

June 2022



COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF UTAH

2021 Impact Report

Building Opportunity for All





The Promise of Community Action

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

In each of us, there's a desire to do good for ourselves and support the families and communities that make us who we are. But, as our economy and our society have changed, especially in light of the global pandemic, nearly **300,000** Utahns still live in poverty. Of these Utahns, over **1 in 3** experience intergenerational poverty.

While Utah has fared better than most states economically during the global pandemic, it is important to remember that not all that glitters is gold. Mountain West states have experienced the highest rate of inflation in the country, negating the positive impacts of increased wages.

Even with Utah's low unemployment rate, there are also many part-time and full-time workers unable to work their way out of poverty. For many of our family members, friends, and neighbors, any one of a hundred misfortunes can spell disaster.

Community Action provides life-changing services that build pathways to opportunity in all 29 counties in Utah. Utah's 9 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) work in every corner of our state, serving small towns and big cities. They serve families, seniors, adults, and youth. They know from experience that every community faces obstacles but no two communities face the same barriers to progress.

Community Action rejects the idea of one-size-fits-all solutions to poverty. Community Action Agencies rely on the diverse perspectives of both community members and state and local officials to guide community change. And we pride ourselves on evidence-based approaches. Each agency completes a community-specific assessment to drive solutions that respond to local needs, because we know that effectively addressing poverty across different counties requires a tailored approach. And Community Action Agencies tap the power of local volunteers to help their neighbors improve their lives and build more resilient communities.

In Fiscal Year 2021, Community Action Agencies:

Served over 48,370 households and 108,931 individuals

The network facilitated 355,244 hours of volunteer work - a total worth over \$2,575,519 - even in a pandemic.

23,525 unduplicated Individuals achieved 51,291 outcomes while progressing towards stability and greater self-reliance

The need has never been greater. Neither has our resolve. We're challenged to create solutions that don't just help people stay afloat but build lives of stability, dignity, and, whenever possible, prosperity. And we will rise to that challenge.

We're inspired by the researchers, advocates, and policymakers who keep working and innovating. We're inspired by the boards, staff, and volunteers of Community Action Agencies across the state, who believe in their neighbors and their communities and fight every day to make them stronger. And we're inspired by the Utahns who will not let poverty break them – who keep learning, keep working, and keep fighting to build better lives.

Community Action Partnership of Utah, the state association for Utah's 9 Community Action Agencies, with the support and partnership of the State CSBG Office within the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the Region 8 Regional Performance and Innovation Consortium, and the National Community Action Partnership, serves as a hub, linking these local leaders to each other and helping to connect them to allies in the fight against today's poverty. We invite you to read and learn about the work of Community Action. More importantly, we invite you to join us on the journey to create a thriving state.



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he Community Action Partnership of Utah is a statewide association that links Utah's 9 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to each other - and to leaders looking for solutions that connect Americans to greater opportunity.

Community Action Agencies create solutions that improve people's lives, homes, communities, and the nation.

Nearly
300
thousand people in Utah experience poverty.
People of color are disproportionately impacted as well as children under the age of 5.

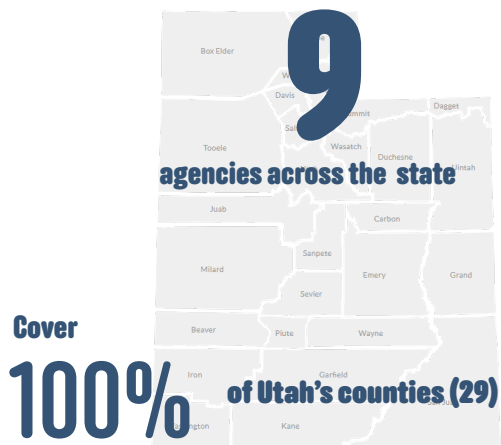
The Statewide Need



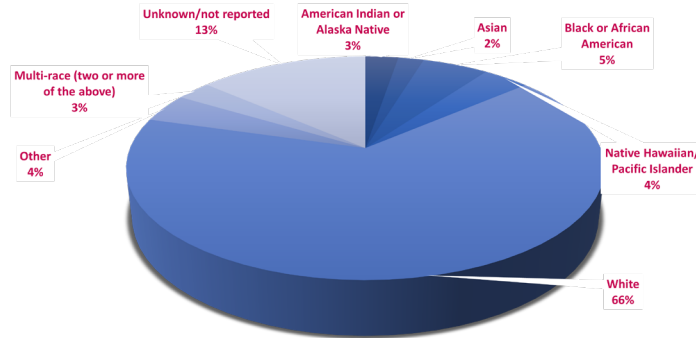
1 in 11 families face food insecurity at some point during the year

60
thousand people who worked the entire year full-time still fell below the poverty line

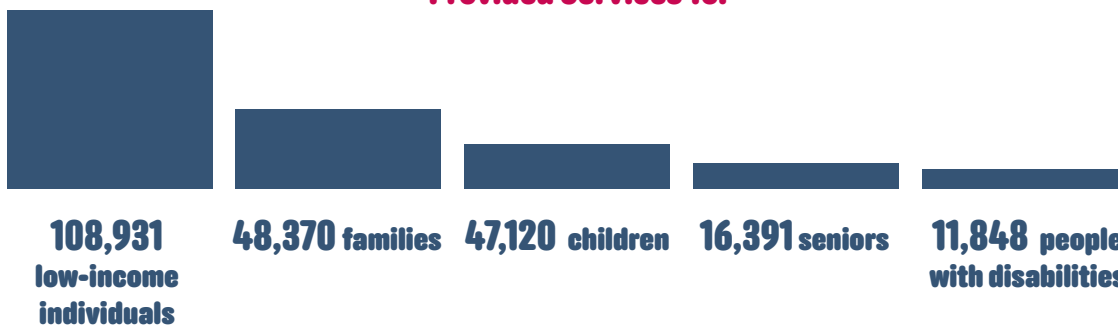
Community Action's Reach



Individuals who benefited from Community Action in Utah



Community Action Agencies Provided Services To:



\$ Asset Building

For families working low-wage jobs, financial assets like a small savings account provide a critical buffer during tough times. Disruptions like an unexpected medical expense (including those related to COVID-19) or a temporary cutback at work do less damage if the family has assets. Building assets is critical for our economy. Creating asset building opportunities is especially important for families of color, as approximately two in three households of color don't have a sufficient amount of money set aside for a financial emergency. That results in overall financial instability for communities of color and a lack of social mobility for their children. But when families have built up savings and assets, it not only gives them a financial cushion in times of need, it helps them get ahead, as savings allow them to invest in skill building or meet educational goals.

Community Action Agencies help hundreds of individuals and families improve their economic stability. Agencies help families open and maintain savings accounts and adopt good budgeting practices. And, year after year, Community Action Agency staff make sure the hardworking community members they serve are well informed on the tax filing process and claim the tax credits they've earned.

Social capital is also an asset that many people living in poverty do not have. In many instances, getting a better paying job is as much of "who you know" as it is "what you know." Circles programs operated by CAAs help individuals learn the hidden rules of the middle class and build social capital.

The Statewide Need

391 thousand Utahns have no savings for emergencies and may not be able to meet basic needs after a crisis

288



thousand Utahns have a Net Worth of Zero

422 thousand Utahns experience asset poverty

Many Utahns living in poverty lack the social capital needed for economic mobility

Our Reach

8 CAAs help people build assets and financial skills

More than **615** people were enrolled in CAA budgeting and savings programs



More than **6,341** households received tax assistance services from CAA volunteers

More than **119** individuals participated in Circles programs that build social capital

Our Annual Impact

219

low-income households increased financial assets or skills



\$8,863,553.00 in tax credits, like the earned income tax credit and child tax credit, were returned to low-income families through CAA volunteer income tax assistance services

619 People were able to meet basic needs for more than 90 days through case management and other services



Building assets to build better lives and stronger communities

Community Action Services and Food Bank

"When Trevor joined Circles, he was frustrated with his life and wanted to change it, but he didn't know how. He set goals to get off disability, create connections, and advocate for others.

According to Trevor, when you're dealing with a mental health issue and a disability, it's easy to fall into a state of learned helplessness and to believe you're not capable of doing much. That makes it easy to cut yourself off and back away from the world.

Fortunately, his allies in Circles didn't let him isolate. They held him accountable and kept him in the trenches, even when he was struggling. Over time, he took on a leadership role in the program and became the unofficial go-to guy for all things related to disabilities.

Circles not only helped Trevor improve his life but also allowed him to help others. Now that he's done with the initiative, he's working full time helping people at

the hospital find work and develop the skills they need to be released. He said he's happy where he is. Just as Trevor was able to increase his social capital assets, he now can increase social capital assets for other."

Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments

"My family went through some dramatic changes in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We were grateful for the Child Tax Credits that we received throughout the year. It truly helped us stay on our feet. When going to file taxes for 2020, I was very nervous and had so many questions. I didn't know where I should go to make sure I got them done correctly and to have my questions answered. When I heard about the VITA program I was relieved to have found somewhere to get my taxes done and by someone who truly wanted to help. . . [VITA volunteers were] amazing to work with and really wanted to get the job done right. It was a simple process; my taxes were done quickly and all my questions were answered."



Children and Families

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children are more likely than adults to live in poverty in America. Child care costs, lack of living wages, costly housing, and other factors drive many families with children into crushing debt and put economic opportunity out of reach for many more.

Community Action Agencies provide that path to opportunity by strengthening families with children. Agencies help parents overcome barriers to employment, build financial assets, and improve the economic stability of their families. Community Action Agencies also offer high-quality early learning that cultivates the skills and abilities children need to enter school ready to learn. By addressing the needs of the whole family, Community Action is opening doors for parents and their children.

The Statewide Need

9.9% of Utah's children live in poverty, with **6.1%** of children living in intergenerational poverty.



48% of 5-year-olds in low-income families are school ready compared to **75%** of 5-year-olds in high income families.

Our Reach

Agencies served over **42,120** children

2 CAAs provided Head Start/Early Head Start

1 CAA served as a regional Child Care Development agency

1 CAA served as Family Support Center

3 CAAs sponsored Foster Grandparent Programs



AmeriCorps Seniors

Foster Grandparent Program

Our Annual Impact

22,526 families reduced or eliminated barriers to stability through access to childcare, food assistance, after school programs, and more

108 children grades 1-8 who fell behind during COVID improved academically to grade level.

943 parents improved family functioning skills

3,051 children under 5 became school ready





Photo: Shutterstock

A brighter future for Utah children and their families

Ogden-Weber Community Action Partnership

“OWCAP identified two geographic locations within its service area that have high needs and low access to resources, including resources available at OWCAP’s main site in Ogden. In Weber County, Roy City is second only to Ogden in percentage of households living in poverty, and with the ability to map Head Start applications by location, the agency learned that Roy needed to be an area of focus for OWCAP services. As such, OWCAP secured funding to renovate an unused building in Roy to become a satellite office for Head Start, Community Support, and the Roy Communities that Care program. This location is much more accessible to citizens of Roy and the surrounding area compared to OWCAP’s main building in Ogden.

OWCAP obtained and renovated another satellite office in the northern end of Weber County as this was also identified as an area with high need and low access to services for those living nearby. This location has Head Start Classrooms, community meeting spaces, and storage space, with the option to add more rooms in the future. It will be used by Head Start, Community Support, and other local partners.

These satellite offices increase OWCAP’s ability to find and connect with low-income families by meeting them where they are, reducing transportation barriers, and

bringing the needed services to more communities than ever before. ”

Utah Community Action

“Head Start children receive free healthy meals, made fresh daily in our Central Kitchen and delivered to our sites. These meals meet at least two-thirds of children’s daily nutritional needs not only for their health and well-being but for their intellectual and social development. Dietary accommodations are available.

In operation since 2010, UCA’s Central Kitchen is a successful social enterprise that now serves more than 720,000 meals each year to Head Start children, after-school programs, charter school students, and child care facilities

During the summer, UCA’s Central Kitchen continues to deliver meals to our year-round students. Additionally, the Central Kitchen runs the summer food program at 3 sites throughout Salt Lake County. This program runs for 10 weeks each summer. ”

Community Building

Community Action Agencies are a powerful force that build economic opportunities throughout their communities making them stronger and better places to live. From affordable housing opportunities to community gardens, CAAs pull community leaders together to improve the odds for Utahns. Central to the promise of Community Action is “helping people help themselves and each other.” That’s why Community Action Agencies work with local organizations to launch small business loan programs for entrepreneurs, build commercial properties, and create other economic development opportunities that help the community prosper. Agencies also engage local residents as volunteers who donate their time to support community growth. Across the country, business owners, volunteers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and local leaders work alongside agencies to amplify the impact of Community Action.

The Statewide Need



8.6% of Utahns live in areas that are economically distressed or at risk of being economically distressed.



of adults in Utah without a high school degree live in at-risk or economically disadvantaged areas

Our Reach

CAAs collaborated with more than

958

Community organizations to amplify their impact



Through various community initiatives, Community Action works to develop healthy communities that offer economic opportunity and actively engage people with low incomes

5 CAAs are Economic Development and Planning Agencies

Our Annual Impact

14,000 people engaged in activities to support themselves and the community

Total volunteer hours donated were valued at just over
\$2,575,519.00

42

new community assets were created by CAAs. This includes shared working spaces, landlord-tenant mediation programs, housing units, and living wage jobs that build communities.



Engaging Volunteers to Create And Preserve Community Resources

Uintah Basin Association of Governments

"Through our last Community Needs Assessment and numerous board discussions it was discovered there was a great need for more nutritious fresh produce to be available to the low-income population of the Uintah Basin. Many individuals and families in our area who are trying to live on lower wages or unemployment cannot afford the high cost of nutritious food and fresh produce. So in 2018 it was decided we would build a community pantry garden next to each of our food pantries.

This initiative has created two new community pantry gardens. During this last year the gardens produced 1,434 pounds of fresh vegetables to our low-income community. Not only have the gardens provided hundreds of pounds of much needed fresh produce,

but also provided great volunteer and learning opportunities to both adults and children in our area. We decided to build a garden every other year and spend the year in between improving the existing gardens and increasing the amount of community involvement. This last year was the first year we were able to plant and utilize both gardens. We were able to plant a great variety of plants such as, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, zucchini, eggplant, onions, peppers, cabbage, and a few others. The clients and volunteers in the community were so thankful for the extra nutritional food, along with the opportunity to learn how to grow and prepare a variety of foods. With the two gardens we have increased our volunteer hours donated by 26% and have been able to provide many great learning opportunities to volunteers and community members. We have learned even more how important having a garden to produce fresh vegetables can be especially in a crisis like the one the pandemic has brought on in the last few years."

Nutrition and Well-Being

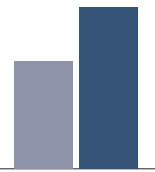
Nutrition and health go hand-in-hand. Nutrition plays an important role in improving health outcomes in persons of all ages. Poor health can negatively impact a family's income through medical debt and inability to work. Community Action Agencies that are also Area Agencies on Aging play an especially important role in improving the health for seniors on fixed incomes.

Research also suggests that nutrition may influence academic and behavioral outcomes in children and adolescents. Community Action Agencies operating Head Start programs highlight the importance of nutrition as part of kindergarten readiness and setting up youth for future academic success.

Community Action Agencies help families all over the country improve their health and well-being. Because healthy families build stronger communities, Community Action's health and well-being initiatives promote economic opportunity nationwide.

The State Need

From April 2021 to April 2022, the cost of food rose



by over 10%

More than **355,550**

Utahns cannot consistently afford adequate food for their household

7.4% of Seniors were food insecure prior to the pandemic

Food Insecurity adds an additional **\$140** in medical costs for each Utahn annually

Our Reach

9 CAAs provide food assistance in various ways:

6 CAAs supported Senior Congregate and Home Delivered Meals



5 CAAs operated/supported emergency food pantries

1 CAA serves as a food bank

1 CAA serves summer meals to children under 18

Our Annual Impact

More than **27,673** people received emergency food boxes

More than **3,139** children 0-5 improved their nutrition



1,600 people reported becoming food secure through case management and referrals - a healthcare savings of **\$225,000.00**



Photo: Shutterstock

Improving Food Access in Utah

Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments

"In our 2019 Community Needs Assessment, food insecurity was an identified barrier in our rural region. During the past two years, individuals and families facing food insecurity have increased substantially due to job loss, reduced work hours, and illness.

Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments (SEUALG) strengthened partnerships with Utahns Against Hunger, Utah Food Bank, County Commissioners, and partnerships to increase food security to vulnerable individuals and families in Carbon, Emery, Grand, and San Juan County. SEUALG Staff applied for grants that would allow us to increase deliveries to some of our most vulnerable populations in Carbon, Emery, Grand, and San Juan County, and increased deliveries to many families that have been unable to pick up monthly food boxes during the pandemic. San Juan County has the highest rate of food insecurity in our region and strengthening collaborations with San Juan Foundation, our agency was able to deliver thousands of pounds of food to some of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our region.

Comprehensive referral forms were created to provide to individuals and families receiving assistance to help them with needed services to assist in getting them out of crisis."

Community Action Services and Food Bank

"The Springville, Utah (immediately south of Provo), Kiwanis club contacted CASFB to inform them of an observation about the small pantry it was running. It was seeing increased demand. The club invited CASFB to partner with it and Early Learning Essentials, the local Head Start program, to create a small pantry that Head Start families and other community members could access. CASFB, in conjunction with the above mentioned organizations and a student from Brigham Young University's Civic Engagement minor program opened a food pantry at the Head Start building. It took a couple of months for word to get out and now it serves nearly 500 people a month from a very small space. In February 2020, CASFB and Early Learning Essentials came to an agreement to lease additional space that would more than double the size of the pantry. A community organization saw a need, contacted a community action agency that was equipped to quickly act, and additional families are now being served."

Housing

Stagnant wages and rising rents mean that housing consumes an ever-increasing share of household budgets. Coupled with medical bills, transportation expenses, and food, housing-related costs like utilities add to the financial strain that puts many families at risk of missing mortgage or rent payments. These challenges for families become even more prevalent in communities that simply don't have enough safe, affordable housing options to meet the need. Community Action Agencies help families rent or buy and maintain safe homes they can afford, and may also provide weatherization services that lower monthly utility bills and put millions of dollars back into family budgets. Agencies also address the housing needs of the whole community.

The Statewide Need

Nationally, only 21 of every 100 rental units are available for extremely low-income renter households

Low-income households typically spend 16% of their annual income on energy costs



On average, minimum wage workers would need to work 92 hours every week of the year to afford rent for a modest one-bedroom apartment

Our Reach

All CAAs operate housing programs

UCA supports a statewide landlord tenant mediation program that serves over 700 households

5 CAAs operate a weatherization assistance program

CAAs helped over

50,000

people obtain non-emergency energy assistance such as home heating or insulation

The network provided rental assistance and deposit assistance to over 30,000 Utahns

Our Annual Impact

50,350 individuals reduced energy burden through the weatherization and other utility assistance programs



5,900 people obtained safe, affordable housing and

7,700 people avoided an eviction

1,450 people obtained temporary shelter

CAA weatherization saved families more than \$381,865.00 in anticipated utility savings



A Collaborative Network Keeping Families in Their Homes

“Innovative Solutions occur within a state network when there is alignment between the State CSBG Office, State Association, and all Community Action Agencies. The State Association believes it is vitally important to highlight the innovations and increased capacity that occurred network-wide during the network’s pandemic response – primarily through statewide rental assistance programs. The relationships forged and strengthened over the last two years has led to growth across agencies and magnified Community Action’s impact!

In March 2020, the Community Action Network responded to housing concerns of low-income renters impacted by COVID’s shock to livelihoods, health, and well-being. Most agencies had years of experience providing rental assistance. As a statewide network, rental programs administered roughly 3 million dollars a year for a state with 3.2 million people in it. As housing needs increased, individual agency responses developed into a statewide response. Agencies which lacked prior experience joined in new programs, supported by agencies across the network, the state association, the State CSBG Office, and other partners. The statewide strategy for stabilizing households grew drastically in scope by June 2020. By the end of 2020, or nine months later, Community Action Agencies

provided over \$20,000,000 in rental assistance.

To say this was a small undertaking is an understatement. It was not without difficulties at the state and local level. However, as the network implemented the tenant-side of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA), the network played a key role in distributing over \$59,169,434. This could not have happened without the support of the State CSBG Office who maintained relationships with local agencies and for the peer support of the network. Through regular state office webinars, more effective state association meetings, and informal networking enabled by new technology platforms, Community Action Agencies provided each other with peer-solutions, support, and consultation. State Association staff can document over 12 examples of where peer recommendations for improving phone systems, database practices, virtual intake, software training, grant management, outreach, and trauma-informed practices increased the capacity of Community Action Agencies.

The drastic increase in rental assistance is not the only outcome seen in the network. As a result of the collective strength of the network, landlord-tenant mediation is being expanded statewide, the Utah Homeless Network has strong participation and support from Community Action Agencies, and agencies are more comfortable engaging peers in finding solutions to challenges. “

Jobs

Getting a job is one thing, and getting and keeping a full-time job that can support a family is another. Many families have been left behind as America has recovered from the Great Recession. Since 2007, wages have grown fastest for families already in the top 10 percent of income. And the number of Americans who want full-time jobs but cannot find them has increased nearly 45 percent since then. The barriers are even higher for Latino and Black families, single mothers, returning citizens, and other disproportionately affected groups that don't often have access to stable work and living wages. When educational gaps, transportation reliability, child care shortages, and other obstacles converge, many families can't overcome them on their own. The pandemic also impacted many families, with the unemployment rate spiking to 10% during 2020.

Community Action Agencies work to understand the barriers families face in the communities they serve, and they develop support systems - from job creation to skills training to child care - to meet local needs

The Statewide Need

60 thousand Utahns living in poverty worked full-time the entire year

After adjusting for inflation, today's average hourly wage has the same purchasing power as in 1978



30%
Families in poverty spend 30% of income on childcare

33,258 Utahns were unemployed in April 2022

Our Reach

CAAs are WIOA Required Partners and Collaborate with local DWS American Job Centers

5 CAAs are Economic Development Administration Planning Jurisdictions

3 CAAs operate commercial kitchens that support employment and entrepreneurship

1 CAA operates an intensive culinary job training program

CAAs supported **3,169 individuals** with transportation service employment.



Our Annual Impact



391 people obtained a job

172 people maintained their existing jobs

112 people with existing jobs increased their salaries through promotions or additional work hours

58 people created businesses

Build Back Better Grant Proposal

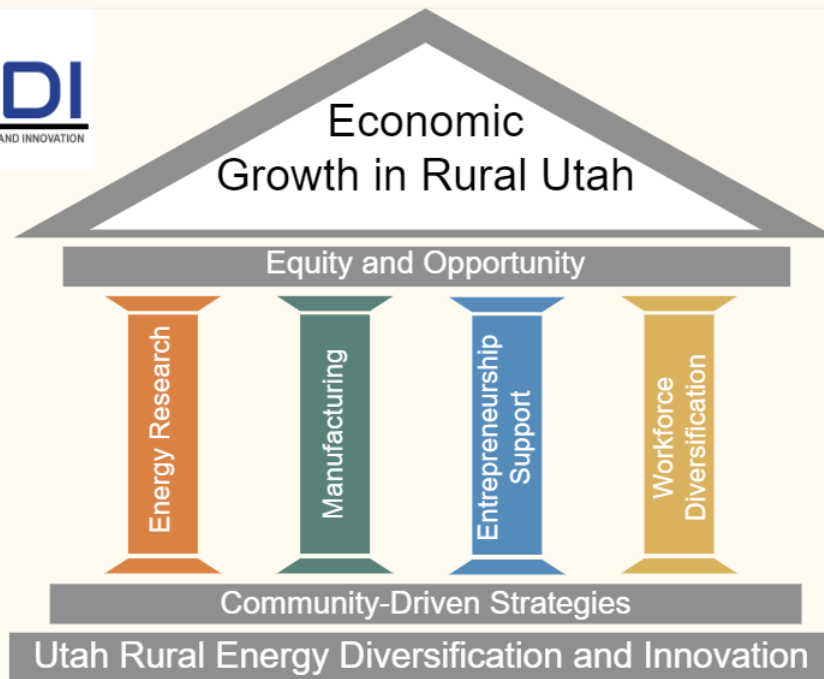


Photo: Shutterstock

CAAs Connect Low-Income Clients to Jobs

Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments

The Poverty Reduction Lab is a strategic task force that convenes community leaders in an environment of radical collaboration. The PRL is made up of community volunteers from public, private, community, faith based, and educational institutions. The collaborative group identifies systemic barriers and identifies potential economic opportunity. The PRL also coordinates family level programs that stabilize, connect, train, mentor, and remove barriers towards self-reliance.

Human services providers, over time, this partnership has evolved and grown - recognizing the economy should work for people and that all human capital is critical for a thriving economy. This is vital in counties that are economically distressed or at-risk of being economically distressed.

Equity is an important component of this project, ensuring that economic opportunity does not leave families behind. The project also recognizes role of family and community-level work.

The Utah Rural Energy Diversification and Innovation

(U-REDI) project is the most recent collaboration. This project is a finalist for the Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Challenge. It has already invested over \$15 million dollars into Emery County.

New Community Assets Created Include:

- Business Technical Assistance Center
- Carbon County Co-working Space
- A Commercial Kitchen Incubator
- Expansion of high-speed broadband with public sector partners into Carbon county
- 15 primary - "living wage" jobs created in Carbon County- the equivalent of 540 jobs in Salt Lake County
- The establishment of the San Rafael Energy Research Center in an abandoned coal warehouse - which looks to diversify energy production and promote energy-efficient, high-tech manufacturing
- Establishment of an equity/inclusion advisory board



About the Community Action Partnership of Utah

WHO WE ARE

Community Action Partnership of Utah (CAP Utah) is the statewide association for Utah's nine Community Action Agencies. The Community Action network envisions an end to poverty in Utah. Our member agencies work toward this vision every day by providing services to low-income families and individuals across the state.

MISSION

CAP Utah leads, strengthens, and supports the Community Action network by working with community stakeholders to advocate for vulnerable populations, build thriving communities, and end poverty.

VISION

We envision a state where residents are self-sufficient and communities are thriving

LEARN MORE

Visit <https://caputah.org/>



Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the leadership of our Community Action Impact Report Editorial Advisory Committee of the National Community Action Partnership.

We would like to thank Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS's) - Housing and Community Services Division for the data that came from agency 2021 Community Services Block Grant Annual Report. Additional Data came for DWS's Workforce Analytics Division from jobs.utah.gov.

Other data sources:

- Feeding America - Map My Meal Tool
- US Census Bureau
- Prosperity Now



The Vision of Community Action Partnership

A nation that creates opportunities for all people to thrive, builds strong, resilient communities, and ensures a more equitable society.

The Mission of Community Action Partnership

To ensure the causes and conditions of poverty are effectively addressed and to strengthen, promote, represent, and serve the Community Action Network.

The Values of Community Action Partnership

We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect and recognize that structural race, gender, and other inequities remain barriers that must be addressed.

We believe that this nation has the capacity and moral obligation to ensure that no one is forced to endure the hardships of poverty.

We believe that with hope, adequate resources, and opportunities, everyone can reach their fullest potential, and we are committed to achieving that vision.

We pledge ourselves to creating an environment that pursues innovation and excellence through multi-sector partnership and collaboration.



<https://caputah.org/>

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