

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

## LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY



LCCAA uses strategic planning as a structured process to define success for the agency. A strategic plan helps us determine priorities for both our programs and our operations and allows us to align resources and staff to achieve goals.

LCCAA's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is aligned with state and national goals for the Community Action Network and the agencies that fund our grants.

We use the Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) system to follow the framework of national performance indicators created for agencies like ours that receive Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding.

ROMA's standardization has made it possible to speak about the national impact of CSBG funding and the other resources it leverages.

In 2016, ROMA was expanded to include other indicators and agencies were encouraged to create goals for families, their community and their agency.

Community Action Agencies are required to complete a comprehensive strategic plan every five years.

The planning process includes stakeholder engagement and participation as well as the latest Community Needs Assessment and other data-driven sources.

All of LCCAA's strategic priorities for 2023-2026 are aligned to the plan's three main goals as well as the agency's mission statement.

GOAL 1: SERVE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES USING A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH. (FAMILY)

GOAL 2: USE COMMUNITY COORDINATION EXPERTISE TO EXPAND OUTREACH, LEVERAGE LOCAL FUNDING AND TACKLE RATES OF CHANGE. (COMMUNITY)

GOAL 3: BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO MEET CURRENT AND EMERGING COMMUNITY NEEDS. (AGENCY)



# TO SERVE

## ***1. Maximize each customer interaction with tracked-to-response referrals (Star Service).***

LCCAA recognizes that community members that come to us typically do so for a specific reason. We believe it is our responsibility to offer them all agency services and connect them with a program staff member. We call this “Star Service.” During fiscal year 2024, LCCAA will complete no fewer than 85 Star Service referrals per month. During fiscal year 2025, we will complete no fewer than 100 Star Service referrals per month. During fiscal year 2026, we will complete no fewer than 125 Star Service referrals per month.

## ***2. Launch a household income screening application that simplifies eligibility determinations and reduces a community member’s application fatigue when seeking multiple services.***

It is absurdly difficult to make cross-program eligibility determinations because federal programs include and exclude income sources differently and use different poverty thresholds (federal poverty level, area median income, etc.). No later than Jan. 1, 2024, LCCAA will launch a “universal application” used by all agency programs, resulting in 80 percent of community members served receiving assistance in more than one program.

## ***3. Lean into our ROMA “Counts/Rates of Change” to improve our anti-poverty reporting to the U.S. Congress.***

LCCAA will use monthly program outcomes reporting to the Board of Directors as a catalyst to demonstrate how we excel at meeting National Performance Indicators for the Community Action Network.

## ***4. Address the “loss” areas of Early Head Start and USDA-CACFP (Head Start meals).***

Not all LCCAA programs and services are fully funded by one source. Two examples are LCCAA’s Early Head Start program and the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. Both programs cost more to operate than their respective funding.

Rising expenses in excess of federal cost of living adjustments created an unsupportable burden on secondary funding sources. As such, LCCAA made the difficult decision to relinquish our Early Head Start program effective August 1, 2024.

Relinquishment carries no penalties and does not disqualify LCCAA from being funded for EHS in the future.

Regarding Head Start meal expenses, several strategies related to increasing meal reimbursement rates and reducing food procurement costs will be used to reduce demands on secondary funding sources. We will continue to maintain high standards for child nutrition services.



# To EMPOWER



## ***1. Systematically listen to customers.***

Customer satisfaction surveys will be completed quarterly using a random sample of customers making applications to agency programs. Results will be reviewed by Agency leadership and managers for continuous improvement of services (full ROMA cycle), reported to the board and included in the Agency's annual report to the community.

## ***2. Be a trusted resource providing up-to-date information on community programs and services.***

The Agency's Community Resource Directory addresses a need identified in the 2022 Community Needs Assessment of "not knowing where to get help." The agency will distribute no fewer than 5,000 printed copies per fiscal year. The electronic version on the agency's website will also be accessed no fewer than 850 times.

## ***3. Reduce infant mortality in Lorain County one pregnant mom at a time.***

Working through our Lorain County Pathways HUB and community partnerships, we will reach no fewer than 115 pregnant woman or mothers with infants annually. Through Community Health Workers we will support healthy pregnancies and offer supportive services during the first year of a child's life.

## ***4. Be a highly accessible resource for fresh and healthy produce in underserved areas.***

Our 2022 Community Needs Assessment identified food insecurity and access to fresh foods as concerns. In 2023, LCCAA began online ordering through a curbside produce pantry in downtown Lorain. That pantry will serve no fewer than 50 unduplicated households weekly. In 2024 and early 2025, LCCAA will open the South Side Center in Elyria which will feature a produce market in a food desert. The market will serve no fewer than 20 WIC-eligible, 25 TANF-eligible and 30 low-income senior unduplicated households on a weekly basis.

## ***5. Directly supervise youth offering workforce readiness experience.***

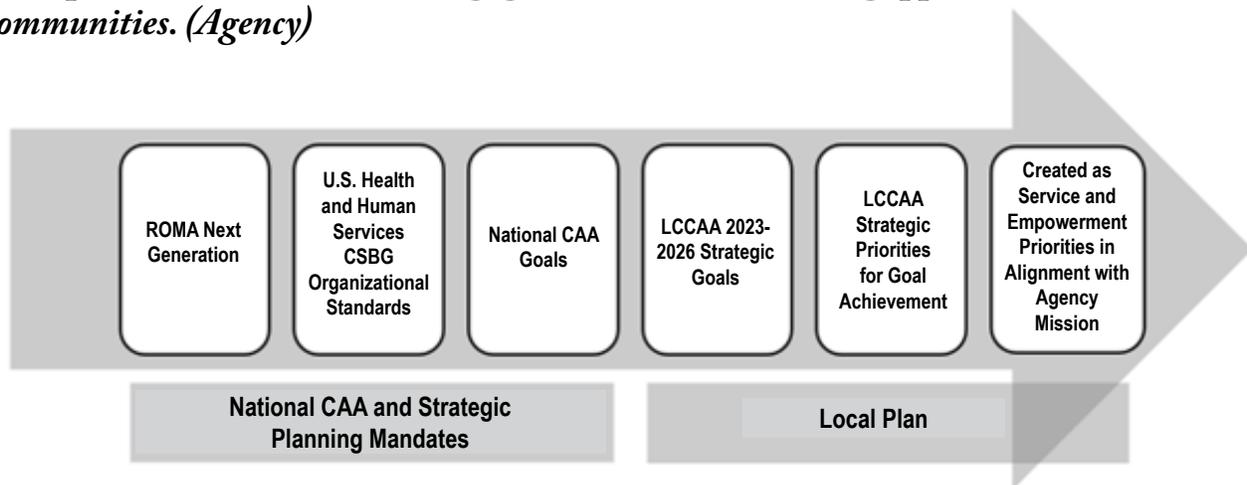
Youth unemployment in Lorain County worsened during the pandemic and has shown a slower recovery rate. Working in partnership with OhioMeansJobs Lorain County and WIOA-eligible youth, LCCAA's youth program will be an employer of choice for 15- to 24-year-olds staff the Produce Pickup Center on West 10th Street in Lorain. Annually, the agency will directly supervise no fewer than 22 low-income youth.

## ***6. Secure and maintain 360 repeating monthly donations of \$5 each to the Agency's endowment fund. Thirty such donors each month will raise \$11,700 annually for the endowment.***

# ALIGNED TO NATIONAL STANDARDS

LCCAA's new strategic goals and priorities are aligned to the national goals for Community Action Agencies who are required to use the ROMA system. The National CAA Goals are:

- 1: Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security. (Family)*
- 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity. (Community)*
- 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities. (Agency)*



LCCAA's plan also aligns with the CSBG Organizational Standards in the following ways:

- ◇ Our board has reviewed and affirmed the agency's mission.
- ◇ The agency used the full ROMA cycle to create the plan and will use a ROMA certified trainer in the plan's implementation.
- ◇ The plan addresses reduction of poverty and empowerment of low-income people.
- ◇ The plan uses customer satisfaction data and customer input from the Community Needs Assessment.
- ◇ The board will receive regular reports on the progress of the plan's implementation.
- ◇ The Board has formally approved the plan as reflected in its meeting minutes.

**OUR MISSION IS TO SERVE AND EMPOWER  
LORAIN COUNTY RESIDENTS IN NEED**