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 we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.
Goals
Community Action Agency of Greater Kansas City (CAAGKC) works to advance and promote the interests of low income individuals and families in Clay, Platte, and Jackson Counties in Missouri. At our core, we strive to provide programs and services to assist them in their effort to rise out of poverty.

Every three years, Community Action Agencies throughout the United States conduct thorough and systematic assessments of their community’s needs, developing a well-rounded Community Needs Assessment (CNA). In accordance with Organizational Standard 1.2, CAAGKC collects information directly from those served to determine what services and programs are needed to help achieve the mission.

Four goals were established for this 2017 CAAGKC CNA: 1) Determine the current number of low income individuals and families in our service area, 2) Identify the current and anticipated needs of low income people living in our service area, 3) Recommend strategies to address local causes of poverty, and 4) Determine agency utilization.

Findings
The number of low income individuals in the CAAGKC service area slightly decreased from 16.45% (150,721) to 15.27% (138,816) since the last CNA was conducted in 2014. These sets of data are based on the United States Census Bureau findings. Additionally, the gathered data demonstrated and confirmed the needs of Clay, Platte, and Jackson Counties, and have largely remained constant.

Note: several individuals participating in focus groups were not aware of the breadth of CAAGKC services.

Needed Resources (Rank Ordered)
The CNA team considered Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs during this analysis of community needs. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is a psychology theory proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 Psychological Review paper, “A Theory of Human Motivation.” This model states that physiological and safety needs such as food, drink, shelter, warmth, protection from elements, security, order, and freedom from fear, must be addressed in order for individuals to move forward and achieve their full potential.

In accordance with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and data gained from our CNA analysis, we identified the following to be physiological and safety needs of the community we serve:

1. **Food**: all people located in our service area need to have access to adequate nourishment on a daily basis
2. **Shelter**: all people need a stable, safe, and affordable place to live where utility bills are reasonable. Energy and rental assistance are needed to help families focus on regaining self sufficiency
3. **Health**: each member of the household needs access to sufficient and affordable healthcare
4. **Education**: young people need year-round access to good schools and educational programs and more young people need to
graduate with high school diplomas; post-secondary education needs to be available and affordable. Adults need access to programs that will assist them in gaining competitive employment

5. Employment: able-bodied adult members of each household need to have a livable wage and benefits

6. Transportation: people need a reliable mode of travel

Agency Utilization
Our Outcome of Efforts Report revealed 36,166 individuals received emergency food assistance, 10,246 families received energy assistance, 600 families received emergency rental assistance, and 423 individuals received assistance with transportation to facilitate stabilization of families in our service area.

Strategies to Address Community Needs
CAAGKC’s strategy to address the identified needs of Clay, Jackson, and Platte Counties include: 1) Sustain and expand pantry partnerships, 2) Continue providing energy assistance, 3) Increase economic security and self-sufficiency through the administration of case management, and 4) Improve the effectiveness of the agency’s outreach and communications plan.

Clifton Campbell
Executive Director & CEO

I wish my kids had more opportunities.
- Freedom School Parent
I didn’t know the agency did so much.

- Member of the faith-based community
Vision (revised)
We Envision a World Without Poverty!

Mission (revised)
The mission of CAAGKC is to assist low income residents of Clay, Jackson, and Platte counties, Missouri in their effort to become self-sufficient by providing emergency utility, food, and housing assistance to improve the quality of their lives and the opportunity to eliminate the causes of poverty.

Background
United Services Community Action Agency (USCAA), now Community Action Agency of Greater Kansas City (CAAGKC), was incorporated on December 14, 1978 to mobilize, coordinate, and focus public and private resources to create change in the Kansas City area. Changing our name and unifying under a single, identifiable national brand not only increase our name recognition and visibility, but also identifies us as part of a preeminent poverty-fighting agency. But the core of CAAGKC remain consistent: make the maximum impact on problems and obstacles affecting the lives of the poor, and actively respond to the causes and conditions of poverty.

Introduction
The results of this CNA provides CAAGKC with information about the current needs of low income families and individuals, as well as their future needs as they strive for economic independence. The method used to gather the current and projected needs of low income families and individuals in Clay, Jackson and Platte Counties included various sources of information. Population data was gathered using US Census Bureau poverty level data sets and pertinent documents describing available community resources were reviewed. Information gathered from various resources resulted in a description of the current and projected needs of low income families and individuals in CAAGKC service area. Based on the findings, CAAGKC will develop a three-year strategic plan that will guide our role in supporting low income families in Kansas City.

Goals and Guiding Principles
The six national community action goals and national performance standards were used to guide the framework of this needs assessment.

Goal 1: help low income people become more self-sufficient
Goal 2: improve the conditions in which low income people live
Goal 3: offer low income individuals a stake in their own community
Goal 4: achieve partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low income people
Goal 5: work with agencies to help them increase their capacity to achieve results
Goal 6: strengthening family and other supportive systems so low income people, especially those who are part of a vulnerable population, achieve their full potential
If I had more training, I could get a better job.

- Community Member
CAAGKC conducts a CNA every three years to properly identify the areas in which to focus our resources and programming, in an effort to effectively service the communities of Clay, Jackson, and Platte counties.

Our first decision was to determine the current number of low income individuals and families in our service area. Second, we identified our primary and secondary data sources. Third, we decided to utilize stratified random sampling to collect our data. Our staff defined stratified random sampling as “a random sample of a population in which the population is first divided into distinct subpopulations, or strata, and random samples are then taken separately from each stratum.” (www.dictionary.com)

In accordance with stratified random sampling, our team used the following as the primary data source which consisted of 3 sub-components:

1. **Survey Groups**
   a. Seven community partners/stakeholders
   b. 183 customers of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP), Youth Services, and Supportive Services

2. **Customer Interviews**
   a. Eight LIHEAP customers
   b. Three Supportive Services customers
   c. Five Youth Services customers

3. **Focus Groups**
   a. Six members of pantry partnerships
   b. 12 pantry customers and partners
   c. 22 Freedom School parents
   d. 37 from the faith-based community
   e. 17 Community Resources Council (CRC) members

In regard to our secondary data source, we used census data collected from the United States Census Bureau (www.census.gov). Census data was used to determine the current number of low income individuals and families living in our service area, among other pertinent demographics of our service area.

Next, our team reviewed and analyzed the data collected from all the sources of our stratified random sampling – surveys, interviews, and focus groups – to determine which identified needs CAAGKC could address through programming, within the guidelines of our contracts and grants. Additionally, we rank-ordered the top six needs we could affect in our service area.

**Survey Groups**

**Adult**
The survey targeted at adults was made available online and in print. These surveys were disseminated at CAAGKC offices and via email throughout the months of May-July 2017. Adult participants

Continued >>>>
Client Survey (Adult)
By Age Group
Just over half the survey respondents were between the ages of 24 and 44.

Client Survey (Adult)
By County
The majority of survey respondents were Jackson County residents, followed by Clay and then Platte.

- Jackson County: 80%
- Clay County: 13%
- Platte County: 7%

The following charts represent the views and opinions of 116 respondents.
One of the needs referenced in our customer survey was the need for more programs focused on education and job training. Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows college graduates earn more than those who only complete high school or GED. In 2015, degree holders earned $48,500 a year, while diploma holders earned $23,900. Advanced education helps keep people out of poverty.

### Client Survey (Adults 24+)
#### By Education

- **Some High School**: 15%
- **High School Grad/GED**: 45%
- **Some College**: 22%
- **Associates or Trade School**: 13%
- **Bachelor’s Degree**: 2%
- **Master’s Degree or Higher**: 3%

### Client Survey (Adult)
#### By Race

- **Black/African American**: 59%
- **Caucasian**: 19%
- **Other**: 8%
- **Hispanic**: 4%
- **Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander**: 3%
- **American Indian**: 3%
- **Asian**: >1%
Youth

The surveys for the youth audience were developed and made available online and in print. These were disseminated at CAAGKC offices and via email throughout the months of May-July 2017. Youth participants requesting assistance with completing the survey were assisted by CAAGKC staff. The following charts represent the data collected from a total of 67 respondents.

**Client Survey (Youth)**

**By County**
The majority of survey respondents were Jackson County residents. Unfortunately, there was no response from the youth of Platte County.

- 93% Jackson County
- 13% Clay County

**Client Survey (Youth)**

**By Age**

Middle schools are increasingly looking for ways to expose students to careers so they understand the relevance of what they are learning and stay on track. The hope is with a goal in mind, they will be inspired to take rigorous classes, be engaged in learning, and increase the likelihood they will be prepared for college.
92% of youth respondents felt CAAGKC Youth Services Programs impacts kid’s lives in a positive way.

Client Survey (Youth) By Race
Youth respondents recommended the following services, based on need: career training, resume building, financial literacy, emergency assistance, and financial assistance for education.
Community Stakeholders
Surveys for community stakeholders were developed and available online and in print and were disseminated at CAAGKC Offices and via email throughout the months of May-July 2017. Participants requesting assistance with completing the survey were assisted by CAAGKC staff. The following chart represents the percentage of community stakeholders represented by each county. A total of seven community stakeholders were represented in this survey.

Client Survey (Stakeholders) By County
Jackson and Clay County residents had equal representation, while those in Platte County had a smaller number participate.

- Jackson County: 43%
- Clay County: 43%
- Platte County: 14%

82% of respondents rent.
67% are single parents.
100% have hope for a better tomorrow.
Focus Groups
We conducted five focus groups throughout our service areas to expound upon specific discussion topics. The focus groups consisted of representatives from different segments of the population: CAAGKC community partners, clients who have benefited from our services, and those working in the faith-based community. The discussions took place in non-threatening environments and all participants were encouraged to talk openly. During the course of our five focus groups, participants were divided into nine discussion groups. Each group was asked the same three questions and the data collected was analyzed by our CNA team to determine which needs can be addressed within the guidelines.

Question 1
What do you see as the greatest needs in your congregation or community? What do you think is the best way to meet those needs?

Results:
Adult Education: Parenting, budgeting/finance, basic computer skills, employment/interview process
Outreach: CAAGKC programs and services need to be more known/visible in the community
Transportation: Public transportation does not adequately cover the CAAGKC service area
Food: Pantries need to remain open after 5 p.m., food assistance for children during summer break
Financial Assistance: Rent and utility assistance

Question 2
When looking at the services currently being offered at our agency, do you feel that we are addressing the current needs of the community? Why or why not?

Results:
Yes: Participants felt CAAGKC is meeting the basic needs of the community
No: Felt program guidelines were burdensome and unrealistic, better marketing of CAAGKC programs and services, need more assistance for the elderly, and resources for undocumented individuals and families

Question 3
If you could add a service that is not currently offered at our agency, what would that service be?

Results:
Adult education classes, homeless programs (adult/children), mortgage assistance, legal assistance, child care assistance, more P.A.V.E. the Way locations, after hours food pantries, tutoring, funeral expenses, and health insurance
Poverty Population
By Number of Persons
In Missouri, 908,628 people live at or below the federal poverty guideline. Of those, 15.27%, or 138,816 individuals, are in the CAAGKC service area.

Poverty Population
By County
Jackson County has the highest population density of all the counties in the CAAGKC service area, thus the percentage of population in poverty is also the highest. In Jackson County, 111,745 people live in poverty; 20,715 in Clay and 6,356 in Platte Counties.
Children in Poverty
By County
Twenty-one percent of all children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty guideline. Research shows, on average, families need an income of about twice that level just to cover basic expenses. There are 27,936 children under the age of 17 living in poverty in Jackson County, 2,072 in Clay County, and 636 in Platte County.

26,393
Unduplicated Individuals Served
An unduplicated individual is a participant who is counted only once, no matter how many direct services the individual receives during a funding year.

21%
OVER 2013
I can’t get to the pantry until after work, and by then they’re closed.

- Community Member
The data gathered through the administration of surveys, conducting focus groups, and analysis of the aforementioned data sets, along with information generated by the United States Census Bureau, led our staff to determine the top six community needs for our service area. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, the needs assessed illustrate the most basic needs: physiological and safety. When these basic needs are not met, it is impossible for individuals to move on to other stages of personal development such as esteem and self-actualization.

Needed Resources (Rank Ordered)

1. **Food**: all people located in the service area need to have access to adequate nourishment for the entire family on a daily basis

2. **Shelter**: there is a need for a stable, safe, affordable shelter where utility bills are reasonable and financial assistance is offered in terms of both energy and rent, for a period of time, while families focus on regaining self-sufficiency

3. **Health**: each member of the household needs access to sufficient and affordable healthcare

4. **Education**: youth need to regularly attend schools and graduate with high school diplomas; post-secondary education should be affordable and available. Adults need access to programs that will assist them in gaining competitive employment

5. **Employment**: each household achieves a livable wage and benefits

6. **Transportation**: reliable mode of travel is needed

Agency Utilization

According to the 2016 State of the State Report by Missourians to End Poverty, Missouri has the seventh highest food insecurity rate in the nation, meaning 16.8% of our people do not have the food they need to lead active, healthy lives. It is vital CAAGKC continue to provide food and toiletry pantries to our Supportive Services clients, as well as professional case management, to continue to meet these most basic needs.

Energy costs have increased an average of 10% from 2001-2014 and equate to 26% of household budgets, making LIHEAP assistance even more vital today than a decade ago.

Other programs such as Youth Services, provide options and incentives for children to excel in school and utilize education as a path out of poverty.
Strategies to Address Food Needs
CAAGKC will address food insecurity with the continuance and expansion of our food pantries, the “BackSnack” program and other food-related partnerships. Additionally, we will maintain partnership with “Giving the Basics” (GTB) in order to meet the toiletry/household good needs of our pantry partners.

Strategies to Address Shelter Needs
In terms of shelter, the agency will continue to administer the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP) to help lower utility and maintenance costs. Second, we will provide rental assistance through Supportive Service’s case management to help families obtain self-sufficiency. Third, our staff will develop the Healthy Homes Program to address health and safety issues in the home such as mold, poor ventilation, pest infestation, etc.

Strategies to Address Health Needs
Health needs will be managed through referrals to healthcare professionals such as those associated with United Way’s 2-1-1 and the pilot program “OneTouch KC”, in partnership with Children’s Mercy and other professional healthcare organizations.

Strategies to Address Educational Needs
Our Youth Services Department will maintain the “Projects, Assets, Values and Education” (P.A.V.E. the Way) program to assist high school students in obtaining their diplomas as well as preparing them for post-secondary education.

To address summer learning, the department will continue and expand Children’s Defense Fund’s Freedom School program. Freedom School offers children, K-5, opportunities for enriching summer experiences, healthy meals and snacks, all at no cost.

With regard to adult education, our Supportive Services staff will provide training such as resume building and soft communication skills to prepare individuals to secure competitive employment. Moreover, we will provide referrals to agencies that provide specialized programming and job skills education.

Strategies to Address Employment
CAAGKC will refer customers to the Full Employment Council and 2-1-1.

Strategies to Address Transportation
Our agency will provide bus passes to customers located in the southern region of our service area because of the ease of access to public transportation. However, due to the lack of a robust public transportation system in the northern part of our service area, our Supportive Services staff will address this need through reimbursement of funds spent on travel to locations, such as job sites or healthcare facilities.

Strategies to Address Communication and Outreach
CAAGKC will continue to pursue opportunities that promote CAAGKC’s brand and resources to families, individuals, funders, and future supporters. By providing quality, timely, and professional communication, CAAGKC will position itself as the subject matter expert on poverty in the community.

The organization will increase accessibility to vital program information by providing a mobile-friendly website, with robust search engine optimization and user-focused content.
I used to think weatherization & winterization were the same thing.

- Community Member

Additional avenues of communication will be established through the utilization of social media channels and proper management of online interactions. By engaging with our clients in a positive and conversational way, we hope to enhance our image, increase our reach, and improve relationships with both clients and community partners.

With professional marketing tools such as program brochures, trade-show materials, an up-to-date website, a variety of social media channels, and an email marketing system, CAAGKC will be able to drive traffic to critical program information, provide analytics on interactions, and maintain our brand position.
Client Survey Questions (Adult)
1. What is your age?
2. In what county do you live?
3. What is your Zip code?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. What is your employment status?
6. If you are unemployed, please select the reason(s) why below:
   a. Criminal Background
   b. Lack childcare
   c. Lack proper clothing
   d. Lack skills/education
   e. Lack transportation
   f. Permanent or Temporary physical disability
   g. Other (please specify)
7. What is your housing status?
8. Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage?
9. What language do you speak at home?
10. What is your marital status?
11. Do you have minor children? (Under 18)
12. If you have children or other dependents under your care: What is your family situation?
13. How many people live where you stay?
14. Using the answer from previous question, please select the appropriate number of household members to determine income level?
15. What types of income do you have?

16. Do you have health insurance or other health care coverage?
17. If you have health insurance, who provides your health insurance?

Client Survey Questions (Youth)
1. What is your age?
2. What is your highest education level?
3. What is your racial or ethnic background?
4. Marital Status
5. What county do you live in?
6. What programs and/or services have you received through CAAGKC? (Circle all that apply)
   a. P.A.V.E. the WAY
   b. Youth Resiliency
   c. Emergency Services
   d. Snack Pack
   e. County Wide Scholarship
   f. Other
7. Do you need assistance with any of the following?
   a. Resume Building
   b. Career/ Job Training
   c. Financial Literacy
   d. Educational Expenses such as: Senior Fees, College application fees, ACT Fees, etc.
   e. Community Service/ Volunteer Work
   f. Emergency Services (i.e., Food, Transportation and Clothing)
8. How would you say that the Youth Services Department and/or the PAVE the Way program impacted your academics and social life?
   a. A lot
   b. Somewhat
   c. A little
   d. Not at all

9. Other than the college tours what are some ways the Youth Services Department can expose you to different colleges/Universities?

10. Would you recommend friends to participate in the Youth Services programs and/or the P.A.V.E. the Way program?

Interview Questions

Customer (Youth) Interview Questions

1. What programs and/or services have you received through CAAGKC?
2. How would you say that the Youth Services Department and/or the PAVE the Way program impacted your academics and social life?
3. Other than the college tours what are some ways the Youth Services Department can expose youth to post-secondary education?
4. What are some ideas or programs that you would beneficial to offer youth and their families?

LIHEAP (Adult) Interview Questions

1. How did you hear about LIHEAP?
2. Do you know how many CAAGKC offices we have? Do you feel these are accessible to the community?
3. Do you know the time-frames of LIHEAP assistance?
4. Do you know the services LIHEAP provides?
5. Do you know the different ways you can communicate with CAAGKC?
HELPING PEOPLE.  
CHANGING LIVES.