

**Community Action Organization
2003-2005 Community Development Block Grant Needs Assessment**

Project	Need Statement
<p>Support for a Child Development facility in southeast Washington County. This facility would house multiple services including Head Start, child care and a family resource center.</p>	<p>Community Action Organization currently provides child development services including Head Start, Before and After School Child Care and family support to over 600 families. These services are provided in a variety of settings including elementary schools and the Hillsboro Child Development Center. Due to the growing need for full-time child care, we see the need for a Head Start child development center in the south county area. The part-day Head Start preschool programs in Washington County are located in elementary schools; however, schools are not appropriate facilities for full-time child care for children birth to five. In fact, school buildings do not meet child care licensing standards. This facility would provide multiple services including Head Start, child care, a family resource center and meeting and training areas. Approximately 60 children between the ages of 0 and 5 would receive care and education in this facility. The need for child care, neighborhood facilities and specifically a facility in the Southeastern County has been identified in previous CDBG Plans.</p>
<p>Assure low income families access to affordable quality child care through support of programs which allow parents to access child care on a sliding fee scale, or provide child care scholarships for low income families.</p>	<p>The need for affordable quality child care addresses two community conditions. First, national studies have indicated that only 26% of child care sites provide quality care. Over 63% of children in Washington County spend time in child care. Thus, it is estimated that up to 30,000 Washington County children may be spending time in substandard child care settings. Poor quality child care has been shown to have a negative impact on children's social development, emotional development and school readiness. Lack of quality child care puts stress on the entire family and may lead to parents increasing their use of sick time and unpaid leave, and decrease their productivity while at work. Secondly, even when quality child care is available, it is often priced beyond the reach of low income families. The cost of child care in Washington County can be as high as \$3.80 per hour. Some families may receive assistance through the Employment Related Day Care program. However, even these families must pay high co-pays and often still find the cost of child care overly burdensome. Indeed, "increasing our capacity to support quality child care for our children, and assisting families to find and pay for quality care," has been identified as a priority in the recently completed Washington County Comprehensive Community Plan for Children and Families. Ensuring enriching, culturally sensitive and bilingual child care are also objectives of the 2000-2003 Washington County CDBG Plan. Thus, support for programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start and A Kid's Domain, which provide high quality child care for low income families, either through subsidies or scholarships, is a significant community need.</p>
<p>Provide support and scholarships to enable low income child care providers in Washington County to access/attend training.</p>	<p>The impact of quality child care on children's emotional, social and cognitive development has been well documented. However, studies indicate that only 26% of child care sites provide high quality, developmentally appropriate care. Provider/teacher training has been shown to be the strongest predictor of quality care. The state of Oregon has recognized the importance of training for child care providers and now mandates that Registered family child care providers and teachers in child care centers receive ongoing training. However, the abysmally low wages, which are predominant in child care, make even nominal training fees prohibitive for many providers. In addition to improving the quality of care, training elicits a sense of professionalism in providers/teachers. This, in turn, helps to reduce turnover and stabilize the child care workforce. The desire for a stable population of well trained child care providers in Washington County is a priority. "Stabilization of new and existing child care providers" is an ongoing strategy of the Washington County Commission on Children and Families. "Increasing our capacity to support quality child care for our children, and assisting families to find and pay for quality care," has been identified as a priority in the recently completed Washington County Comprehensive Community Plan for Children and Families. Enabling low income</p>

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	child care providers to obtain training that will improve the quality of care for children was an objective of the 2000 Plan.
Provide educational support in multiple subjects including income management, literacy and parenting, for low income families in Washington County.	Low income families may face multiple barriers in becoming self-sufficient. Frequently, lack of education is foremost among these. Adults who are illiterate, or lack a basic education often have difficulty finding employment. These same families also face the challenges of parenting. Low income parents wishing to support their children in school may become frustrated due to their own lack of formal education. Lack of parenting skills can lead to abuse, neglect and other family dysfunction. Education can mitigate these issues and prevent them from continuing into future generations. Assisting low income people through the provision of literacy services, parenting education and life skills were objectives of the 2000-2003 CDBG Plan.
Assure access to health care services (including health, dental and mental health care) for low income families in Washington County.	Many low income families in Washington County do not have access to adequate health care services. Only 21% of the 35,000 clients who received services from Community Action Organization last year reported that they have health insurance. Families without insurance have few or no health care options. Currently, uninsured persons needing treatment for acute illness can attend the Essential Health Clinic on Thursday evenings. However, there is no mechanism in place for addressing ongoing health conditions, or urgent health needs that do not happen to occur on Thursday evenings. Furthermore, many people who are insured through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) are not able to access care because of the fluctuation/decrease in health care providers who accept the OHP Open Card. Poverty in Washington County is increasing, as is the cost of health care. The combination of these two conditions will most certainly result in an increasing need for health care services for low income families. "Increasing the availability of health care for all Washington County residents and, in particular, lower income and uninsured children and families," has been identified as a priority in the recently completed Washington County Comprehensive Community Plan for Children and Families.
Support for non-profit organizations to pay for translation and interpretation services.	Ensuring that language is not a barrier to needed services was identified as an objective in the 2000-2003 CDBG Plan. Washington County is becoming increasingly diverse. In the past decade, the Latino population has grown by 245% and the Southeast Asian population by 150%. While every effort is made to hire staff that are bilingual and bicultural, non-profit agencies frequently need outside assistance for translation and interpretation. These services can be costly, but are necessary to ensure that all persons who need assistance are able to obtain it. Several agencies have purchased radio transmission equipment to support live simultaneous interpreting at public meetings. The equipment is expensive (approximately \$5,000), however, and smaller agencies often need to borrow it. Live interpreters charge a basic rate of \$65 per hour. In an effort to provide interpreting for parent meetings, the Head Start program found it needed an annual budget in excess of \$20,000 in addition to the equipment.
Support to continue/expand services that provide prenatal and parenting support to low income women in Washington	Adequate prenatal care--beginning in the first trimester-- has been identified as a basic need for all pregnant women in Oregon. Yet many Oregon women go through pregnancy without adequate care. Low-income and uninsured women are much less likely to receive adequate prenatal care. In 1996, approximately 26% of all births in Washington County were to low-income women. In this same year, 23% of low-income mothers did not enter prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy. When compared with commercially insured women, low-income women were nearly four times more likely to enter care late in pregnancy (23% compared to 6%). Oregon's Benchmark for early prenatal care rests at 95%. Clearly, we are far from this goal for low-income

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Support for the weatherization of homes occupied by low income persons.	Low and moderate income families are only half as likely as higher income families to live in weatherized dwellings. It is estimated that low income households in Oregon pay about 14% of their gross income for home energy costs. Energy rates increased by 30% for many residents of Washington County. This makes the need for energy conservation especially urgent, particularly for elderly or disabled persons who are likely to be on a fixed income. Households who are faced with high heating bills are often forced to choose between heat and other basic needs. The 2000-2003 Washington County Community Development Block Grant Plan identified the need to improve the energy efficiency of housing occupied by low income residents.
Support for energy education and low cost weatherization materials for low income households.	The cost of energy has increased dramatically during the past year. Under normal conditions, low income families frequently find it difficult to pay high heating bills and are often forced to choose between heat and other basic needs. The increase in energy costs will increase the number of families who face this crisis. Energy conservation education, combined with low cost weatherization materials can result in energy savings of up to 25%. The need to improve the energy efficiency of housing occupied by low and moderate income families was noted in the 2000-2003 CDBG plan.
Acquisition or development of a Homeless Management Information System that will meet the requirements of the HUD mandate.	The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been directed by Congress to work with local jurisdictions to collect an array of data on homelessness. Information to be collected includes unduplicated counts, use of services and the effectiveness of local homeless assistance systems. To this end, HUD has mandated that jurisdictions implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by 2004. HUD has also made certain activities which support the implementation of an HMIS allowable expenses under several grants, including CDBG. The congressional direction applies to all homeless assistance programs, not only those which receive HUD funding. Thus, the implementation of an HMIS has potential to affect all homeless persons in Washington County. According to the One Night Shelter Count conducted on March 27, 2001, there are 150 families in Washington county experiencing homelessness on any given night. The implementation of an HMIS will provide information about this population, which can be used to improve services.
Support for the maintenance and expansion of the web-based Information & Referral (I&R) system	Access to information is the foundation of self-sufficiency. Most social service agencies throughout the county provide information and referrals in one form or another. It is believed that the web-based FIND system, which is accurate, centralized and makes maximum use of available technology, is the most efficient and effective way to deliver Information and Referral services. Community Action Organization maintains the FIND database and web site. The web site is available to all social service providers, and to individuals via the Internet, or their local library. This allows low-income people in Washington County,

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<p>Support for the development/acquisition of a multi-service facility in the Southeast County area.</p>	<p>"prevent homelessness through assisting people in retaining their housing".</p> <p>The need for a multi-purpose service center serving the needs of low income people in Southeast Washington County has been noted in previous CDBG Plans. Community Action Organization currently operates a satellite center, "Neighborshare", in Tigard. During FY 2000-01, the Neighborshare office responded to 4,151 requests for assistance. A variety of services were provided including energy assistance, rent assistance, food box intake, information and referral, and other emergency assistance. While many of these services are available at other locations within the county, low income families often lack transportation. Therefore, it is crucial that services be available in all localities. Currently, the Neighborshare office is located in a building owned by the City of Tigard. However, this location may not be available in the future. Therefore, Community Action Organization recognizes the need for a facility to house our services, and possibly other social service agencies in southeast Washington County.</p>
<p>Support for the modernization of the Hillsboro Family Shelter. This includes the conversion of a wheelchair accessible room, which is currently used as an office, into a bedroom.</p>	<p>The Hillsboro Family Shelter is located in a historically significant building in downtown Hillsboro and provides shelter for approximately 70 homeless families per year. The building itself is wheelchair accessible; however, the residential rooms are not. There is also a sever shortage of office space. In addition to the Resident Assistants who operate the shelter, it also houses 5-7 other staff members. This includes case managers for the shelter and the long term housing stabilization program, the Housing Services Coordinator and staff for the Homeless Children's Program. We would like to add an additional building on the shelter property. This building would be used for offices and meeting space for Homeless and Housing Services staff. Thus, a room in the shelter, which is currently used as an office, could be converted into a bedroom. The room in question is located on the first floor of the shelter and is wheelchair accessible. The 2000-2003 CDBG Plan listed improving existing homeless shelters, and ensuring that homeless shelters are fully accessible to people with disabilities, as objectives.</p>
<p>Support for locating and accessing available housing opportunities for low income families.</p>	<p>The need for housing for low income families has been identified by case workers in many programs. There is a need for one person to coordinate information on available housing. All case managers would contact this person to locate housing opportunities for their clients. Having a single point where housing information is disseminated and coordinated would increase efficiency and reduce duplication of effort. Only this one person would need to track available units. Case managers would be able to obtain information about more housing resources in less time. This position would require a bilingual person and their services could be available to any agency that provides case management. This would address the need to "assist households transitioning out of homelessness", as identified in the 2000-2003 CDBG Plan.</p>

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<p>Support to address the issues of employment, training and addiction among homeless persons.</p>	<p>Homeless families who seek stable housing must overcome a variety of obstacles. Employment and addiction have surfaced as particularly prevalent issues among homeless people in Washington County. Loss of employment is the factor most commonly cited by homeless persons at the Hillsboro Family Shelter as the cause of their homelessness. Oregon currently has the highest unemployment rate in the country. Thus, homeless persons, who may have few skills and little formal education, find themselves in a highly competitive job market. Services are needed to help these homeless individuals obtain employment so that they can become self-sufficient. Many homeless persons also face problems of addiction. In addition to the case management received by families staying in shelter, services are needed that specifically address the complicated issues of addiction. Both the needs for employment training and substance abuse services are noted in the 2000-2003 plan. Increasing the availability of training and substance abuse treatment were also both noted in the Comprehensive Plan developed by the Washington County Commission on Children and Families. Services developed for the Hillsboro shelter could also be made available to residents of other area homeless shelters.</p>
<p>Support for services to meet the needs of homeless children and their families. Services to include access to Head Start, after school and summer activities, academic support and child care.</p>	<p>Families in the homeless shelters and transitional housing programs in Washington County live in poverty and are searching for basic supports to help them step up and out of poverty. When families arrive on our doorsteps we take them as they are, with or without supports, with each family being in various stages of transition. The face of poverty is becoming younger with 9.7% of Washington County children living in poverty. When families become homeless children face the loss of not only shelter, but also stability and access to the experiences which will help them learn to get along with others, succeed in school and gain the skills that will make them into a successful adult. Services to homeless children help to mitigate the effects of homeless by working to ensure that children experiencing homelessness have pro-social experiences and academic support. Access to quality child care is also essential so that families can find or maintain employment, locate housing, and apply for DHS assistance. The need for high quality child care for children and support services for sheltered families have been identified past CDBG plans.</p>