



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

## Ohio Valley Opportunities

Website: [www.ovoinc.org](http://www.ovoinc.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ohiovalleyopportunities](https://www.facebook.com/ohiovalleyopportunities)

Tel: 812-265-5858

421 Walnut St., Madison, IN 47250

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Strategic Highlights

OVO has been serving Jefferson, Jennings, and Scott Counties since 1965. To stay current with community needs and to meet the requirements of our funders, we conduct a Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment every three years. A Community Needs Assessment is a process conducted by all Community Action Agencies to determine the underlying causes and conditions of poverty within the community they serve and identify the available resources to address the unmet needs of the community's most vulnerable residents. OVO uses the information gathered to guide our strategic planning process and to promote continuous improvement of our programs and services. We are pleased to share this important data with the community and you may view the results our most recent Community Needs Assessment at [www.facebook.com/ohiovalleyopportunities](https://www.facebook.com/ohiovalleyopportunities).

## Financial Highlights

OVO has high standards for accountability of the federal, state, and local funds that are entrusted to us. In 2020, we once again received designation as a low-risk auditee by an independent auditing firm and we had zero audit findings. This signifies that we are adept at adhering to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines, are skilled at ensuring that all funds are handled appropriately, and that we are in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards.

## Operating Highlights

OVO was quick to respond to the public health crisis both operationally and programmatically. We focused on how to maintain efficient processes and high-quality services as the pandemic unfolded. We assessed our systems and business operations and developed policies, procedures, and practices in order to ensure that program services continued without significant disruption. We worked diligently to meet local, state, and federal guidelines to ensure safe business practices for staff and those we serve. Through CSBG CARES Act funds, we also provided two new projects to households affected by COVID-19 that were at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. First, the **Coronavirus Arrears Recovery for Electric Service (CARES) Project** helped to mitigate utility service disruptions by providing assistance with electric utility payment arrears. The CARES Project helped 181 households to get caught up with past due electric bills. The average benefit provided was \$497. Second, the **Air-Conditioning for At-Risk Populations Project** helped 102 households to limit exposure to the Coronavirus this summer. This project provided installation of a window air conditioning unit for non-air conditioned homes so that people (especially those in high risk categories) could better adhere to stay-at-home orders, quarantine due to exposure, and recover if infected.

## Looking Ahead

I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for all of the staff at OVO. As we all know, 2020 was a year of unique challenges for everyone. The need for OVO's services and supports to the community never seemed greater. Our dedicated professionals ensured continuity of services and that operations were maintained in a healthy and safe manner. Throughout the year, our incredible staff displayed teamwork, flexibility, servant leadership, and sheer determination. My heartfelt thanks to these valued and unparalleled individuals. Our commitment now and in the future is to continue to serve and support to the community.

*Elaina Freeman*  
Executive Director

## 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.

# ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## Angela Spurgeon, Director of Community Services

The Energy Assistance Program provides financial assistance to low-income households to maintain utility services during the winter heating season.

### Year in Review:

- 2,879 households served
- 5,680 individuals served
- 1,199 total crisis benefits issued
- 2,872 families received Energy Education and an Energy Conservation Kit
- 1,020 families avoided disconnection of their heating utility or had services restored
- 10 inoperable furnaces were repaired or replaced
- 130 LIHEAP CARES Act benefits were provided to those affected by Coronavirus

### Ann's Story: A Silver Lining

Every year, Ann receives assistance from us with her heating costs. This winter, her furnace broke and she couldn't afford the repair cost. Since Ann is a homeowner, has a disability, and is the legal custodian of her two grandchildren she qualified for another program, Emergency Repair and Replace. OVO quickly assessed the situation and found that her inoperable unit was a fuel oil furnace. We determined that switching from a high cost fuel oil unit to a gas furnace would provide better energy efficiency and permanently reduce heating costs. In order to complete the job, a 100-amp fuse box was ungraded and a propane fuel tank was installed. Stakeholders including the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and multiple utility vendors coordinated their efforts. The total cost to convert Ann's furnace was \$6,026. Now, Ann and her grandchildren have a warm home. Because of the new, efficient furnace her heating bills are easier to afford.

### What Our Clients Are Saying About Us:

Energy Assistance Program Client Satisfaction Survey Results	
How satisfied were you with EAP	100%
Would you recommend EAP to a friend or family member	99%
OVO staff were friendly and courteous	100%
OVO staff were knowledgeable and able to answer my questions	100%
Application was processed in a timely manner	99%

### What's Next in 2021:

Due to the public health crisis we will continue to adjust our services while striving to meet community needs. We will continue to conduct outreach so that more eligible households are able to receive help with home heating costs. We will continue to provide Energy Conservation Kits to all clients and provide information on ways to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency in order to reduce utility costs.

# WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## Jeff Rowlett, Weatherization Assistance Program Manager

The Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety.

### Year in Review:

- \$12,500 spent per home, on average, for weatherization measures to improve energy efficiency
- 62 homes weatherized
- 93 individuals served
- 17 homes were rehabilitated under the Healthy Homes Program
- 112 hours of Continuing Education completed by staff and contractors

### Tom's Story: Keeping Families Safe

Health and safety issues are always addressed in every home that we weatherize. While on-site at Tom's home, our highly trained staff detected some safety issues with his natural gas furnace. Not only did we repair the furnace, we also installed a carbon monoxide detector that would alert Tom and his family should any gas leaks occur within the residence. Exposure to carbon monoxide can be life threatening and this is just one example of how our extensive health and safety measures keep people like Tom and his family in good health.

### What Our Clients Are Saying About Us:

Weatherization Assistance Program Client Satisfaction Survey Results	
How satisfied were you with the Weatherization Program	100%
Would you recommend Weatherization to a friend or family member	100%
OVO staff were friendly and courteous	100%
OVO staff were knowledgeable and able to answer my questions	100%
Communication with the office for initial set-up for audit was satisfactory	100%
The contractors were professional and courteous	100%
The contractors cleaned up work areas satisfactorily	97%
Do you feel the weatherization on your home will save energy	100%
Did you receive Energy Education during your audit	100%

### What's Next in 2021:

All weatherization personnel and contractors undergo extensive training every year. This year, staff will attend virtual training during the National Home Performance Conference. All staff will also attend training at the Indiana Community Action Association State Conference. Continuing education in this dynamic field not only ensures that our staff are up-to-date on materials, tools, and resources but also furthers certifications and achievement of Continuing Education Units.

# HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM



## Angela Spurgeon, Director of Community Services

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent housing in the private market.

### Year in Review:

- 325 families remained in stable and affordable housing
- 134 elderly citizens remained in stable and affordable housing
- 264 disabled people remained in stable and affordable housing
- 181 rental unit inspections were conducted by certified staff
- 82 new rental subsidy vouchers were issued

### Carol's Story: Helping Hands and Open Hearts

Times that are filled with challenges (such as Covid-19) can prove that there are caring and selfless people in the world... and in our community. Carol, a senior citizen on a fixed income, needed help in applying for Section 8. Her family members made sure all the paperwork was completed, turned in, and that Carol understood the process and necessary steps. Her landlord went above and beyond to give information on the unit and even took time to personally check in on the progress of the application. Because of these caring individuals, Carol has settled into her new home. Nowadays, she can live independently in an affordable apartment because of the rental subsidy she receives. We wish to express our gratitude for the many people in our community that are committed to ensuring safe and affordable housing for our senior members.

### What Our Clients Are Saying About Us:

Section 8 Program Client Satisfaction Survey Results	
How satisfied were you with the Section 8 Program	99%
Would you recommend the Section 8 Program to a friend or family member	99%
OVO staff were friendly and courteous	100%
OVO staff were knowledgeable and able to answer my questions	100%
OVO offers useful information when finding a home	100%
It's easy to reach someone at OVO when I have a question or problem	100%

### What's Next in 2021:

Landlords that participate in the program are key to ensuring that safe and affordable housing is attainable. In 2020, we were unable to hold a Landlord Appreciation Event. Moving forward, our goal is to foster stronger relationships with our landlords and to recognize their contributions to the success of the program. We will continue to provide exceptional customer service to the clients that we serve. We will continue to personalize our approach and provide assistance with the housing process.

# HEAD START



## Melanie Harrell, Head Start Director

Head Start helps every child to be physically, emotionally, and cognitively prepared for kindergarten. Services are designed to foster stable family relationships, enhance children's physical and emotional well-being, and establish an environment to develop strong cognitive skills.

### Year in Review:

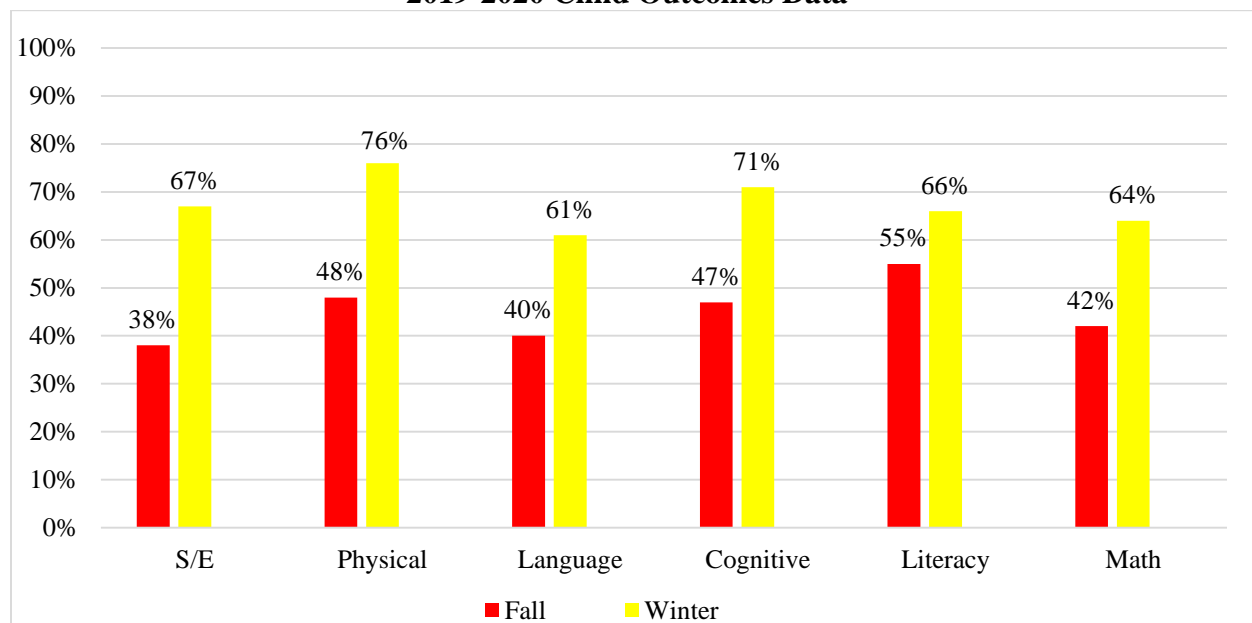
- 237 children and families served; 50% of eligible children were served in our counties (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 90 children transitioned to Kindergarten
- 99.5% Average Monthly Enrollment, 84% Average Monthly Attendance
- 93% received medical exams, 66% received dental exams, 11% received special services
- 99% of parents/guardians participated in a Parent/Teacher Conference

### Program Response Story: Dedication to Early Childhood Education

Staff conducted virtual learning activities and maintained contact with families to finish the school year. Resource packets were mailed to enrolled children to promote learning at home. We followed multiple guidelines and implemented procedures to provide a safe and healthy environment for children and staff. Subsequently, we successfully provided face-to-face programming to children. Through CARES Act funding, OVO provided a 4-week Summer Program to 100 children. We began the new school year in August 2020.

OHS CLASS Stats 2018 - National Distribution of Grantee-Level Domain Scores				OVO Scores 4/18
Domain	Lowest 10%	Median (50%)	Highest 10%	
Emotional Support	5.6641	6.09	6.45	5.9432
Classroom Organization	5.2803	5.82	6.28	5.1818
Instructional Support	2.3125	2.89	3.71	2.8788

### 2019-2020 Child Outcomes Data\*



\*Only two of three data points were collected due to COVID-19 closures.



# LA CASA AMIGA



## Dr. Shirley Kloepfer, Program Director

La Casa Amiga functions as a cultural hub, providing necessary services for Spanish-speaking residents and helping new immigrants become valuable participants in our community. We endeavor to raise cultural awareness and provide community events that share Hispanic culture. La Casa Amiga is funded entirely through the generosity of local support.

### Year in Review:

- Community collaborations and special projects were made possible by and supported through many partnerships such as the Hanover College Cultural Diversity class, Hanover College Sigma Chi Fraternity, Ivy Tech Nursing class, and the Jefferson County Public Library.
- Education Programs included English as a Second Language, homework help, bilingual library, bilingual story hour, books, gardening, and 6 weeks of summer tutoring in Math, English, and Reading Comprehension.
- Physical, Mental Health, and Nutrition Programs included translating at local hospitals, clinics, dental offices, vision offices, courts (virtual), and mental health facilities; setting up medical and follow up appointments; explaining to Hispanic speakers the KDH nutrition program for diabetics and programs for mental health; and providing transportation and translation to the Hope Care Clinic.
- Other Significant Impacts: There were fewer volunteers because of the virus. We formed small groups of 3 levels: First Grade, Fourth Grade, and Seventh Grade. Our classes on different days of the week for six weeks with masks were intense, but fun. Coronavirus in medical situations also kept loved ones apart. Sometimes only the patient and the translator could see the doctor. We have been an assuring instrument to several families during pregnancy and during surgeries. We served to decrease the language barrier for people in medical and legal situations.

### Isabella's Story: Learning and Growing

Isabella had just arrived here in February and didn't know any English. In December the little girl with less than a year here, received the ICE Achievement Award in her class. They stated that she didn't let any barrier stop her from becoming a friend of others and growing in education. Dr. Kloepfer is convinced that the summer program was the spark for Isabella to not be afraid to obtain her goals.

Age	Education Participants	Health Participants
5 years and under	100	50
6-12 years	300	50
13-18 years	150	10
19-25 years	50	30
26-54 years	135	165
55 years and over	15	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>325</b>

### What's Next in 2021:

La Casa Amiga moved to the Eggleston Community Center at 419 East Street in Madison in late 2020. The new location is more spacious and other community activities are also provided at the center. We have already begun providing services including homework help, the bilingual story hour, English as a Second Language Classes, Citizenship Classes, Knitting Classes, and other activities. So many wonderful opportunities for volunteerism are available at La Casa Amiga. We are excited to welcome back our former volunteers and look forward to new possibilities for community support.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<b>Grant Funding</b>	
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)	\$163,340.37
Community Service Block Grant CARES	\$167,645.68
Head Start	\$2,316,310.78
Head Start COVID / Summer	\$168,731.00
Energy Assistance Program (EAP)	\$2,085,170.88
Energy Assistance Program COVID	\$59,197.71
Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	\$235,979.00
Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)	\$1,678,545.24
Department of Energy (DOE)	\$242,835.42
State LIHEAP	\$23,705.17
Duke Helping Hands	\$68,200.00
Vectren Share the Warmth	\$10,000.00
Vectren Duke Rebate	\$10,687.31
Health and Safety	\$6,145.00
USDA Food Program	\$89,889.46
<b>Housing Properties</b>	
Apple Blossom Court Apartments	\$18,002.16
Scott Valley Court Apartments	\$196,797.79
Valley Court Apartments of North Vernon	\$183,419.54
<b>Local Support</b>	
Wee Care	\$1,830.01
La Casa Amiga	\$26,599.85
Donations/Revenue to Programs	\$8,938.49
United Way Bartholomew County	\$318.19
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	\$29,937.46
<b>In-Kind</b>	\$265,243
<b>Family Services Centers - Buildings</b>	\$41,976.00
<b>Total Agency Revenue</b>	<b>\$8,099,445.51</b>

# RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

*Thank you!*

## STAFF YEARS OF SERVICE

5 – 9 years	10 – 14 years	15 – 19 years	20+ years
Jamie Bare	Misty Boggs	Shirley Kloepfer	Debra Alcorn
Alysa Baugh	Deanna Callis	Roger Stockdale	Sarah Cicenas
Brandi Bivens	Jeff Rowlett		Susan Cicenas
Elaina Freeman	Maria Schwers		Melanie Harrell
Julie Hancock	Angel Snell		Tammi Marshall
Michelle Kimmel			
Nicole Kouns			
Mary Osterman			
Angela Spurgeon			
BJ Sykes			

## OVO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Public Sector Representative	Private Sector Representative	Low-Income Sector Representative
Leslie Bixler	Mary Beth Boone	Holly Armstrong
Dana Riddle	Linda Cheatham	Sheila Coffin
Dr. Steven Sollman	Casey Goode	Kathy Edgington
Tammy Stout-Johnson	Emily Hall	Sharon McCoy
David Sutter	Leah Ungru	Brandi Poling

## HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Jerrica Bishop	Angela Maas	David Neuman
Whitley Brunner	Chasity Mair	Tessa Roberts
Kassie Daniels	Sharon McCoy	Dawn Sanders
Charlotte Dunn	Misty McFadden	Mariah Snyder
Josh Kendall	Trevor McFadden	Tamra Stidham
Eva Kirby	Misty McGinnis	Micki Vojkufka
Anna Fitzgerald	Sheena McKenna	

## THE 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.



### Ohio Valley Opportunities

421 Walnut Street P.O. Box 625

Madison, IN 47250

p. (812) 265-5858

f. (812) 265-5850

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Ohio Valley Opportunities provides all of its services without regard to race, age, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, or status as a veteran.