

TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Serving Bureau, Carroll, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Ogle, Putnam, Stark & Whiteside Counties

AGENCY PROGRAM DIRECTORY



Tri-County Opportunities Council will investigate the impact of poverty throughout our nine-county service area and will work, in partnership with individuals, families, and communities, to provide opportunities that supports movement towards stability and self-sufficiency.

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Rock Falls, IL 61071
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www.tcochelps.org

#TCOCTRANSFORMS



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OFFICE LOCATIONS

Main Office

405 Emmons Avenue
 Rock Falls, IL 61071
 PH: 815/625-7830
 PH: 1-800-323-5434

LaSalle Office

308 N. 30th Road
 LaSalle, IL 61301
 CSBG: 815/224-0028
 CSBG: 815/224-3939
 LIHEAP: 815/223-2333
 HEAD START: 815/224-2533

Princeton Office

1019 N. Main Street
 Princeton, IL 61356
 CSBG: 815/875-6064
 LIHEAP: 815/879-6035

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

BUREAU COUNTY FOOD PANTRY

Purpose of Program:

Provides food on an emergency basis to meet meal gaps for families residing in Bureau County in the following communities: Dover, Kasbeer, Malden, Manlius, New Bedford, Ohio, Princeton, Tampico, Tiskilwa-VanOrin.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

None.

Timeframe: All year; Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. First Thursday evening of each month 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Services Provided:

Food and personal products provided.

CHILD CARE PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance to licensed child care centers to support working families sustain employment or enrollment in college/trade school.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist households with financial assistance to a licensed child care center to support the family in sustaining employment or enrolling in college/trade school. To continue payments, the customer must remain employed (working at least 32 hours a week) or attend college/trade school (registered in at least 12 credit hours a semester). Assistance will be paid up to one year from their enrollment date on a pay-out scale: 3 months: 100%; 6 months: 75%, 9 months: 50%, 12 months: 25%.

DENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance to customers seeking dental assistance to meet their dental needs.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist eligible customers in need of dental health assistance up to \$300.

DISASTER PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides direct emergency assistance to customers affected by a disaster beyond their control to meet basic needs.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

No guidelines.

Services Provided:

The program will assist customers with emergency relief damages caused by fires, tornadoes, floods, etc., to meet basic needs.

EMERGENCY UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible households with an economic hardship with financial assistance towards a water or sewer bill.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist customers with a one-time emergency utility payment assistance towards their water or sewer bill to prevent shut-off for those with an economic crisis to meet basic needs within the last 90 days. Additionally, the program can be bundled with LIHWAP Program to ensure that customer bills are paid to sustain water/sewer in the home.

ENROLL & ACHIEVE RESULTS NOW (EARN) PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides customer engagement services to help CSBG eligible customers stabilize and achieve a higher level of self-sufficiency.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist eligible customers with the opportunity to promote self-improvement, stability, employment, savings, and other essential life skills.

FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING

Purpose of Program:

University of Illinois Extension's All My Money: Change for the Better curriculum teaches financial literacy to individuals seeking financial education.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide individuals seeking financial education with free training that offers financial literacy, light dinner/snacks, child care, and incentives once they have completed the program.

HEALTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance to customers seeking health assistance to meet their health needs.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist eligible customers in need of health assistance, up to \$300.

HOME SAFETY PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible homeowners financial assistance with minor home repairs to maintain a safe home.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist eligible customers in need of home repairs up to \$500 but can be increased to \$1,000 in extenuating circumstances. Assistance may not be given more than two years in a row.

ID PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance to eligible customers seeking necessary identification documents to improve a level of self-sufficiency.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance to eligible customers in need of acquiring necessary identification documents.

LITTLE BOTTOMS PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance to eligible families to offset the costs of hygiene assistance to children under five or with a diagnosed disability.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance to customers, up to \$100 per child, to purchase diapers, wipes, and creams for children under five or with a diagnosed disability.

PERSONAL CARE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance to eligible households to assist with the costs of personal care items to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance for customers, up to \$100 per household, to purchase personal care items: laundry detergent, toilet paper, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, dish soap, cleaning supplies, adult hygiene products, etc.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides 12 eligible customers with a scholarship for post-secondary education at an accredited Illinois institution.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days. Must be planning to attend an Illinois post-secondary institution as full-time or part-time students in the fall.

Services Provided:

The program will provide 12 scholarships to eligible customers enrolled in an accredited Illinois institution that will provide formal education or occupational training towards a degree.

SCHOOL SUPPLY PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible families financial assistance to purchase school supplies for their children: preschool through 12th grade.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

Provide financial assistance to children, up to \$50 per child, to purchase necessary school supplies, such as shoes, physical education uniforms, winter coats/boots/pants, backpacks, general school supplies, etc. Supplies will help give children a positive approach to learning by having the necessary supplies and clothing to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

SENIOR MEAL PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance and education to eligible seniors, over the age of 55, with a grocery food voucher to meet meal gaps.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance to customers that are 55 years and older, with a food voucher to offset meal gaps to those on a fixed monthly income.

SKILLS TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

Purpose of Program:

Provides funding towards a certification program to obtain employment and necessary supplies to begin employment with a living wage or higher.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will assist customers with funding towards a certification/license to obtain employment and purchase the necessary supplies. In addition, the program will prepare customers by offering resources and referrals on financial literacy, general job readiness skills, transportation, and child care to sustain employment.

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible customers with financial assistance to maintain employment, attend college/trade school, or meet basic transportation needs.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance to eligible customers who work at least 30 hours a week or more and have been employed for at least 90 days with their current employer; currently attending college/trade school, or receive social security as their only source of income. In addition, assistance will be offered to make repairs on the customer's vehicle (maximum of \$750); purchase up to 3 months' car insurance (maximum of \$600); purchase one month of bus passes (maximum of \$250).

YOUTH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible families with opportunities for their youth to participate in the community, school, and family activities.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Customers must be at 200% of the federal poverty level for the past 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will allow youth to participate in community, school, and family wellness activities. These activities will include sports, camps, arts, music, wellness, etc.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) – Rapid Re-Housing Program

Purpose of Program:

Assist homeless individuals and families in gaining housing.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Must be literally homeless (staying in an emergency shelter, safe haven, motel/hotel supported with government/charity funding, street/place not meant for human habitation, or fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence. Rent must be under Fair Market Rent amount, have no appropriate subsequent housing option, and lack sufficient resources and support networks to retain housing.

Services Provided:

Provides financial assistance and case management to eligible individuals to gain housing.

HOMELESS PREVENTION

Purpose of Program:

Assist individuals and families with one-time assistance with rent/deposit to prevent homelessness.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Income must be under 200% of federal poverty guidelines, a proven financial crisis within the last 90 days; rent must be affordable; must not have received previous help within the previous two years, and lack financial resources to prevent homelessness without assistance.

Services Provided:

Provide financial assistance and case management to eligible individuals to maintain housing.

RENTAL HOUSING

Purpose of Program:

To provide decent, safe and affordable housing to low-income customers.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

The family must be at or below 50% of the area median income.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Services Provided: Six single-family families, 32 subsidized units, and 16 apartments are available for rent in Sterling, Rock Falls, Dixon, and Wyanet. There is a waiting list, but customers are welcome to fill out an application to get on the list at any time. Referrals to other programs which may be helpful are also made.

VOUCHER SHELTER

Purpose of Program:

Provides voucher shelter in an emergency to prevent homelessness.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Income must be under 200% poverty level; must be literally homeless and unable to stay at a homeless shelter; must lack financial resources to obtain shelter on their own; must not have received help in the last two years.

Services Provided:

Provide financial assistance to prevent homelessness.

FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides meaningful volunteer opportunities for those in the lower-income range who are 55 years old and older. The Foster Grandparents program offers supportive person-to-person services to at-risk and children with exceptional needs in reading, math, spelling, art, and other constructive projects.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Foster Grandparents need to be 55 years old or older and have incomes that do not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level. In addition, they should be able to work 5-40 hours a week depending on the assignment.

Timeframe: This is a year-round program for the volunteers in daycare facilities. Those in public and private school assignments and the volunteers in Head Start classrooms follow the school-year calendar. Some Foster Grandparents volunteer for summer school programs and particular summer park district programs or area libraries that offer a summer reading program for children.

Services Provided:

The Foster Grandparents make a service commitment to youngsters and individuals struggling with learning needs and provide personal guidance to grow more fully. Besides assisting the child and the site teacher or supervisor, the Foster Grandparents also expand their personal lives with friendships and experiences and utilize their unique talents.

Other Information:

The program serves Bureau, Carroll, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Ogle, Putnam, Stark, and Whiteside counties in the public and private schools, preschools, Head Start programs, and daycare facilities. Participants receive a tax-free stipend of \$3.00 per hour, transportation or reimbursement, meals during service time, annual physical examinations, ten paid holidays, sick leave, vacation days, and training.

EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

To provide quality, comprehensive care and experiences for infants, toddlers, and expectant mothers. This programs' mission is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of very young children and promote healthy family functioning. Service options are available in Bureau, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Ogle, Putnam, and Whiteside Counties.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Pregnant women and children, birth to 3 years of age from families with incomes below the poverty guidelines, experiencing homelessness, or families receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI are eligible. Foster children are eligible regardless of their foster family's income. In addition, ten percent of enrollment is reserved for children with qualifying diagnosed disabilities, regardless of income, if that child will benefit from enrollment.

Timeframe:

Early Head Start services are provided full-year.

Services Provided:

Services are offered in home-based and center-based settings based on the respective communities and the needs of each family. Early Head Start center-based classrooms are located in Sterling, Ottawa, and Streator and are funded with a combination of Early Head Start and Illinois Child Care subsidy funding. Center slots are reserved for parents working or in school or job training on a full-time basis. All other services are provided in a home-based model. Services include early education services within developmentally appropriate settings and supportive services in medical health, dental health, mental health, nutrition, and disabilities. In addition, opportunities are provided to parents in parent education, program participation, and decision-making roles.

Other Information:

All program centers are staffed by qualified Associates' Degree infant/toddler teachers. In addition, parent/child educators have degrees and credentials as per federal requirements.

HEAD START PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

To promote school readiness by enhancing children's social and cognitive development by providing educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services. Services and various programming options are provided to eligible children and their families in Bureau, Carroll, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Ogle, Putnam, Stark, and Whiteside counties. The program provides several programming options, including half-day, full-day, and full-year options.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Children ages 3-5 years of age (birthdate is figured on an August 31 cut-off date) from families with incomes below the poverty guidelines, experiencing homelessness, or receiving public assistance such as TANF or SSI are eligible. Foster children are eligible regardless of their foster family's income. In addition, ten percent of enrollment is reserved for children with qualifying diagnosed disabilities, regardless of income, if that child will benefit from enrollment in an inclusive classroom setting.

Timeframe:

Most center-based classes operate during the school year or from September through May annually. However, the program does provide full-day, full-year classrooms in Ottawa and Streator (LaSalle County) and Sterling (Whiteside County). The full-year classrooms are funded with a combination of Head Start and Illinois Child Care subsidy funding. Center-based classroom schedules and days of operation vary depending on community and family needs.

Services Provided:

Comprehensive school readiness services in the following domains: approaches to learning; social and emotional development; language and literacy; cognition; and perceptual, motor, and physical development. Supportive services to children and their families in medical health, dental health, nutrition, and disabilities. Opportunities are provided to parents in the areas of parent education, program participation, and decision-making roles. Transportation to and from the center is provided for the majority (but not all) classes.

Other Information:

All program classrooms are licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services. Qualified Bachelor Degree teachers staff all program centers. Each family is assigned a Family and Community Service Worker who works collaboratively with the teaching staff to promote, support, and empower families to set and meet expressed family goals that move them toward self-sufficiency.

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

Purpose of Program:

To assist income-eligible households with their utility bills in the winter months.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Income must be at or below 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines.

Timeframe: September 1 – May 31 (depends on the funding)

Services Provided:

LIHEAP – If a household meets the income guidelines, LIHEAP makes a one-time payment to their utility company. Bills must be in the name of the applicant at the address in which they reside. The amount is determined by using a matrix given by the State. In addition, some applicants may qualify for emergency funding if a utility has been disconnected.

PIPP – The Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) program is designed to help clients pay their bills with a manageable budget bill. Eligibility for this program includes being within the LIHEAP guidelines and must have a participating utility company. As of now, Ameren, Com-Ed, and Nicor are participants within the nine-county service area.

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR – Neighbor to Neighbor funds are for Jo-Carroll energy clients. The income cannot exceed 300% of the poverty level and can use up to \$1,200 in benefits in a rolling year, depending on when they applied.

COM-ED HARDSHIP – This program helps households that may be having a hardship crisis. Examples of a hardship qualification are as follows: disabled (must have Social Security Disability or SSI), loss of income (unemployment, job closing or illness), outstanding medical bills, prescription costs, military deployment, death of an immediate family member living in the home at the time of death or property damage due to a natural disaster not covered by insurance. Guidelines are 250% of the poverty level or less. Past due balance can be requested up to \$500 if they are not shut-off.

AMEREN SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAM – Ameren donated \$25,000 for the 2021 program year to use for clients. The criteria that we have established is 200% of the poverty level and a benefit amount no more than \$300.

Other Information

If a household is eligible for LIHEAP, owns its own home, and has a property tax bill in its name, the program may also help with a furnace repair or replacement throughout the LIHEAP program. There is only help with this providing the furnace is not working.

WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

To make homes more energy-efficient, provide safe heating equipment to replace the furnace if necessary and provide customers with safety equipment.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Based on the household's gross income for the past 3 or 12 months.

Timeframe: July 1 through June 30 of the following year

Services Provided:

Possible items to be taken care of: furnaces, doors, repair or replacement, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, insulation, carbon monoxide detectors, caulking.

Other Information:

This program is open to homeowners and renters (if the owner agrees to the program terms). However, all nine counties have waiting lists, some as long as a year. In addition, if your home has been weatherized previously, you must wait a minimum of 15 years before applying for assistance again, regardless of what funding source was used on your home.