



3435 Liberty Drive  
Springfield, IL 62704

# NEWS



Volume 30  
November 2004

## ICAA Launches Dialogue on Poverty

ICAA encourages all Illinois Community Action Agencies to participate the 2004 Dialogue on Poverty, "Finding Perspectives and Creating Solutions." This is an excellent opportunity to measure the state of poverty, create awareness and seek effective, practical solutions to local and national causes of poverty.

Every four years, Community Action Agencies are asked convene local community meetings to discuss specific poverty issues. In past years, this knowledge has not been shared with our state and national stakeholders in our fight against poverty. This time, ICAA is committed to reporting the Dialogue results on all levels – this report will provide the larger picture of poverty in the State of Illinois, not through statistical analysis, but

through the eyes and ears of those citizens intimately familiar with the face of poverty.

In this 40<sup>th</sup> year of Community Action, ICAA remains committed to implementing recommendations at both the state and federal level and to assisting Illinois Community Action Agencies in implementing local solutions. Your participation in the Dialogue is a critical step in this process. By now, all agencies should have received Dialogue Kits and additional materials to support the organization and direction of their local dialogues. A training will be held at our December meeting to help bring clarity to this process. At our May 2005 Annual Meeting, ICAA will share the Dialogue results.

If you need further information, please contact Sara Ratcliffe at ICAA. ■

## Community Action Tour

On October 25, ICAA, along with Executive Directors and staff from ECICAA, PCCEO, IVEDC, MCCS, and NICAA departed on the third Community Action Tour to promote the Dialogue on Poverty and the good work that the local Commu-

nity Action Agencies do. The tour traveled to Mid Central Illinois Community Action, Kankakee County Community



A crowd gathers to watch the press conference in Danville.

Services, East Central Illinois Community Action, Embarras River Basin Agency, MCS Community Services and Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation. News conferences were held in most of the cities and state and

local officials came out to support Community Action. ■



# ICAA Members Featured in Annual HUD Peer-to-Peer Conference

## Contents

Dialogue on Poverty..... 1  
 CA Tour..... 1  
 HUD Peer to Peer..... 2  
 Welch Woods.....3  
 Public Policy Update..... 4  
 FCD Funding Remains... 5  
 FCD Training..... 5  
 RCAP..... 6  
 IDA Program..... 6  
 CFNP Update.....7  
 National Conference..... 7  
 Conference Registration.8

## Community Action Officers

Dwight A. Lucas, CCAP,  
 Chair  
 East Central Illinois  
 Community Action Agency  
 Danville, Illinois

McFarland A. Bragg II,  
 Vice-Chair  
 Peoria Citizens Committee  
 for Economic Opportunity  
 Peoria, Illinois

Frank Schwab, Treasurer  
 Illinois Valley Economic  
 Development Corporation  
 Gillespie, Illinois

Mary Lockhart-White, CCAP,  
 Secretary  
 Community Action  
 Partnership of Lake County  
 Waukegan, Illinois

Dalitso Sulamoyo, CCAP,  
 President & CEO  
 Illinois Community Action  
 Association  
 Springfield, Illinois



Volume 30  
 November 2004



On September 21 and 22, Rockford hosted the Sixth Annual HUD Peer-to-Peer Homeless Provider Conference at the Cliffbreakers Hotel and Conference Center. ICAA has worked with HUD's Chicago Field Office to produce the conference since 1999. This year, the Wisconsin and Missouri HUD offices helped bring technical assistance to providers from those states, as well as to Illinois providers. Nearly 300 providers attended, an increase of approximately 60 over last year and close to four times the attendance of the 1999 conference.



This year the Association owes much to contributions from members and ICAA alumni. Bus tours of Rockford homeless programs proved to be a popular and successful addition. Jennifer Jaeger and Nancy McDonald from Rockford's Human Services Department were instrumental in coordinating many aspects of Peer-to-Peer 2004, and ICAA's Sara Ratcliffe worked to identify Consumer Panel participants and coordinated the tours.

Keynote speakers this year included Rockford Mayor Doug Scott and Patricia Carlile, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs Assistance in HUD's Washington D.C. headquarters.



ICAA members were among the most popular of the workshop presenters. Denise Johnson from Project NOW presented an informative session on program evaluation, and an ERBA workshop on permanent housing for persons with disabilities in rural settings was very well received. Staffers participating included Susie Beaumont, Nina Kistner, and Larry Sullivan.



A special feature of Peer-to-Peer 2004 was a general session entitled Illinois' Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan and Initiative. Speakers included Joyce Probst, former Director of Housing Development for ICAA's Illinois Community Action Development Corporation. She is now Senior Policy Development Advisor on Housing for Governor Blagojevich. Joyce was joined by Jane Bilger, Chief of Staff and Assistant Executive Director



for the Illinois Housing Development Authority, and Sharon Hess, Executive Director of the Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless and member of the Executive Committee of the Governor's Affordable Housing Task Force. Sharon is also a former WADI employee. ■

## Welch Woods Project Kicks Off

The City of Beardstown has a pressing need for quality affordable housing as new families arrive to work at Excel, a pork processing plant. The 2000 Census found Beardstown's population at 5,766 residents, a 9% growth from 1990; however, more recent demographic studies project the population to be more than 7,000. To meet the demand for housing, existing housing is being subdivided into smaller, inadequate units. There is also an increase in mobile home permits, and families are known to reside in towns up to 60 miles away from where they work. MCS Community Services submitted a request to the Illinois Community Action Development Corporation (ICADC) to consider the community for a project which the ICADC Board approved in 2001.

ICADC and MCS Community Services worked closely with both the elected officials and staff of Beardstown and Cass County on the proposed project. With constricted property choices ICADC was able to identify an attractive site in a residential neighborhood. The site is locally known as the Welch place after the family that lived and farmed on the property for the last 75 years; out of respect for this history ICADC has named the proposed project Welch Woods.

ICADC recently obtained conditional financial commitment on the 42 unit family apartment complex. The \$5 million dollar project is being financed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Illinois Housing Development Authority HOME Funds and Illinois Housing Development Authority Trust Fund. Construction, on the project could start in November 2004 and be com-

pleted by October 2005. This project was one of twelve projects funded, under the State's 2004 tax credit allocation, out of a total of forty-three submissions.



*A friendly, affordable housing  
community*



The Welch Woods apartment complex will contain 42 rental housing units constructed in nine one- and two-story buildings, built around a central road. The new construction units will provide thirty (30) two bedroom and twelve (12) three bedroom units, in nine separate buildings, along with a community center. The average size of a two bedroom unit is approximately 1016 square feet, while the three bedroom units will average approximately 1140 square feet.

Each unit will have an open floor plan, front and rear entrances, full kitchen appliances, including dishwashers, full window treatments and carpeting in the bedrooms. The units will also include wiring for Internet access and a private patio for outdoor living. There will also be a community center and play lot, on site.

The community center is available for meetings and intake services for the MCS Community Services.

The project will rent the thirty (30) two bedroom units, \$294 to \$400 per month, and twelve (12) three bedroom units, from \$365 to \$455 per month, depending on income.

Cass County's community action agency, MCS Community Services intends to provide a range of services to residents including a college scholarship program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and other emergency services. ■

## Public Policy Update

### ICAA Candid Camera: Poverty Rally



Thousands of Community Action supporters participated in the "No Room for Poverty" National Rally.



Rally participants listen to the many speakers of the day.



ICAA staff members Mary Collier and John Bowersmith pose for the camera.



### Federal Issues

*Reauthorization of CSBG, Head Start, and LIHEAP and Weatherization* - Reauthorization of all these programs will not happen this year. There is so much acrimony between the partisan factions of Congress that there is no will to move these issues on either side. They are going to wait and let the 109th Congress sort it out.

*Appropriation of CSBG, Head Start, and LIHEAP and Weatherization* - The house has passed the Labor - HHS - Education Appropriation Bill. However, the Senate is moving a little slower and has recently passed the Labor - HHS - Education Appropriation Bill out of the Labor - HHS - Education Subcommittee. In the House bill, CSBG is funded at \$627.5 million (down by \$147 mil under last yr) and LIHEAP is funded at \$1.8 billion. In the Senate, the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee has recommended CSBG funding at \$650 (up by \$8 mil over last yr) and LIHEAP is at \$1.811 billion (11 million more than the House level).

Will the appropriations bills pass before Congress breaks for the election? This is a good question. Maybe they will pass, but then again maybe not. There are a couple of options Congressional leaders can implement: 1) They can get it over with, pass the appropriations bills and not have to come back for a Lame Duck session after the election; or 2) Pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) that lets programs run until after the election or even into next year. However, since both the House and Senate Appropriation Chairs will have to step down at the end of the 108th Congress (due to term limits on Committee Chairs) they may want to end their tenure on a positive note and pass the bills. If number three happens look for one of those very large omnibus bills that combines numerous Approp Bills into one bill. Stay tuned on this. For further info visit the National Community Action Foundation at: <http://www.ncaf.org/>

### State Issues

*Illinois Rental Assistance Bill* ICAA is working in coalition with SHAC and the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless concerning an initiative to get state funding for rental assistance. Basically this bill will provide rental assistance for low-income renters and will be funded through a \$10 surcharge on real estate transactions. Nine dollars will go to the fund and \$1 will stay in the local county where it is collected. It is important for CAA's to know what this bill is about and how it is an important and a needed program. There is a legislative bill that advocates will be moving during the Veto Session in November. For further info on this bill go to: <http://www.ittakesahome.org/rentalbill.html>.

*Affordable Energy Plan* The Affordable Energy Plan is a comprehensive proposal that would offer progressive reform of the Illinois LIHEAP program. This plan (which ICAA has helped to design) would offer a percentage of income payment plan (PIPP); a new reconnection rule; strategic hedging of the price of natural gas; arrearage reduction for regular payments; and increased reporting requirements for utilities. Stay tuned, ICAA will be posting the full plan on the ICAA website in the near future.

*People's Energy Dialogues on Energy Assistance* Peoples Energy has worked with the Black and Latino Caucuses to conduct four meetings to have a comprehensive discussion on LIHEAP and energy assistance. The meetings were held starting in late September and concluding in the end of October. The first meeting was in Waukegan, then Chicago, then Springfield and the fourth one in East St. Louis. ■

If you have any questions concerning this Public Policy Update, contact John Colgan ([JTColgan@icaanet.org](mailto:JTColgan@icaanet.org)) or Holly Copeland-Lasley ([hcopeland@icaanet.org](mailto:hcopeland@icaanet.org)) or at ICAA - 217-789-0125.

## FCD Funding Remains

Despite the budget cuts, reorganizations, and layoffs that occurred during the State's past budget season, the ICAA was able to secure funding for the Family and Community Development Program from the Department of Human Services. The 11<sup>th</sup> hour breakthrough for funding underscores the importance of advocacy and sharing the outcomes clients achieve through the FCD Program. In this time of tighter state budgets it is critical that the funds awarded for this program are fully spent by the sub-grantee agencies. It is harder to justify the need for funds if agencies fail to spend all their grant awards. Of course, agencies are at a disadvantage because they do not receive the funding until the end of the first quarter. Moreover, case management is not a short term "fix" but a long term process of helping someone become self-sufficient. Yet the realities of a limited funding stream and the politics that dictate the flow of the funding requires a conscious effort to spend funds to demonstrate the continued need for the program.

This year, the Department of Human Services reduced the grant by four percent as part of an overall reduction in their grant funds. Sixteen agencies applied for funding with a total request of over \$500,000 competing for a grant amount of only \$232,000. Thirteen agencies were awarded FCD grants. They include:

BCMW Community Services, Inc.  
 CEFS Economic Opportunity Corporation  
 Champaign Regional Planning Commission  
 DeKalb County Community Services Department  
 DuPage County Division of Human Services  
 Embarras River Basin Agency  
 East Central Illinois Community Action Agency  
 Madison County Community Development  
 Project Now, Inc.  
 Rockford Human Services Department  
 Shawnee Development Council  
 Tri County Opportunities Council  
 Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council

The application and review process was streamlined this year. Applications only had to be five pages but required very specific information. This helped the review team consisting of a CAA director, DCEO staff and ICAA staff to evaluate the volume of applications in a timely manner. Overall, the criteria made the applications stronger and more competitive. Given the uncertainty of funding and shrinking dollars, the review process must also be revamped. ■

## FCD Training

Beginning this fall, the Family and Community Development Specialist Training has a new look, a new university affiliation and a new curriculum. These changes are in response to the national effort to incorporate ROMA into Community Action trainings and outreach plus the ongoing efforts, by ICAA, to reinvigorate the FCD program for the Illinois Network and, most importantly, continue to deliver cost-effective training.

Earlier this year, ICAA staff sought and received proposals from Illinois Higher Education institutions and selected the University of Illinois-Springfield to help develop and present the FCD training. ICAA convened a focus group of recent FCD graduates and asked for their input and insight. The end result is a new curriculum geared for the Illinois Network, and owned by ICAA.

The 12 day course will be team taught, both by UIS faculty members and ICAA staff. This development of the curriculum has been a joint effort, involving many hours of meetings, coordination of materials and countless e-mails. The focus of the training remains on family-strengths case management, with several areas being enhanced. Outcome based performance and management will be emphasized, along with the history of poverty and community action. The Family Self-Sufficiency Scale also remains an integral part of the training, with ROMA being woven in throughout the course of the training.

The FCD training will be offered at least twice a year in Springfield, in addition to agency hosted training. The cost, per student in Springfield, will remain at \$950 and, outside of Springfield, \$1050. For further information and scheduling, please contact Christine Westerlund at ICAA. ■

ICAA Candid Camera: CA Tour



Rep. Grunloh addresses the crowd at ERBA



Head Start children sing and perform at ERBA.



Participants tour the CIEDC facility.



John Burrill welcomes the tour to Mid Central CAA



## RCAP

The Illinois Rural Community Assistance Partnership (IRCAP) would like to report on the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Community Development Assistance Program grant funds awarded to IRCAP communities. This year IRCAP leveraged \$2,355,235.00 from DCEO CDAP grants for water and wastewater projects in rural Illinois. RCAP leveraged \$10.25 in DCEO CDAP funds for every \$1 in program funding RCAP receives. The communities assisted by IRCAP in pursuing DCEO funding are as follows with their award amounts:

Oconee	\$ 53,340.00
Ohlman	\$ 56,100.00
Roodhouse	\$170,440.00
Eldred	\$105,000.00
Shelbyville	\$350,000.00
Bunker Hill	\$350,000.00
Murphysboro	\$165,000.00
DeSoto	\$ 55,355.00
Dana	\$350,000.00
Reading	\$350,000.00
Breckemyer	\$350,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$2,355,235.00

IRCAP is pleased to assist these communities in receiving this funding on behalf of their local community action agencies. This leverage is a service you provide as an Illinois Community Action Agency to rural communities in your service areas. Feel free to contact the IRCAP staff with questions regarding these or other water and wastewater projects. ■

## IDA Program Shows Results!

With the help of National City grant money as well as participating community action agencies, The Illinois Community Action Association (ICAA) launched its first IDA program in late 2000 with the award of an Assets for Independence Act (AFIA) grant from HHS/OCS. Two years later, ICAA applied for and was awarded another grant from HHS OCS, again with support from National City and participating community action agencies. As those involved can attest, the IDA program can be at times, a confusing and trying program. However, in the past year all the hard work of the IDA staff at the agency sites as well as ICAA IDA staff has begun to pay off.

The first IDA grant has to date had 26 graduates purchase their asset: 9 for homes, 6 for small businesses and 11 for secondary education. These graduates saved a total of \$29,902.79. While this figure within itself is impressive, keep in mind that in order to be eligible to participate in the program, the household income cannot exceed 200% of poverty. This makes the amount saved more than impressive, it makes it truly amazing.

Last month for the first time in over 2 years, HHS/OCS had a national training conference in New Orleans. Three ICAA staff and 2 agency site staff attended. This meeting provided very useful answers to questions posed by the grantees with ideas for making the program more successful as well as new information such as the introduction of the new tracking system soon to be available. The current tracking system known as MIS IDA has been touted by many users as confusing, time consuming and not user-friendly. This new system will be much simpler to use and will be accessed online. The system will be going live in the very near future.

In addition, ICAA is in the process of putting together a news conference. This will be an exciting one, with IDA graduates from around the state present to tell their stories, as well as their IDA sponsors, National City and ICAA IDA staff. Be sure to watch your email for more details. ■

## CFNP Update

The Illinois Community Action Association (ICAA) is offering start-up grants for community action agencies to begin new Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) feeding sites during the summer of 2005. When school lets out, millions of low-income children lose access to the school breakfasts, lunches and after school snacks they receive during the regular school year. The SFSP is a key to filling this gap. The SFSP provides meals and snacks to children who might otherwise go hungry and is often provided in conjunction with educational, developmental, and recreational activities. Federal reimbursements are available to pay for the program once it is up and running. If you are interested in obtaining additional information about the start-up grants please contact Holly Copeland-Lasley at 217-789-0125.

July marked the beginning of the ICAA's second year of collaborating with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Hunger Coalition and the Dairy Council to get schools with high percentages of low-income students to begin sponsoring the National School Breakfast Program (SBP). Throughout the past year ICAA staff has provided technical assistance to schools throughout Illinois as they go through the process of initiating a new SBP site. In collaboration with the other breakfast partner organizations, the ICAA is planning two conferences in November that will address the barriers that are responsible for discouraging

schools from participating in the SBP. The overall goal of these activities is to get three-hundred schools to begin sponsoring the SBP in Illinois by May of 2005.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) recently received a substantial federal grant to develop the technology that will allow individuals to submit food stamp, TANF and Medicare applications via the Internet. Once completed, this will negate the need for individuals to go into the local office to submit their applications and/or for their recertification appointments. The IDHS decided that as this technology is developed, it will be beneficial to obtain the input and recommendations of representatives in the community. ICAA staff has been asked by the IDHS to participate in this external advisory committee and attended the initial meeting in September.

Senator Durbin's office contacted ICAA earlier this year and requested information about agencies that are fighting hunger in their local communities. Soon thereafter ICAA was notified that Senator Durbin intended to nominate Project NOW to receive the Congressional Hunger Award based on the exceptional work that has been accomplished through the agency's food stamp outreach project. Although, Project NOW was not selected as an award recipient, the ICAA would like to congratulate the agency for being nominated to receive such a prestigious award. ■

## National Conference

This year 14 Community Action Agencies from Illinois and the Illinois Community Action Association celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Community Action by participating in the Community Action Partnership National Conference and the "No Room for Poverty" National Rally in Washington, D.C. August 31-September 4, 2004.

The Conference offered many learning opportunities in the various workshops for Community Action Staff. There were also plenty of opportunities for networking at the different receptions. CEDA and ICAA hosted a reception for the Illinois contingent where colleagues were able

to relax and engage in good conversation. At the Gala celebrating the 40th anniversary of Community Action several Community Action Awards were distributed to deserving individuals. After the Gala dinner there was a dance party with a variety of music for everyone.

On Saturday, September 4, thousands of Community Action supporters gathered on the ellipse across from the White House to rally for an end to poverty. Several speakers addressed the crowd and various singing

groups performed. All in all it was truly an inspiring week. ■



Illinoisans at the "No Room for Poverty" National Rally

# Winter Membership Conference 2004

## Sunday, December 5

- 4:00-5:30 ICAA Board Meeting
- 5:30-7:00 ICADC Board Meeting

## Monday, December 6

- 7:45-8:30 Registration
- 8:30-9:15 Motivational Speaker
- 9:30-11:30 Facilitated Forums  
*A time to network with colleagues about the day to day challenges facing Community Action Professionals. The following forums will be offered:*
  - LIHEAP
  - Weatherization
  - Head Start
  - Housing
  - IDA
  - Nutrition
  - Fiscal Staff
  - Executive Directors
- 11:30-12:15 Committee Meetings
  - Legislative
  - Program Development
  - Professional Development
- 12:30-1:30 Lunch
  - Ron Carter, Director of Strategic Planning, DHS
- 1:30-2:00 Legislative Committee of the Whole
- 2:00-2:30 ICAA Business Meeting

## Monday continued

- 2:30-3:00 ICADC Business Meeting
- 3:00-4:00 John Barry, IDPA  
LIHEAP Challenges
- 4:30-5:00 Earned Income tax Credit Seminar
- 4:30-5:30 ICAF Meeting
- 4:30-6:30 Free time
- 6:30-8:00 ICAF Reception

## Tuesday, December 7

- 9:00-12:30 Mock Poverty Dialogue  
 The Mock Poverty Dialogue is a hands on simulation training in real time of the entire dialogue process.
- 12:30 Closing Remarks

### Hotel Information

A block of sleeping rooms has been reserved at the Embassy Suites Lakefront for the nights of December 5-6, 2004 at a rate of \$124/single and \$144/double under Illinois Community Action Association. Availability and reduced rates are not guaranteed after **NOVEMBER 12**. Please call 312-836-5900 or 866-866-8095 for reservations.

## Registration

Registration is \$165.00 per attendee and is due no later than November 19.

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail or fax registration to:  
 ICAA  
 3435 Liberty Drive  
 Springfield, IL 52704  
 217-789-0139

Registrant Name	Title	Price
<b>Total</b>		