



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Ohio Valley Opportunities

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Executive Director _____	3
Our Mission, Vision, Values _____	4
Energy Assistance Program _____	5
Weatherization Assistance Program _____	6
Housing Choice Voucher Program _____	7
Head Start _____	8
La Casa Amiga _____	9
Total Clients Served _____	10
Financial Summary _____	11
Recognizing Excellence _____	12
The Promise of Community Action _____	13

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Strategic Highlights

This was a year of great transformation for our organization, as we continued to feel the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and prepared for a post-COVID reality; updates to our management team reflected that transformation. The Director of Community Services was promoted to Director of Program Management & Compliance, with increased responsibilities in programs across the organization. The Head Start Deputy Director was promoted to Head Start Director after the former Director's retirement; the Head Start Education Coordinator was then promoted to Deputy Director. And a new Director of Research and Program Development was hired to assist with CSBG administrative requirements and special projects. We are excited about what these changes represent, the successes already achieved and those to be achieved in 2022.

Financial Highlights

OVO holds itself to the highest standards for accountability of the federal, state, and local funds that are annually granted to our organization. This is proven by our designation as a low-risk auditee by an independent auditing firm, which found zero audit finding. 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

Services continued to be provided to our clients, despite the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic. In addition to successfully implementing our primary programs, we assisted the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority with benefits determination for 1,159 applications and paperwork review for 247 applications for the Indiana Emergency Rental Assistance Program; the reimbursement provided for that work allowed us to grow our unrestricted funds. Over the summer we used Community Services Block Grant funds to provide utility assistance for 200 households on fixed incomes, in addition to that provided through our Energy Assistance Program (EAP); most COVID relief programs were specifically for individuals who lost incomes because of the pandemic, and we felt strongly that individuals who are elderly or disabled also need additional assistance. Finally, we used remaining funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide State Park Passes to 1,915 families in our EAP and Head Start programs, so those families had an opportunity to safely gather together outside and enjoy beautiful community assets they normally may not be able to afford.

Looking Ahead

This year was full of challenges but we also had many notable triumphs. Our resilience allowed us to become an even stronger organization as well as a significant resource to community partners. Regardless of circumstances, OVO will be there in service to the community and we will remain committed to providing quality programs. We are excited about the opportunities that wait in the new year.

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

Year in Review:

- 2,718 households served with utility assistance
- 5,209 individuals served with utility assistance
- 970 total crisis benefits issued
- 2,769 families received Energy Education and an Energy Conservation Kit
- 1,062 families avoided disconnection of their heating utility
- 176 families had their utility restored after disconnect
- 12 inoperable furnaces were repaired or replaced
- 173 LIHEAP CARES Act benefits were provided to those affected by Coronavirus

Dee's Story: Warmth

Dee is a single mother. She's also a hero to the many children that she fosters. She provides a caring home and works hard to make sure that the children she fosters feel at home with her family. Even though Dee is employed, she still needs assistance with the high cost of heating in the winter months. This year, her household received a total of \$1,225 that was paid toward her electric bill. As a result, Dee, her children, and her foster kids were covered in warmth; both in their home and in their hearts.

What Our Clients Are Saying About Us:

Energy Assistance Program Client Satisfaction Survey Results	Percent of Respondents Who Agreed
I am satisfied with my EAP services	100%
I would 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 process was easy, and staff assisted when needed	100%

What's Next in 2022:

With the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic still being felt, including supply chain issues and rising prices for necessities like food and gas, we will continue to focus on helping as many people as possible pay their utility bills. To reach applicants that we have never served before, new and expanded outreach strategies will be utilized, such as billboards, social media, and ads on local TV and radio stations.

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Jeff Rowlett, Weatherization Assistance Program Director

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
- 53 homes weatherized
- 98 individuals served
- 15 homes were rehabilitated under the Healthy Homes Program
- 68 hours of Continuing Education completed by staff and contractors

Chris' Story: Healing

Chris is a husband and a father of two young children. He enjoyed completing projects around the house. Unfortunately, after a hunting accident, he sustained a disabling injury. After the accident, Chris' income was reduced and he wasn't able to finish some home repairs. Once his home was weatherized, his family saved money each month on their energy bill. We were also able to help him finish a small project that he had started. We are proud to help all of our clients in the weatherization program, and we were honored to assist Chris and his family.

What Our Clients Are Saying About Us:

Weatherization Assistance Program Client Satisfaction Survey Results	Percent of Respondents Who Agreed
I am satisfied with my Weatherization services	100%
I would 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	100%
I believe weatherization on my home will save energy	100%
I received Energy Education during my audit	100%

What's Next in 2022:

We are enthusiastic about our strong team of weatherization professionals. All weatherization personnel and contractors are required to obtain and maintain various work and safety certifications. In 2022, our staff will complete coursework leading to certification as Certified Energy Auditor, Lead Risk Assessor, and Quality Control Inspector. We are proud to provide professional development opportunities to our staff and to promote certification attainment in these specific areas of expertise.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM



Angela Spurgeon, Director of Program Management & Compliance
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:

- 386 families received rental assistance
- 674 individuals were served with rental assistance
- 168 elderly citizens received rental assistance
- 307 disabled people received rental assistance
- 399 rental unit inspections were conducted by certified staff
- 64 new rental subsidy vouchers were issued

Vivian's Story: Giving

Vivian is a senior citizen on a fixed income. She used her rental subsidy voucher to move into a one-bedroom apartment that was close to her family, shopping and other conveniences. HCVP pays 67% of her monthly rent. This allows Vivian to live more comfortably on her fixed income, so she can worry less about her monthly expenses and can devote her time and energy to the things that matter most to her: helping raise her grandchild with special needs and volunteering with community organizations.

What Our Clients Are Saying About Us:

Section 8 Program Client Satisfaction Survey Results	Percent of Respondents Who Agreed
I am satisfied with the HCV Program	99%
I would recommend HCV 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%
OVO offers useful information when finding a home	100%
It's easy to reach someone at OVO when I have a question or problem	99%

What's Next in 2022:

Continuing challenges related to COVID-19 kept us from implementing the additional landlord outreach we had planned. Given the importance of landlords in providing safe, affordable housing options, we will keep landlord outreach and relationship building as a goal for 2022. Ultimately we hope to house more individuals and families, and we need great landlords to help us accomplish that!

HEAD START



Lindsey Simmons, 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:

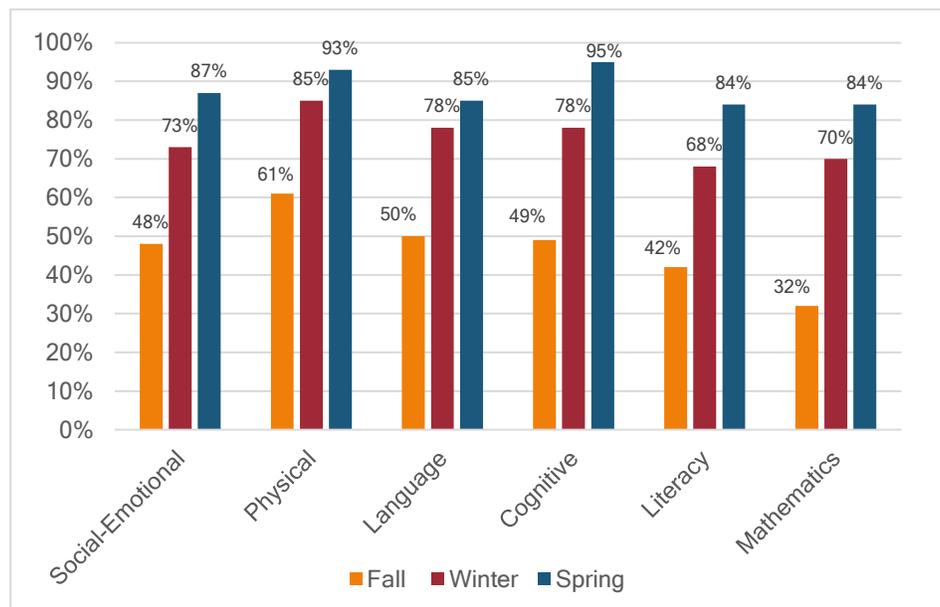
- 239 children and families served; 31% of eligible children were served in our counties (STATS Indiana)
- 65 children transitioned to Kindergarten
- 51% Average Monthly Enrollment, 83% Average Monthly Attendance
- 72% received medical exams, 50% received dental exams, 11% received special services
- 100% of parents/guardians participated in a Parent/Teacher Conference

Program Response Story: Dedication to Early Childhood Education

The Head Start Program remained resilient through many changes in 2021. We celebrated Melanie Harrell's retirement after 27 years of service, and ushered in a new Head Start Director, Lindsey Simmons. 2021 was characterized by the climb toward full enrollment as we moved classrooms back from 10 children per classroom to 16 children per classroom with continued COVID-19 precautions.

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

2020-2021 Child Outcomes Data: Percentage of Children Meeting or Exceeding Widely Held Expectations



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:

- November marked the one-year anniversary of La Casa Amiga's move from the Hilltop to the Eggleston Community Center in downtown Madison. The new space offers many amenities, including space for multiple groups to meet at once, a fenced outdoor space, WIFI, bathrooms, an industrial kitchen and wonderful neighbors.
- We offered many classes, including English, Spanish, citizenship and even knitting! Some of our adult students in the English courses received extra benefits at work for their attendance, and donations in exchange for the Spanish courses were used to support other community projects.
- With the help of Dr. Sue Stack, COVID-19 vaccinations were scheduled for many La Casa Amiga clients.
- Our children's programming continues to be incredibly popular, including our Wednesday afternoon homework help and the summer "Exploration of Fun in Learning" program.
- We hosted two successful events this year: the Hispanic Dinner raised over \$4,000 and the 20th Hispanic Cultural Awareness Day was a big hit in the community.
- We were thankful to receive two Women's Giving Circle grants this year: one to fund a bus for Wednesday homework help, and another to support the "Exploration of Fun in Learning" program. Grant funds from Jefferson County United Way also made our educational program possible.
- Partnerships continue to be instrumental in our work, including those with Prince of Peace schools, Hanover College, Sigma Chi Fraternity, Ivy Tech, the Madison Public Library, the Madison Area Arts Alliance, Salvation Army, and our amazing volunteers.

Elena's Story: Courage

One of services La Casa Amiga is most proud to provide is a citizenship class for individuals preparing for the U.S. Naturalization Test and Interview. This year, Elena completed the naturalization process by correctly answering every question that was asked of her. We are so proud of her hard work and accomplishment!

What's Next in 2022:

Our regular programs and events will continue into 2022, along with a few new projects. A new partnership with Purdue Extension began in November 2021, with the aim to increase participation in 4-H by Hispanic students. Another partnership, this time with Salvation Army, led to a new Monday Free Food Giveaway initiative; donated food from grocery stores that is picked up by SA volunteers but cannot be used by Salvation Army is now brought to La Casa Amiga and distributed to clients there. We are excited about both of these new projects, and for everything else we plan to accomplish in 2022!

TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED

As a requirement for Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Funding, each year OVO submits a report on total clients and households served in Jefferson, Jennings and Scott counties. Below are a few highlights from the 2021 CSBG Report:

Total Clients Served by All Programs	Total Households Served by All Programs
5902	2981

Client Age Ranges	Number of Clients	Percentage
0-5	670	11%
6-13	846	14%
14-17	362	6%
18-24	317	5%
25-44	1152	20%
45-54	681	12%
55-59	439	7%
60-64	439	7%
65 -74	616	10%
75+	373	6%
Unknown/not reported	7	0%
TOTAL	5902	100.0%

Level of Household Income	Number of Households	Percentage
Up to 50%	528	18%
51% to 75%	620	21%
76% to 100%	650	29%
101% to 125%	530	18%
126% to 150%	361	12%
151% to 175%	195	7%
176% to 200%	81	3%
201% to 250%	8	0%
251% and over	1	0%
Unknown/not reported	7	0%
TOTAL	2981	100.0%

Education Levels of Clients Aged 25+	Number of Clients	Percentage
Grades 0-8	419	7%
Grades 9-12/Non-Graduate	727	12%
High School Graduate	1805	31%
GED / HSE	16	0%
12 grade + Some Post-Secondary	243	4%
College Graduate	273	5%
Other post-secondary	19	0%
Unknown/not reported	199	3%
TOTAL	3701	63%

Household Size	Number of Households	Percentage
Single Person	1593	53%
Two	645	22%
Three	313	11%
Four	222	7%
Five	117	4%
Six or more	83	3%
Unknown/not reported	8	0%
TOTAL	2981	100.0%

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Grant Funding	
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)	\$194,501.00
Community Service Block Grant CARES	\$294,419.00
Community Services Block Grant T/TA	\$2,000.00
Head Start	\$2,131,073.00
Head Start COVID	\$122,412.00
Energy Assistance Program (EAP)	\$2,681,356.00
Energy Assistance Program COVID	\$373,486.00
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	\$309,875.00
Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)	\$1,892,660.00
Department of Energy (DOE)	\$327,555.00
State LIHEAP	\$8,182.00
Duke Helping Hands	\$15,107.00
Vectren Share the Warmth	\$7,500.00
Vectren Duke Rebate	\$4,311.46
Health and Safety	\$12,950.70
USDA Food Program	\$122,191.00
Housing Properties	
Apple Blossom Court Apartments	\$22,568.00
Scott Valley Court Apartments	\$205,880.25
Valley Court Apartments of North Vernon	\$188,396.20
Local Support	
Wee Care	\$916.21
La Casa Amiga	\$34,090.68
Donations/Revenue to Programs	\$5,674.22
United Way Bartholomew County	\$191.88
Scott County Community Foundation – Green House Project	\$1000.00
Women’s Giving Circle	\$6037.00
Unrestricted Funds	\$84,707.56
In-Kind	\$199,947.00
Family Services Centers - Buildings	\$41,976.00
Total Agency Revenue	\$9,303,874.21

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

Thank you!

STAFF YEARS OF SERVICE

5 – 9 years	10 – 14 years	15 – 19 years	20+ years
Jamie Bare	Michelle Kimmel	Shirley Kloepfer	Susan Cicenas
Elaina Freeman	Brandi Bivens	Jeff Rowlett	Sarah Cicenas
Julie Hancock	Angel Snell		Tammi Marshall
Angela Spurgeon	Maria Schwers		
Nicole Kouns			
BJ Sykes			
Lindsey Simmons			

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	Jason Judd

HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Peggy Jenkins	Dawn Sanders	Lesli Lewis
Skylar Lewis	Micki Vojkufka	Elizabeth Miller
Amber Ross	Sharon McCoy	

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

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