2020 ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY IN ACTION
The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc. (CAASTLC) had another impactful year promoting economic empowerment in St. Louis County. As we all continue to deal with the pandemic, 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 the more than 40,000 customers we serve to help them gain self-sufficiency is a rewarding experience for our Board of Directors and CAASTLC staff. The personal stories in this year’s Annual Report illustrate our efforts to foster economic and social empowerment for the marginalized members of our community.

When Covid-19 began to spread last March, we were forced to pivot from face-to-face interactions to processes allowing for distance and safety measures. Our staff never wavered in safeguarding the wellbeing of our customers and themselves, while ensuring that we provided continuity to our essential services, with minimal interruptions. Delivery of our rent and mortgage assistance, home weatherization, utility assistance, and the drive-thru food pantry continued at a strong and steady pace. Since last spring, we have bolstered our digital presence with online classes for drug and alcohol, anger management, Step Up To Leadership, along with virtual hiring fairs and expanded services for justice-involved citizens. As we continue our work, the health and safety of the staff and customers remains a high priority. Our programs and services are operating under procedures outlined in CAASTLC’s Communicable Diseases Health and Safety Policy and Coronavirus/Infectious Disease Response Plan. CAASTLC is also a member of St. Louis County’s North County Covid-19 outreach group, as we are doing our part to ensure our customers are properly informed about the Covid-19 vaccine.

Although Covid-19 has presented serious challenges, our goal is to serve even more customers, building on the innovation and technology in our “new normal” environment. It is with honor that we renew our commitment to serving all members of our community while valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all we do.

As we look to CAASTLC’s future, our new strategic plan will be completed by September 2021. That plan will include information from our 2020 Community Needs Assessment. In addition to input from the public, we are collaborating with our Board of Directors, Community Advisory Council, and other community partners to ensure that we have a comprehensive roadmap to use in our efforts to end poverty.

Our thanks to the CAASTLC Board of Directors for your steadfast guidance and leadership. We would especially like to thank our dedicated staff. Each and every day you demonstrate care, compassion, and relentless dedication to serving the community. Collectively our team has demonstrated resilience and digital fluency during this world pandemic. We are proud that for 53 years we have served our customers with the dignity and respect they deserve while helping them gain self-sufficiency. James Baldwin once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” Our thanks to you for helping CAASTLC be that force for positive change.

Sincerely,

Cenia D. Bosman
President and CEO

Sheila Pearson
Board Chair
When I came to CAASTLC in 1998, I had just moved to St. Louis from Toledo, Ohio. I had a six-year-old son, no job, and the burden of feeling like an utter failure when I woke up in the morning. A friend referred me to CAASTLC, and my life was forever changed. Anyone who is struggling will tell you that asking for help can be difficult, and the first interaction you have with an organization often sets the tone for future experiences. Everyone wants to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their economic status.

From day one my CAASTLC case manager, Chris Boyd, became the support system I needed to turn my life around. Ms. Boyd’s encouragement and firm guidance saved my life for two reasons. First, the services Ms. Boyd directed me to made a tangible difference in my life. The pantry provided food for my cupboards, and various classes I took lifted my spirit and gave me a sense of empowerment. Secondly, beyond the services CAASTLC provided, Ms. Boyd repaired my spirit. When she told me I could and would make a better life for myself, I BELIEVED her. A good case manager takes on the role of a therapist, cheerleader, and trusted advisor. Ms. Boyd was all of that for me and more!

“I THANK GOD EVERY DAY FOR DIRECTING ME TO CAASTLC.”

Today, over 20 years after I first entered CAASTLC’s doors, I have a graduate degree and a successful business. Someone recently asked me where I’d be today without CAASTLC. I honestly don’t know. I worked hard to turn my life around, and the help I received from CAASTLC was essential because I received an array of services and support I didn’t even know existed. I thank God every day for directing me to CAASTLC. I believe it’s now my responsibility to empower and inspire others trying to improve themselves.

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 created Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to empower individuals and families living in poverty.

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 became part of a national re-branding effort to make CAAs more identifiable in the community. CAASTLC provides services to more than 40,000 customers annually in St. Louis County.

There are currently over 1,000 CAAs nationwide, engaged in a broad range of activities including energy assistance, home weatherization, job training, and leadership classes.
Financial Statement

Statement of Activities
For years ending: 9/30/2018 and 9/30/2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE</th>
<th>9/30/2018 Actual</th>
<th>9/30/2019 Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$8,731,602</td>
<td>$8,147,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>53,560</td>
<td>182,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>3,055</td>
<td>2,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>67,416</td>
<td>9,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Public Support and Revenue</td>
<td>8,855,633</td>
<td>8,341,864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXPENSES

Program Services:

| Weatherization               | 2,319,755        | 1,933,510        |
| Energy Assistance            | 4,359,700        | 4,118,334        |
| Community Services           | 1,653,596        | 1,761,714        |
| Housing/Rental Assistance    | 13,351           | 9,456            |
| Other Programs               | 0                | 0                |
| Total Program Services       | 8,346,402        | 7,823,014        |

Supporting Services:

| Management and General       | 512,274          | 538,848          |
| Fundraising                  | 8,788            | 19,089           |
| Total Supporting Services    | 521,062          | 557,937          |

Total Expenses                | 8,867,464        | 8,380,951        |
Change in Net Assets          | -11,831          | -39,087          |
Fund Balance                  | $2,471,677       | $2,432,590       |
Leadership

Board of Directors

Sheila Pearson
Chair
10/17 – present

Michael Pendergast
Vice Chair
12/13 – present

Joel Vickery
Treasurer
06/17 – present

Gloria McQueen
Secretary
10/13 – present

Rose Cason
06/11 – present

Linda Eikerenkoetter
12/14 – present

Louis Aboussie
12/15 – present

Shira Truitt
02/17 – present

Tyrrell Rodgers
04/18 – present

Clayton Evans
06/18 – present

Geralyn Clifton
10/18 – present

Terrie Hart
12/18 – present

Julie Harris
4/19 – present

Antonio Maldonado
12/19 – present

Dr. Miranda Avant-Elliott
12/20 – present

Community Advisory Council

Marcus Adams, Chair
Wilma Abernathy
Cheryl Anthony
Delisie Boyd
Stacy Clay
Bonita Cornute
Michael Crayton
Selette Crews
Alvin L. Doss
Rose Eichelberger
Sharonica Hardin-Bartley
Debra Harper-LeBlanc
Charley Hunt
Michael Kniepman
Kevin Marquitz
Sharon Pace
Monica Peterson
Jay Rhodes
Calea Stovall-Reid
Shenisia Watson

CAASTLC, Inc. Staff

Administration
Cenia D. Bosman
President and CEO
Ellen Weaver
Resource Development Manager
Michael Clark
Project Manager/IT

Human Resources
Susan E. Moss
Director

Communications/PR
Cordell Whitlock
Director

Contract Compliance
Richard Reinbott
Director
Cedric Jackson
Compliance Manager

Finance
Mark Kurtz
Chief Financial Officer
Pat Bulejski
Service Integration Specialist
Danielle Tarrant
Senior Accountant
Angela Harris
Accountant
Nicole Briones
Accounting Specialist

Housing & Support Services
George Robnett
Director
Roger Brown
Weatherization Technical Coordinator
Janice McKinney Gage
Financial Housing Counselor

Re-entry and Employment Services
Keith Robinson
Director
James Ingram
Employment Specialist

Program Administration
Georgie Donahue
Director
Aimee Watson
Associate CSBG Director

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
Toni Marie Smith
Case Manager
## Results & Impact

### Caring for our community and ourselves
While the pandemic minimized physical contact with customers, CAASTLC was still committed to serving the community. Job fairs and other large outreach events could not be held, but our dedicated staff and volunteers continued to provide essential services and resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Living for Low Income, Vulnerable Populations</strong></td>
<td>5,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>5,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Opportunities and Resources</strong></td>
<td>4,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Assistance</strong></td>
<td>28,812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **5,731** individuals with low incomes received services from CAASTLC and secured or maintained an independent living situation as a result.
- **5,686** 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.
- **4,520** 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 advocacy with other public and private agencies.
- **28,812** individuals and families with low incomes received emergency assistance from CAASTLC.
**Economic Assets Enhancement and Utilization**

2,994 households with low incomes achieved an increase in financial assets or financial skills as a result of CAASTLC assistance.

**Employment or Work Supports**

26,144 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.

**Child and Family Development**

1,463 infants, children, youth, parents, and other individuals participated in case management, developmental or enrichment programs facilitated by CAASTLC and achieved program goals.

**Community Resource and Empowerment Opportunities**

10,206 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 advocacy with other public and private agencies.

**Seeds of Hope**

During 2020 Seeds of Hope continued to supply fresh produce for our food pantry and CSAs. Their efforts were even more appreciated during a year when food was sometimes hard to get.
“My house was leaking air, and I needed help”. Such was the situation Tamara Painter describes before a friend told her about CAASTLC. “I had never heard of the organization, but I figured what did I have to lose?” A few weeks later, crews were in Tamara’s basement weatherizing her home. “The workers were very professional and explained in detail exactly what they were doing. I wasn’t familiar with everything that weatherization entailed, so I learned a great deal while getting free improvements to my home.”

Tamara received a new furnace and insulation, weather strips, fans, smoke detectors, and caulking among other items. “The change in temperature is probably the first thing I noticed,” Tamara said. “After the weatherization, my thermostat stays on 68 year-round and, the airflow is excellent. I also noticed a significant savings in my utility bill. When you are on a fixed budget with kids, an additional $50 in the bank every month is a big deal.”

While talking with the CAASTLC staff, Tamara learned about some of CAASTLC’s other services including the reentry program. “I talked with James Ingram (Reentry employment specialist), and he was very helpful in answering my questions. I am starting my own cleaning business, and I want to reach out to some of CAASTLC’s customers about possible employment. CAASTLC really helped me when I was in a bind, and I’d like to pay it forward by offering someone an opportunity as they work to rebuild their lives.”

“I would highly recommend CAASTLC’s SUTL class for anyone wanting to boost their communication skills and self-confidence.”

During my six weeks with the CAASTLC Step Up To Leadership (SUTL) program, we were taught to think outside the box and learned how to extend our comfort zone in terms of relating to people who didn’t necessarily share our respective beliefs. Our instructor, Lori Jones, stressed the importance of encouraging open dialogue from a leadership perspective. One of the most important things I learned in SUTL was the art of communicating and listening to people – the art of asking questions and following up.

After graduation, I grew my business, Wellness Choice, LLC. We focus on organic gardening and healthy eating. I do a great deal of fundraising for my company, and the skills I learned from Lori in SUTL have made a big difference. I’m always talking and interacting with people while being an active listener. I keep in touch with two of my fellow graduates. One of my classmates helped me get a grant to promote health and wellness through good nutrition. I would highly recommend CAASTLC’s SUTL class for anyone wanting to boost their communication skills and self-confidence.

Testimonials

LaTonya Neely

“CAASTLC really helped me when I was in a bind, and I'd like to pay it forward by offering someone an opportunity as they work to rebuild their lives.”

Tamara Painter

“I would highly recommend CAASTLC’s SUTL class for anyone wanting to boost their communication skills and self-confidence.”
Giving to CAASTLC

I’m from St. Louis and used to work in the nonprofit space there. I now live in Colorado. The fundraising platform I was managing when I was in St. Louis featured CAASTLC. I really admire what you all do. For my year-end giving in 2020, I was searching for organizations providing rent assistance to those in need and remembered that was part of your work. Thanks for all you do.

Elise Hastings
Business Development Manager at Elevation Solutions

We are proud to support The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County’s efforts to economically empower the people it serves. As a participant in CAASTLC’s virtual Doors of Opportunity Gala in 2020, I was moved by the personal stories shared by the agency’s customers. The programs and services CAASTLC provides are needed now more than ever. CAASTLC exemplifies the spirit behind Cigna’s motto, “Together, all the way.” We salute CAASTLC in its ongoing efforts to help people while changing lives.

Susan Stith
Vice President, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Civic Affairs and Foundation at Cigna

Each year at Christmas my company holds in-house fundraisers to gather money that we use to not only adopt multiple families for Christmas, but to also donate to select charities. We found your group this year and all agreed that we would donate to your organization. The way you empower those in need to be able to help themselves is why we were moved to choose CAASTLC.

Trisha B.
Advance Valve, Inc.
Poverty & Healthcare

You may have heard of the terms “health equity” and “social determinants of health.” It reflects a reality that, for underserved populations, life in the United States is unequal, unjust, and rooted in longstanding structural racism, with de facto and de jure discrimination. Immoral and persistent health inequities—such as higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and kidney disease, and disparities in life expectancy—are not surprising to individuals and families dealing with poverty.

The patterns of COVID-19 infection follow a disturbing and familiar pattern in terms of the pandemic’s impact on susceptible populations. We define “susceptible populations” as those who are unable to reach their full health potential because of social and structural barriers to health, including poverty, joblessness, inadequate housing, food insecurity, lack of access to affordable healthcare, and inadequate education.

In America, that translates into predominantly African American, Latino, and Native American populations. The data is disheartening and unacceptable: African Americans are twice as likely to be infected with COVID-19 and three times as likely to die from COVID-19 illness. Equally disturbing, the CDC recently reported racial and ethnic data for 54 percent of all people who had received both doses: more than 65 percent were white, compared to 5.8 percent who were Black, 8 percent who were Latino, and 1.7 percent who were Native American.

The grim facts I have outlined above illustrate the importance of CAASTLC’s work. Because health outcomes are so closely tied to an individual’s financial well-being, organizations like CAASTLC that address the root causes of poverty are essential partners for healthcare. For a person to have a sound body and mind, they need a decent job, balanced diet, utilities, and shelter. CAASTLC’s case management system offers its customers a tailor-made strategy for upward mobility that includes these necessities. No one can deny the CAASTLC staff has a difficult job, but the success stories from former customers prove that there is a path to self-sufficiency and fulfillment for anyone who is struggling. As the pandemic continues and the vaccination stage moves forward, we all have a responsibility to look out for each other and offer a hand up whenever we can.

— Will Ross, MD, MPH

What Does Poverty Look Like?

The federal poverty threshold is $26,500 in income for a household with four people. The official poverty rate in 2019 was 10.5 percent nationwide. According to the Census Bureau, 34 million Americans live at or below the poverty line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Households earning 30% or 50% of Median Gross Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Area</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis County, MO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2013-2017 Source geography: County Show more details.
Virtual Gala

Although COVID-19 prevented us from holding our annual gala in person, we used technology to try something new. Our 5th Annual Doors of Opportunity Gala was orchestrated through Zoom. The virtual event included an auction, fabulous speakers, and testimonials from customers.

Our Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Art Holliday

One of many great auction items

William Clines
Volunteer of the Year Recipient

Keynote speaker, Dr. Gail C, Christopher, D. N.

Our thanks to everyone, especially our corporate sponsors, who helped make the night an incredible success!
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