



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Updates and Opportunities for Collaboration Office of Economic Opportunity

EAP Fall Training 2015
Jessica Rochester, MPH
August 13, 2015

Topics to cover

- Introduction to Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)
- City of Minneapolis
- Coordinated Oversight
- Economic Asset Enhancement and Use
 - FAIM
 - Financial Literacy
 - Tax Credits
 - Energy Efficiency



Introduction to OEO

- Located with the MN Department of Human Services
- Oversee funding for grants and programs:
 - Housing/Homeless Programs
 - SNAP Outreach and Nutrition Education
 - TEFAP and Food Shelves
 - Community Action
 - FAIM and Financial Literacy
- Community partnerships are vital – MinnCAP, grantees, other state agencies.



Introduction to OEO

■ Mission:

To be a voice for the poor within state government, and a partner with local community agencies to help families and individuals to become more self-sufficient and build strong communities.

■ Guiding Principles for Partnership:

- Mutual Respect.
- Open Communication.
- Joint problem-solving.
- Empowerment through diversity.



City of Minneapolis

- DHS and Commerce terminated Community Action of Minneapolis' contracts on September 24, 2015
- Agency appealed
- Agency placed into receivership
- Agency dropped appeal in May 2015



City of Minneapolis

- Designation and Recognition process established in State Community Action statute and rules.
- City of Minneapolis released an RFQ on June 22nd entities seeking the City's designation to be the CAA serving Minneapolis.
- RFQs are due on August 11th.
- A Public hearing will be held – notice posted in Star Tribune and mailed to past CA Minneapolis clients.
- City will designate an agency – Fall 2015.
- Department of Human Services reviews materials and recognizes the City's designation.



Coordination of Oversight

- Different funders and different grant requirements – of OEO & Commerce AND of our grantees.
- Opportunity for coordination – shared grantees and best practices. . .
- Potential joint training for monitors on shared responsibilities.
- Exploring coordinated efforts around monitoring.
- Communicating about observed grantee strengths and concerns.



Economic Asset Enhancement and Use: FAIM

- **Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM) is a *matched savings* project to help Minnesota low-wage earners *build assets* through:**
 - purchase of a home
 - pursuit of a higher education
 - launching of a small business.
- Participants deposit \$40 of earned income into a savings accounts.
- Savers participate in an asset specific training and general financial literacy classes.
- Savings are ***matched 3:1*** when the participant has met the program requirements
- Participants can save up to \$960 over two years and leverage \$2,880 accruing a total of \$3,840 towards their goal.



Economic Asset Enhancement and Use: FAIM

- Over the last 10 years, FAIM account holders earned and deposited over \$2.46 million into local savings accounts.
- Over 1,675 assets have been acquired: 28% home purchases, 39% capitalized businesses, and 33% higher education degrees.
- Over 2,975 participants completed 12 hours of financial education, increasing the financial fitness of Minnesotans working to leave poverty permanently.



Economic Asset Enhancement and Use: Financial Education

- Does your agency offer FAIM?
 - Visit minnesotafaim.com to see a list of agencies that do.
- Resources for providers
 - HelpMNSave – website, e-newsletter – sign up via link on bookmark
 - Four Cornerstones trainings – train the trainer
 - Upcoming training on October 27th and 28th
 - Curriculum topics:
 - Budgeting to create savings
 - Debt reduction and asset building
 - Building a good credit rating
 - Consumer protection and financial institutions.



Economic Asset Enhancement and Use: Tax Credits

- Helping customers access the Earned Income Tax Credit – largely through VITA and similar programs.
- Outcomes in 2014:
 - 14,502 individuals participated in CAA tax preparation programs and qualified for Federal or State Tax Credits.
 - \$15,661,557 – amount of tax credit returned to low-income CAA clients.



Economic Asset Enhancement and Use

- Assurance 16 – Providers can spend funds (no more than 5% of their LIHEAP funds) on services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance, including needs assessment, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors).
- Conversation – what A16 programs are you operating this cycle?
- **Examples:**
 - Budget counseling
 - Energy conservation education
 - Facilitation of household negotiations for budget payments
 - Advocacy with fuel suppliers on behalf of households
 - Household energy assessments
 - Referrals
 - Case management
 - Public relations and outreach



Questions & Discussion

- How are you connecting the dots for your clients?



Thank you!

Contact me if you have follow up questions or ideas:

Jessica Rochester, MPH

Office of Economic Opportunity

Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

651-431-3819

jessica.rochester@state.mn.us

