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## FISCAL TOPICS

Fiscal Services Division

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Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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## Community Action Agencies

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created by the federal [Economic Opportunity Act of 1964](#) as a national network of agencies with the purpose of developing local solutions to poverty. The agencies are locally based private and public nonprofit organizations that network with local organizations to serve elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals and promote self-sufficiency. Each CAA develops and coordinates programs and services that meet the needs of citizens in the local service areas. Iowa has 16 CAAs that serve all 99 counties and assist more than 320,000 Iowans annually. Each of the 16 CAAs is governed by a volunteer board of directors that includes an elected public official, private sector representatives, and low-income representatives. There is also an Iowa Community Action Association that provides resources and support to the CAAs and is governed by a board of directors that includes the executive director for each of the 16 CAAs.

The CAAs assist clients in achieving educational goals, finding and retaining employment, and obtaining food and shelter. Some of the services that may be provided, in addition to the programs administered by the Department of Human Rights Division of Community Action Agencies (DCAA), include:

- Head Start
- Child care
- Individual case management
- Food and nutrition
- Employment
- Emergency services
- Local and community planning
- Prevention strategies
- Advocacy for low-income issues
- Volunteer mobilization
- Transportation
- Job training and education
- Housing
- Youth involvement

### Iowa Department of Human Rights Division of Community Action Agencies

The DCAA of the Iowa Department of Human Rights administers a variety of State and federal programs operated by local CAAs. Programs use a combination of federal, State, local, and private funds. Several programs are administered at the State level by the DCAA, which serves as the central point for community action activity within the government of Iowa. Federal programs administered by the Division

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#### More Information

Department of Human Rights, Division of Community Action Agencies: [humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa](http://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa)

Iowa Community Action Association: [iowacommunityaction.org](http://iowacommunityaction.org)

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include: the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Additionally, there is an Iowa Commission on Community Action Agencies that serves to review the Division's progress on programs. Nine members appointed by the Governor serve three-year terms. One-third of members are elected officials; one-third are representatives of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, and educational organizations; and one-third have incomes at or below poverty level.

### **CSBG**

Annually, the Iowa Department of Human Rights is appropriated moneys from the federal CSBG, of which 96.0% must be allocated to the CAA for coordination and delivery of programs and services. This funds the central management and core activities for CAAs, and agencies use the funds to mobilize additional public and private resources. Each CAA must receive at least \$100,000 of the funds. In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020, CAAs served more than 120,000 families and more than 291,000 individuals with CSBG funding.

### **LIHEAP**

This federally funded block grant is designed to aid qualifying households with the payment of a portion of their winter residential heating costs. The program works to intervene in potentially life-threatening situations. Additionally, there is a client education component to encourage regular utility payments, energy awareness, and energy efficient practices. In FFY 2020, the LIHEAP aided 81,875 households, and the average statewide LIHEAP benefit was \$460. Annually, the Iowa Department of Human Rights is appropriated moneys from the federal LIHEAP Block Grant, of which up to 15.0% can be allocated for residential weatherization or other related home repairs and up to 10.0% may be used for administrative costs associated with the LIHEAP.

In the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, a temporary Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program was established and funded to help support water accessibility for low-income individuals through financial assistance for water bills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional funds were provided in the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#). The administration of this program is based on the structure of the LIHEAP, and the DCAA contracts the Program funds to local CAAs.

### **Weatherization Assistance Program**

The Weatherization Assistance Program is a federal grant program established to assist low-income persons with the installation of energy efficient measures, such as insulation and infiltration, in their homes to reduce long-term heating and cooling costs and improve the health and safety of the homes. The Program utilizes a computerized energy audit to determine the measures to be applied to each house and performs safety checks on weatherized homes. The Weatherization Assistance Program receives annual funding from the LIHEAP, the United States Department of Energy, and from investor-owned utility companies.

### **FaDSS**

FaDSS is a voluntary option for recipients of Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits. The State program provides home-based supportive services that promote, empower, and nurture families toward economic and emotional self-sufficiency. The FaDSS program is administered through home visits with families using a strength-based approach. The Department of Human Services contracts with the DCAA to administer the grant program and subcontracts with the 16 CAAs statewide to provide FaDSS services. The FaDSS program receives annual funding through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant and General Fund appropriation for the FIP. In FFY 2020, the FaDSS program served 2,268 families.

### **Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)**

Legislation passed during the 2008 Legislative Session directed DCAA to implement a new IDA program. The IDAs are designed to promote the accumulation of assets that lead to self-sufficiency for low-income families. The program provides matched savings accounts for families with limited resources who meet income-based criteria. The IDA program was last funded in FY 2013. This funding was spent down by FY 2016, and the program has not been funded since.

**Related Statutes and Administrative Rules**

Iowa Code sections [216A.91](#) through [216A.107](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [427](#)

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