

# Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.

## 2012 Annual Report

### A Letter From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Sequester. It is the new buzzword. It is the new reality for everyone.

Sequester became a part of our vocabulary when Congress and the federal administration failed to come to terms on the very important matter of the federal budget. For SMOC and everyone else, sequester means budget reductions. For SMOC specifically, those budget reductions result in the loss of jobs. More critically, sequester cuts result in fewer children served by Head Start, fewer households receiving help paying their fuel bills and fewer homes receiving energy conservation measures. Sequester cuts mean less assistance for homeless or near homeless households. Sequester results in us turning people away who are in need of assistance.

The new reality is that sequester has further limited available resources for everyone. We acknowledge the need for the state and federal government to take measures necessary to balance their budgets. At the same time, we recognize the impact sequester has on those families and individuals who are already in crisis. We hope that in any effort by our government to fix these budget problems, they remember the hardship already experienced by our less fortunate neighbors, and consider that reality when making their decisions.

The pages of this Annual Report reflect the efforts of Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council's board, staff and volunteers, as we provide opportunity, assistance and hope to those who need it the most. We thank you for your continued support of our efforts

Neal W. Steffl

Executive Director

### Positive Outcomes for Our People and Communities

Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc. (SMOC) is a private non-profit, 501(c)3 Community Action Agency. SMOC was incorporated in July 1965 to assist and serve the needs of low-income persons in Southwestern Minnesota, specifically in the counties of Nobles, Rock, Murray, and Pipestone. Although these counties receive most of our attention, SMOC does provide specific program offerings in as few as one, and in as many as fourteen counties.

The mission of SMOC is "Strengthening our communities and people through opportunities and service." To accomplish this mission, SMOC currently employs approximately 110 full and part-time staff, that deliver an array of programs over our service area. Each of these programs has stated goals and outcomes by which we measure our success. The setting of program goals and measurable outcomes is a requirement of most of our funding sources. The operations and policies guiding SMOC's actions are governed by a fifteen member Board of Directors. It is a tri-partite board comprised of one-third elected officials, one-third private sector representatives, and one third low-income or community representatives.

In addition to making a positive difference in the lives of disadvantaged citizens of Southwestern Minnesota, SMOC also contributes to the economic development of the region. Annually, SMOC makes payments of over \$5 million to contractors, vendors, partners, and agency employees. This money circulates throughout the area, thereby benefiting the entire economy of the region.

We are proud to share the following summary of outcomes we have provided in 2012.

## SMOC Expenditures ~ Fiscal Year End 2012

Federal/State Programs:	Funds:	%:	Includes:
Child Care	\$158,239	3.1	SWCCRR, Family U, SW Initiative Grant
Community Services	\$698,410	13.7	CSBG/MEOG/Transit/Family Connect/Homemakers/United Way
Energy Programs	\$1,130,854	22.2	EAP
Head Start	\$1,762,297	34.7	CACFP (Food Programs)
Health Program	\$508,111	10.0	Family Planning
Homeless & Shelter	\$68,667	1.4	Emergency Services: EFSP/THP/FHPAP
Housing Programs	\$116,776	2.3	MHFA/Small Cities
Job Training	\$311,527	6.1	SCSEP
WX Projects	\$329,478	6.5	DOE/EAP WX/Oil/Propane
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$5,084,359</b>	<b>100</b>	

### Community Development

- The **Energy Assistance Program (EAP)** assisted 2029 households with their energy bills. The average grant was \$419 per household.
- Fuel and electric vendors received a total of \$850,000.
- Crisis dollars helped 159 households avert fuel or electric disconnects with a total of \$62,123 in assistance.
- We assisted 49 people with employment training through our efforts in the **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** and paid \$189,923 in training wages. Thirty-seven local non-profit worksites were assigned workers that helped to enhance their services.
- Worksite supervisors in the six county area of Cottonwood, Jackson, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, and Rock donated their time valued at \$49,185 as in-kind dollars to assist in training the enrollees of SCSEP.
- We provided motel vouchers for 29 homeless individuals providing them with temporary shelter utilizing \$2,904 in Salvation Army funds.
- We provided \$16,777 in FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds in supplemental financial assistance to area food shelves that were having difficulty meeting needs through local contributions. These funds supplied the equivalent of 8,389 meals to hungry men, women and children.
- We assisted 29 households (81 individuals) with services that prevented them from becoming one of the growing homeless statistics utilizing **Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program** funds.
- We assisted six households (23 individuals) with reduced rental expenses which allowed them to live in quality, safe, affordable housing utilizing **Transitional Housing Program** funds.
- We provided \$26,263 to area landlords for rental assistance payments on behalf of persons experiencing homelessness or near homelessness utilizing Family Homeless Prevention Assistance, Transitional Housing, and Salvation Army and United Way funds.
- We have weatherized 14 homes in Nobles, Rock, Pipestone, and Murray counties and spent \$67,707 on independent contractors who purchased the materials from local businesses to complete the services through the **Weatherization Program**.
- We replaced and repaired furnaces and water heaters through the Energy Assistance Program and Weatherization Program for 71 homes, totaling \$87,590.
- The **Small Cities Development Program** had four grants in 2012 which served nine area communities: Worthington, Wilmont, Round Lake, Slayton, Hadley, Luverne, Hills, Pipestone and Jasper. This activity rehabbed 41 homes and generated \$885,463 that has been spent at local area businesses, helping the local economy.
- We also rehabilitated two additional homes in Nobles county and two in Rock County through the **MHFA Rehabilitation Loan Program**, which resulted in the expenditure of \$42,282 for Nobles and \$51,344 for Rock county area businesses.

## **Southwest Child Care Resource & Referral**

- SWCCRR serves the nine counties of Region 8: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, and Rock.
- Consultation, coaching, and technical assistance calls provided to 457 early childhood programs in Region 8: 13 Child Care Centers, 396 Family Child Care Providers, 31 Preschool Programs, and 5 School Age Care Programs.
- Family Friend and Neighbor Caregivers received health, safety, and child development information.
- 13 Child Care Center Directors received advocacy, training, grant, resource, policy, and support information.
- 36 newly licensed child care providers in Region 8 received individualized telephone consultation along with a resource packet including child development, business, and child care safety information.
- Community outreach opportunities were provided in each county by collaborating with partner organizations: public health, Lower Sioux Community, family services, Help Me Grow Committee, Early Childhood Initiative Coalitions, Early Childhood Family Education, Community Education, and Early Childhood Special Education.
- Child care assistance participants received informational packets containing health, safety, and child development information.
- SWCCRR staff are involved with 6 Early Childhood Initiative Coalitions throughout the nine counties to provide guidance and leadership regarding child care information and development.
- SWCCRR staff provided technical assistance and guidance to preschool, family child care providers and child care centers in Region 8 in preparation for a statewide quality rating system : Parent Aware.

## **Prairieland Transit System ~ Nobles County Heartland Express**

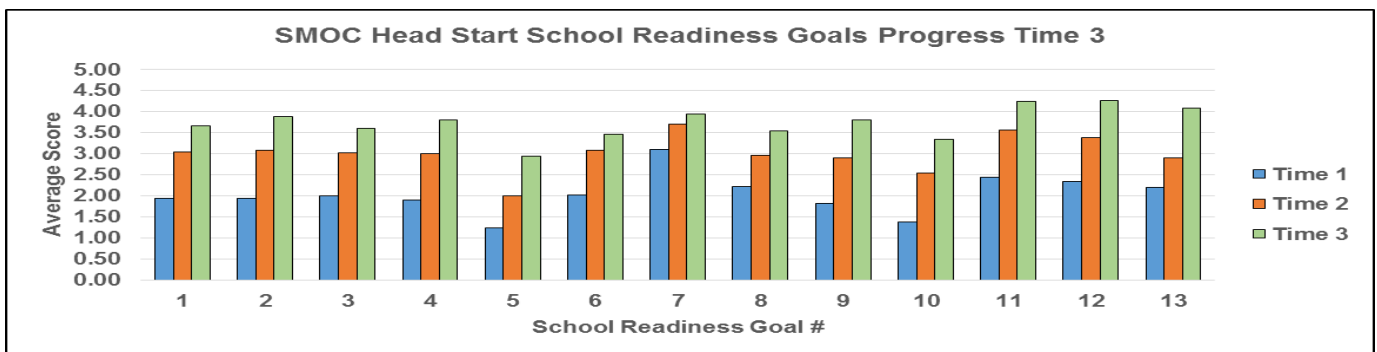
- Twenty routes are provided in Nobles County each week with two Nobles County Heartland Express buses.
- 3,927 rides were provided to residents of Nobles County with the Nobles County Heartland Express buses.
- Nobles County Heartland Express bus service is available to each of the fourteen communities in Nobles County five times each week.
- 4 senior citizens received transportation with a volunteer driver to allow them to participate in Senior Dining.
- 28,360 rides were provided at a reduced fare within the City of Worthington by the Worthington Taxi Service.
- Preschool programs in Worthington receive transportation for their students at a reduced rate.
- 11,115 hours of public transportation services were provided.
- 84,978 miles were driven by Nobles County Heartland Express buses, Worthington Taxi Service vehicles, and volunteer driver cars.

## **Family Planning**

- Provided exams and health related services to 586 clients.
- Provided services to 46 persons from communities of color.
- Provided services to 180 Hispanic clients.
- Provided interpretive services to 136 Limited English Proficient clients through the use of two bilingual Family Planning staff.
- Provided services to 24 male clients.
- Provided 462 STI testings.
- Provided Education and counseling to:
  - ~1454 one on one conference at the 5 clinic sites of Worthington, Marshall, Ortonville, Montevideo, and Redwood Falls.
  - ~469 students, middle school through college age in Marshall, Worthington, Slayton, Ortonville, Westbrook, Tracy, and Redwood Falls.
  - ~850 persons at Community Health Fairs and Special Community Events.
- Family Planning operates with a budget of \$451,920 and employs 4 staff members and 5 clinicians.

## Head Start

- Head Start received \$1,324,384 from federal and state funding to provide comprehensive child development services in Murray, Nobles, Pipestone and Rock Counties. A total of 192 children were served during the 2012-2013 school year.
- Non Federal In-Kind donations totaled \$413,213 for the 2012 fiscal year; this exceeded the \$272,993 required amount and documents community support for our program.
- New SMOC Head Start Staff include: Lori Gunnink, Stacy Klinkner, Joan Lupkes and Jennifer Cattnach.
- Our Self-Assessment was conducted in January and February. Staff, Board and Policy Council Members, community representatives and parents participated in the process. The current Monitoring Protocol was used, and there were no non compliances in any program areas, and we also developed an Improvement Plan.
- Head Start's 2012 Community Assessment received the SMOC Board and Policy Council Approvals.
- A total of 480 quality books were purchased and given to Head Start children for the cost of shipping at \$1.00 each.
- Each classroom (combination classrooms and home-based classrooms) held Family Nights for parents, Head Start children and their siblings. These events encourage and promote Parent Engagement within our program. The Mental Health Family Night gives parents the opportunity to have their questions answered and concerns addressed by a mental health professional, and Nutrition Nights focus on healthy food choices and obesity prevention.
- All Head Start buses passed the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation Bus Inspections complying with all requirements. Children's safety is our top priority.
- For Mental Health Services we contracted with Greater MN Family Services. This allowed us 416 hours of Social Emotional Health support for children, & families. The consultants also observed classroom settings, making recommendations for improved practices.
- Maria Olga Aguilar & Maria Jimenez, two bilingual Aides earned their Child Development Associate Credential.
- During the 2012-2013 school year, 95% of children in Head Start had a physical examinations, and 94% had dental examinations.
- School Readiness Goals were developed to ensure that children in SMOC Head Start will be ready for kindergarten. These goals align with the Head Start Early Child Development and Early Learning Framework and the MN Early Indicators of Progress. Children's progress is monitored throughout the year, and program-wide data is analyzed three times per year. We also engage parents to help their children learn the skills they will need for school and for life.



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