

RPC – COMMUNITY SERVICES

Fund 075

MISSION STATEMENT

The Community Services Division is the designated community action agency in Champaign County supporting the well-being and quality of life for at-risk, low-income and underserved residents in our defined service area. The division aims to promote self-sufficiency of these populations through innovative programming, regional leadership, and interagency cooperation.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Community Services Division is projected to experience sustained growth in programming in FY22 with the continuation of programming that began in mid-year 2020 including COVID-19 relief programs and expansion of energy efficiency and utility assistance programs.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The Community Services Division activities for FY22 will focus on retaining existing funding resources for current social services programming, leveraging additional funding resources as new federal and state initiatives are announced, and seeking ways to incorporate a variety of funding resources to achieve program goals.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Community Services Division performs services aimed at improving the quality of life for at-risk, low-income and underserved residents in our defined service areas. The Community Services Division includes the following major program areas: Case Management Services, Independent Service Coordination, Homeless Services, and Energy Efficiency and Assistance. Community Services staff provide assessment, information, referral, and supportive services to over 10,000 individuals annually, who need assistance in coping with life challenges. Comprehensive services are provided to achieve successful grant and contract outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

Case Management Programs

Case management staff provide information, support and advocacy focused on moving households out of poverty toward self-sufficiency.

- *Youth Assessment Center* - Serves as the primary center for intake, screening and service connection for Champaign County youth and families. The goal of the YAC is to connect youth with resources that help them to be resilient, resourceful, responsible, and restored to positive community involvement through prompt assessment, treatment/service recommendations and follow-up, in collaboration with youth service providers in the community and other positive youth development and restorative best practices in the community.

- *Court Diversion Services* –Youth who have committed a legal offense are provided an opportunity to divert court involvement. Using a balanced and restorative justice perspective, staff hold youth on station adjustment accountable for their wrongdoing and also provide opportunities for competency development through interventions such as mediation, peer court, and services referrals with a goal of diverting them from court involvement. Court Diversion staff provide victims and the community the chance to participate in decisions involving restitution agreements. Both sides actively participate in face-to-face meetings as a way of making things right. For single victim, single-offender situations, CDS operates the Victim Offender Mediation Program. For cases involving multiple victims and offenders, where the distinction between the two is blurred, CDS operates its Circle Mediation program. Peer Court is an option for cases with no victim participation.
- *No Limits* - provides case management services to low-income families at risk of long-term public assistance dependency. The goal of No Limits is to cultivate family self-sufficiency as well as to establish community partnerships with other community resources for additional family services and support. Case management services focuses on comprehensive assessment, self-sufficiency planning, goal development and a plan to work toward achievement, employment preparation, job training and numerous other activities designed to move a family to self-reliance.
- *Norman Housing Advocacy Programs* – assists eligible DCFS-referred households in locating permanent housing throughout Champaign, Ford, and Vermilion Counties. This program is a result of a lawsuit against DCFS to prevent removing children from homes only because the family could not afford housing. Under DCFS contract, staff assists families by removing barriers to stable housing by locating housing, negotiating with landlords, and offering case management to help these households become stabilized. Additional services are provided to DCFS wards that are transitioning into adult independence.
- *Rapid Rehousing* – attempts to permanently house homeless individuals and families by providing case management and/or financial assistance. Case management may include attempting to remove barriers to stable housing by locating housing, negotiating with landlords, and offering case management to help these households become stabilized.
- *Senior Services Information, Referral and Advocacy* - is provided by telephone consultations, face-to-face interviews, public speaking events, and our website. Specific outreach activities are targeted for minorities and rural areas of the county. A mix of funding from local governments and special interest groups allows services to be provided regardless of income.
- *Justice Diversion Programs* - is the primary connection point for case management and services for persons who have crisis intervention and/ or domestic contacts with Rantoul Police Department and the Champaign County Sheriff’s Office. This program provides case management and supportive services with a goal to reduce criminal recidivism and to help clients develop and implement plans to become successful and productive members of the community and offering law enforcement an alternative to formal processing.

Homeless Assistance, Rental Assistance, and Rent Voucher Programs

- *Centralized Intake for Homeless* - is an access point for households experiencing homelessness. Individuals will complete the screening and assessment process to gather and verify information about the person, individual's housing and service needs and program eligibility. This information is used to refer homeless households to appropriate programs and agencies based on identified needs and objective prioritization.
- *Emergency Shelter for Families* – provides emergency shelter for families for a short-term period, filling a critical gap in Champaign County's homeless services. Along with providing shelter for families with children; ESF provides case management for families while they are guests at the shelter. ESF services offer families an opportunity to progress in a safe space and transition into stable sources of employment, food, shelter/housing and other necessities.
- *Homeless Prevention Rental Assistance Program* - helps homeless households obtain housing and near-homeless households retain housing by paying the first month's rent or up to one month's past due rent. Services provided in this program include information and referral, assistance with landlord negotiations, and housing counseling.
- *Permanent Supportive Housing - Individuals* – offers a limited number of rent subsidies with supportive services and case management to homeless individuals with a disability.
- *Permanent Supportive Housing- Physical Disabilities* – offers a limited number of rent subsidies with supportive services and case management to homeless persons with a physical disability.
- *Shelter Plus Care Program* – offers rent subsidies for homeless persons with disabilities being served by partnering agencies that benefit from supportive housing services.

Independent Service Coordination (ISC) Programs

Independent Service Coordination provides an array of activities on behalf of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families/guardians to help them access individualized services and supports. The program's purpose is to ensure such services and supports are responsive to the unique needs and desires of each individual and to effectively promote independence, community inclusion, and self-determination. ISC staff serve as an advocate, resource, and partner for the individual, their family, and others who are important in their lives — including service providers. Counties served beginning July 2019 now include: Champaign, Vermilion, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, McLean, Woodford, Tazewell, Mason, Bureau, LaSalle, Putnam, and Marshall.

Staff support individuals and families to complete a discovery tool, develop a person-centered plan, and support the individual and family in identifying and securing services to support the goals of the person-centered plan. Staff also provides follow up services to monitor the implementation and success of the plan, making adjustments as needed, always taking into the general health, safety and well-being of the participant.

Special Initiatives

- *Department of Treasury Emergency Rent Assistance (DOT-ERA) Program* – provides financial assistance to renters in Champaign County who have been impacted by the pandemic with a household income that does not exceed 80% Area Median Income (AMI). Assistance to address overdue housing expenses (rent and utilities).
- *Community Services Block Grant – CARES Act Relief Program* – provides financial assistance to households who have been impacted by the pandemic with a household income that does not exceed 200% poverty. Assistance to address overdue rent, water and power bills. The program also supports health needs through provision of grocery vouchers and prescription/medical supplies. Program staff provide supportive case management to homeless households referred and approved to the time-limited COVID-specific Emergency Housing Vouchers administered by the Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC).
- *Community Services Block Grant - Scholarship Program* - provides scholarship assistance to low-income Champaign County residents to help pay for tuition, books, or other costs associated with their education at a post-secondary institution in Illinois. Scholarships range from \$500 to \$2,500. Almost 100 students have benefited from CSBG Scholarships since the program was initiated in 1986.

Energy Assistance, Utility Assistance, and Housing Repair Programs

Staff assists low-income households with financial assistance for utilities and home repair and weatherization measures to improve home safety and energy efficiency.

- *Bridge to Subsidized Housing Utility Assistance Program (BSHUAP)* - provides utility payment assistance to households in Champaign County who have been awarded a subsidized housing award, but have utility arrearage that is a barrier to moving into subsidized housing.
- *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)* - provides utility payment assistance to low-income households in Champaign County.
- *Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program* – provides general contractor services in assessing homes and coordinating private construction contractors to provide weatherization measures to achieve energy savings for low-income households in Champaign County.
- *Senior Home Repair* – offers minor home repairs to City of Champaign and City of Urbana seniors and persons with disabilities in order to provide a safe, healthy living environment.
- *Low Income Sanitary Assistance Program (LISAP)* - provides eligibility screenings for low-income Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD) residential customers with past due sanitary bills, to be referred to UCSD for consideration or USCD sanitary bill assistance.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Indicator	2020 Actual	2021 Projected	2022 Budgeted
# of clients accessing community services	14,675	12,000	10,000
# of clients progressing on measures of self-sufficiency & skill development	1746	1700	1700
# of clients receiving financial assistance for basic needs	8199	10,200	9,500
# of youth diverted from court	140	150	250
# homeless persons provided shelter/housing	250	260	250