TRI COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION

2019-2024 Strategic Plan

History

Community Action Commission (CAC) was incorporated in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on April 12, 1966 as a private, nonprofit, anti-poverty planning agency serving Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Counties. The purpose of the Community Action Commission is:

- To study poverty in Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry Counties.
- To form strategies to reduce the causes of poverty.
- To involve meaningfully, neighborhood representatives and others in the resolution of community needs.
- To facilitate the delivery of services and resources.
- To evaluate programs and to change them as conditions warrant new approaches.
- To inform the community of problems of poverty.
- To act as the coordinating mechanism to receive and distribute funds necessary for the operation of the many services logistically allied to this effort.

In January 2014, CAC began doing business as Tri County Community Action (TCCA) in order to better reflect our three county service area; Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry Counties.

Our Promise, the Promise of Community Action, is to change people's lives, embody the spirit of home, improve communities, and make America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Today, Tri County Community Action offers a comprehensive approach to individual, family, and neighborhood success. We offer a myriad of programming all in effort to support families, strengthen communities, and eliminate poverty.

Current Programs and Initiatives

Tri County Community Action's current programs and initiatives are organized in six major areas:

- Self-Sufficiency which encompasses Getting Ahead, Financial Literacy and Education, Supportive Services, and our long-term Case Management programming, including the S.T.A.R.T. (Skills, Training and Readiness, Today!) initiative. These programs provide support for individuals and families to develop long-term goals to move out of poverty. Our Case Managers identify needs, navigate resources, and create connections that move clients forward.

- Family Center which encompasses Parents As Teachers, Fatherhood 24/7 Dads, Positive Parenting Program, and ACT: Raising Safe Kids. Focused on supporting families, these programs are designed to ensure children meet development milestones and are school-ready, parents are equipped to handle the challenges of parenthood, and families move forward as strong units together.

- PPL OnTrack which is for low-income PPL electric utility customers. Eligible enrollees receive a reduced monthly payment, which when paid on time over time reduces any past due balances on their account. Enrollees learn the fundamentals of budgeting, and ways to make smart electricity usage decisions in their home.

- Housing and Credit Repair Counseling which includes Credit Counseling, First Time Homebuyer Education, Prepared Renter Education, and assistance with completing Home Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP) applications. As a PHFA certified housing counseling agency, we offer one-on-one and group workshop training and counseling so that individuals are prepared and successful long-term home owners.

- Neighborhood Revitalization includes a myriad of community planning activities and leverages relationships, community engagement, and partnerships within focused communities by offering human services, physical and safety improvements, and attracting investment into the community.

- Keystone Community Development Corporation is a registered 501c2 subsidiary of Tri County Community Action and was created to stabilize and re-invigorate community and economic development in the South Allison Hill neighborhood of Harrisburg. Through these efforts, Keystone owns several commercial and community spaces.

Results of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan

Goal 1	Align programs, services and agency operations to meet the needs identified in the community.
Goal 2	Reduce the agency's overall dependence on government funding by increasing fund development activities.
Goal 3	Increase advocacy work.
Goal 4	Increase overall organizational capacity.

Each goal had identified objectives. Key outcomes achieved were:

Goal 1

- A satellite office was opened in northern Dauphin County.
- A transportation program was launched in partnership with Dauphin County targeting northern Dauphin County residents.
- The Getting Ahead curriculum was implemented, and Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World and Getting Ahead in the Workplace are now facilitated across the region.
- The Across Ages youth program was retired and Bridges 4 Life was implemented.
- The S.T.A.R.T. initiative was launched.
- An updated comprehensive community needs assessment was completed.

Goal 2

- A development plan was created and launched, along with the creation of a full-time Development Director position.
- New foundation grants were received.
- Relationships with potential funders and partners are being cultivated.

Goal 3

- A "gear wear" options for staff was created allowing them to affordably receive agency branded clothing.
- Poverty Simulations were provided in all three counties.
- A new website was launched.
- Branding guidelines were created and disseminated.

Goal 4

- Several new positions were created including a Development Director, a Volunteer Coordinator, a new Revitalization Coordinator, a northern Dauphin Case Manager, and other positions were modified to increase capacity.
- Draft volunteer policies and procedures were created.
- A new agency-wide client database system to better track both activities and outcomes for client-based programs was implemented.
- Our IT infrastructure was stabilized which minimizes down-time and outages.
- A comprehensive salary survey was conducted, and staff salaries were adjusted to ensure all positions are competitive.
- The Personnel Policies, Fiscal Policies, and Board By-Laws were all reviewed and updated.

Approach to 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Tri County Community Action desired to adopt a different approach to traditional strategic planning, which is typically based on a snapshot in time. We desired a long-range plan that would be flexible, adaptable, and help us respond to our rapidly changing environment, and we used David La Piana's *Real-Time Strategic Planning in a Rapid Response World* as our guide.

As a result of this process, Tri County Community Action was able to:

- More meaningfully engage both staff and the Board of Directors in the planning process,
- Develop a deeper and shared understanding of our current programming and services,
- Develop an ability to quickly and continuously recognize and respond to changes in trends and other factors in the environment that may impact us,
- Improve our capacity for strategic thinking,
- Create a process that can be used repeatedly and continually to build and revise successful strategies,
- And create a process that keeps us mission focused and using data to inform our decision-making.

Our Mission:

The mission of Tri County Community Action is to build on the strengths and resources available, provide solutions for complex issues, and empower individuals, families, and communities to move out of poverty.

Our Vision:

We all live in a community free from poverty.

At Tri County Community Action, we believe:

- That program decisions should be on the basis of need versus funding streams.
- That identifying community needs has to reflect self-assessment through a grassroots effort.
- That the values of respect and caring for one another transcend economic status, while recognizing the inherent worth of each individual.
- We should not limit our focus to social services but include other community systems in our planning, both formal and informal.
- In a multi-system approach to transformation of individuals, families and communities.
- All persons should have the opportunity for maximum growth and development, health, happiness, well-being and economic self-sufficiency.
- Every individual has the ultimate responsibility for the quality of his/her own life.
- In a balance between direct service provisions and in system-wide planning, development and advocacy.
- That to ensure agency effectiveness and flexibility, it must strengthen our ability to bring about self-sufficiency.
- That all segments of a community need to be aware of issues limiting advancement
- In recognizing cultural diversity in service delivery.
- In comprehensive and coordinated service delivery networks.
- That with proper networking and communication, services are available.

Business Model

Tri County Community Action has evolved over its 50 plus year history. Additionally, the nonprofit environment has also shifted over time. As such, it is important to our future that we clarify and identify our current position in the marketplace, and to define our preferred future.

Geographic Area

We work primarily in Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Counties in Pennsylvania. However, we can work with residents living in other counties based on specific programming/contract requirements. Tri County Community Action will consider contiguous areas if significant, competitive advantage and funding resources exist.

Customers

We provide services and supports to individuals and families, but also work with businesses, employees, and entire neighborhoods through various initiatives. While Tri County Community Action is an anti-poverty program and does prioritize lifting up low-income individuals and families, we do work with people of all incomes.

Programs and Services

We are intentional about not providing emergency/crisis services – which are those services that keep a situation from getting worse, they do not make any lasting change in an individual's situation. While we believe these services are important, we believe there are quality community and faith-based organizations already in place, and that our resources are best used for moving families from crisis to self-sufficiency.

Additionally, we believe that providing services in partnership with others is key to creating lasting and long-term change. As such, we work with many community partners on a broad range of initiatives.

Funding

Tri County Community Action is primarily funded through federal, state, and local government grants and contracts. We do have some fee for service programming, such as our supportive services, but most of our contracts are cost-reimbursement based. Corporate and private donations, foundation grants, and fundraising currently comprise a small portion of our budget. We do not accept funding with stipulations that conflict with our values or mission.

Market

In order to understand our position in the marketplace, we must have a clear sense of the community and its needs, identify our competitors, and continually asses the needs of the people and communities we service. Tri County Community Action conducts community needs assessments, with a focus on the populations we serve, and uses that data to guide decision-making and program planning.

Tri County Community Action is also mindful that there are many quality organizations with whom we compete for resources. In many cases, we partner with our competitors particularly where the people we service are concerned.

As part of this planning process, we identified our key competitors and analyzed their key strengths and advantages. Tri County Community Action noted admiration and support for our competitors' specialization, marketing, presence, and fund development activities.

Competitive Advantages

Understanding our competitive advantage is one of the most important components of strategy. Competitive advantage exists when an organization possesses a unique and desirable asset to capability. Tri County Community Action possess these competitive advantages in our market:

- A wide range and diversity of services with a comprehensive, whole family approach.
- Evidence of success and outcomes.
- Fiscal strength.
- Vast connections and partnerships.
- Strong leadership and board of directors.
- The Community Services Block Grant.
- Our "community action attitude".
- Our "boots on the street".
- Positive visibility and commitment.
- Offices in all three counties.

In recognizing our advantages, we are also cognizant of our challenges and opportunities to strengthen. These represent potential areas for strategy development.

- Demands to expand existing programming across the entire service region continues to grow, but funding in stagnate.
- A high proportion of the budget is government funding.
- Nearly all of our funding is restricted.
- Talking about the agency is difficult because of the diversity in programming.
- People only know us for the program that they access, and not for everything that we do.
- Public perception is that Tri County Community Action is a Harrisburg or Dauphin County only agency.
- Our satellite locations are not connected to our main network, and staff are unable to work remotely.
- Our satellite offices are small and have limited capacity.
- Tri County Community Action has historically not fundraised before.

Trends

At Tri County Community Action, we continually monitor our environment to understand and forecast social, political, economic, and technological trends that may impact us. Here are some of the trends which may affect our current and future plans:

- We'll always have staff turnover and vacancies.
- While employment opportunities may be growing, many are low-wage paying jobs.
- Because our region is growing in population, the need is also growing.
- The face of poverty is changing.
- Unfunded mandates are increasing (for example, mandating staff have a specialized certification but not paying for the workshops/classes necessary to obtain or maintain it).
- The media paints a good picture of the economy but low-income working families are struggling.
- Private landlords don't want to accept housing vouchers.
- Our affordable housing stock is aging.
- Our population is aging.
- In the current political environment, hate is often sanctioned.
- More funders are pushing regionalization of contracts.
- More pressure on impacting social determinates of health.
- Program participants want short-term but high-impact services.
- Technology is rapidly changing.
- Using data to inform decision-making is becoming critical.

Each of these trends will shape Tri County Community Action in some fashion. It is critically important that we remain focused on our ever changing environment and plan proactively to respond to these and other trends as they emerge.

What is Strategy?

Our goal is to advance and meet our mission. To do this, Tri County Community Action must use our resources in the most effective way possible. We have to be flexible, responsive, and adaptable so that we can change quickly, as our environment

changes, and be prepared to obtain the resources we need to achieve the results we seek. We use organizational, programmatic, and operational strategies to intentionally strengthen our capacity.

Strategic Implementation:

Tri County Community Action has implemented strategic roadmaps for each objective to guide the board and staff in implementation, as well as for providing as system for monitoring progress and measuring success. Staff and Board champions will lead the individual strategies.

Strategic Plan Flexibility:

We are mindful that our strategies are fluid and may well change as we respond to external influences and shifts in governmental policy and direction. We are confident that our Real Time Strategic Planning approach will serve Tri County Community Action well as we respond to this uncharted period in our history.

Strategy Screen:

Our strategy screen is the specific decision-making criteria used to evaluate our potential strategies. It is a simple yet powerful tool. The screen is a guide to help determine if a particular strategy or approach is consistent with our identity, values, business model, and market position. As our environment changes, we can quickly evaluate opportunities and challenges by running possible strategies through our screen.

Tri County Community Action's Strategy Screen:

- Meets and advances our mission
- There is an identified need
- Capitalizes on our competitive advantage
- Internal/administrative capacity to implement
- Financially stable within a defined time period
- Data-informed decision-making process
- Measurable outcomes/impact
- No other resources can address the need

Strategies 2019-2024

Our strategies were developed in response to the "big questions" facing our organization. Some of the key questions we identified were:

- What should we do with Keystone Community Development Corporation?
- Do we continue housing counseling as one of our service programs?
- How do we enhance community education/advocacy to touch donors and increase fund development activities?
- How do we continue to develop and use technology to address the changing face of poverty?
- How do we expand needed programming into Perry and Cumberland Counties?
- Are our small satellite offices the most efficient way to maintain a presence in the region?
- How do we effectively tell our story and the impact of our programming?

Throughout the next five years, we intend to address other challenges and opportunities as they present themselves. We will use our strategy screen to help devise the best possible solutions and approaches to those "big questions", using the *Real-Time Strategic Planning in a Rapid Response World* process.

Types of Strategies:

Strategy is a coordinated set of actions designed to create and sustain a competitive advantage in achieve our mission.

Programmatic strategies determine what approaches we will take, and what programs and initiatives will be achieve specific outcomes or results for those we work with.

Operational strategies define how we will do our work – what systems, policies, procedures, and administrative tools will be used to achieve the programmatic and organizational strategies.

Organizational strategy is built on our mission, vision, trends, competitors, partners, and market position. Our programmatic and operational strategies are consistent with our organizational strategy.

We have built our strategies on our business model, our awareness of the environment, and our competitive advantages. Most importantly, we have developed a strategy screen as a tool to guide our future decision-making about our strategies and approaches.

Programmatic Strategies

1. Expand programs across our entire service region.
2. Ensure services and initiatives meet identified needs.
3. Increase employee engagement.

Operational Strategies

1. Create a local Theory of Change which defines our service delivery model.
2. Connect social determinants of health to agency initiatives and outcomes.
3. Increase the use of trauma-informed practices.
4. Improve impact and outcomes.

Organizational Strategies

1. Implement optimal configuration for effectively and efficiency meeting organizational needs.
2. Implement a coordinated communication strategy to highlight impact of programming and increase community awareness of TCCA.
3. Generate new funding in ways which do not over burden limited staffing and resources.
4. Define how our subsidiary, Keystone Community Development Corporation, can be used to support and enhance revitalization efforts of the agency.
5. Increase non-Community Services Block Grant resources for direct service programming.

Strategic Pyramid 2019-2024: