

# **DARLINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN (2017 – 2022)**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**



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# **DARLINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

## **Strategic Plan Approach**

Darlington County Community Action Agency's Strategic Plan describes strategies to accomplish specific goals and objectives to achieve the vision upon which the organization's success will be measured. The governing body, the Board of Commissioners, the Policy Council and the staff of the DCCAA have worked to develop both a realistic and forward-thinking strategic course with both short and long term goals. Diligence and commitment to this course will help to propel DCCAA to a position of prominence as the chief poverty fighting agency which is both consistently and predictably impacting the lives of the low income citizens of Darlington County in a positive manner. This includes both assisting them to meet their immediate needs while also facilitating, on a longer term basis, their achievement of a sustainable level of self-sufficiency.

## Agency History

The Darlington County Community Action Agency is a public, non-profit agency that was established in 1965 by the County Delegation under the authority granted by the General Assembly of South Carolina in Act #314 as part of the Great Society programs under President Lyndon B. Johnson's war on Poverty. As the county's designated poverty fighting agency, DCCAA is responsible for fulfillment of the Economic Opportunity Act, including "securing of all available local, state and federal resources to assist low income families and low-income individuals to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivation to become self-sufficient."

## Agency Organization

The Board of Commissioners, currently comprised of 12 members, is the governing authority of DCCAA. Mandated by federal statute to maintain tri-partite representation, one third of the Board's complement must come from each of the following categories: 1) public officials or their designees; 2) representatives of the low income community; and 3) representatives from business/community organizations. DCCAA provides human and economic developmental services which are designed to alleviate the causes and characteristics of poverty in Darlington County.

In order to be in compliance with its largest program requirement, they must establish and maintain a Policy Council for

Head Start / Early Head Start (HS/EHS). The Agency administers the following programs: Head Start/Early Head Start, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Low Income Home Energy Program (LIHEAP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Program (SFP). These programs comprise the core component services provided by the Agency. Support services are provided to these divisions by the Fiscal Department and the Human Resources Department.

## **Mission and Vision**

### **Darlington County Community Action Agency**

#### **Mission:**

- to promote sustainable economic self-sufficiency by eliminating the causes of poverty through partnerships and programs to improve the standard of living of low-income individuals and families.

#### **Vision:**

- to be the premier agency in delivering exceptional services to low-income children and families through effective program implementation and innovative partner collaboration.

## Programs and Services Offered

**Administration (IDC):** Administrative Offices include the Board of Commissioners, Executive Director, Human Resources Department, and Finance Department.

**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG):** General Emergency Assistance, Utility Assistance, Housing Assistance, Senior Citizen Employment Program, and Youth Leadership Program.

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Emergency and Non-Emergency Household Energy Assistance for electric and heating needs.

**Head Start/Early Head Start:** A comprehensive federal preschool program for low-income families and their children from birth to five years of age.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program:** A federally funded program that gives meal reimbursements to Head Start/Early Head Start programs and other eligible entities for serving nutritious meals.

**Summer Food Program:** A program that helps provide public school age children in Darlington County communities a balanced and nutritious meal during the summer months while public schools are not in session.

## ROMA Statement

Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) is the performance-based initiative designed to preserve the anti-poverty focus of community action and to promote greater effectiveness among agencies providing services under a Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. Darlington County Community Action Agency's Strategic Plan has incorporated the following six, broad anti-poverty ROMA goals.

*Goal 1: Low-income people become more self-sufficient.*

*Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.*

*Goal 3: Low-income people own a stake in their community.*

*Goal 4: Partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low-income people are achieved.*

*Goal 5: Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.*

*Goal 6: Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.*

DCCAA has developed realistic, measurable objectives and strategies to meet the ROMA goals. Utilizing the ROMA cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation, DCCAA will continue to analyze its Strategic Plan's goals and objectives to identify meaningful ways to enhance capacity and improve services to the low-income population of our service area. Nationally certified ROMA trainers will assist the Agency in its monitoring process to assess the real-time viability of this strategic plan and the approaches.



## Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The Strategic Plan supports DCCAA's overall mission of providing assistance and opportunity to low-income people with a goal of achieving and maintaining sustainable self-sufficiency. DCCAA'S 10 strategic objectives are designed to ensure that it that it remains a viable, relevant and adaptive organization, widely known in the community for exceptional customer service, committed and high level Board governance, well trained and dedicated staff, creative and innovative programming, and strong partnerships with other organizations aiding in securing independence for the low-income community.

### DCCAA'S TEN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES TO MEET THE ANTI-POVERTY ROMA GOALS

- 1. Provide Clients with Exceptional Outcome-Based Customer Service***
- 2. Community Improvement and Revitalization***
- 3. Increase the Participation of Low-Income Citizens in their Communities***
- 4. Increase Public Awareness of the Agency Activities and Outcomes***
- 5. Increase Political Awareness and Support of Agency Efforts***
- 6. Ensure Agency Services Are Aligned with the Needs of the Low-Income Population***
- 7. Ensure On-going Agency Operational Compliance***
- 8. Improve Agency Tools/Processes for Identifying and Referring Customers for Various Agency Services***
- 9. Decrease Agency Dependence on Specific Program Funding/Increase Agency Flexibility***
- 10. Adopt a Two-Generation/Multi-Generation Approach in Programming, as Feasible***

**GOAL #1: LOW-INCOME PEOPLE BECOME MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT**

**OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME:** *Provide Clients with Exceptional Outcome-Based Customer Service*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>TARGET DATES/PERIOD</b>
A.	Identify additional referral sources and cultivate stronger linkages for educational and or job training certifications.	Ongoing
B.	Continuously identify ways to strengthen staff knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide high-quality and impactful customer service to all clients.	On-Going
C.	Continue to explore the identification of acceptable housing to address the needs of the low-income community, including elderly and disabled residents.	Ongoing
D.	Seek ways to expand employment programs that will provide job skills training for program participants and work with partner organizations to identify meaningful and achievable entrepreneurial opportunities.	Ongoing
E.	Determine if the Emergency Solutions Grant program should be sought after as a funding opportunity to help residents that are homeless or facing homelessness in Darlington County achieve sustainable self-sufficiency.	Ongoing
F.	Incorporate a financial literacy component into the service delivery methodology in each program area.	Ongoing
G.	Explore training, technical assistance and/or grant opportunities to increase awareness of health and fitness initiatives.	On-going

**GOAL #2: THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH LOW-INCOME PEOPLE LIVE ARE IMPROVED**

**OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME:** *Community Improvement and Revitalization*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>TARGET DATES/PERIOD</b>
A.	Explore more creative approaches to partnerships with community partners to identify neighborhood revitalization projects and other approaches that will positively impact living conditions of local residents.	Ongoing
B.	Continue to cultivate partnerships to enhance client services including, for example, quick referrals of clients for emergency services.	On-Going
C.	Stay abreast of local, state and federal efforts to ensure all persons meet the qualifications for and access to more competitive and livable wages in the community.	Ongoing
D.	Explore concerns regarding “employing people into poverty” with community partners and local jurisdictions and identify possible deterrents and methods to ensure positive outcomes.	Ongoing
E.	Serve as a continuing reliable source to provide comprehensive and accurate information regarding healthcare, housing, home repairs, linkages, job training, certifications, and other vital services to the low-income community.	Ongoing
F.	Continue to explore the creation of a Community Development Corporation to focus on issues related to affordable and owner occupied housing units, job training/employment opportunities and other economic issues affecting the lives and well-being of the low income communities of the service area.	Ongoing

G.	When the opportunity arises, seek to increase the size of the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs to meet the needs of the community (as referenced in the 2021 Community Needs Assessment).	Ongoing
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**GOAL #3: LOW-INCOME PEOPLE OWN A STAKE IN THEIR COMMUNITY**

**OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME:** *Increase the Participation of Low-Income Citizens in Their Communities*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>TARGET DATES/PERIOD</b>
A.	Encourage greater participation of clients in all program areas to attend and participate in regular and special meetings of county and local jurisdictions.	Ongoing
B.	Regularly collect and report success stories of low-income citizens for presentation (by involved individuals if possible) at meetings before state, local, and federal jurisdictions and community events.	On-Going
C.	Inform and encourage the participation of low-income citizens to participate in matters affecting utility rate increases, community revitalization efforts, school, and other jurisdictional matters which have a negative impact on the low-income community.	Ongoing

**GOAL #4: PARTNERSHIPS AMONG SUPPORTERS AND PROVIDERS OF SERVICE TO LOW-INCOME PEOPLE ARE ACHIEVED**

*A. OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME: Increase Public Awareness of the Agency Activities and Outcomes*

*B. OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME Increase Political Awareness and Support of Agency Efforts*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>TARGET DATES/PERIOD</b>
A/B-1	At least annually, update the Agency’s website and social media presence in order to maintain high visibility in the community and focus on continuous re-branding as an organization that provides exceptional services in an intentional and meaningful way.	Year 1 and continuous
A/B-2	Include Agency logo on letterhead, style, colors , employee email signatures, website, business cards, fax cover sheets, and other Agency materials.	Year 1 and continuous
A/B-3	Publicize all agency events through media outlets, partner organization distribution links, mail-outs, handouts, and social media outlets.	Year 1 and continuous
B-1	Report annual Agency program performance at meetings of County Council and local jurisdictions and other events attended by Congressional representatives, including success stories, performance results, services delivered to low-income citizens and the overall impact of Agency programs on the service area.	On-going
B-2	Invite local, state and federal Legislators and community partners to all DCCAA events and services	Ongoing

**GOAL #5: AGENCIES INCREASE THEIR CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE RESULTS**

*A) OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME: Ensure Agency services are aligned with the needs of the low-income population*

*B) OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME: Ensure ongoing, Agency operational compliance*

*C) OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME: Improve Agency tools/processes for identifying and referring customers for various Agency services*

*D) OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME: Decrease Agency dependency on specific program funding/increase Agency flexibility*

ITEM	STRATEGY	TARGET DATES/PERIOD
A -1	Board to read DCCAA mission statement at each Board meeting	On-going
A -2	Incorporate DCCAA mission statement on all Board and Committee meeting Agendas	On-going
A-3	Full Board, Executive Committee and/or designated committee to thoroughly assess mission statement annually and make recommendations for change, if any, to the full Board for approval	On-going
A-4	Conduct an Agency-wide needs assessment every three years with annual updates	On-going
A-5	Seek to increase the Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment by applying for an expansion grant when the opportunity presents itself (in line with the 2021 Needs Assessment and the 2020 HS/EHS grant application).	On-going
A-6	Regularly seek training opportunities to improve staff development and capability to provide enhanced case management support to low-income citizens	Continuous
B-1	Executive Director and Agency management team will work with the Board to continuously monitor progress toward compliance with all organizational standards. Review of compliance with standards will be performed at least quarterly.	Continuous

B-2	Executive Director will work with CSBG Director (and an outside ROMA-certified trainer, as necessary) to perform a regular assessment to ensure that ROMA measures and goals remain in alignment.	On-going
B-3	Executive Director will continuously work with the Board and the management team to ensure overall compliance with funding source requirements	On-going
C-1	Continue to explore bundled services through partnership resources, e.g. Community Action Partnership and other agencies, to increase efficiency and effectiveness in providing the most rapid referrals for assistance to clients.	On-going
C-2	Continue to refine and improve upon a more seamless intake linking program service delivery system to ensure the quick referrals of clients.	On-going
D-1	Explore new programs and grant opportunities to diversify comprehensive services offered to the low-income population, with a focus on decreasing Agency dependency on specific program funding.	On-going
D-2	Continue and expand fundraising events, to increase the level of non-federal funds available to support community needs.	On-going



**GOAL #6: LOW-INCOME PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS, ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL BY STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

*OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME: Adopt a Two-Generation/Multi-Generation Approach in Programming, as Feasible*

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>TARGET DATES/PERIOD</b>
A.	Seek innovative approaches to implementing the youth leadership program to enhance exposure to opportunities that will enhance a broader range of experiences for education, training, character development, and overall life skills development.	On-going
B.	Require program recipients to increase their capacity to manage issues by attending, e.g. financial management classes and other educational or training opportunities to expand their knowledge and ability to handle routine and non-routine life situations (more efficient use of energy/paying bills on time/addressing credit issues, etc.), to help achieve better self-sufficiency.	Year 1 and continuous