

The State of Ohio will receive approximately \$8.2 billion from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. On April 7, The Columbus Dispatch editorial focused on the \$267 million the act is bringing to Home Weatherization Assistance Programs (HWAP). Of the 56 HWAP programs in Ohio, 43 are administered by Community Action Agencies. The members of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies welcome this scrutiny and look forward to being held accountable as the stimulus funding is disbursed.

Ohio's community action agencies are more than happy to set an example of transparency. Toward that end, OACAA will make it easy for the public to monitor the use of stimulus funds by our members on our website, www.oacaa.org. On our site we will track the jobs we are directly creating, the dollars we are spending with Ohio companies to indirectly create jobs and, most importantly, the people who are being helped by having their homes weatherized. We challenge all other agencies, departments and groups receiving stimulus funding to be equally candid. It is important for us all to be accountable with the use of these funds.

For twenty years, the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (an organization of Appalachian community action agencies) has operated the Ohio Weatherization Training Center in Athens, one of 10 training centers in the nation. In response to the sharp increase in funding, COAD and Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy (OPAE) have opened four additional training centers throughout the state. OPAE represents all HWAP providers in the state. Already, providers have hired 131 Ohioans, secured 73 contractors through competitive bidding, purchased 104 vehicles from Ohio dealers and ordered 50 insulation machines from a plant in Delphos, Ohio.

This boost to HWAP will have an immediate and direct impact on struggling families and communities. Nationwide, homes served by HWAP see an average 31 percent reduction in heating bills and an overall reduction of \$358 annually in energy bills. Instead of sending that money to a utility company out of town or even out of state, families can spend it at their local grocery store, pharmacy or doctor's office. The ripple effect will extend to Ohio manufacturers who will create jobs to meet the demand for insulation, furnaces, air conditioning units, trucks, tools and more. We estimate that the expanded HWAP program may put over 1,000 Ohioans back to work.

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act has no parallel in our nation's history. The additional funding coming to Ohio's Community Action Agencies has no precedent either. However, accountability is an integral part of community action. In addition to annual, federally regulated, independent audits, agencies are guided by National Performance Indicators and are required to use Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA).

The ROMA model was introduced in 1994 and has been mandatory since 2001. As community action agencies, such as IMPACT here in Franklin County, receive stimulus funding for weatherization, they will be required to submit work plans to the Office of

Community Service in the Ohio Department of Development and to meet regularly to discuss progress toward the milestones outlined in the work plans.

While the scale and scope of the work are much larger than they have ever been, the process is not new. At our website, www.oacaa.org, we will go beyond the required reporting. We do so eagerly. We invite the public to watch the progress our agencies show because Ohio's Community Action Agencies are doing, and will continue to do, amazing work.

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