

## **The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**

March 24, 2009

Congress has awarded Community Action Agencies the privilege of helping to bolster our economy by rebuilding communities with stimulus supplement funding in the Community Services Block Grant Program, Home Weatherization Assistance Program, and the Head Start Program among others. These are all services that Ohio's CAAs have been operating successfully for many, many years. We now have the opportunity to expand these services to more low-income Ohioans in this time of economic hardship for Ohio and the country.

Ohio's community action agencies are perfectly positioned for this challenge. The Ohio Weatherization Training Center in Athens is completing expansion into all regions of the State, giving us the only State with five training centers. Hiring has begun as over 100 new employees have already been brought on board for HWAP providers. Those same providers have engaged around seventy new contractors. Vehicles are being purchased. Equipment is being purchased. The preparation is well underway. This is long overdue as some of our agencies have waiting lists of homes that stretch three years or more under current funding.

With the stimulus funding, we will be providing jobs in the highly skilled "green" industries. We will be helping even more homeowners save precious dollars on utility bills. We will be helping the country use our energy resources more efficiently. This is a win-win-win for all.

As the program begins (meaning, when the federal government sends the funding to the states who then pass it on to providers), I will be submitting updates on the progress of the HWAP and other programs on this web site.