

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Community Action Responds to the Pandemic

Agencies Shift to Meet Changing Needs

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused health and economic disruptions around the world; however, the impacts have not been experienced equitably across society. **People with low incomes and communities of color have experienced the most negative health and economic outcomes**, and continue to recover economically slower than their middle- and upper- income neighbors. While COVID did not create these inequities, it has exacerbated them. Minnesota's **Community Action Agencies (CAAs) have been working nonstop since the start of the pandemic to mitigate some of these inequities** and to ensure their program participants remain healthy and have the necessary social and economic supports. **CAAs will continue to play a vital role beyond the pandemic** to ensure Minnesotans with lower incomes have the services and supports needed to recover equitably.

Housing Assistance

COVID-19 did not cause the housing crisis, but it has made it worse. In addition to **more people facing housing instability**, people experiencing homelessness often live in congregate spaces with limited opportunities to safely isolate. To meet these needs, some **CAAs have worked with local hotels to secure safe isolation spaces**. And, across the state, CAAs have worked diligently to **provide federal, state and county emergency rental assistance**.

Social Support & Technology Assistance

Researchers estimate that feelings of depression and anxiety have **increased by 20-30%** during the pandemic, especially among older adults, people with disabilities, and people who are immunocompromised. To mitigate this isolation, **CAAs have provided tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, and technology training** to ensure these groups can safely attend virtual appointments, grocery shop online, and stay connected with family and friends.

Emergency Food Assistance & Distribution

Throughout the pandemic, **1 in 8 Minnesotans struggled to purchase food**, and households of color were three times as likely as white households to report not having enough to eat. **CAAs quickly pivoted congregate dining to meal delivery or pick-up programs**. CAAs also assisted families with children in enrolling in federal and state food benefit programs.

About Community Action

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created the Community Action Network of national and local organizations that connect millions of people, with low and moderate incomes, to essential services. The network works to build community resiliency and self-sufficiency, including removing systemic and structural barriers to move people out of poverty. In Minnesota, 24 Community Action Agencies and 11 Tribal Nations serve all 87 counties, providing poverty solutions with equitable access to various services: homeless prevention and housing assistance, utility bill assistance, healthcare enrollment, food and nutrition services, Head Start early childhood programming, financial asset building, regional transit, and more.

- CAAs directly paid out over **\$15 million of the MN COVID Housing Assistance Program** between August and December 2020
- Some CAA food shelves experienced more than a **200% increase in need** during the pandemic

[Read More >> White Paper on CAA's COVID Response](#)



2020 Network Highlights

2021 Annual Report



\$173.4 Million
funds leveraged



355,000 People
served in Minnesota



153,000 Households
served in Minnesota

2020 MN CAA Network Funding

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) - **\$8.3 million**

MN Community Action Grant (MCAG) - **\$4.3 million**

Weatherization (DOE & HHS) - **\$13.7 million**

LIHEAP - **\$55.7 million**

Federal Head Start & Early Head Start - **\$99.6 million**

State Head Start - **\$25.9 million**

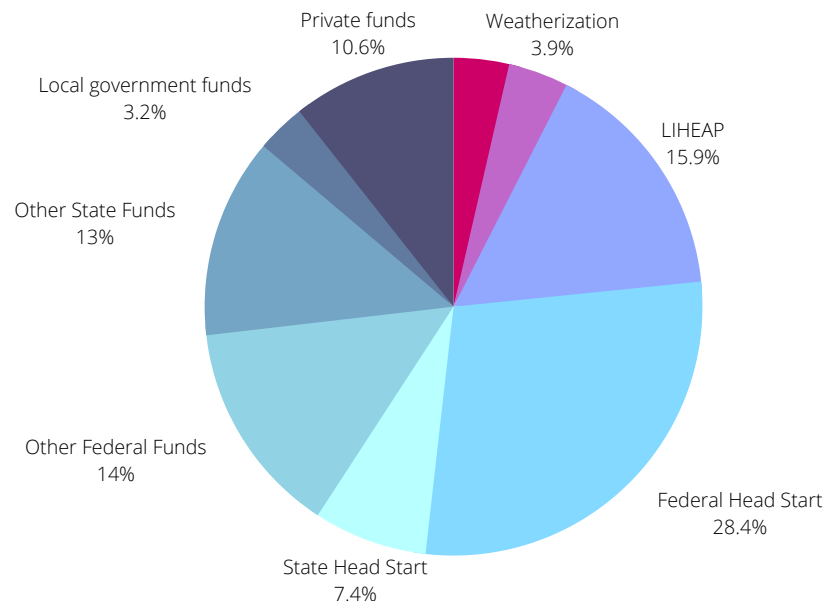
Other Federal funds - **\$49.0 million**

Other State funds - **\$45.6 million**

Local government funds - **\$11.2 million**

Private funds - **\$37.3 million**

TOTAL - \$350.67 million



COMMUNITY

2020 Network Highlights Continued

2021 Annual Report



Nutrition Services



Emergency Services



Housing Services



Energy Assistance

- **Over 1,321,000 people received prepared meals** and an additional 140,000 people participated in food distribution (food boxes, food share, etc).
- Over 10,000 people increased nutrition skills like cooking and growing food.
- And, **almost 2300 people had better access to local and nutritious food** through farmers markets, local SNAP incentives, and CSA shares.

- **3150 households experiencing homelessness obtained safe, temporary shelter.**
- 3,400 people received emergency clothing assistance.
- **5,400 people received food support** from a CAA food shelf.
- And, over 4000 people received mental health screenings and assessments, CAAs responded to 230 crisis calls.

- Almost **5600 households avoided eviction or foreclosure** with CAA services.
- Over 2,500 households experienced improved home health and safety due to CAA provided home improvements (i.e. lead or radon remediation, removal of fire hazards).
- 4,600 households obtained safe and affordable housing, and over 3500 maintained that housing for at least 90 days.

- **227,500 households received utility assistance**, including emergency utility assistance. An additional 31,000 households received arrearage assistance.
- CAAs provided 5,000 households with energy efficiency measure like new insulation, and furnace repair.
- Over **27,200 households** improved their **energy efficiency or reduced their energy burden.**

COMMUNITY

2020 Network Highlights Continued

2021 Annual Report



Employment & Benefits Enrollment

Childcare & Head Start

Financial Asset Building

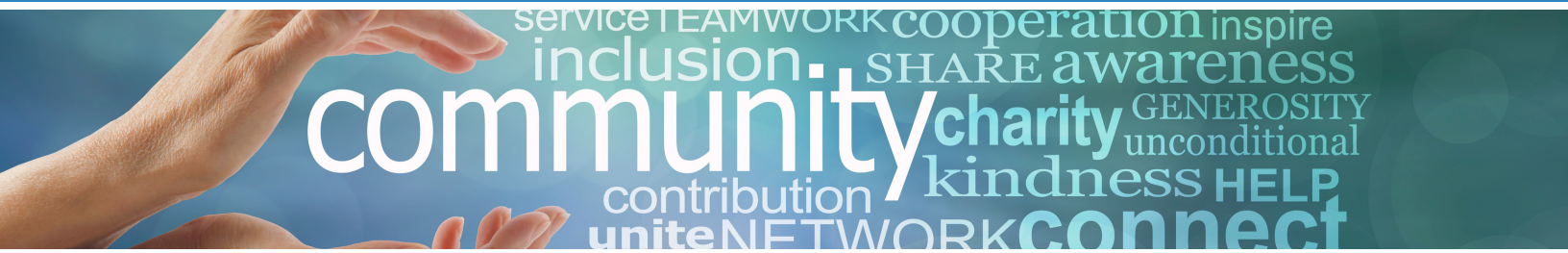
Other Programs

- **4,900 unemployed adults secured employment** with over 2,100 of those adults obtaining jobs with a living wage or higher.
- CAAs assisted over 6,600 people enrolling in health insurance, and an additional 4,900 people received health insurance options counseling.
- Over **13,600 people enrolled in SNAP** benefits with help from CAA SNAP navigators.

- **Over 13,000 kids** served by **Head Start** and **Early Head Start**.
- Almost 10,000 children ages 0-5 demonstrated school readiness, and 9,400 demonstrated positive approaches toward learning.
- Almost **2500 children received either payments or subsidies for childcare**.
- Over 7,900 children received dental services or exams, including emergency dental procedures.

- **Over 8,500 CAA** participants report **improved financial well-being**.
- 1,500 people achieved and maintained their ability to meet their basic needs for 90 days, with 900 maintaining it for at least 180 days.
- **14,750 people** received services through **VITA, EITC, or other tax preparation** programs.
- Over 2000 people participated in financial coaching or skills training courses.

- **Over 38,600 people received voter education**.
- 65,000 seniors and people with disabilities maintained an independent living situation.
- **286,000 referrals** made to partner organizations and other service in the community.
- 4,600 people received mediation or customer advocacy interventions (debt forgiveness, negotiations with landlords, etc.).



2020 Local Agency Highlights

2021 Annual Report



Investment in Technology to Connect with Older Adults

"The pandemic left seniors to struggle to do normal day to day activities such as getting groceries, ordering prescriptions, spending holidays with family and grabbing a cup of coffee with friends," explained Marley Melbye, senior programs director at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council. To help bring people together virtually through COVID-19 quarantine and isolation, Tri-Valley added 90 iPads to its Caring Companion Program and Foster Grandparent Program.



Coalitions Form to efficiently address Eviction & Crisis Issues

With the COVID-19 eviction moratorium looming, "local agencies began meeting as an Eviction Clinic to brainstorm how best to help clients who were facing evictions," explained Danette Ringwelski, community services director at Tri-County Community Action Partnership. It became clear quickly that the volume of cases and breadth of need reached beyond just eviction assistance. "COVID added a whole layer of need," added Ringwelski. So a new collaboration formed between several organizations across Crow Wing County to also help clients with emergency services including rent, deposit, utilities, water, sewer, and essential household expenses.



New Certification Program to address Child Care and Employment Crises

COVID-19 exacerbated the child care shortage and steady employment issues already facing many Minnesota families with low incomes. Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties launched a pilot program to address the need for more Head Start teachers and provide a path to employment for parents/caregivers called the Child Development Associate Credential Training Program. Participants are paid as interns throughout the six-month training, and child care and transportation assistance is available.



Emergency Food Delivery Program forms in partnership with area food shelves

Tri-CAP pivoted when COVID hit to provide food and basic necessities to families, who had previously gotten food from school, and older adults, who had previously gotten food from local food shelves. With a grant, Tri-CAP staff put together necessities and worked with area food shelves to make deliveries to those in need.

24 Local Agencies & 11 Tribal Governments

MinnCAP Leadership

MinnCAP Executive Director

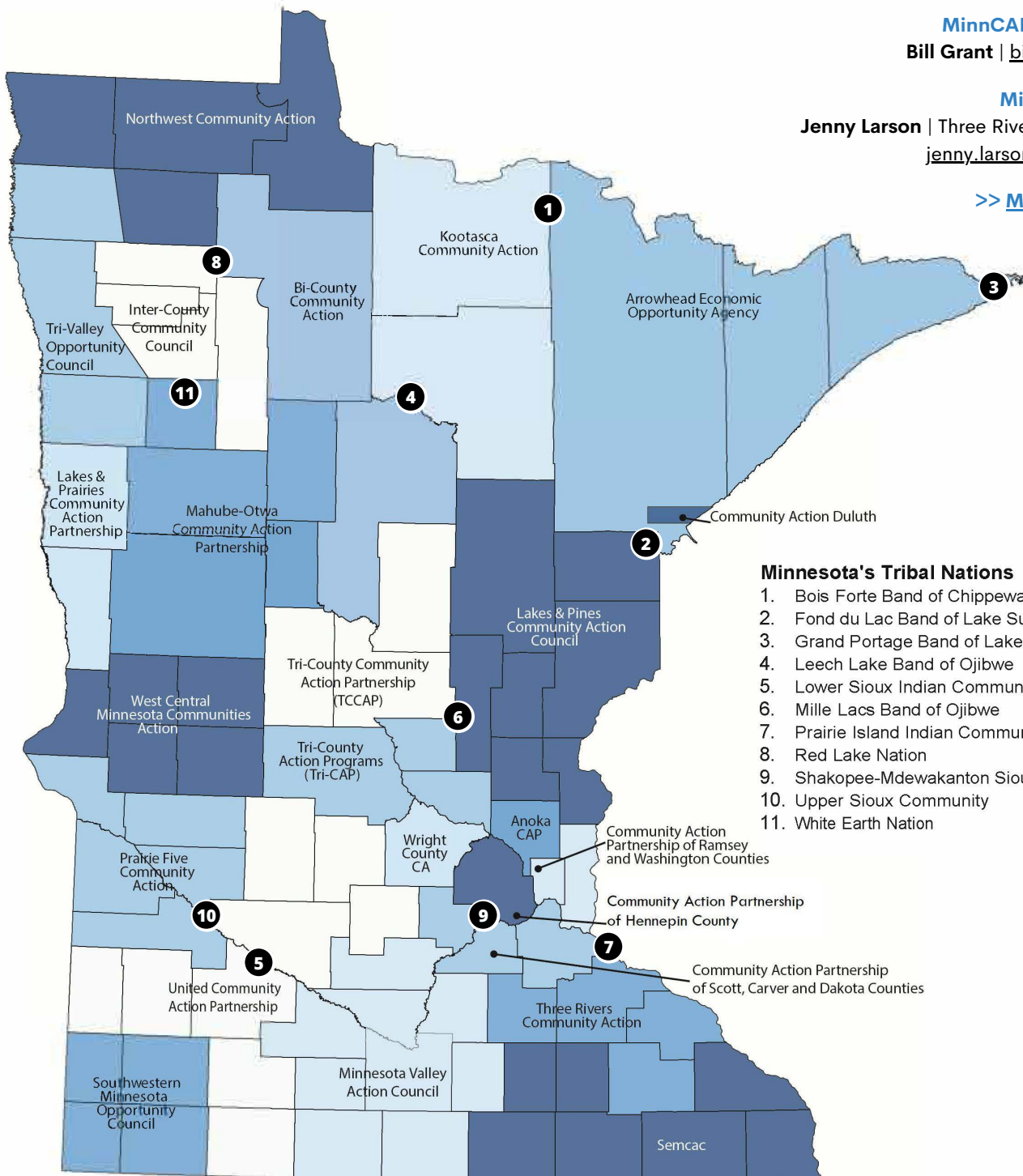
Bill Grant | billgrant@minncap.org

MinnCAP Board Chair

Jenny Larson | Three Rivers Executive Director

jenny.larson@threeriverscap.org

[>> MinnCAP's Full Board](#)



Minnesota's Tribal Nations

1. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
2. Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior
3. Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior
4. Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
5. Lower Sioux Indian Community
6. Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
7. Prairie Island Indian Community
8. Red Lake Nation
9. Shakopee-Mdewakanton Sioux Community
10. Upper Sioux Community
11. White Earth Nation

Minnesota Community Action Association Resources Foundation (MCAARF) is the 501c(3) nonprofit that secures funding to support MinnCAP's mission.