

2012– 2013 Annual Report

Northern Tier Community Action Corporation

Helping People...



Changing Lives!

*Over 47 years of
Service to Low-Income
Families in Cameron, Elk,
McKean and Potter Counties.*





NORTHERN TIER COMMUNITY ACTION CORP.

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KENNETH P. STRAUB
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF THE AGENCY

As we reflect on this past year we realize that Community Action has been subject to a great deal of scrutiny in regards to: mission, strategy, outcomes and – of course – funding. This attention could be considered a “back handed compliment”. That is to say that the Community Services Block Grant, with the prime directive to combat the root causes of poverty would be placed under the magnifying glass. This attention is well deserved considering that nationally, Community Action Agencies number more than 1200 and the monies generated from these entities to implement their “change agent” strategy is in excess of 10 times the core dollars enabling these organizations, to be!

Our effectiveness stems from the 5 steps to problem solving known as – the scientific method!

- 1) **Research:** needs assessment is a constant process. Implementation of current programs as well as participation with intra-agency groups enables the realization of the impediments to achieving self-sufficiency; and,
- 2) **Define:** identify these obstacles in clear and simple language; and,
- 3) **Design:** avenues to overcome these difficulties being experienced by our clientele; and,
- 4) **Implement:** implement strategies to achieve the desired outcomes; and,
- 5) **Evaluate:** periodic review of effectiveness is a must.

This methodology may not be the best operational procedure, but it's the best strategy that we have found. This process has enabled this organization to become 48 years young!

THANK YOU TO THE BOARD & STAFF FOR YOUR EFFORTS !!!

Sincerely,

George E. Hults
President

Respectfully,

Kenneth P. Straub
Executive Director

Board of Directors

NTCAC Board of Directors

George E. Hults, President
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R. Gale Monroe	Donald (Pat) Walker

Mission Statement

*Northern Tier
Community Action is
dedicated to
providing families and individuals
in
Cameron, Elk, McKean & Potter
Counties with
resources to alleviate poverty and
promote self-sufficiency.*

Northern Tier Community Action Corporation's Board of Directors and Staff know well the importance of the work we do and how critical it is we have our family's support . For all the phone calls, long hours, weekends lost and time spent away from home making sure we are helping those in need, we say *Thank You for standing with us!*



Northern Tier Community Action Corporation is governed by a volunteer 18 member tripartite Board of Directors. One-third of these members are Elected Officials or their appointees, one-third is elected from the Private Sector and one-third is elected as Community Representatives of our low-income population. These dedicated individuals are drawn from all four counties—Cameron, Elk, McKean and Potter and serve tirelessly to offer their knowledge and experience for the governance and guidance of the agency.

Northern Tier Community Action Corporation's 50 full and 36 part-time staff and an army of Community Volunteers are on the front lines in the war on poverty. These dedicated Staff and Volunteers perform work that is often unseen, unrecognized and under-appreciated publicly, yet they continue the effort they know is making a difference in the lives of those in need.

Community Action Works.....

Congratulations Connie Bush! 2013 Community Action Association Self-Sufficiency Award recipient



On April 17, 2013, Northern Tier Community Action Head Start Teacher Connie Bush was recognized and awarded a Community Action Association of Pennsylvania 2013 Self-Sufficiency Award for her achievements.

Connie is pictured above with her daughter Angelina, Pennsylvania State Representative Matt Gabler, Ken Straub—Executive Director and George Hults—Board President.

Prior to Connie receiving the CAAP Award with her peers, Representative Gabler presented Connie with a Letter of Recognition from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and congratulated her on her achievements.



Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.

James A. Baldwin

“Northern Tier Community Action really gave me a second chance by opening up a whole new life for me and my daughter”

Connie Bush

One might pose these questions..... *Who is Community Action? What does a Community Action Agency do? Does Community Action really make a difference in our local communities?*

Community Action is a national network of 1200 Community Action agencies, of which there are 43 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, funded in part by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), serving approximately 7 million families, totaling 16 million low-income persons each year. Most importantly is these are agencies made up of caring, compassionate and dedicated people anxious to help individuals and families up and out of the grip of poverty to self-sufficiency.

To answer the second question one needs to step into the lives of a rural family struggling to survive in this difficult economy.

- You suddenly find yourself unemployed with limited opportunities for employment.
- If you are fortunate enough to find employment it likely doesn't pay a "living wage", defined as what you need to earn to support your family. It may or may not provide health care insurance and if it does, is another chunk out of your pay each month.
- While you found work at a lower than "living wage" job, you need childcare for your younger children, but find most of your paycheck is going to pay for childcare.
- What of your paycheck doesn't go for childcare, goes for operation of a vehicle (gas, oil, repairs, inspection, license, etc.).
- You are likely living in an older home with less than energy efficient heating, appliances, windows and insulation, leaving you with continually rising utility costs. You make it through the winter months only to have your gas turned off because you couldn't keep up with the bill.
- While you may be able to qualify for SNAP assistance for food, but because you are working, it likely won't be enough to feed your family and get you through the month.

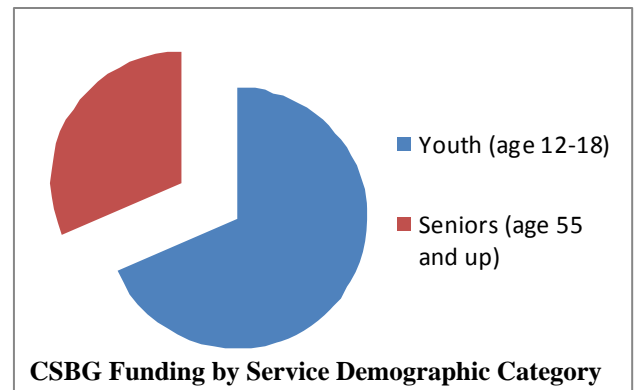
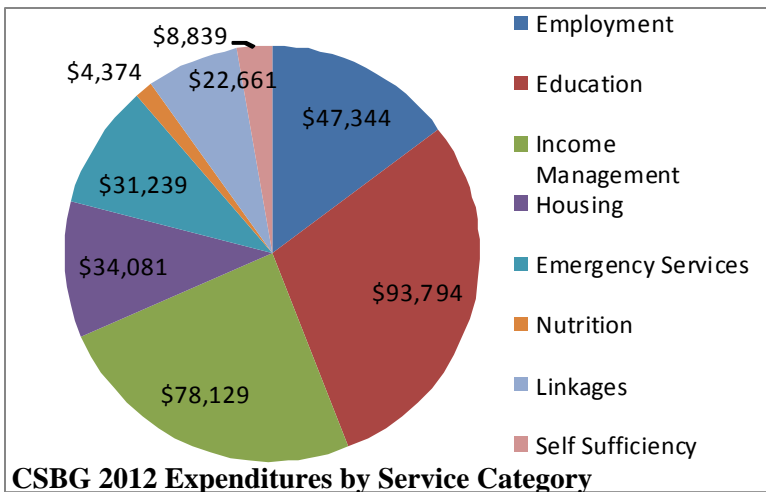
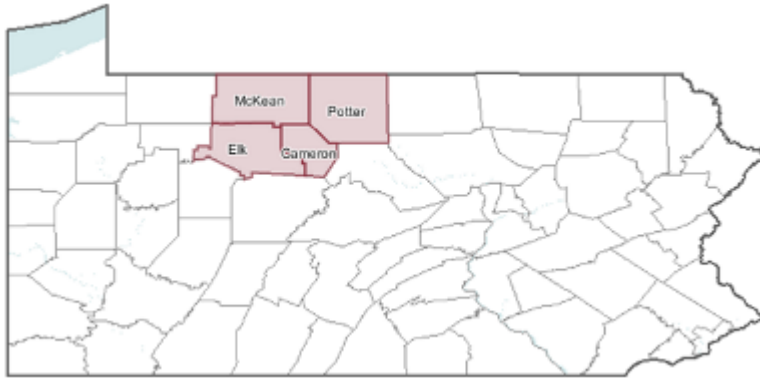
Community Action agencies through a variety of programs, services and partnerships help struggling families survive and stabilize while working to become self-sufficient once again.

- Employment and training programs & partnerships help individuals and families prepare for career changes and locate employment.
- Child Care Information Services (CCIS) provides qualified families with financial assistance and referrals linking families to childcare so parents are able to work.
- The Head Start program helps not only children to get a head start on their education, but also allows parents and other family members or caretakers to learn important parenting and social skills that help them be better parents which in turn reduces family stress.
- Weatherization and Energy Assistance programs help make homes safe and affordable through improvements and energy conservation measures low-income families could never afford to make on their own. This reduces utility consumption and expenditures allowing those resources to be used for food, shelter and transportation.
- Homeless Assistance programs are often able to help families to stay in their homes either through rental and energy assistance or foreclosure prevention counseling.
- Food & Nutrition programs provide food to area food banks which in turn provide a supplemental food distribution to help families make it through the month. Having enough health food to eat is critical for adults working to try and make a living, but equally important for children. It's difficult to work efficiently or learn when you are hungry.

Northern Tier Community Action

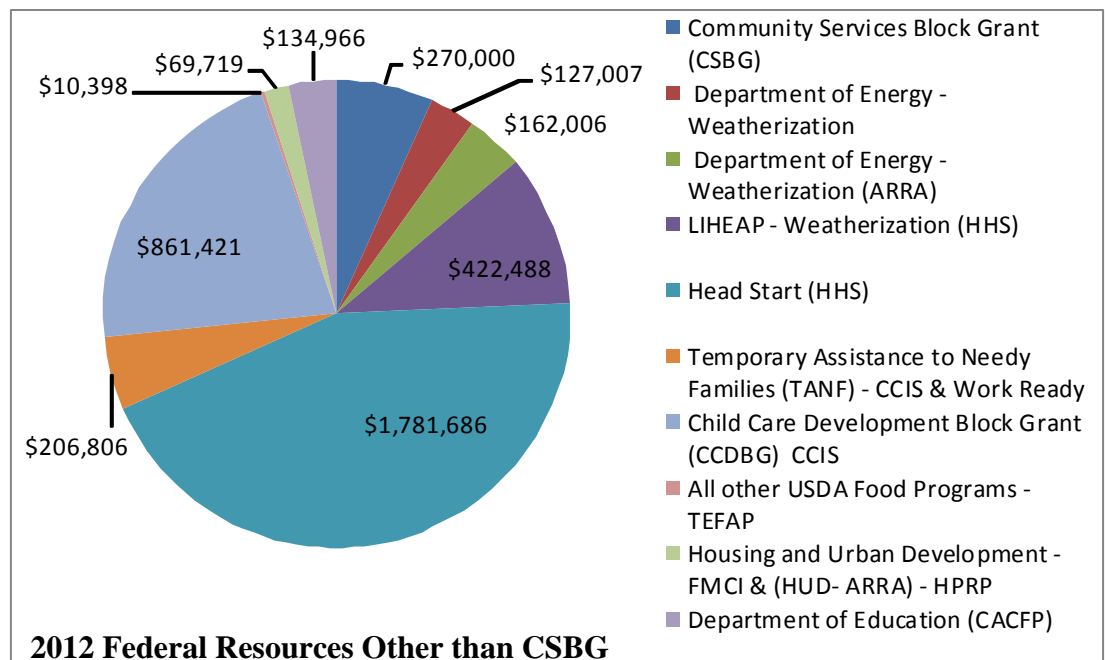
Serving in the heart of rural Pennsylvania

Northern Tier Community Action Corporation serves a four county north central region of the Commonwealth consisting of 3,300 square miles and 71 individual rural municipalities. According to the 2011 American Communities Survey, Cameron County has a population of 5,130, Elk County 32,233, McKean County 43,642 and Potter County 17,487 for a total population of 98,492. 2011 poverty estimates show a total of 13,679 persons or 14.6% of our residents living in poverty and a 4.6% increase from 2010 to 2011.

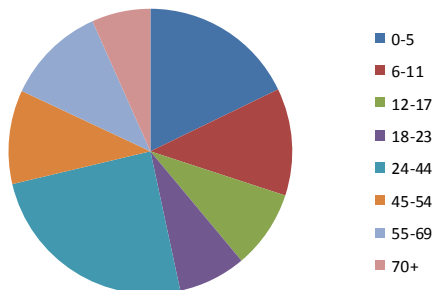
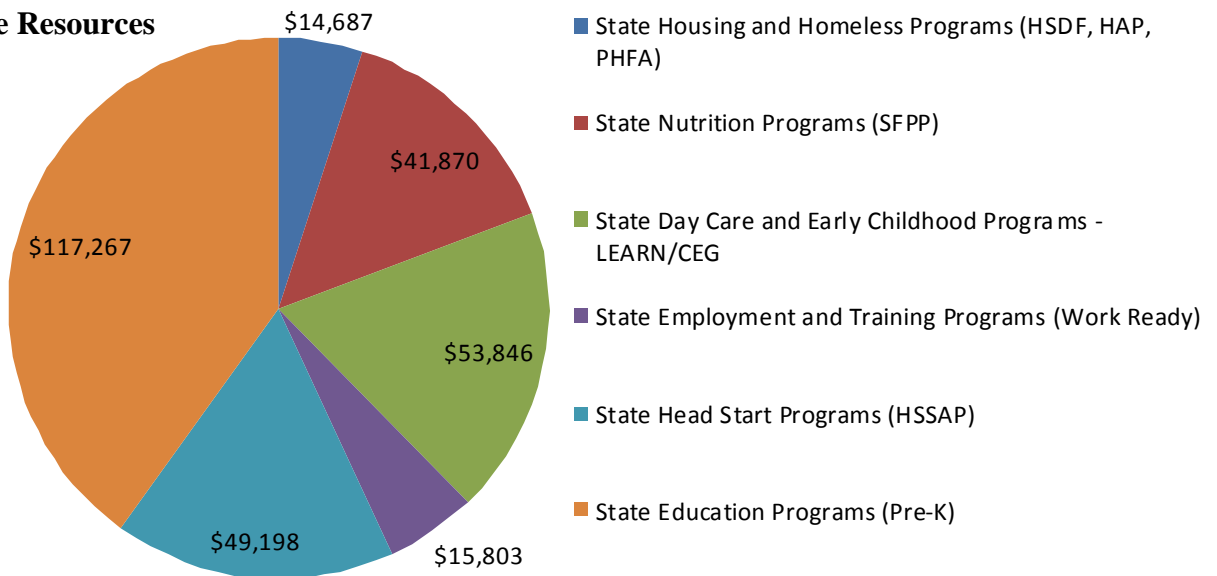


"It is the millions of acts by ordinary people that will eventually make a difference."

Hamish McRae

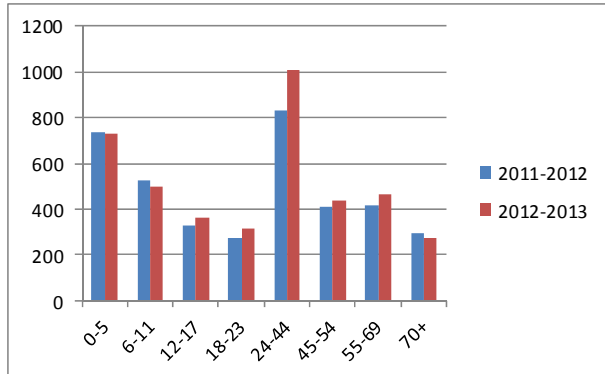


2012 State Resources

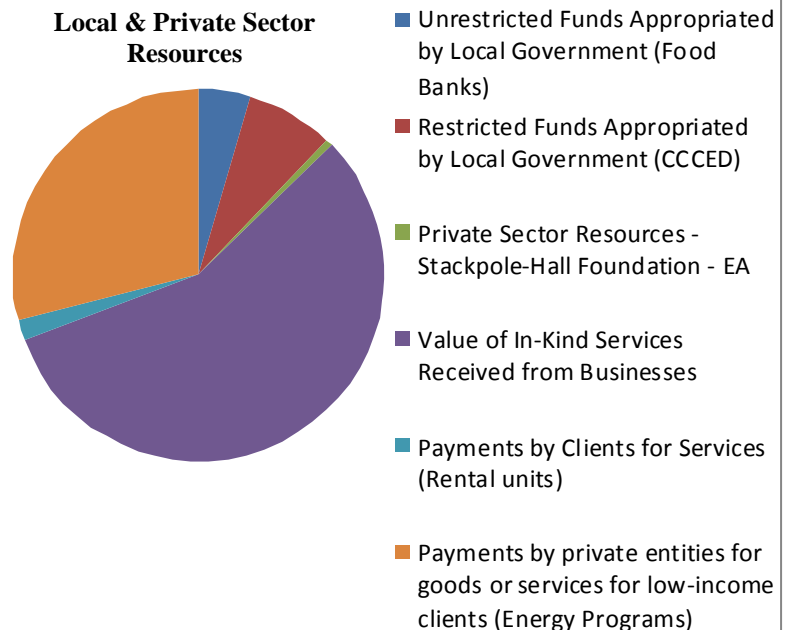


Program participants—Age

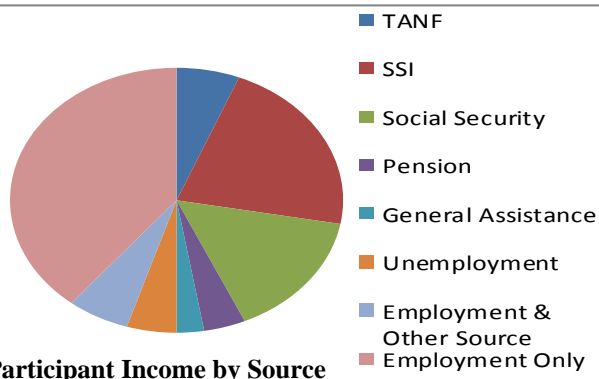
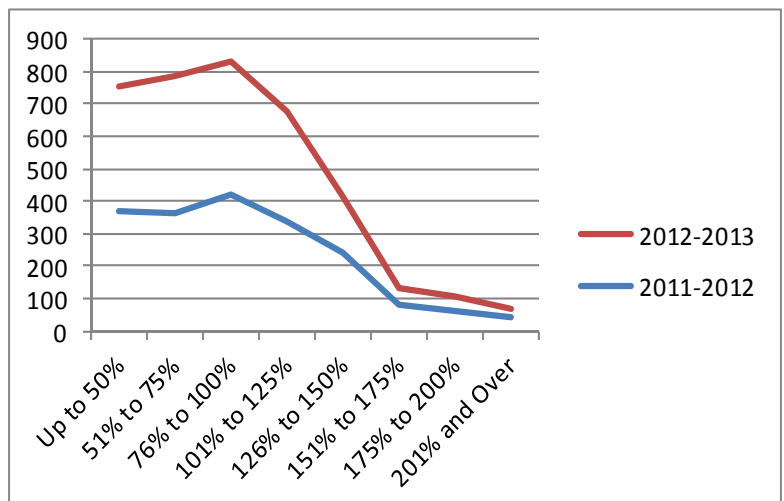
Program participants - Age Comparison



Local & Private Sector Resources



Program Participants Level of Family Income % of Federal Poverty Guidelines FY Comparison



Participant Income by Source

Early Childhood Programs

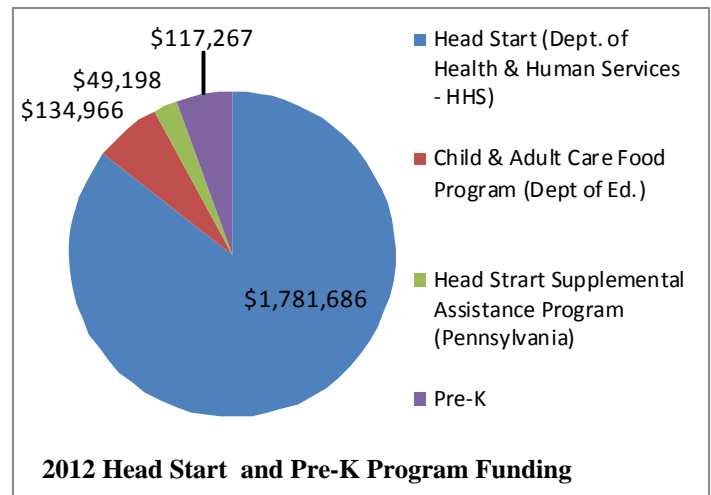
Head Start

Head Start is the most successful, longest running, national school readiness program in the United States, promoting the individual development and well-being of children and their families. Head Start strives to address the various needs of preschool age children, be it educational, nutritional, health, social service, and/or disability needs. Head Start staff members offer children love, acceptance, understanding and the opportunity to learn and experience success. Head Start children socialize with others, solve problems and have experiences that help them become self-confident and ready to enter kindergarten. The children also improve listening and speaking skills. Eligible families with 3- to 5-year-old children must be county residents and meet income guidelines. Head Start Program Centers and Home Base locations include: Smethport, Bradford I, Bradford II and Bradford III, Coudersport, Emporium, Johnsonburg, Kane I, Kane II, Otto-Eldred, Port Allegany, Ridgway, Smethport, and St. Marys, Elk County Home Base, McKean County Home Base and Potter County Home Base.

Head Start Offers:

- Preschool classrooms
- Family education programs
- Health screenings
- Nutritional assessments and counseling
- Social service programs
- Individualized education

Head Start does so much more than just educate and prepare children for school. Mom's, Dad's and other family members or caretakers learn important parenting and social skills that help them be better parents and caretakers.



2012 Statistics

Number of children obtaining age appropriate immunizations, medical and dental care:298
Number of children health and physical development were improved as a result of adequate nutrition:298
Number of children participated in pre-school activities to develop school readiness:.....298
Number of children participated in pre-school activities developmentally ready for Kindergarten or 1st. Grade:.....298
Number of parents and other adults learn and exhibit improved parenting and family functioning skills:444

Summer Work Study Program

Through the **Summer Work Study Program** funded through a partnership with Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) and the Stackpole Hall Foundation allowed us to employ two students for the Head Start Program in Elk County. With management, field staff, and secretarial staff, not employed during the summer, the summer jobs program benefitted Head Start by offering administrative support to the Head Start program.



*Children are great imitators.....So give them something great to imitate.
~Anonymous~*

Early Childhood Programs

Child Care Information Services (CCIS)

Child Care Information Services (CCIS) is the local source for child care information. NTCAC CCIS provides your families with information on quality child care and personalized child care referrals to child care providers based on their specific needs or preferences. NTCAC continues operation of the Subsidized Child Care Program, currently referred to as Child Care Information Services (CCIS) or Child Care Works (CCW) funded through the PA Department of Public Welfare. The Child Care Works subsidized child care program helps low-income families pay their child care fees.

Providing they meet the guidelines:

- The CCIS will pay a part of the child care cost. This is called a subsidy payment.
- Family will pay a part of the cost. This is called the family co-pay.
- The subsidy payment and the family co-pay go directly to the child care program.

Northern Tier Community Action provides parent counseling to families with an emphasis on the importance of early care and education, and quality child care for their children. Providing working families with the resources they need to achieve self sufficiency directly affects a family's ability to obtain and maintain employment.



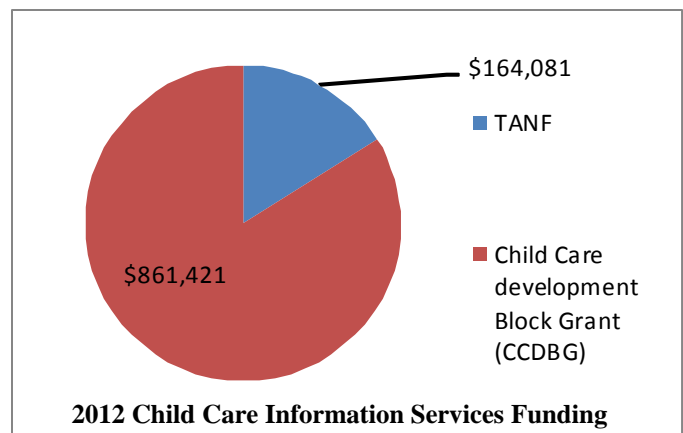
With current economic conditions, high rates of unemployment combined with a lack of "living wage" jobs in our area, and ever increasing cost of transportation, families find it nearly impossible to afford quality child care without these services. Our



and
bors
up our
ties and
vitality to our

These are families, friends, neighbors that make our community contribute to our local economies.

231 families were able to obtain quality care for children or other dependents through CCIS in FY2012. CCIS provides outreach to families throughout the year at various area events, such as county fairs, family day activities and business expos.



**CHILDREN ARE LIKE SPONGES.
THEY ABSORB ALL YOUR STRENGTH
AND LEAVE YOU LIMP
BUT GIVE THEM A SQUEEZE
AND YOU GET EVERYTHING
BACK
~ AUTHOR UNKNOWN ~**



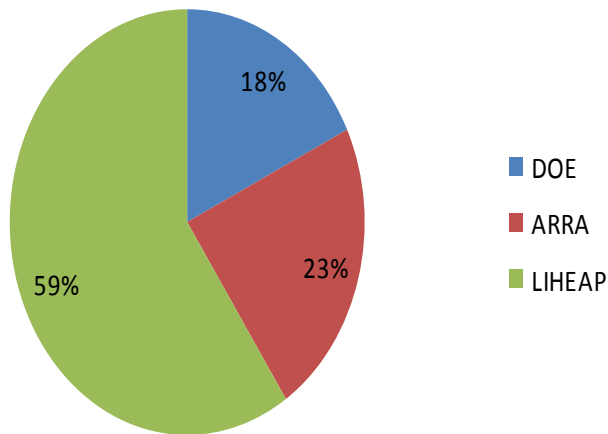
Weatherization Assistance and Energy Programs

The mission of the **Weatherization Assistance Program** is to reduce energy consumption and cost in low-income households throughout Pennsylvania. It is designed to insulate the homes of low-income persons, particularly the elderly, persons with disabilities, families with children, and high residential energy users, in order to conserve needed energy and to aid those persons least able to afford higher utility costs.

On site energy audits are conducted to assess conditions in homes and to identify the most cost-effective energy saving measures to be installed.



2012 Weatherization Funding



Weatherization services include but are not limited to:

- Blower door guided air sealing to effectively locate and reduce air-leakage throughout the home.
- Installation of attic, wall, basement and crawlspace insulation and ventilation to reduce energy loss.
- Heating system modification or replacement to increase the efficiency and/or safety of the heating system.
- Minor repairs, and/or health and safety measures are provided (when necessary) to allow the safe and effective installation of the weatherization measures.
- Client education on the proper use and maintenance of the installed Weatherization measures and ways to reduce energy waste everyday.

The average expenditure in Pennsylvania, per household is \$6,500 depending on the home audit results.

Eligible applicants include low-income individuals (at or below 200% of the federal poverty level), with priority given to higher risk residents such as the elderly, disabled individuals, families with children and high energy users.

Energy Assistance Programs through NTCAC such as Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Low Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP) are funded through partnerships with National Fuel, Allegheny Power (West Penn Power) and First Energy, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the Department of Public Welfare Crisis Interface Program. These programs provide energy education and targeted utility related energy conservation measures to eligible consumers. Priority is given to low-income, high-usage, payment troubled customers. Eligible individuals and families may be eligible to have a portion of their heating bill paid and/or receive financial assistance to repair or replace their heating system.



2012 Statistics

Number of families were provided weatherization and energy assistance services:

- Cameron County32
- Elk County.....99
- McKean County450
- Potter County228

Total 809

Housing Programs

With shelter being a critical component of a family's stabilization, NTCAC Housing Programs and services help to stabilize families by providing shelter and/or utility assistance during times of crisis. This shelter assistance is generally in the form of assistance with a security deposit, first month's rent, past due rent, utility assistance or if a homeowner is in a mortgage crisis situation and facing foreclosure, we provide mortgage foreclosure prevention counseling.



The **Cameron County Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)** funded by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) through Cameron County provides emergency rental and/or utility assistance to low-income families in Cameron County struggling to overcome another obstacle in their daily lives.

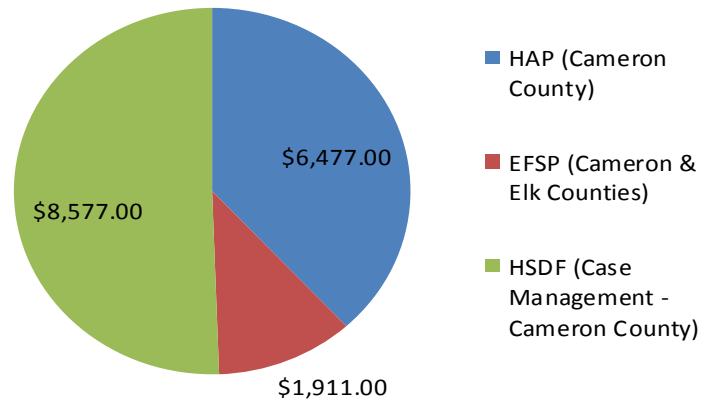


The **Human Services Development Fund (HSDF)** funded by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) through Cameron County, allows us to provide important Case Management Services to individuals and families in Cameron County to prevent or cure a homeless situation.

The **Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program (EFSNBP)** funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding for the emergency assistance consisting of rental and/or utility assistance. To stabilize a family they not only need shelter, but equally important are having heat and lights.



2012 Homeless Prevention Programs funding



All of these programs partner with other local human service providers such as Citizens Against Physical Sexual and Emotional Abuse (CAPSEA), Cameron Elk MH/MR, Potter County Human Services and McKean County YWCA as well as Ministerial Associations and Salvation Army offices in all four counties. This collaboration makes the best use of all resources available to assist the individual or family to get through the crisis at hand. Through these programs, case management is provided to connect the clients with important stabilization resources that may be available through NTCAC and other providers.

The **Homeowner's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP)** funded through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), allows NTCAC to provide counseling services processing applications for the HEMAP.



This program was de-funded in 2010 and fortunately was re-funded late in the fall of 2012. Legislated by the PA Legislature under Act 91, HEMAP provides not only the potential opportunity for homeowners to refinance mortgage arrearages to bring them

current on the mortgage, but also buys the homeowner up to 90 days time to work with lenders and servicers to come to alternatives to foreclosure. More homeowners will be assisted in 2013 through the availability of CSBG Discretionary funding availability.

2012 Statistics

Number of families provided rental assistance:	26
Number of families provided utility assistance:	15
Number of families provided case management services	31
Number of families provided foreclosure prevention counseling.....	3

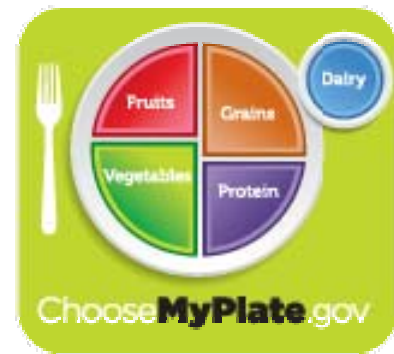
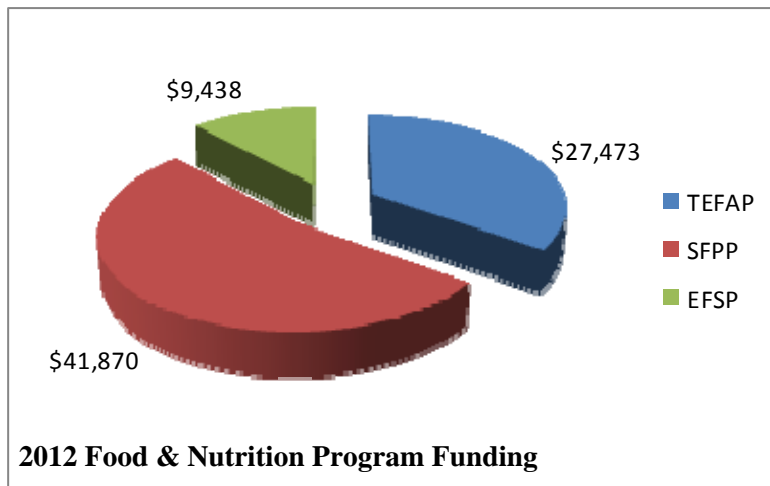
A HOME IS CRUCIAL,
THE FOUNDATION OF
A STABLE FAMILY.
ERIC CANTONA

Food & Nutrition



NTCAC partners with three area food banks (Christian Food Bank - St. Marys, Good Samaritan Food Bank-Ridgway and Northern Elk Food Bank- Johnsonburg) in Elk County and one in Cameron County (Cameron County Food Pantry-

Emporium) to provide administration of state and federal funding through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the PA Department of Agriculture - State Food Purchase Program (SFPP), provide much needed food subsidies that help families have nutritious meals. The Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program (EFSNBP) funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funds for Local Recipient Organizations (LRO's) to purchase additional food items. Local food collections and donations make up a sizeable portion of each food bank's distribution. These programs and the food banks bring a variety of volunteer opportunities in our communities with churches and local civic organizations providing many of the volunteers.



2012 Statistics

Number of families served with food assistance:844
Number of food boxes distributed:9744
Number of pounds of food distributed:78,921

The lack of access to proper nutrition is not only fueling obesity, it is leading to food insecurity and hunger among our children.

Tom Vilsack



Northern Tier Community Action Corporation is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of Services
Programs and services made possible with funding by the Community Services Block Grant
through the Department of Community and Economic Development



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