

2020 Annual Report

Providing a Supportive Environment
in Which to Thrive



AGENCY PROFILE

Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. (RKCAA) has successfully operated anti-poverty programming in Racine County since 1967 and in Kenosha County since 1978. The RKCAA mission is "Stabilizing lives by providing supportive programs and access to community resources for individuals and families", RKCAA's vision is "Partnering in a thriving Community". The agency is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors, that includes representation from civic, low-income and government sectors of Racine and Kenosha Counties.

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Serving as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. (RKCAA) I have the pleasure of giving back to the community of Racine where I was born and raised, as well as to the Kenosha community where I previously worked. I am pleased to say that my work along with our Board helped push forward RKCAA's mission, "Stabilizing lives by providing supportive programs and access to community resources for individuals and families", concurrently with the agency's vision, "Partnering in a thriving Community".

The mission in conjunction with RKCAA's vision guides the Board's perspective when determining policies and procedures that allow the agency to carry out its work in the communities where we provide resources. I am the proudest of the development of a new pillar created during our strategic planning period this year that fully incorporates family dynamics into RKCAA's work as a standalone pillar of focus. The initial four pillars include housing, food & nutrition, health, asset attainment, and now family dynamics is the fifth and final piece of the puzzle that links all the pillars together. The Board, staff and I find it fulfilling to partner with the deserving families of Racine and Kenosha, uplifting and cultivating a thriving community in both cities.



Carmen Ayers, Board Chairperson

Reflecting back on 2020, it is impossible not to acknowledge that the year was extremely challenging, fraught with uncertainty and devastating loss for many, caused by a public health crisis, an invisible disease, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The pandemic reshaped the manner in which the RKCAA team provided services. Supporting individuals and families seeking assistance face to face, nearly ceased.

Contact was scaled back to the use of phones, social media, virtual programming, meetings and curbside services. MASKING UP, HAND WASHING and SOCIAL DISTANCING (six feet apart) became the new norm. Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. (RKCAA) continued to provide supportive health and human services to individuals and families. **The provision of services changed, but the dedication and call to assist others did not.** In 2020, RKCAA served more than 53,000 individuals and families.



Agency staff worked with governmental entities, vendors, schools, churches and the broader community to assist residents in Racine and Kenosha by making services readily available. The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, and the temporary Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program (WRAP), which distributed more than 2.9 million dollars in rental payments to 1,708 households, are snapshots of the services provided in 2020. Thanks to donors, volunteers and staff for the many contributions to ensure that individuals and families received critical assistance.

Essie Allen, Chief Executive Officer

HEALTH

Fit Families

Fit Families Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) is a successful behavior change program for families of two-four year old children enrolled in WIC. Fit Families coaches assist families in adopting healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. RKCAA coaches offer individualized guidance, support, and tools to the families monthly for one year. During the pandemic, contact with families was made through texting and phone calls. Staff mailed incentive packets to families which supported the goals they were working on implementing in their family.

Eighty-eight (88) children were enrolled in Fit Families in 2020, additionally 82 children who were enrolled in 2019 continued to participate in the program, increasing the total number of families to 170. This exceeded the goal caseload of 100 families.

Fit Families' core messages and 2020 results are highlighted below:

Make Every Bite Count, More Fruits and Vegetables: 32% of children were consuming four or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily after one year, compared to 23% at enrollment.

Move More, Watch Less: 98% of children were engaging in more than 60 minutes of physical activity each day, compared to 97% at enrollment. While the majority of children were very active each day, the number of children engaging in less than two hours of screen time per day decreased from 70% at enrollment to 65% at the completion of the program.

Make Every Sip Count, More Healthy Beverages: 96% of children were consuming less than six ounces of juice each day compared to 67% at enrollment.

Eat Healthy, Be Active Your Kids are Watching: Strategies that promoted parents as role models for their children were shared during each session.

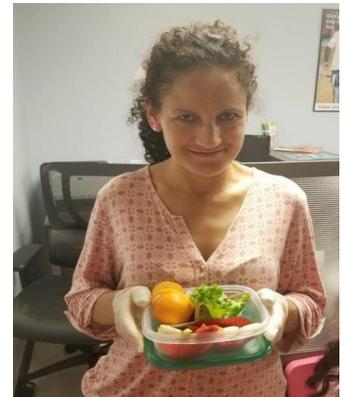
Fit Families incorporates three components to build a strong environment for families: The Family Component is directed at families with children age two to four years, The Organizational Component is directed at Fit Families Centers and the Community Partnerships Component reinforces Fit Families' health messages and helps to promote and protect the health of all children in the community. RKCAA's Kenosha staff practice and promote healthy living.

Lead Testing

Lead poisoning, even at low levels, can harm a child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. RKCAA's Kenosha office offers blood lead testing for children participating in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. In 2020, lead testing was performed on 157 children from January 1, 2020 – March 15, 2020. When the public health emergency was declared, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) waivers for non-physical presence were implemented, and WIC services were provided remotely. During virtual WIC appointments staff continued to educate families on ways to protect their children from lead poisoning. Blood lead testing will be encouraged when in-person visits resume.

Wellness Center

The Kenosha County Division of Health Wellness Center is located on the 2nd floor of the RKCAA's Kenosha office. WIC families have improved access to nursing and preventative health services through RKCAA's partnership with the Kenosha County Division of Health.



HOUSING

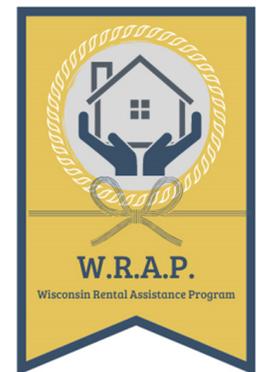
Weatherization Assistance Program

RKCAA's Weatherization Assistance Program served 870 individuals residing in 339 dwellings in 2020. Senior citizens and individuals with disabilities represented 25.3% of those receiving weatherization services. The Weatherization Assistance Program provided emergency heating services to 344 families enrolled in the Home Energy Plus Furnace Program. Over 90% of all clients were completely satisfied with their experience, based on feedback from the customer satisfaction survey. Weatherization Day was not held in 2020 due to COVID-19, instead money-saving kits were distributed to the public.



Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program (WRAP)

The Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. (RKCAA) in collaboration with the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR), Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP), and Energy Services, Inc. (ESI) provided rental assistance to individuals and families seeking to remain in their homes in Racine and Kenosha Counties. WRAP provided critical financial assistance to those economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.



RKCAA's WRAP Team provided eviction prevention services to 1,708 households in Racine and Kenosha Counties. On behalf of the participants, the program paid arrears, the current month's rent, security deposits and first month's rent, and lot fees. A total of \$2,945,709.00 in benefits was disbursed to those in need. Additionally, participants gained access to other community services during the application process, including energy assistance and legal services.

The WRAP program operated June 2020 through November 2020.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Food is a basic need and access to healthy food is central to RKCAA's wellness strategy. Attention is given to improving the nutrition of those receiving food through the agency's programs. RKCAA administers programs that **support** individuals who are food insecure.

Cupboard Bound Program

With a caseload of 1,150, the Cupboard Bound Program provides an average of 982 nutritious food boxes per month to senior participants in Racine and Kenosha Counties. The supplemental food boxes assist in meeting the dietary and nutritional needs of the elderly. In 2020, 11,777 boxes were distributed. Food boxes distributed directly from RKCAA were supplemented with products from the USDA's Trade Mitigation Program (TMP), along with fresh produce donated by Festival Foods and Potato King.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

RKCAA is the lead Emergency Feeding Organization (EFO) that administers the TEFAP program in Racine and Kenosha Counties. Healthy, nutritional state commodities are distributed to TEFAP affiliated shelters, food pantries and meal sites. In 2020, host sites distributed approximately 3.6 million pounds of food to 39,743 families, providing nutritious food to 105,956 individuals. TEFAP also assisted in providing 156,206 meals to individuals and families through shelters and meal sites.

Holiday Food Basket Program

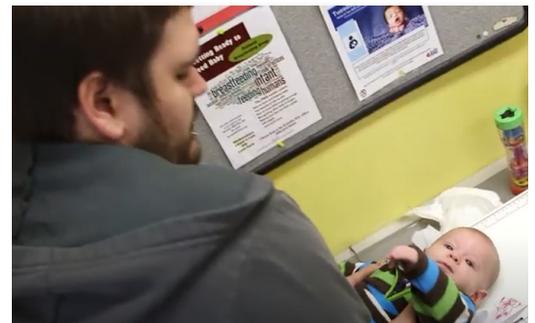
During the holiday season, RKCAA collaborated with community partners and provided approximately 2,000 holiday food boxes to senior citizens, disabled individuals and other eligible participants in Racine County. Along with the ingredients for a healthy holiday meal, boxes were supplemented with TMP/TEFAP commodities and fresh produce.



Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a public health nutrition program for pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to age five. WIC provides healthy food through an eWIC card, which is used at grocery stores to purchase milk, eggs, cereal, fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, peanut butter, canned or dried beans, infant formula, infant cereal, and baby foods. Nutrition education, breastfeeding education, and referrals to community resources are also key components of the WIC Program.

In 2020, RKCAA provided WIC services to 5,028 unduplicated participants. Services were provided at RKCAA’s Kenosha office, a satellite office at Kenosha County Center in Bristol, and via WIC on the Go until the public health emergency was declared in mid-March. USDA focused on ensuring families were safe and healthy during the national emergency. Families were able to participate in WIC without visiting a clinic in person, and certain medical tests were postponed. Appointments were completed over the phone and food benefits were issued onto eWIC cards. For new families, the eWIC card was mailed or curbside pick-up was available. WIC’s average monthly caseload increased by over 265 from the start of the pandemic, with 3,457 clients participating in December.



RKCAA’s nutrition staff developed several videos and podcasts for families to fulfill the non-certification nutrition education requirements. Parents had an opportunity to complete the videos or podcasts at times that were convenient for them. Videos and podcasts were available 24 hours a day. After viewing the video or podcast, parents submitted feedback to the nutritionists, who provided additional information or resources.

In 2020, 1,557 Kenosha families were issued WIC farmer market checks totaling \$35 each to purchase locally grown herbs, and fresh produce at farmer markets and approved farm stands. Families received information on how to safely shop at local farmer markets during the pandemic.

Breastfeeding

WIC promotes and supports breastfeeding as the ideal method of feeding and nurturing infants. RKCAA’s goal is to help women successfully breastfeed their babies. Nutrition staff promoted breastfeeding, and provided education and support at WIC appointments. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselor was available to assist women through one-on-one support, text messaging, phone calls, and group education. Advanced level breastfeeding support was available from RKCAA’s Breastfeeding Coordinator, who is an Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). In 2020, 72% of Kenosha WIC mothers initiated breastfeeding and 52% continued to breastfeed at three months.



Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program

The Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program (SVVP) provided summer produce vouchers to low-income seniors residing in Kenosha County. In 2020, 625 seniors received \$25 in vouchers to purchase locally grown fresh produce at local farmer markets and approved farm stands. The redemption rate was 78%.

Since inception, the Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program has steadily grown each year. The pandemic changed how services were provided but did not affect participation or redemption rates. Staff shifted to a remote process, with intake being conducted over the phone for 625 participating seniors. The majority of vouchers were mailed, however, curbside pick-up was also available. Several low-income apartment managers distributed the vouchers to the senior's mailbox.

RKCAA incorporated food insecurity questions during intake to identify and link seniors who may have been food insecure to community resources. Those indicating they were food insecure were connected with the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Kenosha County and local food pantries. In 2020, the number of food insecure seniors rose to 41%.

The Kenosha Senior Access Produce Gift Cards Program was launched, as an extension of the Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program to provide healthy food options and access during the winter months. Each senior received a \$25 gift card to purchase fresh, frozen, or canned fruit and vegetables from participating Festival Foods grocery stores in Kenosha County. Expansion of the Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program and the formation of the Kenosha Senior Access Produce Gift Cards Program were two strategies RKCAA incorporated to improve food security and access to healthy food in the low-income senior population.

The Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program is supported by Kenosha County SHARES funding, United Way of Kenosha County, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, and RKCAA Community Services Block Grant funding. The Kenosha Senior Access Produce Gift Cards Program was supported by the Community Services Block Grant and ZF North America, Inc.'s Community Care Grant.



ASSET ATTAINMENT

The Skills Enhancement Program (SEP) provided opportunities for participants to move closer to becoming self-sufficient by offering financial assistance for tuition, books, transportation, childcare and other unmet financial obligations, not covered by financial aid. Participants enrolled in the program must work a minimum of 20 hours per week, and be income eligible. The program serves as a catalyst for creating economic stability.

In addition to receiving funding from the State of Wisconsin, the program secured funding from Associated Bank, and the Community Services Block Grant Cares Act, which increased the number of individuals who received assistance. The program also assisted SEP participants' family members who had been impacted by COVID-19. This was achieved by providing school supplies and other needed items.

Of the participants who successfully exited the program in 2020, 100% are employed in the field in which they were trained and all have access to employer-sponsored healthcare benefits. The average hourly wage increased by \$5.85/hour or \$14,853 annually. The greatest success story of 2020, was that of a single parent of five, who entered the program as a Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.) working 23 hours per week for \$15.00/hour or \$17,550 annually. When she completed her Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) degree, she was hired for \$24.00/hour, working 38 hours per week. This amounted to an annual salary of \$47,424, an increase of nearly \$30,000 per year.



Testimonial

Pictured is Chanel Gentry working as a CNA. Ms. Gentry is scheduled to graduate in December 2021 with an associate degree in Nursing. "Working 3rd shift, taking care of kids, and attending school is no small feat. I am very thankful that I am enrolled with the RKCAA Skills Enhancement Program, it reduced a tremendous financial burden, and allowed me to concentrate on my job, kids and schoolwork. I can't wait to move on to bigger and better things." - Chanel Gentry



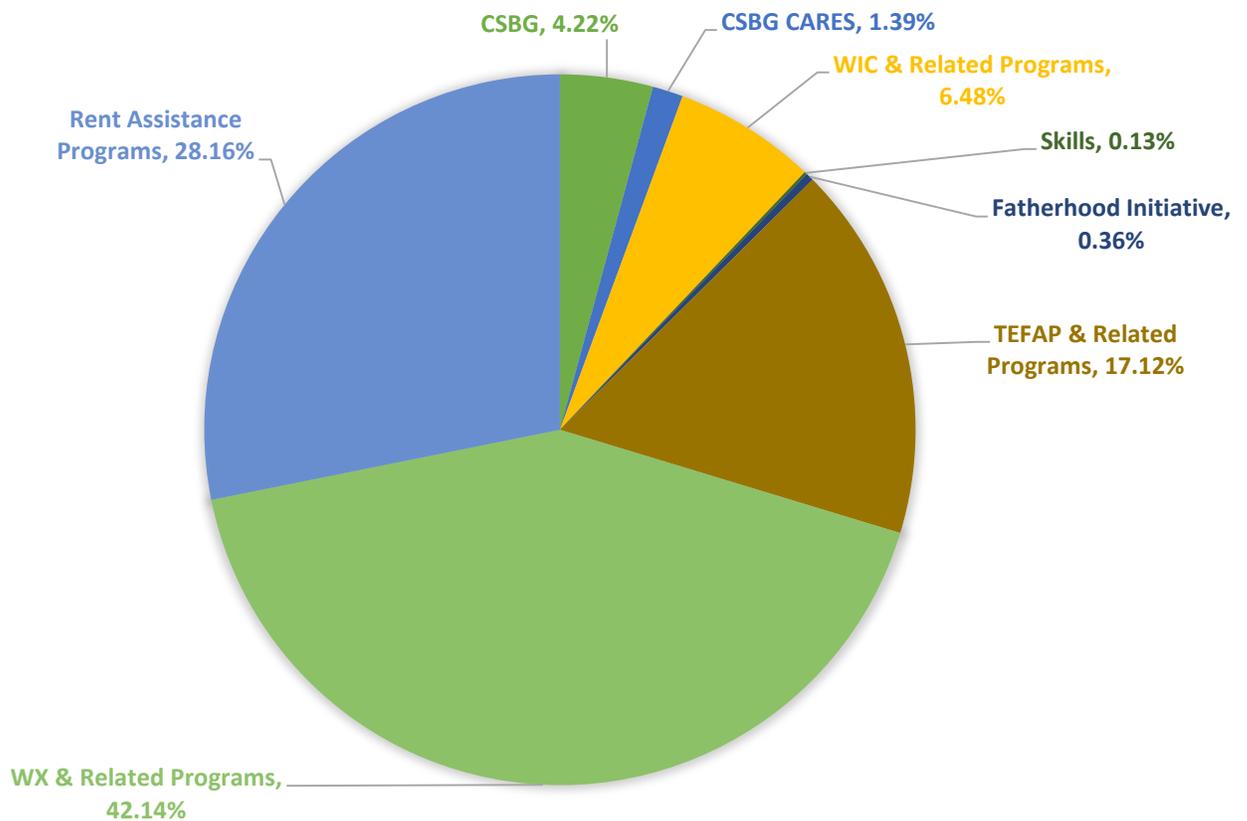
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Covenant Presbyterian Church
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Gordon Food Service
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Kenosha County Dept of Human Services Division of Workforce Development
Managed Health Services Insurance Corp.
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Progressive Missionary Church ECU
Potato King
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RUSD Montessori
Siena Catholic Schools of Racine, Inc.
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State of Wisconsin, Dept of Children and Families
State of Wisconsin, Dept of Health Services
Supermercado Gran Morelos LLC
Taqueria Gran Morelos LLC
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
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UAW Local 180
United Healthcare of Wisconsin, Inc.
United Way of Kenosha County, Inc.
UW-School of Medicine WI Partnership Program
US Administration for Children & Families
US Department of Agriculture
US Department of Energy
US Department of Health and Human Services
US Department of Treasury
WI Community Action Program Association
ZF North America, Inc.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. receives federal, state, local and private funding. RKCAA's Finance Department records all funds in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and funding source requirements. An independent Certified Public Accounting firm performs annual audits, and funding sources perform required regular fiscal and program monitoring. During 2020, the agency managed twenty-seven (27) programs totaling \$11.94 million in Racine and Kenosha Counties.

2020 PROGRAMS



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