

Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Community Plan 2026-2027 Community Action Wayne/Medina

Community Action Wayne/Medina (CAW/M) was established as a private, not-for-profit in 1966 as a result of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and became the designated Community Action Agency of Wayne County at the time. In 1979, after four years of service to the Medina region, the agency was designated the Community Action Agency for Medina County also.

Often described as an “anti-poverty” agency, the organization’s recognized values are Self-Determination, Advocacy, Value, Mutual Respect, Creative Responsibility, and Organizational Opportunity. The agency mission is to strengthen the community through collaborations and services by promoting self-sufficiency, household stability and family and childhood education. Goals include economic, social, and physical self-sufficiency as well as dignity and self-esteem for all residents in the two-county area.

Community Action’s current activities are operated under three departments: Child and Family Development; Economic Assistance; and Housing Services. With the current CSBG plan, CAW/M will be adding an additional department: Community Services Department. In addition to the services it administers, Community Action Wayne/Medina provides information and referral to low-income persons in the two county region.

Community Action Wayne/Medina Needs Assessment

Nationally Community Action Agencies are designated as recipients of Community Services Block Grant money to develop programming and community change to serve the needs of those in each community who are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. By providing this funding through Community Action Agencies in each community the federal government is ensuring that this funding will be used to meet the unique needs of each community. In order to do this CAW/M is mandated to conduct a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years to determine the most significant needs in its community. The CSBG funding then follows to address these needs. In its most recent CNA covering the period of 2023-2025, the following conclusions were reached.

Brief Summary of Conclusions of Needs Assessment

The assessment findings include data from sources such as the American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census Bureau, Community Health Rankings, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development. Primary data was collected through a survey mailed to residents, an online survey distributed to community partners, and direct conversations with community members. This needs assessment gathered insight from 765 unique residents of Wayne and Medina Counties: 613 residents through the mailed survey; 127 community partners primarily from local non-profits; and 25 residents through three focus groups and a series of key informant interviews. Lower income residents, and residents who had received services from CAW/M in the past were prioritized in the survey mailings, focus groups, and interviews. Among the residents who provided information about where they live, 373 of them resided in Wayne County, and 326 in Medina County.

Summary of Findings: CAW/M Needs Assessment:

Transportation and Accessibility. Need for easy-to-navigate transportation options, especially for outlying towns and rural areas. Door-to-door transportation services are sought after to assist individuals with hospital discharges, access to medical appointments, and essential services. Dependable public transportation is desired to improve accessibility.

Affordable Housing and Homelessness Support. Residents are seeking more affordable housing options, rental housing assistance, and emergency homeless shelters, including transitional housing. Need expanded services to support homeless individuals with severe physical and mental health concerns.

Child and Family Support Services. Affordable and evening childcare services are in demand, along with supplemental food programs for school-age children during the summer. Accessible resources for single parents and support for families with severe mental health needs are needed.

Healthcare and Mental Health Services. Additional mental health service providers, walk-in mental health clinics, and care for severe mental health issues are needed. Access to dental and vision clinics, especially for the vulnerable populations, is desired.

Education and Skill Development. Residents are seeking practical education programs, including money management, job interview preparation, and healthy meal preparation on a budget. Life skills and budgeting programs are also in demand. Tutoring services for students across all income levels.

Community Information and Services. Better information sharing and coordination among nonprofits and the community are needed to ensure residents are aware of available services.

Youth and Family Programs. There is a call for more youth programs, after-school activities, and community-building activities that teach practical skills, such as home repair and improvement. Expanded intramural and non-competitive sports programs for youth and adults are also desired.

Transitional Support and Case Management. Residents are looking for additional case management services to connect individuals to community resources, especially for housing and social services. Transitional housing and case management for domestic violence and sexual assault victims are also sought after.

Senior Services. Programs for seniors, including affordable wellness and creative arts programs, transportation assistance, and auto repair services for the elderly population, are needed.

While the CNA showed additional needs and services that could benefit the community, the funding only supports a limited number of programs. Services relating to mental health and substance abuse, transportation, and senior services are provided by organizations receiving specific funding for these services. Additional funding sources and partnerships continue to be sought out and evaluated for additional programming.

Community Action Wayne/Medina CSBG Program Plan for 2020-2021

1. Basic Survival—Through its economic assistance programs, CAW/M addresses heating costs and food insecurity. CAW/M provides assistance through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP) programs in both counties. HEAP is a federally funded program administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency. It helps eligible Ohioans pay their home energy bill. The benefit is applied directly to a customer's utility bill or bulk fuel bill. The amount of the benefit is determined by the number of people in the household, the heating source, and the region of residence. The Winter Crisis Program helps income eligible Ohioans who are threatened with disconnection, have been disconnected or have less than 25 percent supply of bulk fuel in their tank to maintain their utility service through the winter. The Summer Crisis Program provides a one-time benefit to eligible Ohioans with cooling

assistance during the summer months. PIPP Plus is an extended payment arrangement that helps Ohioans maintain their natural gas and/or electric service. Regulated gas and electric companies accept payments based on a percentage of the customer's household income. The program provides customers with a consistent payment amount year-round and customers who pay on-time and in-full receive a credit for the balance of their current bill as well as credit to reduce their outstanding balance. These programs are all funded through other sources but CAW/M will use CSBG during this grant period to support these programs administratively, as necessary.

To address the issue of food insecurity, CAW/M plans on providing several programs supported by CSBG funding. CAW/M has operated the Rittman Food Pantry for decades to address the needs of the Rittman community as well as the surrounding communities in both Wayne and Medina Counties. This location is an outreach site for all of CAW/M's services and supplies a 3-day food supply for all CSBG eligible clients. CSBG funds are used to purchase food and support the operation of the pantry. The pantry has a new location in West Salem and now offers food seniors food boxes in Wayne County and Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to those in need. Although outreach portions of the site are funded by other programs, the food pantry is totally funded through CSBG.

CAW/M also organizes and operates a plant program in the spring of each year. In late spring local greenhouses donate vegetables and flower plants to CAW/M to distribute to low-income families so that they can grow their own fresh vegetables. CSBG helps to fund this program by subsidizing the salary of the staff that help to coordinate donations and the volunteers that run the program.

CAW/M also provides donations of fresh vegetables to customers during the summer months through its collaboration with a local food rescue program, A Whole Community. Weekly deliveries of fresh produce are made to CAW/M June through September and allows anyone coming to the agency for services to take whatever they can use. CSBG funding is used for delivery of these free vegetables.

2. Basic Survival—CAW/M's housing department assists families and individuals in maintaining affordable housing through its involvement in housing coalitions in both counties, through its collaborations with several state of Ohio programs and through its ongoing relationship with utility companies and their energy efficiency programs for low-income clients. The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides eligible Ohioans with assistance to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce energy costs. Ohioans participating in HWAP will receive a home inspection to identify services needed to improve the home's energy efficiency and reduce energy bills and to address some of the health and safety issues that may require individuals to move. This inspection will also be used to identify if clients are eligible for additional services with First Energy, Dominion and Columbia Gas. In addition, CAWM receives a grant through the Housing Assistance Grant Program (HAGP) to assist lower income households in the areas of plumbing, electrical, heating, roofing and handicap accessibility. These programs are all funded through other sources but CAW/M will use CSBG during this grant period to support HWAP administratively, as necessary to support its housing programs.

Through CAW/M's housing department, we provide Rural Outreach, permanent supportive housing, direct financial assistance, and temporary supportive housing services to individuals experiencing homelessness. Short- and long-term housing as well as emergency funds for housing stability help individuals and families move toward permanent housing solutions.

3. Increase Self-Sufficiency—Increasing self-sufficiency is a cornerstone of the work of Community Action Agencies across the nation and is at the forefront of the work that CAW/M does in Wayne and Medina counties.

Tax Prep—Each year for over a decade CAW/M has provided tax preparation assistance to low-income clients. The goal is to ensure that each individual and family receives all of the tax benefits and credits that they are entitled to without incurring fees of high cost tax preparers. This program is conducted in both counties and CSBG funds are used to offset salary costs for staff who assist CSBG eligible clients.

Resource rooms in each county have been set up with computers and phones for clients to use to obtain needed documents and information and print out documents needed for CAW/M services as well as for additional needs.

4. Empowerment

Head Start is a Department of Health and Human Services program that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to low-income children ages 0-5 and their families. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's educational environment. Support services, parenting and a variety of classes and information are given to families to ensure a comprehensive approach to improving their lives. Although it is an early childhood education program, Head Start addresses the needs of children and families. There is a focus on health of individuals and families and families are often referred to additional services and connected with the needed resources to help the family to resolve all of their needs including mental health and pre and post natal mental health. CSBG funding is not used for Head Start.

A Car Seat Program is run through the Child and Family Development Department and provides free car seats to low-income families throughout Wayne and Medina Counties. Families must attend an educational class on how to install a car seat correctly. The program is designed for families with babies and small children who have outgrown their infant seat. They also provide free inspections and help with installing car seats at local events. This program is funded mainly with CSBG funds but also gets some free car seats from other programs.

Community Action Wayne/Medina CSBG Program Plan for 2026-2027—Additional Information

CAW/M creates and provides many additional opportunities for clients through its involvement in the community and linkages with other organizations. CAW/M staff participate in committees and councils in both counties. The purpose of this is for staff to share what CAW/M is doing and services that are being provided but also to learn about other agencies' programs for referral purposes to our clients and to ensure that services are not being duplicated. It is important for CAW/M to be informed and respond to urgent community needs. This is as important as responding to the needs that are outlined in the Community Needs Assessment.

CAW/M staff routinely provides clients with referrals to other programs and services throughout the community. This is done for clients of all departments. In addition, CAW/M's involvement in the community leads to additional linkages to other organizations and services for clients through

building relationships which lead to services such as weekender bags for some of our Head Start children in Medina County through Feeding Medina County, Diapers for our Head Start clients through the Stark County Diaper Bank and transportation passes for clients of Goodwill and Anazao in Wayne County. CAW/M also partners with Community Legal Aid (CLA) providing office space for clients to have a virtual meeting with attorneys at CLA in Akron without having to travel beyond Wayne County. These are just a few examples of how we link clients and services beyond just referrals to other programs and agencies. These linkage are vital to our clients overall well-being.

CAW/M continues to build agency capacity through its community work and internal planning and administrative processes. Building relationships, collaborations and partnerships provides CAW/M with a method to increase capacity to provide service.

Internally, CAW/M continues to upgrade communication and technology systems to ensure that a maximum number of clients can be served. Ongoing review and adjustment of the crisis response and communication plans will continue to ensure that safest possible environment for staff and clients.

**CSBG Budget
for 2026-2027
= \$ 784,483**

(see breakdown below)

CSBG Budget for 2026-2027 = \$784,483

Administration	\$ 70,334
Transportation	\$ 341,184
Food Pantry	\$ 350,180
Car Seats	\$ 3,459
Tax Program	\$ 9,326
A Whole Community	\$ 10,000
	\$ 784,483