Strategic Plan

2025-2029

Page Reference

PROMISE

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of home, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

MISSION STATEMENT

Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission is dedicated to minimizing the effects of poverty by connecting individuals to opportunities and resources that support a secure future.

Community Action: Who We Are and What We Do

Community Action began as a centerpiece of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The Act created the independent Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to administer Community Action and other groundbreaking initiatives, many of which continue in some form today. In addition to Community Action, these include Head Start, Job Corps, Legal Services, Adult Basic Education, Community Health Centers, Weatherization Assistance, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance, Job Training for adults and youth, VISTA, and many others. In 1981, OEO (then called the Community Services Administration) was dismantled and the Economic Opportunity Act was mostly repealed. Community Action and the nationwide network of CAAs continue today under the CSBG Act.

Community Action also provides much credit for the War on Poverty to the advocacy efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. America was built on the promise that every family should have an opportunity for success. Yet, today's uneven economy has put a good quality of life out of reach for too many Americans. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created the Community Action Network of national and locally-focused organizations that connect millions of children and families to greater opportunity.

A Community Action Agency (CAA) is a local organization with the mission of poverty reduction through locally designed and delivered programs and services targeted to the community's specific needs. CAAs exist in virtually every county in the U.S., numbering more than 900 nationwide. Most are private nonprofits but some are units of local government. They are state-designated but locally controlled, governed by a tripartite board that represents the low-income community, local elected officials, and private and public community stakeholders, including individuals from the education and religious communities.

The nation's Community Action Agencies embody our nation's spirit of hope, change people's lives, and improve communities. When national, state, and local leaders tap into these agencies' experience, they can promote workable solutions that connect more families to opportunity – and make America a better place to live for everyone. Each Community Action agency is different. Some provide a multitude of services, while others may focus on simply a few. The size of their annual budget and the

number of employees are different. However, there is one funding source that all Community Action Agencies receive, which is the Community Services Block Grant.

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) was enacted in 1981 and authorizes block grants to states to be administered federally by the Office of Community Services within the Department of Health and Human Services. States must pass through at least 90% of their block grant allotments to local "eligible entities" (i.e., Community Action Agencies). States may keep up to 5% of allotments for administrative costs and use the remainder for statewide discretionary activities. The CSBG Act specifies the purposes of Community Action, establishes federal, state, and local requirements, and authorizes funds to be appropriated.

NOCAC: Who We Are and What We Do

Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission (NOCAC) is a private, non-profit corporation created in 1965 to combat poverty. Its primary service area is Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Paulding, Van Wert, and Williams counties. However, NOCAC also provides publicly funded childcare in Hancock, Hardin, and Auglaize counties. The central office is located at 1933 E. Second Street in Defiance, Ohio.

- NOCAC has satellite offices throughout the six primary counties and operates Head Start centers in each of these counties, with the exception of Van Wert County.
- NOCAC currently has over 140 employees and a budget of over $14.5 million dollars.
- NOCAC has an 18-member Board of Trustees consisting of low-income representatives, county commissioners, and private sector representatives from our six-county service area.
- The majority of funding comes from Federal and State grants.
- NOCAC offers innovative programs and services in the areas of Early Childhood Education, Emergency Services, Utility Assistance, Homelessness and Housing, Nutrition, Home Weatherization and Repair, Financial Empowerment, Publicly Funded Child Care, and more.

Standards

Strategic Planning is very important for all types of businesses. In the Community Action field, all Community Action Agencies must follow the Community Service Block Grant standards.   These standards are a comprehensive set of standards developed, with input from the entire CSBG Network through a three-year, multi-phase process led by the Center of Excellence. The Organizational Standards were announced in January 2015 with the OCS release of IM 138, State Establishment of Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities, directing States to establish organizational standards by fiscal year 2016.

The Organizational Standards are organized into three thematic groups comprising nine categories and a total of 58 standards for private and nonprofit entities and 50 for public entities. The purpose of the organizational standards is to ensure that all agencies have appropriate organizational capacity in both critical financial and administrative areas, as well as areas of unique importance to the mission of the Community Action network. The standard addressing Strategic Planning follows.

Category Six: Strategic Planning

6.1 The organization has an agency-wide strategic plan in place which has been approved by the Governing Board within the past five years.

6.2 The approved strategic plan addresses reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and/or empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.

6.3 The approved strategic plan contains agency, family, and community goals.

6.4 Customer satisfaction data and customer input, collected as part of the community assessment, is included in the Strategic Planning Process.

6.5 The Governing Board has received an update on progress meeting the goals of the strategic plan within the past 12 months.

Community Action Agencies believe in the *Theory of Change*. Over time, needs change. CAA's across the country are eager to meet the changes in our communities to empower the people and work toward economic security, economic opportunity and opportunities within the communities as a whole.

The National Community Action Network Theory of Change

Community Action Goals

Goal 1: Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.
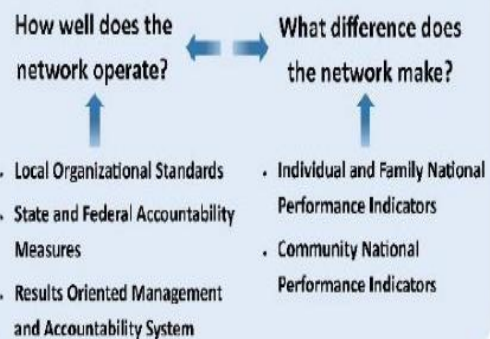
Services and Strategies

Employment

Education & Cognitive Development

Income, Infrastructure & Asset Building

Health/Social Behavioral Development

Housing

Civic Engagement & Community Involvement

Core Principles

- Recognize the complexity of the issues of poverty
- Build local solutions specific to local needs
- Support family stability as a foundation for economic security
- Advocate for systemic change
- Pursue positive individual, family, and community level change
- Maximize involvement of people with low incomes
- Engage local community partners and citizens in solutions
- Leverage state, federal, and community resources

Performance Management

How well does the network operate? ↔ What difference does the network make?

- Local Organizational Standards
- State and Federal Accountability Measures
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability System

- Individual and Family National Performance Indicators
- Community National Performance Indicators

A national network of over 1,000 high performing Community Action Agencies, State Associations, State offices, and Federal partners supported by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to mobilize communities to fight poverty.

ROMA

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) should follow the Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) framework for several key reasons:

1. **Focused Goals and Outcomes**: ROMA emphasizes clear, measurable objectives and outcomes, helping CAAs set specific, actionable goals that align with their mission to reduce poverty and improve community well-being.
2. **Improved Accountability**: ROMA requires regular reporting and evaluation of progress, which enhances transparency and accountability to stakeholders, including funders, community members, and policymakers.
3. **Data-Driven Decisions**: By using ROMA, CAAs can collect and analyze data on program effectiveness and community impact, leading to more informed decision-making and resource allocation.
4. **Enhanced Program Effectiveness**: The framework promotes continuous improvement by encouraging CAAs to assess and refine their strategies based on performance data, ultimately leading to more effective programs and services.
5. **Strengthened Organizational Capacity**: Implementing ROMA helps CAAs build stronger internal systems for planning, monitoring, and evaluation, which can improve overall organizational capacity and performance.
6. **Alignment with Federal Requirements**: For many CAAs, adhering to ROMA is a requirement for receiving federal funding and complying with guidelines set by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program.
7. **Increased Community Impact**: By following ROMA, CAAs can better measure and demonstrate their impact on poverty reduction and community development, leading to greater support and engagement from the community and stakeholders.

In summary, ROMA provides a structured approach that enhances the effectiveness, accountability, and impact of Community Action Agencies, supporting their mission to address poverty and improve the quality of life in their communities.

The Results Oriented Management and Accountability Cycle

Assessment
Community needs and resources, agency data

Planning
Use agency mission statement and assessment data to identify results and strategies

Evaluation
Analyze data, compare with benchmarks

Implementation
Services and strategies produce results

Achievement of Results
Observe and report progress

What is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is a tool that helps nonprofits navigate such change and uncertainty by providing clarity, fostering adaptability, optimizing resources, and ensuring the organization remains aligned with its mission and long-term vision. By planning ahead, nonprofits can be better equipped to handle challenges and seize new opportunities, even in times of instability.

Strategic planning is especially critical for nonprofits during times of change and uncertainty for several key reasons:

1. Clarifies Mission and Vision

During periods of disruption or upheaval, nonprofits can lose sight of their core mission or struggle to maintain focus. Strategic planning helps reaffirm the organization's purpose and ensures that decision-making is aligned with its long-term vision. This provides a solid foundation that helps guide leaders and staff through uncertainty.

- The Northeastern Ohio Community Action Commission (NOCAC) Governing Board reviews the mission statement at a minimum of once every 5 years.

2. Adapts to Shifting Environments

Nonprofits often face external changes such as economic shifts, policy changes, donor uncertainty, or changing community needs. A strategic plan allows the organization to analyze these changes proactively, adapt its approach, and identify new opportunities. With a flexible and updated strategic plan, nonprofits can pivot more quickly when necessary.

- NOCAC completes a comprehensive Needs Assessment every 3 years with updates conducted annually.

3. Resource Optimization

In times of uncertainty, resources (time, money, human capital) may become scarcer. A strategic plan helps nonprofits prioritize initiatives that align with their mission and goals, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively. This is particularly important when budgets tighten or funding sources become unpredictable.

4. Strengthens Organizational Resilience

Strategic planning fosters resilience by encouraging nonprofits to assess risks and prepare for future challenges. It helps organizations anticipate potential disruptions, develop contingency plans, and create a roadmap for bouncing back if setbacks occur. This proactive approach minimizes the impact of external challenges on the organization's long-term health.

5. Improves Decision-Making

During times of uncertainty, decisions can become more complex and less predictable. A clear, forward-looking strategic plan provides a framework that enables leaders to make informed choices that align with the organization's mission and long-term goals. This can improve agility in decision-making and reduce the risk of reactive or short-term thinking.

6. Encourages Innovation and Creativity

Change can present opportunities for innovation. Strategic planning encourages Community Action Agencies to think creatively about how they can address emerging issues, test new models, or explore alternative funding sources. By encouraging a forward-thinking mindset, strategic planning can position a nonprofit to emerge stronger and more adaptable.

7. Aligns Internal Teams

A well-constructed strategic plan aligns staff, volunteers, and leadership around common goals, enhancing collaboration and communication. It provides a shared understanding of priorities and roles, helping the Board and Staff stay focused and work together towards the same objectives.

- The NOCAC plan includes the strategy to hire a full-time Development Director to not only pursue additional funding opportunities but also assist in implementation of the Strategic Plan.

8. Measurable Impact and Accountability

Funders and donors want to see that their contributions are making a tangible difference. The NOCAC strategic plan includes measurable goals and outcomes, making it easier to track progress and demonstrate impact. This accountability is critical for retaining support during uncertain times.

9. Long-Term Sustainability

Strategic planning will help ensure that NOCAC is not only surviving but thriving in the long term. It allows the organization to plan for sustainability, diversify revenue streams, and strengthen partnerships to reduce dependency on uncertain sources of funding.

Strategic Planning In "Today's Environment"

Over the past 5 years, Community Action Agencies across the country, have worked diligently to deliver services through a period of uncertainty during the Pandemic. Multiple funding sources were provided to deliver services to a population that had never sought assistance before. Continuing and new programs were able to meet the needs for those that had lost their jobs, were temporarily unemployed and/or dealing with critical illness.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on nonprofit organizations, particularly those serving low-income and rural communities. NOCAC faced heightened demand for services while simultaneously experiencing challenges in terms of funding, staffing, and their ability to safely provide services.

Reports from John Hopkins University as of March 2023 indicate the counties served by the Community Action Agency had a higher number of cases than the state and national levels. In the service area there were 890 confirmed deaths due to COVID.

COVID-19 Cases, Rate per
100,000 Population

0   40000

● Report Location
  (30,619.94)
● Ohio (29,091.65)
● United States
  (31,100.91)
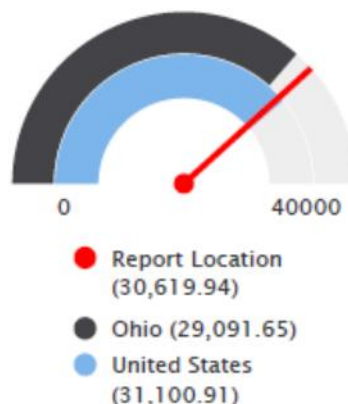
NOCAC had to scale up quickly to meet the needs of individuals and families who had never before relied on such services due to layoffs and economic hardships. Some businesses went to virtual or remote services while NOCAC remained with their doors opened.

While managing multiple new funding sources with different guidelines, NOCAC experienced staff shortages and employee burnouts due to staff and family illness and parental responsibilities with the closing of public schools.

Leadership had to invest in new health and safety personal protective equipment and assure employees and customers were protected. COVID continues to have long term effects on low income communities and nonprofits. Those seeking employment are now looking at remote employment opportunities, which often puts a burden on the agency, as they continue to provide services while being short staffed.

In summary, COVID-19 had a profound impact on NOCAC, both in terms of increased need for services and operational and financial challenges. However, the organization also demonstrated remarkable resilience, adapting quickly and creatively to continue serving communities. The pandemic highlighted the vital role that nonprofits play in providing support to vulnerable populations and underscored the need for long-term investment in these organizations to ensure they can continue to meet emerging needs and build resilience for future crises.

Change in Political Leadership

Nonprofits often face a variety of concerns when there is a change in political leadership at both the state and federal levels. These concerns generally revolve around funding, and potential impacts on their ability to fulfill their missions. Like all CAC's, NOCAC has experienced declining funds as COVID programs are ending. What was a time period where some unique needs were able to be met for higher income populations, these have now decreased or ended. The current economic environment, along with changes in leadership at a Federal level, leaves the continuation of some programs in question throughout the country.

Political shifts also can have an impact with government agencies that work closely with nonprofits. New leaders at the state or federal level will have new faces in leadership levels. This could bring different priorities as they may not be as familiar with or supportive of the work of CAA's. While agencies such as NOCAC are careful to differentiate between standing by their mission and engaging in political advocacy, Community Action Agencies must stand together to prioritize fulfillment of their mission.

Previous Strategic Planning Goals
2022 - 2024

Goal #1 -- NOCAC will be recognized as a top employer with an engaged and retained workforce. All employees will experience a culture of mutual respect, trust and teamwork.

Goal #2 -- Build, communicate and promote an agency brand that is visible, supports the mission and effectively engages the board, staff, customers and the community.

Goal #3 -- Program services and agency operations will continuously be responsive to the most critical needs of low-income families and individuals. NOCAC services successfully support participants through crisis and guide them to success.

Goal #4 -- Enhance and expand agency facilities to support new and current services. Every site will be accessible, comfortable, modern, and branded as a NOCAC program.

Goal #5 -- Secure adequate funding to sustain essential programs and expand organizational capacity to achieve results.

The Strategic Planning Process

- An Internal Consultant (IC), provided by the Ohio Community Action Training Organization, was assigned to consult with the organization.

- The IC, Executive Director, and management staff had several conversations regarding the agency, previous strategic plan, and the recently completed Needs Assessment.

- While a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is a commonly used tool in strategic planning, it isn't always necessary for every organization or situation. A formal SWOT analysis was not conducted for this Strategic Plan for several reasons. The organization had recently conducted a formal and comprehensive needs assessment. NOCAC has been providing services to the region for nearly 60 years and understands the needs of the residents throughout all six counties. In this situation the organization has a strong understanding of their environment and it was decided that such analysis would be redundant.   The organization is fully aware of the internal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats within the agency as a whole and externally throughout the counties served.

- The IC visited the agency for three days, conducting various working group sessions, in 5 of the 6 counties served. The organization service area is over 2,400 miles.

- Stakeholders including NOCAC staff from various departments, board members, community partners, volunteers, elected officials and Individuals receiving assistance provided valuable insights. This provided the opportunity to share data and obtain various perspectives.

- The same discussion occurred within each group. All parties were completely engaged and had numerous ideas of how to best address the needs within the communities.

- One of the key areas identified by the consultant was these groups were active listeners. There is a key difference between hearing and listening. Listening is an active process, one that not only hears but also pays attention. Participants were open, emotional, and thoughtful as they shared their experiences in serving those in need and the barriers that exist in meeting those needs.

- After each group shared needs and discussed data, participants broke into small workgroups to draft initial plans. The written plan included the following: Desired Outcomes, Goals, Rationale (the reason/justification for the goal) and Objective Performance targets that are time specific, measurable, and align with the mission.   In developing work plans, the team also determined specific actions, potential resources, and timelines.

- The discussion between each county working group was not shared with the others. The IC identified which areas were similar priorities between the groups and consolidated them.

- Work plans addressing Community, Agency and Family Goals were developed.

- The final Strategic Plan was presented to the Executive Director for Governing Board input and approval.

- Administration will monitor the progress in achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and share the progress every 6 months with the Governing Board.   During this time period, the administrative team will be open to innovative approaches and adaptation of plan changes as needed.

Identified Needs

Sample of Needs Discussed

- Housing (Lack of affordable, affordable rental, good condition)
- Transportation (Some counties lack any form of public transportation)
- Mental Health
- Child Care
- Aging
- Infestations (No funds to address)
- Barriers Experienced by Single Parent Households
- Cliff Effect
- Workforce
- Food Insecurity
- Substance Abuse
- Car Repairs
- Language Barriers
- Accessible Health Care (Location, Affordable and Available) Values/Cultural
- Homelessness (lack of shelters in needed locations)
- Furniture
- Central Referrals
- Hidden Rules of Poverty
- Financial Coaching
- Landlord/Tenant Relations
- Duplication of Services
- Continual Crisis
- Fear to Ask
- Lack of Consistency in Program Eligibility
- Generational Poverty
- Addiction
- Outreach
- Soft Skills
- Cost of Living

Specific Target Areas and Data

<u>Housing and Homelessness</u> was one of the key issues discussed throughout the planning process as well as identified in the needs assessment.

Below is data from all counties in Ohio reflecting the Point-in-Time (PIT) for 2024. This report captures a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness on a single night, often missing those who are temporarily staying with friends or family, couch-surfing, or in other hidden situations. This often leads to an undercount of the total homeless population; experts generally consider it an estimate rather than an exact figure.

Ohio BoSCoC 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Data by County				
PIT Date = 1/23/24				
Please see below for Ohio BoSCoC PIT count data. This information can be filtered by county and/or region.				
Unsheltered numbers reflect the number of people counted in sampled census tracts within each county. The number is likely not reflective of the actual number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in each county.				
County	Region	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total (Sheltered & Unsheltered)
Adams	3	0	15	15
Allen	12	14	53	67
Ashland	4	3	12	15
Ashtabula	5	15	28	43
Athens	17	5	24	29
Auglaize	12	5	0	5
Belmont	7	0	18	18
Brown	3	0	0	0
Butler	14	120	227	347
Carroll	6	0	0	0
Champaign	13	0	10	10
Clark	15	20	204	224
Clermont	14	33	27	60
Clinton	16	0	40	40
Columbiana	6	0	33	33
Coshocton	9	0	10	10

Crawford	11	0	0	0
Darke	13	1	15	16
Defiance	1	0	16	16
Delaware	10	21	45	66
Erie	2	0	42	42
Fairfield	9	30	104	134
Fayette	16	28	15	43
Fulton	1	1	0	1
Galia	17	8	12	20
Geauga	5	6	43	49
Greene	15	5	151	156
Guernsey	7	8	39	47
Hancock	11	3	109	112
Hardin	11	0	0	0
Harrison	6	0	0	0
Henry	1	0	4	4
Highland	16	0	16	16
Hocking	17	0	20	20
Holmes	9	0	10	10
Huron	2	0	7	7
Jackson	17	0	8	8
Jefferson	6	4	56	60
Knox	9	4	27	31
Lake	5	26	57	83
Lawrence	3	0	7	7
Licking	9	25	151	176
Logan	13	0	19	19
Lorain	4	11	167	178
Madison	10	0	4	4
Marion	11	9	31	40
Medina	4	16	33	49
Meigs	17	0	0	0
Mercer	12	4	1	5
Miami	13	1	74	75
Monroe	7	0	0	0
Morgan	8	0	0	0
Morrow	10	2	0	2
Muskingum	9	13	70	83
Noble	7	0	0	0

Ottawa	2	0	7	7
Paulding	1	0	0	0
Perry	17	16	0	16
Pickaway	16	16	30	46
Pike	3	92	11	103
Portage	5	4	75	79
Preble	13	5	26	31
Putnam	11	0	0	0
Richland	2	7	86	93
Ross	16	46	111	157
Sandusky	2	1	8	9
Scioto	3	31	19	50
Seneca	2	0	25	25
Shelby	13	8	56	64
Trumbull	5	6	89	95
Tuscarawas	6	0	0	0
Union	10	12	0	12
Van Wert	1	10	32	42
Vinton	17	0	40	40
Warren	14	1	38	39
Washington	8	19	14	33
Wayne	4	32	63	95
Williams	1	2	22	24
Wood	2	1	13	14
Wyandot	11	0	0	0

One of the most common areas discussed during focus groups was the increasing homeless population. In June of 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its opinion in the case of Grants Pass vs. Johnson. This makes it easier for local communities nationwide to fine, ticket or arrest people for camping or sleeping in public places when there is no adequate shelter available. At least one municipality is utilizing this technique to "penalize" the homeless even when they have nowhere else to go.

According to the US Census Bureau the number of housing units within the service territory has decreased by 151 units (.18%) between 2014 and 2023. This is compared to a 3.01% increase across the State of Ohio.

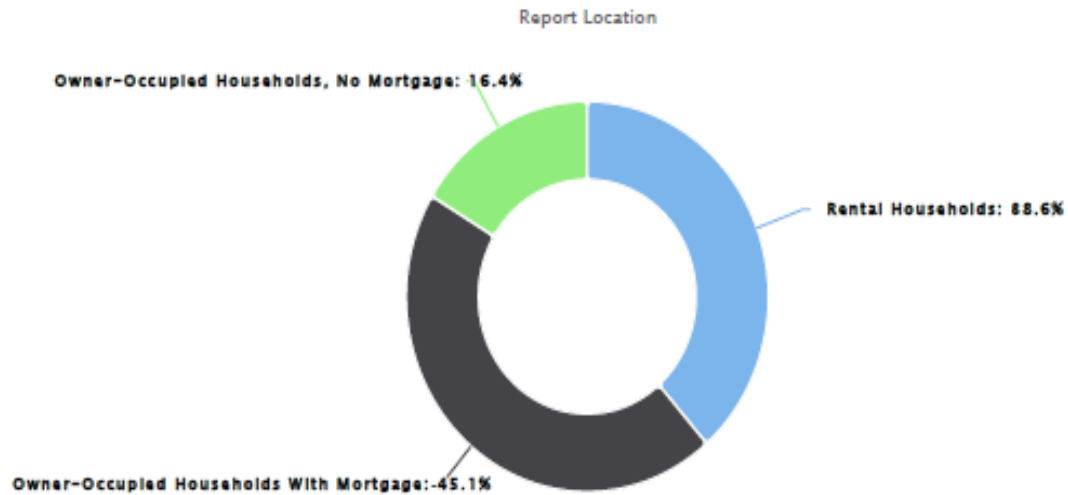| Report Area	July 2014	July 2015	July 2016	July 2017	July 2018	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022	July 2023
Report Location	84,356	84,401	84,475	84,566	84,661	84,754	83,874	84,014	84,118	84,205
Defiance County, OH	16,782	16,779	16,777	16,796	16,811	16,824	16,542	16,570	16,592	16,604
Fulton County, OH	17,457	17,475	17,520	17,548	17,573	17,610	17,696	17,730	17,742	17,747
Henry County, OH	12,031	12,048	12,074	12,095	12,121	12,142	12,040	12,063	12,085	12,099
Paulding County, OH	8,731	8,740	8,744	8,753	8,782	8,803	8,497	8,521	8,541	8,559
Van Wert County, OH	12,719	12,720	12,715	12,714	12,713	12,709	12,539	12,558	12,575	12,597
Williams County, OH	16,636	16,639	16,645	16,660	16,661	16,666	16,560	16,572	16,583	16,599
Ohio	5,162,087	5,173,946	5,186,007	5,201,015	5,217,125	5,232,869	5,246,249	5,269,271	5,292,920	5,317,298
United States	134,388,318	135,285,123	136,286,436	137,366,902	138,516,439	139,684,244	140,808,401	142,163,952	143,789,637	145,344,636

Data Source: US Census Bureau, US Census Population Estimates.

Housing Cost Burden

The chart below shows the number of households where housing costs are 30% more of household income. On average 17% of the population live in housing where the cost of rent/mortgage and utilities exceed 30% of their household income.

Report Area	Total Households	Cost-Burdened Households	Cost-Burdened Households, Percent
Report Location	77,947	13,982	17.94%
Defiance County, OH	15,262	2,775	18.18%
Fulton County, OH	16,869	2,940	17.43%
Henry County, OH	11,179	1,997	17.86%
Paulding County, OH	7,590	1,231	16.22%
Van Wert County, OH	11,666	1,892	16.22%
Williams County, OH	15,381	3,147	20.46%

Cost-Burdened Households by Tenure, Total
Report Location

Owner-Occupied Households, No Mortgage: 16.4%

Rental Households: 88.6%

Owner-Occupied Households With Mortgage: 45.1%

Substandard conditions may include incomplete plumbing, incomplete kitchen areas, 1 or more persons per room and cost of housing.

Report Area	Total Occupied Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units with One or More Substandard Conditions	Occupied Housing Units with One or More Substandard Conditions, Percent
Report Location	77,947	14,396	18.47%
Defiance County, OH	15,262	2,896	18.98%
Fulton County, OH	16,869	3,065	18.17%
Henry County, OH	11,179	1,964	17.57%
Paulding County, OH	7,590	1,304	17.18%
Van Wert County, OH	11,666	1,942	16.65%
Williams County, OH	15,381	3,225	20.97%
Ohio	4,789,408	1,215,605	25.38%
United States	125,736,353	39,858,044	31.70%

Estimated Eviction Rates Per County

Report Area	Renter Occupied Households	Estimated Eviction Filings	Estimated Eviction Filing Rate
Defiance County, OH	4,104	151	3.7
Fulton County, OH	4,027	145	3.6
Henry County, OH	2,605	88	3.4
Paulding County, OH	1,869	69	3.7
Van Wert County, OH	2,896	110	3.8
Williams County, OH	4,492	183	4.1
Ohio	3,444,639	212,720	6.2
United States	140,706,143	10,969,285	7.8

Data Source: Eviction Lab. 2018.

The map below shows areas within Ohio where according to OHFA Tax Credit properties are located and whether they are in "active status. "It appears there is plenty of opportunity to pursue funding under the program.
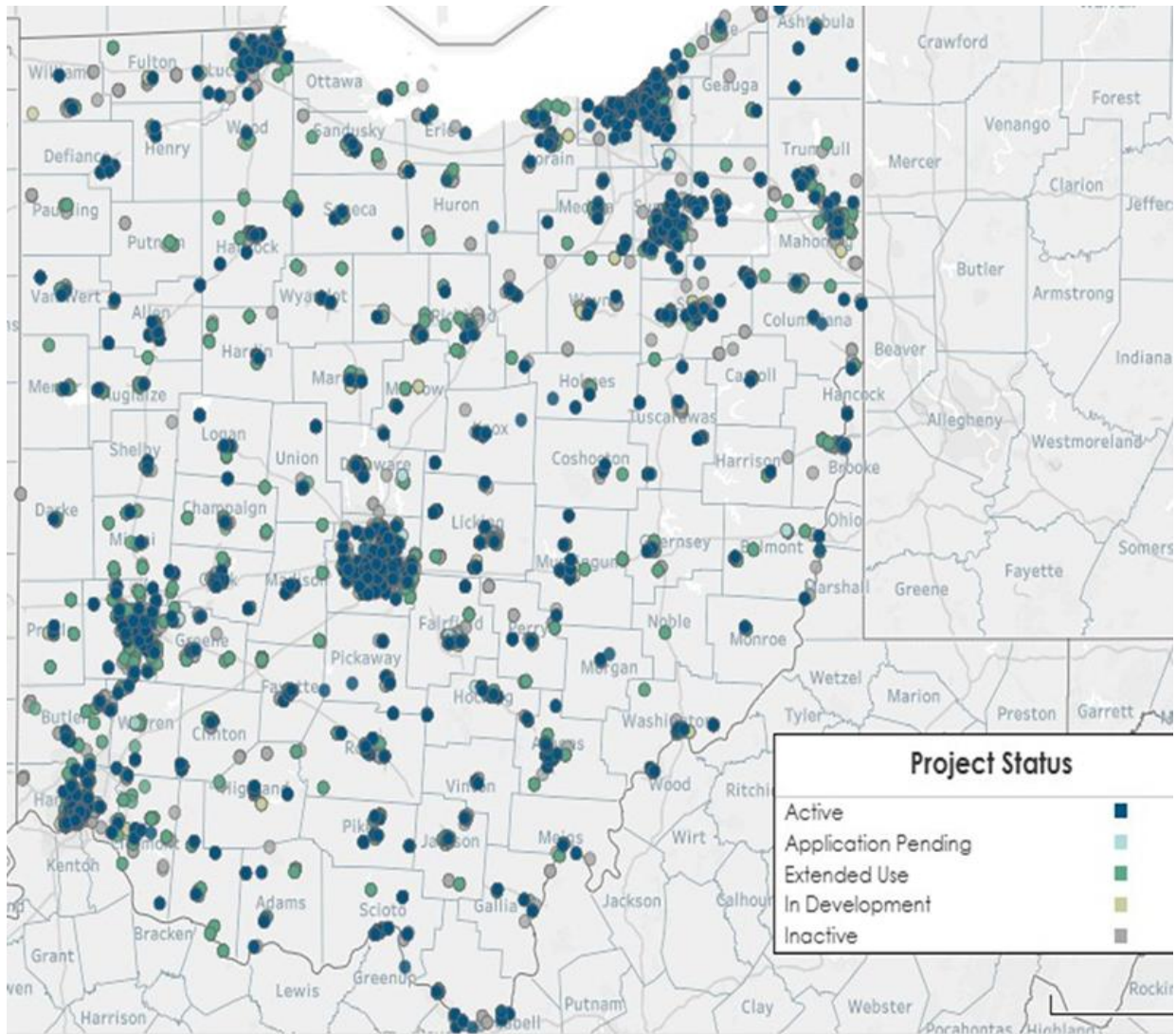
Generational Poverty refers to a cycle of poverty that persists over multiple generations within a family or community. In these situations, the challenges of poverty are passed down from one generation to the next, making it difficult for individuals and families to break free from their circumstances. Children born into poverty often face educational, economic, and social disadvantages that reduce their chances of upward mobility. This cycle is reinforced by factors such as lack of access to quality education, limited job opportunities, transportation, poor healthcare, and inadequate housing, which prevents families from escaping poverty. Addressing generational poverty in rural areas presents unique challenges due to several factors:

1. **Limited Access to Education and Training**: Rural areas often have fewer educational resources, including schools with limited funding, lack of teachers, and less access to extracurricular activities. Higher education opportunities may also be far away or unavailable, making it harder for young people to acquire the skills needed for well-paying jobs.
2. **Limited Employment Opportunities**: Rural areas typically have fewer job opportunities, and those that are available may be low-wage, seasonal, or unstable. Many rural economies depend on agriculture or manufacturing, industries that may offer limited opportunities for career advancement or may be in decline due to automation or economic shifts.
3. **Isolation and Lack of Infrastructure**: Rural communities are often geographically isolated, which can limit access to essential services like healthcare, job training, public transportation, and social support networks. This physical isolation can make it harder for individuals to escape the constraints of poverty, especially if they lack the means to travel.
4. **Cultural and Social Barriers**: In some rural communities, there may be social and cultural norms that discourage seeking outside help or leaving the area to pursue better opportunities. Family and community ties can sometimes trap people in a cycle of poverty.
5. **Health Disparities**: Rural areas often have higher rates of chronic health conditions and less access to healthcare, making it harder for individuals to work, attend school, or improve their quality of life. Poor health can further limit an individual's ability to emerge from poverty.

6. **Economic Decline and Declining Public Services**: Many rural areas experience economic decline as industries close or move to urban centers. This can lead to job loss, a shrinking tax base, and reduced public services, further reinforcing poverty. The lack of economic activity can also discourage businesses from investing in these areas, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of stagnation.

7. **Generational Mindsets**: In some rural communities, there may be a mindset that "this is just the way things are," and people may feel resigned to their circumstances. This can make it harder for individuals and families to believe they can break the cycle of poverty, especially when generations before them have struggled with the same challenges.

Breaking the cycle of generational poverty in rural areas requires a multi-faceted approach including:

- **Investing in education**: Improving access to quality education, vocational training, and skills development can provide individuals with the tools they need to break free from poverty.
- **Promoting economic development**: Encouraging businesses to invest in rural areas, creating job opportunities, and diversifying the local economy can provide long-term solutions to poverty.
- **Improving healthcare access**: Ensuring that rural communities have access to affordable healthcare can help improve quality of life and reduce the barriers posed by chronic health conditions.
- **Expanding social services**: Providing access to social services, such as childcare, housing assistance, and mental health support, can help families emerge from poverty.
- **Community-based solutions**: Community-driven initiatives and local leadership can play a key role in addressing the unique challenges of rural poverty. Collaboration between government, non-profits, and community members is crucial for creating lasting change.

Ultimately, breaking the cycle of generational poverty in rural areas requires coordinated efforts across various sectors.

Strategic Planning Goals for 2025 -2029

Increase Discretionary Funding

Objective/Performance Target: By December 2029, the organization will have diversified revenue streams and strengthened donor engagement to increase agency funding by at least 15% compared to year-end 2024 levels.

Housing and Homelessness

Objective/Performance Target: By December 2029, NOCAC will serve as either a nonprofit sponsor or key partner in acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing up to 25 units of safe, affordable housing while also expanding shelter bed capacity.

Child Care

Objective/Performance Target: By December 2029, NOCAC will increase the number of licensed home-based child care providers. Through community partnerships, targeted training, and policy advocacy, NOCAC will establish sustainable child care solutions that meet the needs of low-income families.

Advocacy and Education for Poverty Awareness

Objective/Performance Target: By June 2029, NOCAC will have expanded training and community engagement initiatives to foster a well-informed staff and a responsive community committed to empowering individuals and families with the skills needed to overcome poverty.

Employee Wellness and Retention

Objective/Performance Target: Beginning in January 2026, NOCAC will reduce annual employee turnover to below 10% by implementing a comprehensive wellness and retention strategy.

Work Plans follow the conclusion.

Conclusion

The development of a strategic plan marks the beginning of a focused effort towards achieving long-term goals and organizational success. With a clear vision, defined objectives, and a structured approach, the plan provides a roadmap for growth and improvement. However, its effectiveness depends on continuous evaluation and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. By engaging stakeholders, monitoring progress, and making necessary adjustments, the strategic plan can be a powerful tool to guide decision-making and drive sustainable results. Commitment to execution and accountability ensures that the plan evolves with the organization, leading to continued success.