

ACSET's Community Action Agency &  
Kent County's Community Development  
Department/Housing Commission

A Potential Opportunity for our Community

# A Potential Opportunity for our Community – The Why

1. Improve Services to Clients – Both organizations have limited one-stop services to clients. Areas for improvement include –
  - Complementary Home Rehabilitation and Weatherization Services
  - Improved Coordination of Services for Housing Choice Voucher Recipients with CAA Services
  - Meeting Client Needs across the County through Satellite Opportunities
2. Maintain Federal Funding – Both organizations are at risk of federal fund recapture, which would reduce available funds to support the poor in Kent County. Areas at risk include –
  - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
  - HOME Investment Opportunity (HOME)
  - Continuum of Care Grants (previously Shelter Plus Care)
  - Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
3. Regionalization Concerns – ACSET is the only Michigan Works! agency that operates a CAA, and that CAA only covers one county. Ensuring CAA funds stay in Kent County is a priority.
4. Administrative Realities– Federal funds require significant reporting requirements, but federal funds are not keeping pace with costs. Aligning necessary staff with funding is essential to ensure quality services to clients and meet federal requirements. The proposed model provides for cost allocation payments to Kent County, additional fiscal and CQI staff, as well as new case managers.

## A Potential Opportunity for our Community – Staffing

- Leadership – The proposed staffing model merges staff from both organizations with Susan Cervantes becoming the Director, Sherry Gillespie managing the CAA operations, and Darrell Singleton overseeing Community Development.
  
- Additional Staff – The proposed model includes:
  - 1.0 FTE – Dedicated Financial Analyst
  - 0.5 FTE – Continuous Quality Improvement Director
  - 1.5 FTE – Case Managers within the Housing Commission
  
- Housing Commission – The 1.5 additional FTE in the Housing Commission increases staffing from 2.5 FTE to 4.0 FTE. This will provide additional time for clients and create increased cross training opportunities for staff which will benefit clients.
  
- Home Repair/Weatherization – The current, part-time HQS inspector will become a full-time Weatherization Inspector I. HQS inspections will be shared between Home Repair and Weatherization staff that are all certified as Housing Quality Services inspectors.
  
- Total FTEs = 31.5

## A Potential Opportunity for our Community – Staffing

- Employment – ACSET and Kent County have several differences in staffing. This includes, but is not limited, to the following:
  - Kent County pays higher wages than ACSET.
  - Kent County participates in Social Security, while ACSET does not.
  - Kent County provides a defined benefit retirement (i.e. pension) with employee contributions, while ACSET only has a defined contribution program (i.e. government equivalent of a 401k).
  - ACSET provides more paid time off (vacation, sick, personal, holidays) than Kent County.
  - Kent County staff is represented by the UAW, while ACSET staff is represented by the SEIU.
  - ACSET and Kent County health insurance options are relatively equal.
- Staff Transitions – Kent County will provide ACSET staff with Kent County wage and employee benefits based on the ACSET/Kent County Human Resource staffing comparison. In general, ACSET staff will earn more money, but lose time off. The major caveat is that because of **ACSET's non-participation in Social Security**, the Social Security's 'windfall' provision may require certain ACSET to retire for financial reasons. The windfall provision ensures staff which have not participated in Social Security cannot take a job with an employer that provides Social Security benefits unless they work for a number of quarters. Staff will be represented by the UAW since they are Kent County employees.

## A Potential Opportunity for our Community – Budget

- Current Budgets – The CAA and Community Development budgets are approximately \$6 million each, for a combined budget of \$12 million.
- Budget Projections – The combined budget and staffing model demonstrates that over the next five years with current revenue sources and anticipated staff raises, the combined budget will:
  - Provide anticipated raises and still allow funding for necessary administrative costs (office, supplies, computers, conferences, etc.)
  - Ensure that current carry forward funds are available for use if need be
  - Provide full cost allocation payments each year for county overhead
  - Provide additional necessary support staff (i.e. a dedicated budget analyst and CQI analyst)

## A Potential Opportunity for our Community – Location

- Location– The proposed location for the combined Department will be in the CAA Suite at the Kent County Human Services Complex (121 Franklin SE) in Grand Rapids. Opportunities for satellite offices in northern Kent County can be considered as Kent County reviews programming options in Cedar Springs.
- Location Impact – The proposed location(s) benefit clients.
  - The Human Service Complex does not have metal detectors, which will provide easier service access for Housing Commission clients and Community Development guests.
  - The Human Service Complex has public health services available (WIC, Immunization, other) along with MDHHS services (State Emergency Relief/SER, Medicaid, Emergency Services, Family Independence Program/FIP, other) which occasionally may support the needs of Housing Commission clients.
  - Clients in northern Kent County will benefit if a satellite office is opened.

## A Potential Opportunity for our Community – Boards

- CAA Advisory Board – The Community Action Agency has a required, tri-partite advisory board with representatives from local government, agencies, and clients, which meets monthly. The Kent County Board of Commissioners has a robust appointment process with annual solicitation, commissioner interviews, and appointments. The advisory board would provide an important role to ensure quality services are provided that meet community need.
- Housing Commission – The Kent County Board of Commissioners appoints Housing Commission members through the appointment process. The Housing Commission approves budgets Housing Commission budgets, and works with the County to provide necessary administrative services.

## A Potential Opportunity for our Community – Opportunities

- Needs Assessment– The Community Action Agency regulations, Community Development Block Grant, and Affordable Care Act all require a community needs assessment. Considering the social determinants of health, there is a unique opportunity to align the assessments and services for Community Action Agency, Community Development and the Health Department. This provides an opportunity to impact community in a more strategic manner.
- Branding – The proposed merger allows for a new brand to emerge. Both organizations are not well known, and are occasionally viewed negatively. A merger allows for an intentional rebranding with community outreach and better messaging about the services provided.