

2013– 2014 Annual Report

Northern Tier Community Action Corporation

Helping People...



Changing Lives!

Our Dedicated Board and Staff make it all possible...



*Over 48 years of
Service to Low-Income
Families in Cameron, Elk,
McKean and Potter Counties.*



NORTHERN TIER COMMUNITY ACTION CORP.

POST OFFICE BOX 389, EMPORIUM, PENNSYLVANIA 15834
VOICE: (814) 486-1161 / FAX: (814) 486-0825

KENNETH P. STRAUB
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF THE AGENCY

NATIONAL TO LOCAL

This year (2014) we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT of 1964, which is the federal legislation that created the Community Action movement to address the root causes of poverty – at the local level! Correspondingly, Northern Tier Community Action was incorporated in 1966; we are 48 years young and moving forward.

We have experienced a myriad of changes in our time span; philosophies, goals, expectations, objectives and now we have outcomes. Methodologies used to perform evaluations have evolved from the antiquated “counting heads” to “how can the head grow and develop?”

The current “buzz word” at the national level is: “INNOVATION” because the attitude of “same old / same old” is irrelevant and will lead to a level of uselessness.

We agree with the need to constantly change. One of the striking benefits of Community Action Agencies is the ability to be “fast acting” to address a need; as well as the flexibility to mold an initiative around the specificities of an impediment to self-sufficiency. We have weekly management meetings for cross training and sharing program implementation strategies. We are constantly performing research to assess the needs of our local populace. Through introspection, we are ever performing self-evaluation to maintain a level of CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Sincerely,

George E. Hults
President

Respectfully,

Kenneth P. Straub
Executive Director

Board of Directors

NTCAC Board of Directors

George E. Hults, President
Anthony C. Moscato, Vice President
Dana Mackey Secretary
Robert P. Caskey, Treasurer

Joseph C. DeMott, Jr	Terry Simkins
Janice Eberly	Bonnie Skellen
David Greene	Paulette Snatchko
Phil Jones	Bob Strait, Jr.
R. Gale Monroe	Thomas R. Tyler
John W. Robinson	Donald (Pat) Walker
Rev. Joseph Short	

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.*

The Board of Directors is a vital part of nonprofit structure and success by:

- ◆ Upholding sound fiscal practices
- ◆ Guiding policy development
- ◆ Providing strategic direction
- ◆ Ensuring financial viability
- ◆ Supporting executive leadership
- ◆ Representing the interests of the community



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 volunteers 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.

Elected Officials

- ◆ Care about the communities they serve
- ◆ Move within a larger spectrum of decision makers

Low-Income Representatives

- ◆ Bring unique perspective to your story
- ◆ Have the capacity to create grassroots connections

Community Representatives

- ◆ Enhance organizational capacity with professional expertise
- ◆ Expand your reach through their connections

Of all the things I've done, the most vital is coordinating those who work with me and aiming their efforts at a certain goal.

Walt Disney

Community Action Works.....

Congratulations Rebecca Hakes 2014 Community Action Association Self-Sufficiency Award Recipient



On April 9 2014, former Northern Tier Community Action Head Start Teacher Rebecca “Becky” Hakes was recognized and awarded a Community Action Association of Pennsylvania 2014 Self-Sufficiency Award for her achievements.

Rebecca overcame numerous obstacles with being a single mother, raising her children and obtaining her education to create a better life for her and her family.

Rebecca is pictured above offering her thanks to Northern Tier Community Action Head Start Educational Specialist - Jodi Guisto and Head Start Program Director - Debra Sidelinger for the guidance she needed in getting her Associates Degree .



” The cooperative atmosphere at Northern Tier Community Action filled with mutual respect for one another provided the encouragement for me to spread my wings and fly to higher and higher heights and because of this we are at the best place in life that we’ve ever been.”

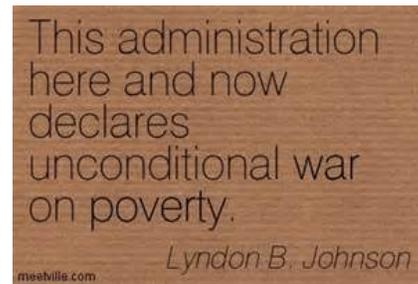
Becky Hakes

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill



50 Years... Looking to the future 1964.....



“This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America. “

The War on Poverty was declared by President Lyndon B. Johnson in his State of the Union Address on January 8, 1964:

"This administration today here and now declares unconditional war on poverty in America. I urge this Congress and all Americans to join me in that effort...."

"Poverty is a national problem, requiring improved national organization and support. But this attack, to be effective, must also be organized at the State and local level."

"For the war against poverty will not be won here in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House."

"It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won. The richest Nation on earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it."

"Very often, a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty, but the symptom."

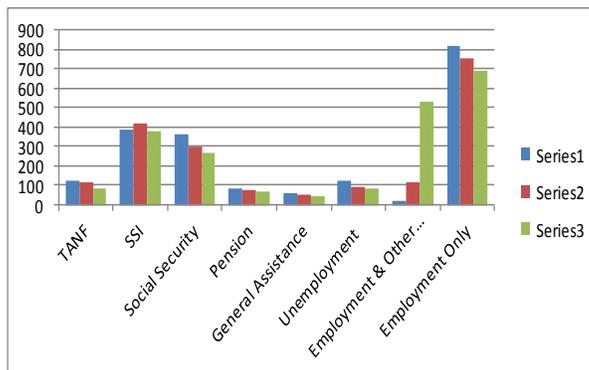
"Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty but to cure it—and above all, to prevent it."

Bruce Hornsby sang about it.....

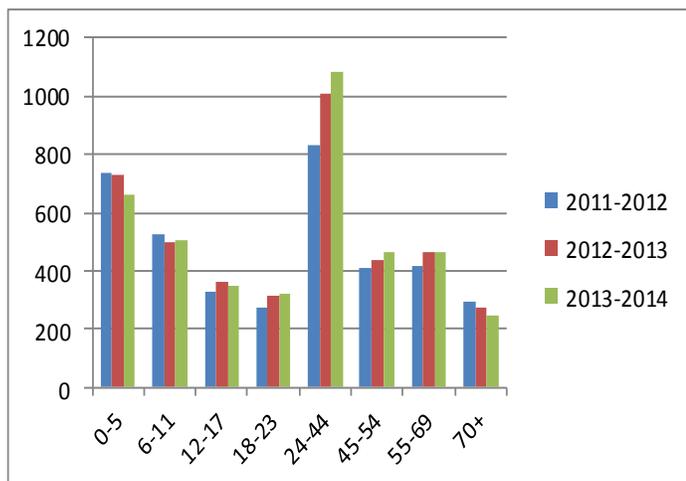
***“Well they passed a law in '64
To give those who ain't got a little more
But it only goes so far
Because the law don't change another's mind...
That's just the way it is
Some things will never change
That's just the way it is
But don't you believe them”***

~ Bruce Hornsby - The Way It Is The Way It Is ©1986

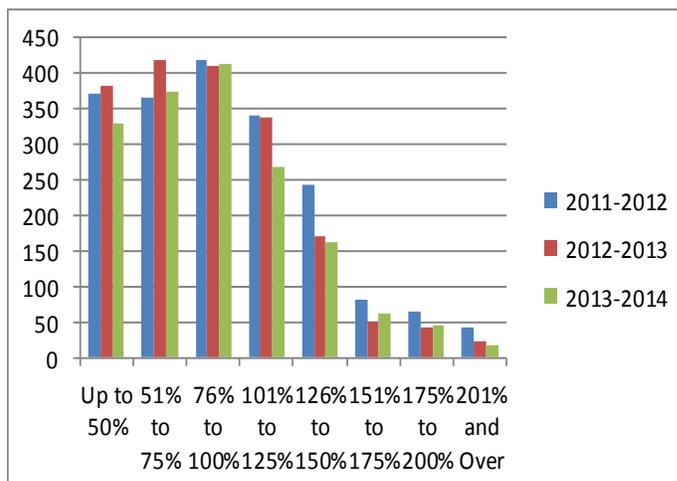
**Participant Characteristics
Source of Family Income**



**Comparison
Unduplicated Number of Persons Served - Age**



**Comparison
Percentage of Federal Poverty Guidelines Income**



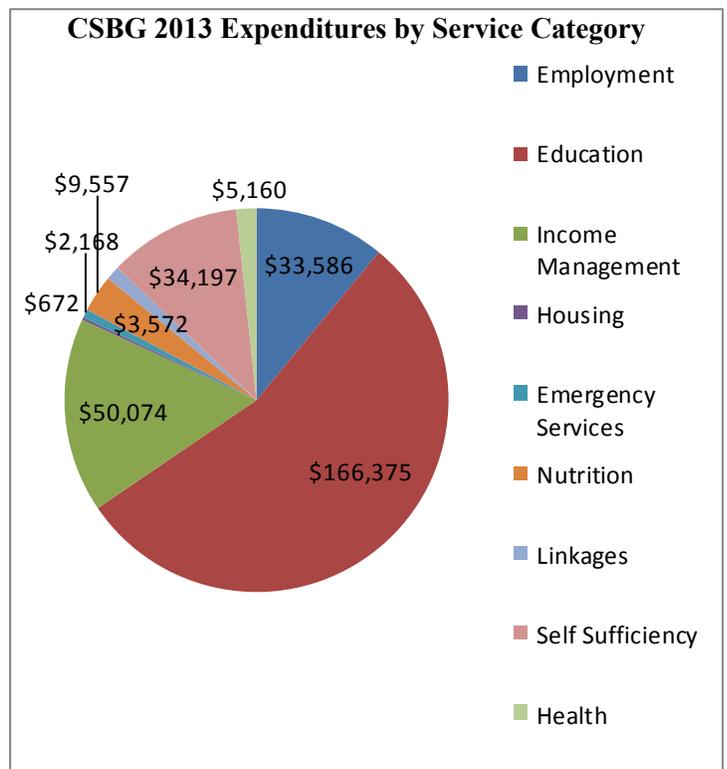
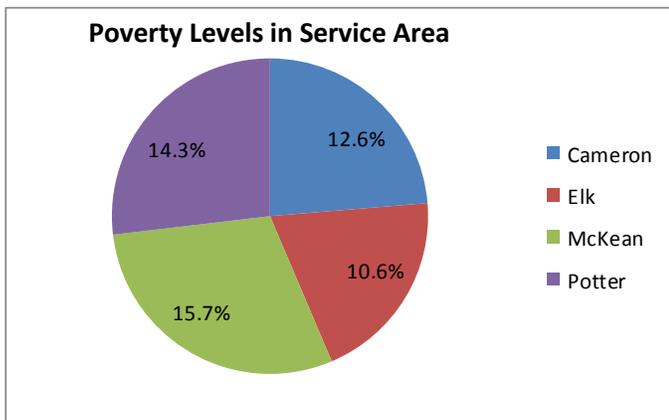
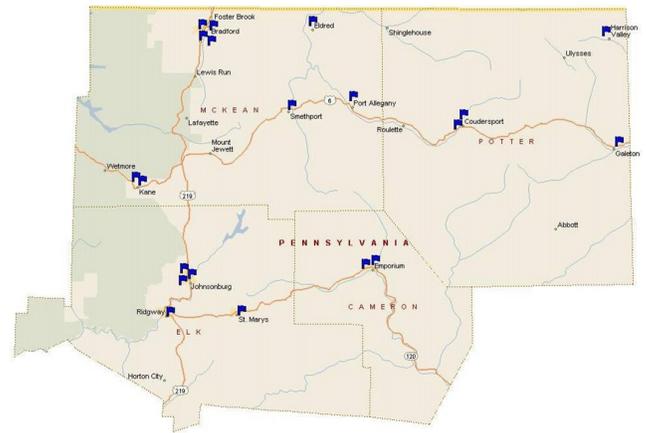
Northern Tier Community Action

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 2008-2012 American Communities Survey Five Year estimates, Cameron County has a population of 5,058 with 12.6% living in Poverty. Elk County has a population of 31,946 with 10.6% living in poverty. McKean County has a population of 43,450 with 15.7% living in poverty and Potter County has a population of 17,457 with 14.3% living in poverty. The overall poverty rate for Pennsylvania is indicated at 13.1% leaving 50% of our service area higher than the state average.

Our consumers face barriers to self-sufficiency with employment and transportation being major issues, reflected not only in people getting to and from jobs, but equally important is the lack of "living wage" jobs in our area. Looking at the Pennsylvania Interstate Highways map, it is easy to see one reason for a lack of economic development. Industry and economic development tends to locate where transportation is. Our consumers face ever increasing costs for housing, utilities, food, child care and education while those fortunate enough to have employment are often faced with making too much to qualify for any assistance, but not enough to "make ends meet". Politicians often debate raising minimum wage to bring individuals to a living wage, against bringing back more industry and jobs to compete for labor, driving wages to a living wage standard.

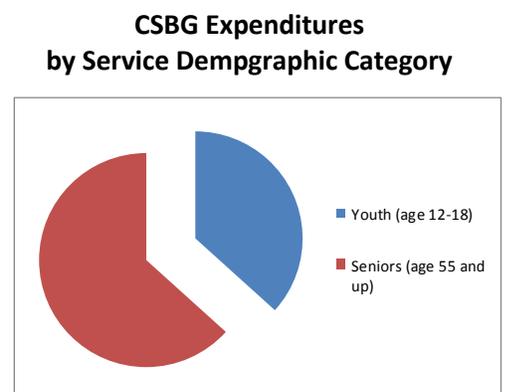
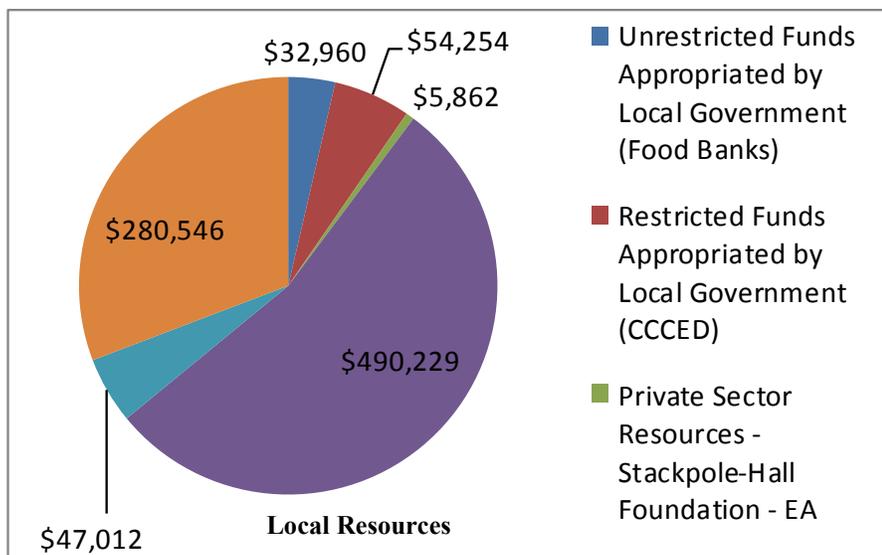
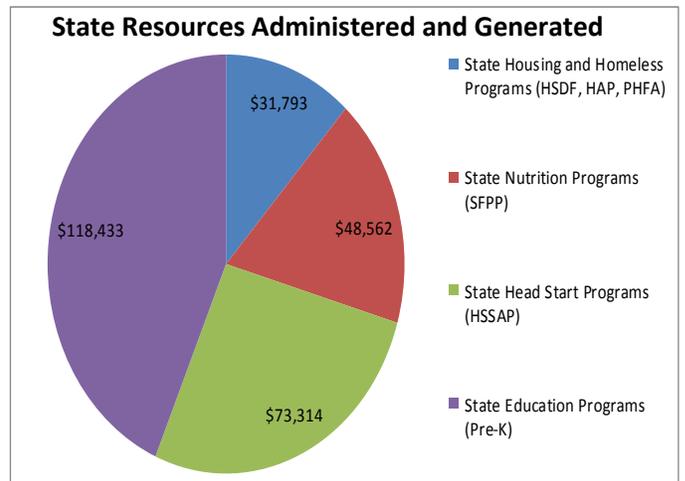
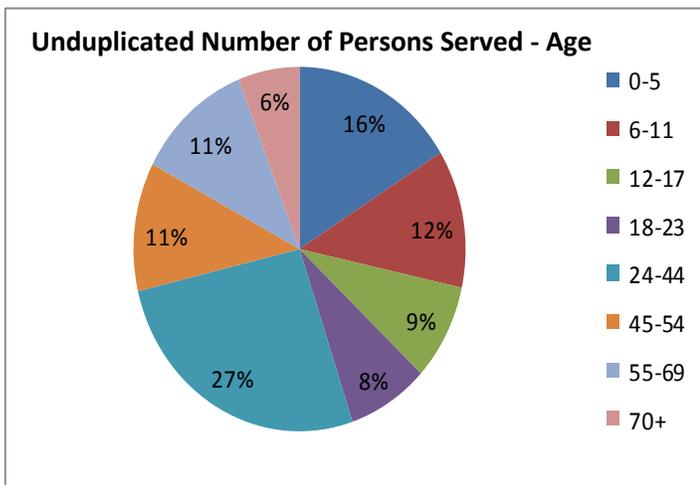
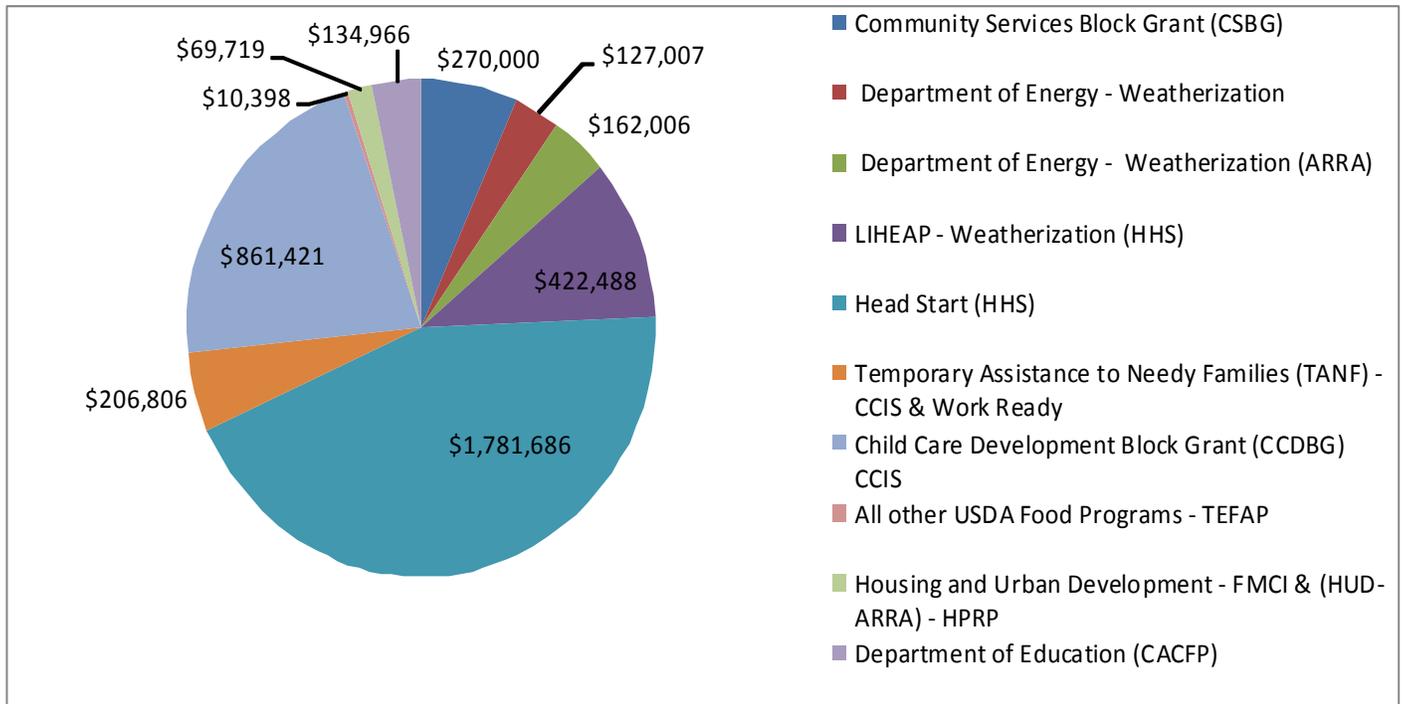
However it is debated, one real fact remains.....Community Action Agencies like Northern Tier Community Action need to be here to help lift families up and help them work through the barriers.



“The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty, and all forms of human life.”

John F. Kennedy

Resources Administered and Generated by the CSBG Network -Federal Resources



Early Childhood Programs

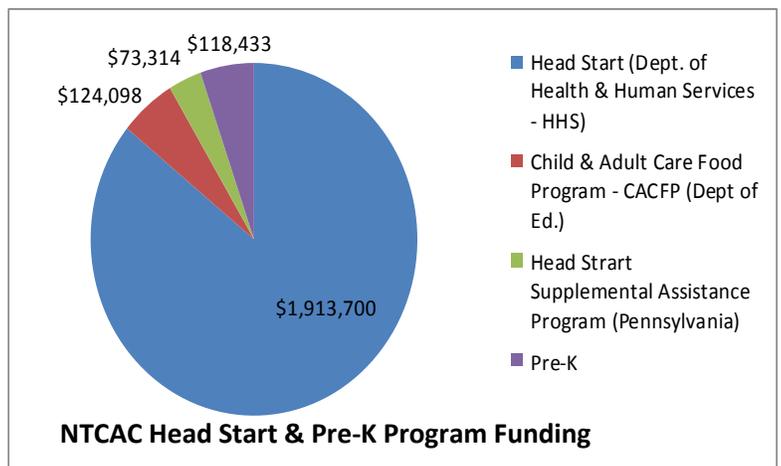
Head Start

In January of 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared The War on Poverty in his State of the Union speech. Shortly thereafter, Sargent Shriver took the lead in assembling a panel of experts to develop a comprehensive child development program that would help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children. Part of the government's thinking on poverty was influenced by new research on the effects of poverty, as well as on the impacts of education.



Head Start was designed to help break the cycle of poverty, providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs. The program was established to be culturally responsive to the communities served, and that the communities have an investment in its success through the contribution of volunteer hours and other donations as nonfederal share.

Head Start continues as 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 Program Centers and Home-Based locations include: Bradford I, Bradford II and Bradford III, Coudersport, Emporium, Johnsonburg, Kane I, Kane II, Otto-Eldred, Port Allegany I and Port Allegany II, Ridgway, Smethport, and St. Marys, Smethport, Elk County Area Home Base, McKean County Area Home Base and Potter County Area Home Base.

2013 Statistics

Number of children obtaining age appropriate immunizations, medical and dental care:279
 Number of children health and physical development were improved as a result of adequate nutrition:279
 Number of children participated in pre-school activities to develop school readiness:.....279
 Number of children participated in pre-school activities developmentally ready for Kindergarten or 1st. Grade:.....139
 Number of parents and other adults learn and exhibit improved parenting and family functioning skills:558

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 once again allowed us to employ two college students. Ms. Emma Shatz and Ms. Jolene Herbstritt, for the Head Start Program in Elk County. With management, field staff, and secretarial staff, not employed during the summer, the summer jobs program benefited Head Start with administrative support to the Head Start program.

I feel that working with Northern Tier Community Action Corporation Head Start has helped me grow in many ways. I have learned many different skills that will help me with my future career and for my last year of college. Emma Schatz

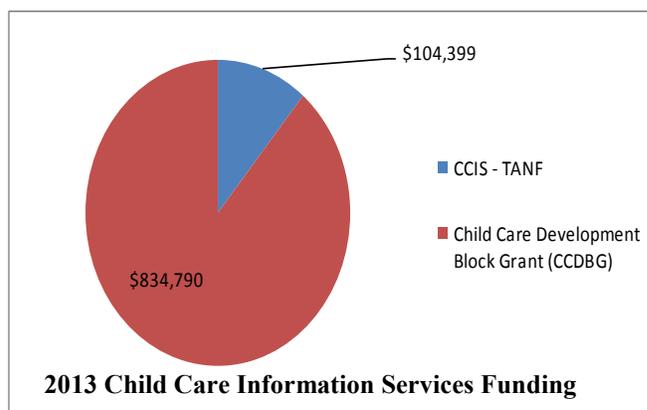
Early Childhood Programs

Child Care Information Services (CCIS)

CCIS is one of the critical human services programs operated through Northern Tier Community Action to stabilize and empower families in our service area assisting with child care costs to alleviate that expense for working families. The Subsidized Child Care Program, also referred to as Child Care Information Services (CCIS) or Child Care Works (CCW) is funded through the PA Department of Human Services and provides families with information on quality child care and personalized child care referrals to child care providers based on their specific needs or preferences. The subsidized child care program helps low-income families pay their child care costs.

Families must submit an application to the CCIS office to see if they meet the guidelines for the subsidized child care program and:

- Must live in Pennsylvania
- Have a child or children who need child care while parent or caregiver work or attend an education program
- Meet income guidelines for family size
- Work 20 or more hours a week - or-
- Work 10 hours and go to school or train for 10 hours a week
- Have a promise of a job that will start within 30 days of application for subsidized child care
- Teen parents must attend an education program
- The child who needs care must be a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residency
- Have proof of identification for each parent or caretaker in the home.
- CCIS pays a regulated state rate for the child care costs directly to the child care facility/provider and parent/caretakers pay a small portion based on family size and income.



2013 Child Care Information Services Funding

Area economic conditions, high rates of unemployment combined with a lack of “living wage” jobs in our area, and the ever increasing cost of living, low-income families find it nearly impossible to afford quality childcare without these services. These are our families, friends and neighbors that make up our communities and contribute vitally to our local economies. 271 families were able to obtain quality care for children or other dependents through CCIS in FY2013. CCIS continually provides outreach to families throughout the year at various area events, such as county fairs, family day activities and business expos.



Along with a livable wage, many parents are desperate for quality affordable child care. *Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senator*

Weatherization Assistance and Energy Programs

The mission of the **Weatherization Assistance Program** is to reduce energy consumption and cost in low-income households. Designed to alleviate the heavy energy burden on low-income households and help them become self-sufficient. Weatherization Assistance Programs:

- Provide an average energy savings of \$413 or more per year per household.
- Reduce a household's annual gas heating consumption by 32%.
- Once in place continue to save money and energy every year.
- Eliminate energy-related hazards improving health and safety.
- Weatherization's Return on Investment is \$1.65 in energy-related benefits for every \$1 invested in the Program.
- For every \$1 invested by DOE, the Program leverages \$1.54 in other federal, state, utility, and private resources.

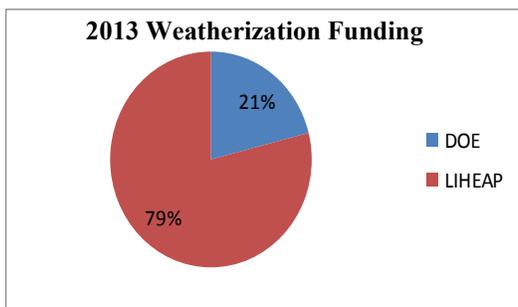


These leveraged resources are utilized to weatherize more low-income homes and deliver more services.

Weatherization not only provides assistance, but also energy education to low income owners or renters who are occupants of housing units in need of improvements to reduce energy usage. Weatherization staff audits the dwelling in accordance with industry standards to determine what efforts will make the structure more comfortable and energy efficient.

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.



NTCAC offers a variety of **Energy Assistance Programs** through both utility donated and private funds throughout the four county area. These programs are available to those customers that are experiencing difficulties in paying for or restoring utility service. Priority is given to low-income, high-usage, payment troubled customers.

Clients are able to apply for funds one time during the funding year. The energy assistance programs use the Federal Poverty Guidelines for eligibility, along with client need. West Penn Power, FirstEnergy/Penelec, National Fuel Gas, and UGI all have usage reduction programs implemented through NTCAC. Eligibility is based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines and customer energy consumption. These programs provide, but are not limited to, many of the same services and materials provided by the State Weatherization Program. Customers may apply for both the utility, gas and electric, and the state programs. Heating emergencies are referred to Northern Tier Community Action during a specified time of year. Applications are distributed by the Department of Public Welfare County Assistance Office. Once eligibility is determined the referral is made to the Weatherization Assistance Program in coordinating efforts to eliminate "no heat" crisis situations throughout the four county service area. Many of these programs provide energy education and targeted utility related energy conservation measures to eligible consumers.



2013 Statistics

Number of families were provided weatherization and energy assistance services:

- Cameron County37
- Elk County.....66
- McKean County351
- Potter County187

Total 641

“No one has ever become poor by giving.”
Anne Frank, diary of Anne Frank

Housing Programs



NTCAC is continually searching for additional opportunities and services to help stabilize families with shelter and/or utility assistance. Shelter assistance is generally in the form of assistance with preventing foreclosure, providing a security deposit, first month's rent, past due rent or utility assistance.

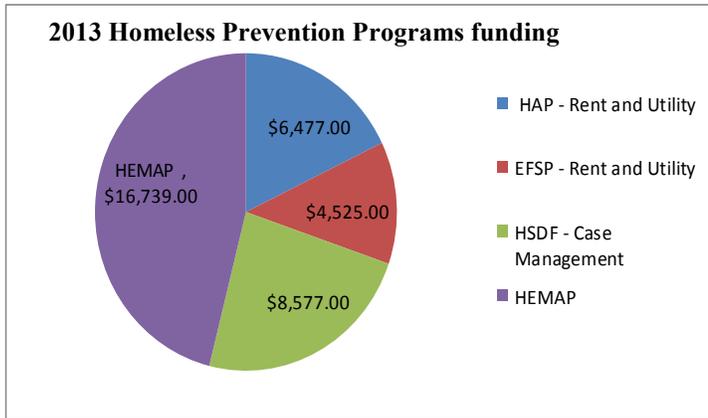
Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, accounting for about 41% of the nation's homeless according to the National Coalition for the Homeless. Within these families, more than 1.3 million children are homeless at some time each year. On any given day, at least 800,000 Americans, including about 200,000 children, find themselves without a home. This could be any of us. According to the Corporation for Enterprise Development, nearly half of Americans are living in a state of "persistent economic insecurity," that makes it "difficult to look beyond immediate needs and plan for a more secure future."

NTCAC programs partner with other human service providers in all four counties. This collaboration ensures resources are available to assist most individuals or families to get through the crisis at hand. Through these programs, case management is provided to connect the clients with important stabilization resources.



The **Homeowner's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP)** funded through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), allows NTCAC to provide counseling services and processing applications for the HEMAP. HEMAP provides not only the potential opportunity for homeowners to re-finance mortgage arrearages to bring them current on the mortgage and property taxes, but also buys the homeowner up to 90 days time to work with lenders and servicers to come to alternatives to foreclosure.

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 and case management to low-income families in Cameron County struggling to overcome another obstacle in their daily lives.



The **Human Services Development Fund (HSDF)** also funded by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) through Cameron County, allows us to provide additional Case Management Services to individuals and families in Cameron County. Case management provides families with the tools and skills to prevent them from being in a homeless situation again.



The **Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program (EFSNBP)** was established on March 24, 1983, with the signing of the "Jobs Stimulus Bill," Public Law 98-8. That legislation created a National Board composed of representatives of the American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; The Jewish Federations of North America; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Salvation Army; and United Way Worldwide. The Board is chaired by a representative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Local Recipient Organizations (LRO's), whether nonprofit or governmental, may apply. The Local Board is responsible for considering all applications, and for determining which organizations will receive funds. The Local Board also determines which services are funded. Contact the National Board staff for specific local contacts.

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program at the local level through NTCAC provides emergency assistance consisting of food, rental and/or utility assistance in both Cameron and Elk counties.

2013 Statistics

Number of families provided rental assistance through HAP & EFSP:	32
Number of families provided utility assistance through HAP & EFSP:	7
Number of families provided case management services through HAP & HSDF	46
Number of families provided foreclosure prevention counseling through the HEMAP.....	16

Total 101

Food & Nutrition



NTCAC continues to partner 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). NTCAC provides 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 food subsidies that help families have nutritious meals.



CAMERON COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY
P.O. Box 389
Emporium, PA 15834

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 cash donations from the Emporium Foundation, Mee Foundation, area businesses such as Level 3 and Stoltz of St. Marys, clubs and organizations such as the Vets and Rotary 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 dedicated volunteers.



Second Harvest Food Bank of Erie, Pa., is a member of the national organization Feeding America and is a non-profit charitable organization with the mission to distribute food to hungry people and eliminate the waste of food.

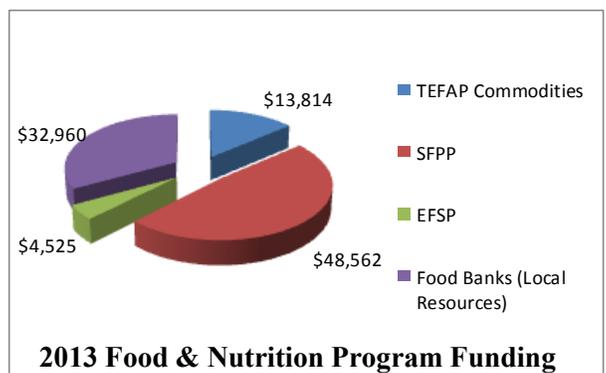


Second Harvest has a website in which orders can be placed to purchase food items by qualifying organizations. When available, Second Harvest also provides bonus TEFAP commodities to area food banks.

NTCAC, d.b.a. the Cameron County Community Food Pantry, entered into a member agency agreement with Second Harvest in June of 2013. During calendar year 2013, Second Harvest delivered 22,940 pounds of food with an associated cost of \$12,144.65 to the CCFP.

2013 Statistics

Number of families served with food assistance: 908
 Number of food boxes distributed: 10,321
 Number of pounds of food distributed: 193,662



2013 Food & Nutrition Program Funding

48 Years of Community Action



**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**



**Northern Tier Community Action Corporation
P.O. Box 389
135 West Fourth Street
Emporium, PA 15834
814-486-1161
Fax 814-486-0825
www.ntcac.org**