BUILDING COMMUNITY

Annual Report 2019
The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc. (CAASTLC) had another impactful year fighting poverty in St. Louis County. Our capacity to serve low-income families is stronger than ever, and our commitment to them remains a top priority. “Helping People, Changing Lives” is our message to the community, and the phrase captures the essence of what we do. Being advocates for our customers to gain self-sufficiency is a rewarding experience for our Board and CAASTLC staff. The personal stories in this year’s Annual Report illustrate our efforts to create a culture of economic and social empowerment for the marginalized members of our community.

In keeping with CAASTLC’s mission and vision, we have seen continued growth in many of our signature programs. Our Reentry Program for Returning Citizens, which serves 411 customers, gives participants the tools they need to transition after paying their debt to society. Our Makin’ It Work curriculum helps returning citizens reenter the workforce. The curriculum’s author and the National Community Action Partnership have recognized CAASTLC for its outstanding delivery of this curriculum. The Step Up to Leadership program teaches attendees how to effect change in their communities and beyond, helping them gain skills in leadership including civic engagement and entrepreneurship. CAASTLC’s energy assistance and weatherization programs remain in high demand, as we continue to improve the quality of life for customers. We anticipate these programs, along with others we offer through our Community Action portfolio, serving a greater role today and in the future in our fight to end poverty.

As you read this, we are all mindful of the global COVID-19 pandemic. CAASTLC is one of 1,000 Community Action Agencies in the U.S. addressing the critical needs of those facing difficult circumstances, and our collective efforts to help people transition out of poverty has never been more critical. CAASTLC’s Strategic Plan is our guide for operational and service delivery based on the needs identified in our Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment for St. Louis County.

To that end, we at CAASTLC continue to expand services while developing new and innovative ways to help our customers. We are confident that with the help of technology, strong board leadership, community partners, and dedicated staff engagement, we will continue to offer the same quality of services our customers expect from us. And, with the current climate of uncertainty, comes an opportunity to grow relationships with donors and financial partners as we seek to expand our footprint in the region.

We are proud that for 51 years we have served our customers with the dignity and respect they deserve while helping them gain self-sufficiency. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Life’s most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” Our thanks to you for helping CAASTLC answer that every single day. Our mission continues.

Sincerely,

Cenia D. Bosman
President and CEO

Sheila Pearson
Board Chair
Upon release from prison, returning citizens in America’s justice system deal with numerous challenges. The stigma associated with being a convicted felon often makes it difficult to secure employment, housing, and a strong support system. For many years, the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County has provided services for returning citizens, including classes on anger management and substance abuse. In 2016, CAASTLC staff decided to begin a formal program for returning citizens from the justice system. “We saw an urgent need for a more comprehensive approach specifically designed for our returning citizens,” said Cenia D. Bosman, CAASTLC’s President and CEO. “Because of the array of services we offer, it made sense to assign case managers to individuals, so we could determine what resources a person needed.”

Enrollees in CAASTLC’s Reentry Program must complete an intake and assessment. “These initial meetings are critical,” said Lori Jones, a CAASTLC Case Manager. “After speaking with a customer, we can help them develop a plan of action to get them on track. If the person needs credit counseling, help with anger management or food from our pantry, we take care of those needs.”

CAASTLC’s Reentry Program currently serves 411 returning citizens. “When I came here I had nothing,” said Stanley Prince. Prince came to CAASTLC soon after he was released from 26 years of incarceration. “The CAASTLC staff treated me like family and never judged me. I took advantage of several services, including utility assistance and the Step Up to Leadership Academy. After being behind bars for so long, the fact that an organization took an interest in my well-being meant the world to me. I have a long way to go, but without CAASTLC’s help, I don’t know if I’d be alive,” Prince said.

The program’s success stories include Stephanie Gooch. After a short stint in jail, Gooch completed Job Readiness Training through CAASTLC. As a result, she received placement with a staffing agency where she obtained demolition and carpentry training. Since then, she has worked in those fields, in addition to staffing national political campaigns. “I’m so grateful to CAASTLC and the Reentry Program,” Gooch said. “The organization gave me hope that I could have a future beyond the walls of a jail.”

CAASTLC’s President and CEO is committed to the Reentry Program and its continued growth. “Our mission is to end poverty,” Bosman said. “And our work with returning citizens ties directly to that mission. The men and women leaving our prison systems have paid their debt, and we need to do all we can to make sure they have the tools necessary to become self-sufficient and productive members of society.”
THE BIRTH OF COMMUNITY ACTION & 
A HISTORY OF CAASTLC

In his State of the Union address to Congress on January 8, 1964, President Johnson declared “an unconditional ‘War on Poverty’ in America.”

The “War on Poverty” was born in February of 1964. R. Sargent Shriver led a task force to draft legislation. In August, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) was passed, creating a Federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The Federal OEO led the efforts of the “War on Poverty” and coordinated related programs of all other federal agencies. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created at a local level to move these services into the communities. Shriver was named OEO Director, serving until 1969.

CAASTLC is part of the national network of federally funded Community Action Agencies (CAAs) created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 as part of the “War on Poverty”.

In November 1963, President Lyndon Baines Johnson expanded the policy ideas initiated in the Kennedy Administration.

CAASTLC, Inc. was originally incorporated as the St. Louis County Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis (HDC) Advisory Council in 1968.

In 2003, The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc. officially becomes part of a national re-branding effort to make CAAs more identifiable in the community. Services are provided to more than 40,000 low-income people annually in St. Louis County.

CAASTLC begins conducting poverty simulations in local schools for 8th and 9th grades. The REALL Simulation (Reality Enrichment and Life Lessons) is also a high school dropout prevention program.

CAASTLC launches the Step Up to Leadership Program to give everyday people tools to help facilitate change and growth in their communities. As of December 2019, 61 individuals have graduated from Step Up, including six who have started their own businesses.

CAASTLC’s Seeds of Hope Farm opens in Spanish Lake. Seeds of Hope is a unique income-tiered Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program focused on improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Free cooking and gardening classes are offered.

Photos courtesy of the Shriver Peace Institute
# CAASTLC Members

## Board of Directors

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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Gloria McQueen</td>
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<td>Yolanda Austin</td>
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<td>Louis “Lou” Aboussie</td>
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<td>Antonio Maldonado</td>
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## Community Advisory Council

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<td>Shenisia Watson</td>
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## CAASTLC, Inc. Staff

### Administration

**Cenia D. Bosman**  
President and CEO

**Michael Clark**  
Project Manager/IT

### Human Resources

**Susan E. Moss**  
Director

### Communications /PR

**Cordell Whitlock**  
Director

### Contract Compliance

**Richard Reimbott**  
Director

**Cedric Jackson**  
Compliance Manager

### Finance

**Mark Kurtz**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Pat Bulejski**  
Service Integration Specialist

**Melissa Stumpf**  
Accounting Specialist

**Danielle Tarrant**  
Senior Accountant

### Housing & Support Services

**George Robnett**  
Director

**Roger Brown**  
Weatherization Technical Coordinator

**Janice McKinney Gage**  
Financial Housing Counselor

### Program Administration

**Georgie Donahue**  
Director

**Keith Robinson**  
Associate Director CSBG

### Employment Services

**James Ingram**  
Employment Specialist

### Seeds of Hope

**Jake Smith**  
Farm Manager

**Randy Tempel**  
Community Garden Coordinator

### Case Management

**Chris Boyd**  
Case Management Coordinator

**Lori Jones**  
Case Manager

**Mario Malone**  
Case Manager

**Idalia McNulty**  
Case Manager
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Grants $8,497,029 $8,731,602
Donations 82,459 53,560
Investment Income 3,847 67,416
Other 239,629 3,055
Total Public Support and Revenue 8,822,964 8,855,633

EXPENSES

Program Services:
  Weatherization 2,078,418 2,391,755
  Energy Assistance 4,146,676 4,359,700
  Community Services 2,042,881 1,653,596
  Housing/Rental Assistance 57,164 13,351
  Other Programs 0 0
  Total Program Services 8,325,139 8,346,402

Supporting Services:
  Management and General 516,457 512,274
  Fundraising 9,905 8,788
  Total Supporting Services 526,362 521,062

Total Expenses 8,851,501 8,867,464
Change in Net Assets 28,537 -11,831
Fund Balance $2,483,508 $2,471,677
We touch people every day, of every age, by providing a myriad of services – from gardening to health care, to housing assistance and construction. We take our role in community development seriously. Following are the results of our efforts during the past year:

**ECONOMIC ASSETS ENHANCEMENT AND UTILIZATION**
2,095 households with low incomes achieved an increase in financial assets or financial skills as a result of CAASTLC assistance.

**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**
27,302 individuals and families with low incomes received emergency assistance from CAASTLC.

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND EMPOWERMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
10,306 community resources and opportunities for people with low incomes were improved or expanded. Community members and people with low incomes were mobilized to engage in activities to improve, support and promote their own well-being and that of their community as a result of CAASTLC initiatives, or due to collaboration with other public and private agencies.

**COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES**
5,210 community opportunities and resources for people with low incomes were improved or expanded, either as a result of CAASTLC projects or initiatives, or due to partnerships with other public and private agencies.
PROGRAM PARTICIPATION RESULTS

OUR IMPACT ON PEOPLE

CAASTLC offers several additional support services designed to meet the needs of income-eligible individuals and families. These services include a Holiday Program and Resource Fairs each year, including a Back-To-School Resource Fair.

CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

2,261 infants, children, youth, parents, and other individuals participated in case management, developmental or enrichment programs facilitated by CAASTLC and achieved program goals.

EMPLOYMENT OR WORK SUPPORTS

25,578 participants with low incomes in CAASTLC employment initiatives obtained supports that reduced or eliminated barriers to initial or continuous employment, acquired a job, obtained an increase in employment income, or achieved “living wage” employment and benefits.

INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR LOW-INCOME, VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

13,580 vulnerable individuals with low incomes received services from CAASTLC and secured or maintained an independent living situation as a result.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

5,096 community members and people with low incomes were mobilized to engage in activities that support and promote their own well-being and that of their community as a direct result of CAASTLC initiatives.
Theresa Denson said that in 2015, her health was a major concern. “I was dealing with high blood pressure, diabetes, and a cabinet full of medications,” Denson said. “I needed a lifestyle change, and my eating habits were at the top of the list.” The Jennings resident says her priority was finding fresh fruits and vegetables.

Denson found out about CAASTLC’s Seeds of Hope Program on the internet. Seeds of Hope is a unique income-tiered Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program focused on improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The first time Denson visited the Seeds of Hope farm in Spanish Lake, she found exactly what she was looking for. “The vegetables were fresh and free from pesticides. I stocked up on turnips, greens, kale and carrots, just to name a few. Before long, I phased meat out of meals, and now I have a plant-based diet.”

Denson says the dietary change has lowered her blood pressure and glucose levels. It has also improved her overall quality of life. “I can’t express how much better I feel. I get my box of natural goodies every week from Seeds of Hope, and some of my friends have joined me. The produce I receive is delicious, and my body thanks me every day. CAASTLC offered me a lifeline, and I’m truly grateful.”

“The produce I receive is delicious, and my body thanks me every day. CAASTLC offered me a lifeline, and I’m truly grateful.”
SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Jorge Diaz, a native of Peru, first came to CAASTLC in 2015. “I visited CAASTLC because I was trying to find a career that fits my lifestyle and I also needed help finding health insurance,” Diaz said. “Idalia McNulty (CAASTLC Case Manager) helped me sign up for insurance, and she also informed me about other programs that CAASTLC offers. I am so grateful to CAASTLC for helping me in my time of need, and for wanting the best for me. The people at CAASTLC are more than case managers; they are caring individuals who have become my friends. Mrs. Lisa Pitt, the front desk receptionist, is very sweet and even tries to speak Spanish to me to make me feel more comfortable. CAASTLC understands cultural barriers and how to work around them. Idalia and at least one other staff member speak Spanish, and that is a huge help to me as I continue working on my English. I have referred several friends to the agency, assuring them they will receive assistance while being treated with respect and dignity. Many have gotten services, including the food pantry, weatherization and utility assistance. Thank you so much, CAASTLC, for your help and support. ¡Muchas gracias su ayuda y apoyo!”

“The difference in my breathing is incredible.” Kelly Young says out of all the benefits of her newly weatherized home, her health is perhaps the most important. “I had problems with allergies and respiratory issues,” Young said. “Since CAASTLC finished their work, my breathing is so much better.”

In 2019, the St. Ann resident noticed drafts in her home and fluctuating temperatures throughout the house. Her landlord and alderman referred her to CAASTLC’s weatherization program. “Once I submitted my paperwork and was approved a crew was here,” Young said. I didn’t know what to expect, and I was shocked by how much they did.” CAASTLC’s services included insulation throughout the house and exterior, sealed doors, new carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, and energy-efficient light bulbs. “I feel like I’m living in a new house,” Young said. The temperature stays exactly where I want it, the air is cleaner, and I love the energy-efficient light bulbs. My utility bills are considerably less; and when you’re on a fixed income like me, that’s a huge deal.”

Young urges any St. Louis County resident who is income-eligible to take advantage of CAASTLC’s weatherization program. “Even if you don’t own your property, you may qualify. And it’s free! I never imagined my quality of life could improve so much by weatherization. I know now!”

The people at CAASTLC are more than case managers; they are caring individuals who have become my friends.
POVERTY RATES IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY BY ZIP CODE

The latest 2017 U.S. Census Bureau statistics show that 9.8 percent of St. Louis County citizens (about 96,000 people) live in poverty. In 2010 two communities, Spanish Lake and Wellston, were designated as areas of “extreme poverty”, something that did not exist in St. Louis County in 2000.

WHAT DOES POVERTY LOOK LIKE?
If a single parent with one child worked full time receiving minimum wage in 2018 ($7.85 per hour), the family would earn $16,328 annually and remain under the poverty line ($16,460 for a family of two).
CAASTLC
Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc.

Our Vision
Healthy families thriving in their community free from poverty and social exclusion
A wide range of opportunities and accessibility to education, healthcare, careers, and safe, affordable, energy efficient housing
Inclusive communities that sustain economic opportunities and business growth
Natural resources protected and sustained for the future

Our Mission
The mission of CAASTLC, Inc. is to end poverty.
We are committed to helping the families and communities of St. Louis County prevent the conditions of poverty for present and future generations.

Visit us online at www.caastlc.org
or in person at:
Main Office:
2709 Woodson Road
Overland, MO 63114
314-863-0015
Service Hours:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday and Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

North County Office:
26B North Oaks Plaza
Northwoods, MO 63121
314-863-0015
Service Hours:
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

This project is funded at 80% at $800 by federal funds and 20% at $200 by nongovernmental sources for a total amount of $1,000. The federal funds are received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provided by the Missouri Department of Social Services Family Support Division. This project was prepared with the support of funds through the U.S. Department of Energy and the Missouri Department of Economic Development-Division of Energy. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendation expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of U.S. Department of Energy or the Missouri Department of Economic Development-Division of Energy.