

## OACAA Summer Conference 2009

### Potential media FAQ

PLEASE NOTE: THESE FAQ ARE MEANT TO SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES. THEY SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH MEDIA.

*Following are potential questions that could be asked by the media, as it relates to Community Action Agency receipt of federal stimulus dollars. The answers are meant to serve as a guideline.*

### STIMULUS MONEY QUESTIONS

#### **From where is your agency receiving funds?**

Community Action Agencies across the U.S. are receiving Federal stimulus dollars as part of the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA).

#### **How is your agency using the ARRA/stimulus money?**

The stimulus money will be used to support several of our programs, notably the weatherization program, Head Start and other general programs that support the community.

#### **Will the stimulus dollars be rolled into your existing budget, or be kept separate?**

The stimulus dollars will be accounted for separately, as required by law.

#### **How can the community and taxpayers be assured that funds are used properly?**

Community Action is committed to financial transparency and we are required to provide data on how funds are used to the Office of Community Services at the Ohio Department of Development, and the weatherization program is also monitored by the Federal Department of Energy.

#### **How will you track the stimulus dollars?**

We will follow normal budgeting procedures to track what funds are used for which projects.

#### **How will you ensure minority-owned suppliers are considered for selection?**

Community Action is committed to diversity and provides equal opportunity for contractors to bid on open requisitions.

#### **From where will you purchase items to support the increased weatherization services?**

As much as possible we support local and state companies when purchasing the supplies to enable weatherization. For examples, the Krendl (machines that blow insulation into walls) are made in Delphos, Ohio, and the plant recently added an additional shift to support demand.

#### **Stimulus dollars are supposed to support job growth. How will your use of the dollars help job growth in our community?**

Community Action Agency use of the stimulus dollars will support job growth in several ways:

- We will be hiring members of the community as crew members to support the increase in our weatherization services.
- Create jobs for our suppliers, many of which are in the state of the Ohio. (See Krendl example above.)
- Local retail, such a Lowe's, where we purchase bulk items are also noting an uptick in business.



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- Finally, other agencies that partner with Community Action are also hiring additional staff or able to retain their current team members.

#### **How will you select candidates for hire?**

Community Action is interested in meeting with any candidate who has a passion for helping the community and an interest in working with people. Many of our training programs are self-contained, so a specific background isn't required coming into the agency. However, candidates with masonry, HVAC, construction and similar work experiences are course encouraged to apply. That said, all candidates are subject to a background and insurability check.

*(Make mention if you're agency is partnering with a jobs bank or other program.)*

### WEATHERIZATION PROCESS QUESTIONS

#### **How do you respond to agencies that express frustration about Community Action receiving Federal funds, when they reach more community members with their weatherization program?**

All nonprofit, community-focused agencies share a common goal: to make the largest impact possible on those in our community who need it most. Community Action is often singled out for its weatherization process because of its robustness. We do more than seal cracks or replace windows. Our process is very specific to each home. It includes blowing insulation, repairing holes and walls and other projects to support heating and cooling a home – and this is done for every home we weatherize.

#### **What is the process to identify who receives weatherization help?**

The first step in identifying who receives weatherization support is an application, where candidates include income details. From there, Community Action must follow specific federal priority guidelines to determine financial need.

#### **Why are weatherization services available?**

The goals for Community Action is to support the community and help residents become self-sufficient. Many of our clients receive heating and cooling assistance and weatherization most often allows them to leave that program, because utility bills become more manageable.

#### **How much money is spent on each home?**

Under ARRA, Community Action is allowed a budget of up to \$6,500 per household, with up to \$600 of that allowed toward minor repairs that further support weatherization. For example: the weatherization equipment and process will have one fee, but the crew might notice a hole in the wall that needs patched. They can use part of the \$600 to patch the hole, which further directs airflow, supporting weatherization.

