



### **Agency Profile**

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc. (LCOI) is a Community Action Agency (CAA) established in 1965. CAAs are nonprofit private and public organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. Today there are approximately 1,100 CAAs in the United States covering 96% of the nation's counties. CAAs are a primary source of support for more than 34.5 million people who are living in poverty in the United States. CAAs provide a range of services to meet the unique needs of each community. CAAs have specially constituted tripartite Boards which include representation from elected public officials, low income representatives, and private entities with compassionate interests within the community.

Operational success at LCOI is made possible through the cooperative interaction of our dedicated Board Members, employees, and volunteers. Our annual budget is approximately \$2.8 million; leveraged through Federal, State, and local funding sources. Our primary service area encompasses the entirety of Lewis County. LCOI also provides select housing programs within neighboring Jefferson County.

Our consumers are men, women, and children who are experiencing financial hardship or those who have been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The typical LCOI consumer is one of the working poor; struggling to escape poverty with limited financial assets and educational opportunities. Being able to assist these families is an honor and a heavy responsibility.

### **Strategic Methodology**

Since 2016, LCOI's Community Action Advisory Group (CAAG) has served as the conduit in developing the agency's Community Needs Assessment (CNA) and Strategic Plan. The CAAG is reflective of the agency's workforce (Board Members, employees, and community volunteers), and representation from community partners, faith-based organizations, the educational sector, private sector, and low-income families. The most recent CNA was conducted beginning in May, 2019 and concluding in March, 2020. The assessment included collecting US Census data, the United Way A.L.I.C.E. report, consumer surveys and customer service data, survey data from workforce (Board members, employees, and community volunteers), and survey data from community partners. Surveys included both quantitative and qualitative data. The CAAG reviewed and analyzed the above data, identified key findings and related needs statements, and identified program priorities under each needs statement. A draft of the CNA was then presented to the agency's Board of Directors and approved on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The CAAG then embarked on the strategic planning process which included the review of the agency's mission and vision statement, SWOT analysis, and the development of outcomes and strategies into a draft Strategic Plan. Throughout the entire process, CAAG utilized consumer satisfaction surveys collected over the prior year, stakeholder survey collations from the CNA, insights provided by the Management Team, and peripheral data to identify social trends and establish needs of low-income families within our service area. The draft of the Strategic Plan was approved by the agency's Board of Directors on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Mission Statement:** Working with people in need to promote a higher quality of life in our community.

**Vision Statement:** A community where people are empowered to live safely without economic barriers.

**Overview**

The following pages identify the various goals of LCOI and provide a framework for continuous growth and improvement over the course of the next three years. These strategic outcomes are organized by CSBG Domains and contain strategies and/or services at the family, agency, and community levels; denoted as (F), (A), or (C). Specific measurable objectives are then derived from these strategies/services and included in the subsequent Community Action Plan. Taken together, the Strategic Plan and Community Action Plan demonstrate the agency’s commitment to address reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.

<b>CSBG Domain: Employment</b>			
<u>Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):</u>			
<i>Low-income individuals lack transportation and other workforce development supports to obtain or maintain employment. Affordability is further compounded by the COVID-19 crisis and economic aftermath given reduced employment or layoffs.</i>			
(F) = Family level services			
<b>SP#</b>	<b>Goal/Outcome</b>	<b>Services/strategies</b>	<b>POC</b>
EMP.1	Low-income families experience the removal of transportation barriers to obtain/maintain employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Transportation assistance in the form of vehicle repairs, tires, insurance assistance, gas cards, and alternate forms of transportation;</li> <li>(F) Bridges Out of Poverty/Getting Ahead classes.</li> </ul>	FS FS

<b>CSBG Domain: Education/Cognitive Development</b>			
<u>Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):</u>			
<i>Low-income families lack education about child passenger safety, as well as access to affordable car seats that meet current regulatory standards.</i>			
(F) = Family level services			
<b>SP#</b>	<b>Goal/Outcome</b>	<b>Services/strategies</b>	<b>POC</b>
EDU.1	Low-income families experience increased safety for their children while traveling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Standards-compliant car seats are provided to low-income families;</li> <li>(F) Education is provided to low income families on how to properly install a car seat for their child.</li> </ul>	FS, VS, HAP FS, VS, HAP

**CSBG Domain: Income, Infrastructure and Asset Management**

Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):

*Low-income families lack education/skill development for basic management of their household budgets. This is further compounded by the COVID-19 crisis and economic aftermath where families face increased pressure to budget effectively to meet household expenses.*

(F) = Family level services

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Services/strategies	POC
INC.1	Individuals and families increase their ability to manage their finances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (F) Money Management/Financial Empowerment;</li> <li>• (F) Representative Payee Services for eligible individuals (Social Security funds);</li> <li>• (F) Bridges Out of Poverty/Getting Ahead classes.</li> </ul>	<p>FS</p> <p>FS</p> <p>FS</p>

**CSBG Domain: Housing**

Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):

*Low-income families lack safe and affordable housing, which is compounded by the COVID-19 crisis and economic aftermath given increase risk of eviction or inability to afford utilities due to reduced employment, layoffs, etc.*

(F) = Family level services

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Services /strategies	POC
HOUS.1	Low-income families obtain safe and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (F) Homeless/Housing Advocacy services;</li> <li>• (F) Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing Choice Vouchers</li> <li>○ Family Self Sufficiency</li> <li>○ Homeownership (as applicable)</li> <li>○ VASH (as applicable)</li> <li>○ Shelter Plus Care voucher payments</li> <li>○ Nursing Home Diversion Waiver</li> </ul> </li> <li>• (F) Emergency shelter assistance.</li> </ul>	<p>HAP, NC HAP</p> <p>HAP, FS, NC</p>
HOUS.2	Low-income families realize a reduction in energy usage within their homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (F) Energy-efficiency services;</li> <li>• (F) Cooling Initiative;</li> <li>• (F) Emergency home repairs;</li> <li>• (F) RESTORE.</li> </ul>	WAP (all)

**CSBG Domain: Health/Social Development**

**Needs Statement #1 (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):**

*Low-income families lack food security, which is compounded by the COVID-19 crisis or economic aftermath.*

**Needs Statement #2 (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment):**

*There is a need for a locally-based victim services program in Lewis County to ensure families who have been victimized by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other crimes can access help to improve their safety. The need for local access is further compounded by the COVID-19 crisis or economic aftermath given the propensity for violence to increase due to increased family pressures without adequate supports.*

(F) = Family level services

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Services/strategies	POC
HLTH.1	Low-income individuals obtain food security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Emergency food assistance via food pantries, mobile food pantry, or food drives.</li> </ul>	FS
HLTH.2	Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes are empowered to regain control of their lives and ultimately move towards healing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Victim Services (Residential and Non-residential), including 24/7 Hotline, Safe Dwelling, Advocacy, Counseling, and Criminal/Family/Hospital Accompaniment for victims, and age appropriate Primary Prevention Education to students in area schools; community education and training.</li> </ul>	VS

**CSBG Domain: Civic Engagement and Community Involvement**

**Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):**

*Additional community resources are needed to address the daily living concerns of low-income residents.*

(A) = Agency level strategy

(C) = Community level strategy

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Strategies	POC
CIVIC.1	Community volunteers actively engage to aid with support services within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Board of Directors, tri-partite membership;</li> <li>(C) Getting Ahead classes (lead volunteers);</li> <li>(A) Volunteer training.</li> </ul>	CEO VS FS, VS

**CSBG Domain: Multiple Domains**

Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):

*Additional community resources are needed to address the daily living concerns of low-income residents, including those impacted by the COVID-19 crisis or economic aftermath.*

(A) = Agency level strategy

(F) = Family level service

(C) = Community level strategy/resource

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Strategies	POC
MULT.1	Low-income families experience the removal of transportation barriers to maintain daily living needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Transportation assistance to address daily living needs, such as vehicle repairs, tires, insurance assistance, gas cards, and alternate forms of transportation.</li> </ul>	FS
MULT.2	Low-income families maintain a basic quality of living by obtaining temporary, emergency supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Miscellaneous critical needs not falling under any other domain;</li> <li>Back to school supplies/hygiene products.</li> </ul>	All employees FS
MULT.3	The digital divide is removed for low-income families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F) Technology assistance and training supports to low income families to access online school work, employment, or daily living needs.</li> </ul>	FS
MULT.4	Commercial services are maintained and/or preserved to promote quality of life benefiting low-income individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(C) Continuation of the New Bremen General Store as a neighborhood resource for groceries;</li> <li>(F)(A)(C) Maintain the Thrift Store to provide a community resource for: 1) Acquiring pre-owned, affordable household and essential items; 2) Provide an avenue for the volunteers to give back to the community; and 3) Provide a community resource for workforce development training;</li> <li>(A)(C) Evaluate the effectiveness of the Neighborhood Center as a community resource to access LCOI services and other community supports.</li> </ul>	CEO FS Mgt Team

**CSBG Domain: Linkages**

**Needs Statement (deciphered from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):**

*The agency needs the support of community partners as well as active partnerships to effectively meet its mission.*

(F) = Family level strategy  
 (A) = Agency level strategy  
 (C) = Community level strategy

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Strategies	POC
LINK.1	Linkages/partnerships are identified within in the community necessary to meet the agency's mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Identify public/private agencies mutually accessed by our consumers and prioritize those which need inter-agency development and/or strengthening.</li> </ul>	Mgt Team
LINK.2	Linkages/partnerships are maintained within the community to ensure effective strategies and meaningful outcomes related to poverty, victimization, youth, substance use disorders, addictions, and other patterned community needs at the Family/Individual, Agency, and/or Community levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(F)(A)(C) Active engagement in consortia/partnerships at the local level to address barriers/issues identified with:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce development/EAP;</li> <li>Local traffic safety/transportation;</li> <li>Financial literacy/empowerment such as Bridges Out of Poverty/Getting Ahead;</li> <li>Homelessness/Safe and affordable housing/Fair housing;</li> <li>Energy efficiency (including audits);</li> <li>Food security/technical oversight;</li> <li>Affordable health insurance;</li> <li>Domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; Primary Prevention Education; Community education/training;</li> <li>Migrant rights;</li> <li>Language interpretation services;</li> <li>Racial justice;</li> <li>Suicide prevention;</li> <li>Early childhood intervention;</li> <li>Leadership development (volunteers);</li> <li>Youth development;</li> <li>Countywide emergency response;</li> <li>Countywide human services priorities;</li> <li>Information and Technology.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Mgt Team and front line employees, as applicable
LINK.3	Consumers have access to additional support services within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) An effective referral process is in place with community partners to ensure consumers have access to needed support services.</li> </ul>	Mgt Team
LINK.4	Linkages are maintained with elected representatives and/or State officials to advocate for the effective change of systematic barriers and regulations which mitigate the effectiveness of the agency's mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Active engagement with elected local, State, and Federal representatives as well as State officials to communicate issues which create barriers affecting services, strategies, and intended outcomes.</li> </ul>	CEO, Deputy Dir

**CSBG Domain: Agency Capacity**

Needs Statement (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment and Addendum):

*Agency capacity-building is needed in order to address program priorities and implement effective strategies for successful program operation.*

Needs Statement #2 (from the 2020 Community Needs Assessment):

*Agency capacity-building is needed in order to either help prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID-19 crisis and economic aftermath. This includes building modification to meet various workplace density expectations of Phased reopening as well as expansion to increase consumer accessibility.*

SP#	Goal/Outcome	Strategies	POC
AGY.1	The agency increases implementation of Results Oriented Management Accountability (ROMA) principles and strategies regarding family-level services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval and implementation of 2021 Agency Strategic Plan;</li> <li>• Revisit/expand where possible a more integrated intake process to more holistically assess family needs;</li> <li>• Implementation of an internal Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to promote a more all-inclusive service provision approach toward families;</li> <li>• Introduction of scales to trend the family's progress in moving from poverty across multiple domains;</li> <li>• Quarterly meetings to evaluate effectiveness of program strategies, revise as needed;</li> <li>• Apprise CAAG annually on Strategic Plan effectiveness (through existing reports);</li> <li>• Community Needs Assessment in 2023.</li> </ul>	<p>Board of Directors</p> <p>Mgt Team</p> <p>Direct service employees</p> <p>Management Team</p> <p>CEO, DD, applicable Program Mgr CEO or Deputy</p> <p>CAAG</p>

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SP#	Goal/Outcome	Strategies	POC
AGY.2	The agency employs qualified employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit qualified employees;</li> <li>• Maintain/further develop the agency training program for mission critical topics (including new area such as trauma-informed, ACES, technology skill sets, etc.) and document attendance thereof. Assess agency retreats as to their effectiveness of a workforce development strategy. Capitalize on online learning;</li> <li>• Monitor training investments with workforce;</li> <li>• Review/revise as necessary the agency Professional Development Plan;</li> <li>• Reinforce consumer-centered service delivery throughout workforce;</li> <li>• Include shadowing in employee orientation and professional development; with opportunities for internal exploration to management level succession;</li> <li>• Implement newly identified communication strategies to improve cohesion among employees;</li> <li>• Oppnet to SharePoint conversion to ensure an ongoing information resource for employees;</li> <li>• Maintain Board of Directors Reference Center as an information resource for Board members;</li> <li>• Provide annual report to Board on employee turnover;</li> <li>• Review and/or revise Affirmative Action Plan;</li> <li>• Obtain ROMA Trainer or Implementer certification, and identify succession;</li> <li>• Provide ROMA training to appropriate staff;</li> <li>• Review employee Job descriptions at minimum, tri-annually;</li> <li>• Review and revise as applicable the Succession Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>CEO, HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>Mgt Team</p> <p>CEO, Deputy Dir HR Mgt Team</p> <p>Mgt Team</p> <p>Mgt Team</p> <p>Mgt Team</p> <p>Deputy Dir</p> <p>CEO, HR</p> <p>CEO, Deputy, HR</p> <p>CEO, Deputy Dir</p> <p>CEO, Deputy, HR</p> <p>Mgt Team</p> <p>CEO, Deputy</p>



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<b>SP#</b>	<b>Goal/Outcome</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>POC</b>
AGY.3	The agency maintains an effective volunteer function for coordinated initiatives benefiting low-income individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and implementation of volunteers;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Board members;</li> <li>○ Thrift Store operation;</li> <li>○ Food pantry operations;</li> <li>○ 24 hour crisis hotline operation;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify and provide/offer continuing Board development;</li> <li>• Ensure continuing volunteer development;</li> <li>• Increase/ensure effective communication to volunteers;</li> <li>• Ensure volunteer recognition.</li> </ul>	BOD Nominating Committee, CEO  FS FS VS  CEO, Deputy Dir  FS, VS FS, VS  CEO/HR FS, VS
AGY.4	Workforce skills are increased among consumers who are enrolled in work skills training programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued availability of the Thrift Store or agency programs as a venue for work skills development (via Lewis County One Stop, Pratt Northam Foundation internships, etc.).</li> </ul>	CEO, FS
AGY.5	The internal consumer assessment methodology increases the effectiveness of cross-program service in meeting individual outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the consumer assessment tool within Family Services Department;</li> <li>• Implement within Victim Services Department;</li> <li>• Explore further benefits of implementation within WAP and HAP.</li> </ul>	FS  VS  CEO, Deputy
AGY.6	The agency increases its on-site availability within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (A)(C) The Neighborhood Center serves as a resource for consumers to access services, as well as a community resource to access trainings, etc.;</li> <li>• The agency reassesses, and acquire as necessary, the need for a Mobile Food Pantry to serve as a resource to low-income families to access emergency food without the need to travel.</li> </ul>	CEO, NC Coordinator, Mgt Team  CEP, Deputy, FS

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<b>SP#</b>	<b>Goal/Outcome</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>POC</b>
AGY.7	The IT function effectively meets the agency's data management and communications needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve infrastructure (hardware and software) to promote the efficiency in the management of consumer data and reporting systems; as well as the overall logistical operation of the agency;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oAgency database;</li> <li>oAgency telephone system(s);</li> <li>oAgency Intranet;</li> </ul> </li> <li>Maintain and monitor wrap-a-round IT services through an external vendor;</li> <li>Ensure compliance with NYS SHIELD Act.</li> </ul>	CEO, Deputy Dir  ACC Tek, FS Mgr CEO, Deputy Dir  CEO, Deputy Dir  CEO, Deputy Dir
AGY.8	The safety and health needs of the agency's workforce and facilities are addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and revise the agency Safety and Health Accident Prevention (SHAP) plan annually;</li> <li>Maintain the internal Safety and Health committee with a purpose to identify and correct deficiencies;</li> <li>Continue to assess the current state of agency facilities;</li> <li>Review all accidents and identify root causes;</li> <li>Maintain an effective and independent Employee Assistance Program;</li> <li>Provide annual refresher training and SHAP Talks.</li> </ul>	S&H Com  CEO, HR  S&H Com  S&H Com HR  CEO/HR
AGY.9	The community is educated about the agency's mission, services, impacts, and relevant community awareness issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review/revise as necessary the agency marketing plan to deliver a systematic and consistent dissemination of agency outreach materials and information;</li> <li>Review/revise as necessary the volunteer recognition plan;</li> <li>Coordinate and publicize agency volunteering opportunities to the public;</li> <li>Utilize media (Facebook, web site, local newspapers, radio, television, printed outreach materials, LC Public Transportation) in an effort to effectively communicate services and awareness issues;</li> <li>Maintain the agency website, ensuring a user friendly interface with both computer and mobile devices.</li> </ul>	Marketing Committee  Marketing Committee  FS/VS/HR (BOD)  All employees  Deputy Dir, FS Mgr

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SP#	Goal/Outcome	Strategies	POC
AGY.10	The agency maintains fiscal competency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review/revise as necessary the Finance Policy Manual in accordance with uniform guidance;</li> <li>Develop/coordinate Audit Services RFP and selection process; participate in annual audits.</li> </ul>	Finance Dir, CEO, Deputy Dir  Finance Dir
AGY.11	Maintains competent agency governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct the 2-year Risk assessment in 2022 and 2024;</li> <li>Legal counsel review of Board Bylaws in 2024;</li> <li>Legal counsel review of Personnel Policy Handbook in 2024;</li> <li>Annual ACROS and tri-annual TRACS completion.</li> </ul>	CEO, Deputy  CEO, HR CEO, HR  CEO, Deputy Dir, Finance Dir, HR
AGY.12	Low-income representation is maintained with formal community organizations, governments, boards or councils that provide input into topics supported by agency mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-income individuals take active part as Target Sector representatives on the Board of Directors</li> <li>Low-income individuals participate in the Community Action Advisory Group (CAAG)</li> <li>Low-income individuals actively engage as stake holders within the community through volunteerism</li> </ul>	Board of Directors  CAAG  FS, VS

**Evaluation Process:** The principle document in which to measure progress will be through the Community Action Plan; which contains strategies, services, and measurable outcomes from the Strategic Plan. Progress toward meeting outcomes of the Strategic Plan will be evaluated on an on-going basis via bi-monthly updates by the Chief Executive Officer to the Board of Directors. Board members will be encouraged to offer their input via questions, comments, and recommendations as applicable.

**Recognition of Development:** The agency acknowledges the input and active participation of the developers of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

Scott Mathys  
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