



TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL

Community Action Agency

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

AGENCY PROGRAM DIRECTORY

405 Emmons Avenue

Rock Falls, IL 61071

815-625-7830

1-800-323-5434

www.tcochelps.org

#TCOCTRANSFORMS

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 the movement toward stability and self-sufficiency.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM	
Bureau County Food Pantry	3
Disaster Program	3
Enroll & Achieve Results Now (EARN) Program	3
Essential Living Program	3-4
Healthy Living Program	4
Home Maintenance Program	4
Mental Wellness Program	4
Mortgage Assistance Program	4
Pathway to Nutrition Program	4-5
Scholarship Program	5
Skills Training & Employment Program (STEP)	5
Transportation Assistance Program	5
Youth Development Program	6
HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	
Agency Rental Housing Program	6
Emergency Solutions Grant – Rapid Re-Housing Program	6
DHS Homeless Prevention	6-7
DHS Rapid Re-Housing Program	7
DHS Voucher Shelter	7
FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM	7
EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM	8
HEAD START PROGRAM	8-9
LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	9
WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM	9-10

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Main Office

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

LaSalle Satellite 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

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, LaMoille, 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.

DISASTER SERVICES

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 in meeting basic needs caused by damages from fires, tornadoes, floods, etc., to meet basic needs: food, personal care items, and temporary or permanent housing.

ENROLL & ACHIEVE RESULTS NOW (EARN) PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides customer engagement services to help eligible customers stabilize and achieve higher self-sufficiency while earning money towards a savings account.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will assist customers with the opportunity to promote self-improvement, stability, employment, savings, and other essential life skills. Rewards are earned after actively and consistently achieving goals outlined in their goal plans. A maximum of \$200 per month can be earned.

ESSENTIAL LIVING PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides customers financial assistance for personal hygiene items, including diapers, to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program provides 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. In addition, an additional voucher may be issued to provide households to purchase diapers, wipes, and creams, up to \$100 per child, for children under the age of 5 or a child with a diagnosed disability.

HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides customers with health or dental assistance to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will assist customers needing health or dental assistance, up to \$300, with vision screenings, prescription payments, prescribed lift chairs, hearing aid assistance, dental cleanings/services, etc.

HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible homeowners assistance with minor repairs to improve safe housing.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will assist with minor home repairs up to \$500.

MENTAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Assists eligible individuals to maintain a healthy mental state in partnership with BetterHelp.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

After completing their donated three-month services, the program will provide an additional three months or up to \$300 of mental health services to BetterHelp.

MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides mortgage assistance to sustain housing to eligible homeowners with economic hardship.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will assist with two months of mortgage (including escrow) payment, up to \$2,000 for those who are past due.

PATHWAY TO NUTRITION PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides financial assistance and education to eligible households with a grocery voucher to meet their meal gaps.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will provide food vouchers, up to \$300, to those who are 55 years or older or to individuals that do not receive SNAP benefits or receive SNAP benefits under \$100 each month for the entire household.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides 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 30 days. Must be planning to attend an Illinois post-secondary institution as a full-time or part-time student in the fall.

Services Provided:

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

SKILLS TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

Purpose of Program:

Provides funding towards a GED and certification to obtain employment and offers necessary supplies to attend classes regularly or begin employment with a living wage or higher.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will provide funding towards either a GED or certification/license to obtain employment and support by offering to fund child care (one voucher a month), gas vouchers (one voucher a month), and a one-time voucher to purchase necessary supplies to begin employment.

TRANSPORTATION 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 30 days.

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance who currently work at least 30 hours a week or more, have been employed for at least 90 days with their current employer, are 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), and purchase one month of bus passes (maximum of \$250).

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Purpose of Program:

Provides eligible families with school supplies and opportunities for youth to participate in community, school, and family activities to help with their growth, knowledge, and self-confidence to become more engaged in life skill building.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

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

Services Provided:

The program will provide financial assistance, 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. In addition, additional vouchers may be issued to provide youth with funds to participate in community, school, and family wellness activities that may include sports, camps, arts, music, wellness, etc., up to \$300.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

AGENCY RENTAL HOUSING

Purpose of Program:

To provide decent, safe, and affordable housing to customers with lower incomes.

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 Wyandot. There is a waiting list, but customers are welcome to fill out an application to get on the list anytime. Referrals to other programs which may be helpful are also made.

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

Purpose of Program:

Assist homeless individuals and families in attaining permanent 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.

DHS HOMELESS PREVENTION

Purpose of Program:

Assist individuals and families with one-time assistance with deposit, rent, or mortgage to prevent homelessness.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Income must be under 200% of federal poverty guidelines, provide a proven financial crisis within the last 90 days; affordable rent; 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.

DHS Rapid Re-Housing Program

Purpose of Program:

Assist homeless individuals and families in attaining permanent housing while receiving supportive services.

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, supportive services, and case management to homeless individuals to obtain and sustain housing.

DHS 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 and older. The Foster Grandparents program offers supportive person-to-person services to at-risk children with exceptional needs in reading, math, spelling, art, and other constructive projects.

Income/Eligibility Criteria:

Foster Grandparents must be 55 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 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 summer programs 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 public and private schools, preschools, Head Start programs, and daycare facilities. Participants receive a tax-free stipend of \$4.00 per hour, transportation or reimbursement, meals during service time, fifteen 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 program's 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, Stark, 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 SNAP, 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 currently located in Ottawa, Sterling, and Streator and are funded with a combination of Early Head Start and Illinois Child Care subsidy funding. In addition, the program has written and is awaiting approval to expand Early Head Start center-based services in the LaSalle/Peru and Wyoming communities. 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, dental, 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 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 (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 SNAP, 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 annually during the school year or from August through May. 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 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 most (but not all) classes.

Other Information:

All program classrooms are licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services. Classrooms are staffed with qualified Early Childhood Educators. In addition, 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 (or until funds are exhausted)

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 applicant's name 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. 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 apply.

AMEREN SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAM – Offers a benefit amount of no more than \$350.

NICOR – provides a one-time grant up to \$350 for households at or below 350% poverty level within the last 30 days. Customers with non-heat accounts are eligible.

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, and 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 at least 15 years before applying for assistance again, regardless of what funding source was used on your home.