (Private, Scott)

Melissa Woods (Public, Scott)

Sally Woods (Low-Income, Jennings)

HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Aaron Cole (Scott)

Codie Hall (Jefferson)

Danielle Hauger (Scott)

Amy Johnson (Scott)

Christabel Lang (Jefferson)

Bobby Loeza (Jefferson)

Kendra Marksberry (Jennings)

Christian Miller (Jennings)

Dustin Petty (Scott)

Ashley Rowlett (Jefferson)

Marissa Salas-Montero (Jefferson)

Missy Scott (Jefferson)

Kim Sears (Jennings)

Mary Sears (Jennings)

Kathy Stevens (Jefferson)

RECOGNIZING STAFF FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

5 TO 9 YEARS

Jennifer Baldwin

Misty Boggs

Barbie Howdeshell

Charla Porter

Jeff Rowlett

Maria Schwers

Angel Snell

Patty Spillman

Lynn Sutherland

April Turley

10 TO 14 YEARS

Debbie Cross

Michele Hopper

Shirley Kloepfer

Nickie Nolan

Roger Stockdale

Shelby White

15 TO 19 YEARS

Debbie Alcorn

Deanna Callis

Sarah Cicenas

Becky Cole

Sondra Fewell

Melanie Harrell

Tammi Marshall

20 TO 24 YEARS

Susan Cicenas

25 TO 29 YEARS

Toni Foist

Sharon McCoy

30+ YEARS

Regina Aldridge

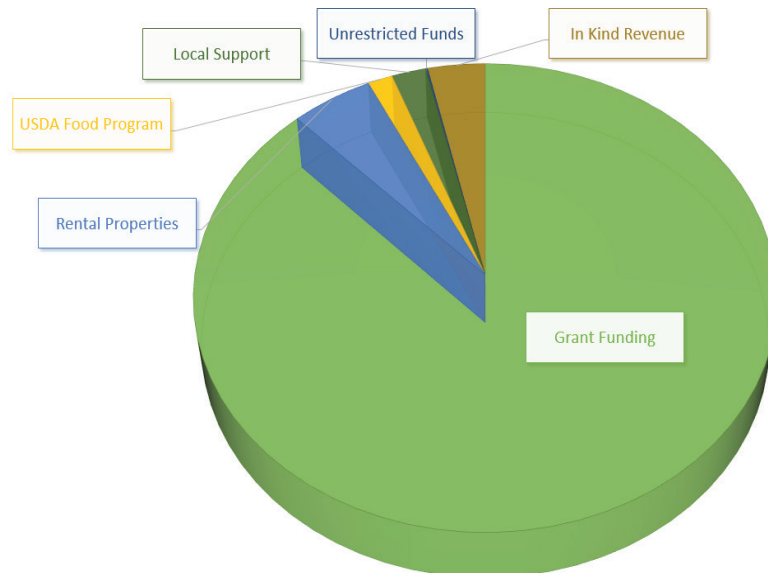
RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

TOTAL AGENCY FUNDING

Grant Funding	
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)	\$136,901
Head Start	\$1,804,480
Energy Assistance Program (EAP)	\$1,626,908
Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	\$380,402
Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)	\$1,295,079
Hoosier Energy	\$6,690
State LIHEAP	\$81,457
State EAP	\$63,231
Neighborhood Assistance Program	\$1,300
Duke Helping Hands	\$52,260
Vectren Share the Warmth	\$11,719
Housing Properties	
Apple Blossom Court Apartments	\$13,085
Scott Valley Court Apartments	\$169,830
Valley Court Apartments of North Vernon	\$126,842
USDA Food Program	\$93,957
Local Support	
We Care	\$2,502
Christmas in Need	\$1,177
United Way Bartholomew	\$524
La Casa Amiga	\$20,443
Family Services Centers–Buildings	\$41,796
Local Revenue	\$46,083
Donations	\$1,084
Project LAUNCH	\$16,430
Unrestricted Funds	\$7,435
In Kind Revenue	\$217,534

TOTAL AGENCY FUNDING

\$6,219,149





OVO Head Start Policy Council

New members have been named to the OVO Head Start Policy Council for the 1994-95. They include (from left): Joyce Owings, second — Deb Myers, Lisa Aiken, Ann Fox, secretary Teresa Bell, Nita Jones, parent coordinator Davita Crowe, back Brenda Molloy, Frank Inskip, and executive director Mike Love. The policy council parents and community representatives. It sets the direction of the local Head Start



LOOKING BACK OVER 50 YEARS



PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



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