

# 2022-2023 Annual Report

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# Table of Contents

**A Message from the Executive Director**

**Meet Our Team**

**Our Mission**

**Financial Impact**

**Services by the Numbers**

**Staffing Challenges & Opportunities**

**Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

**Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2**

**Transition to a 4-Day Work Week**

**Community Engagement, Partnership, & Volunteerism**

**How You Can Get Involved**

## A Message from the Executive Director

We are pleased to present the Schuylkill Community Action Annual Report for the fiscal year 2022-2023. This year has been marked by significant advancements and impactful initiatives aimed at fostering community well-being and resilience. Among our key achievements, we proudly announce the creation of the Food Network Assistant position, a vital role that has greatly enhanced the management and efficiency of the Schuylkill Food Network. This addition has allowed us to streamline operations, ensuring that our food distribution services reach more families in need with increased effectiveness and timeliness.

In our ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we established the DEI Committee, which is dedicated to driving integration and promoting inclusive practices throughout Schuylkill County. This committee's efforts are crucial as we strive to create a more welcoming and supportive community for all residents. Additionally, we celebrate the professional growth of our team, with four staff members successfully completing the Schuylkill Leadership Program. Their enhanced leadership skills and knowledge will undoubtedly contribute to the continued success and innovation of our programs.

This report includes detailed program data and fiscal information from the past year, highlighting our strategic initiatives and financial stewardship. We are confident that these insights will reflect our dedication to improving the lives of those we serve and our commitment to transparency and accountability. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to build a stronger, more inclusive Schuylkill County.

“This year has been marked by significant advancements and impactful initiatives aimed at fostering community well-being and resilience.”



# Meet Our Team

## Administrative Staff



### **ANDREA SLOTTERBACK**

Director of Housing



### **DAVID YOUNG**

Executive Director



### **ERIN MULDOWNEY**

Administrative Assistant



### **JENNIFER SLIFKA**

Director of Program Services



### **KATHRYN SPOFFORD**

Director of Planning



### **RICHARD BIGG**

Director of Case Management



### **TERRY SADUSKY**

Director of Weatherization



### **THERESA YURKONIS**

Director of Fiscal Operations

## Board of Directors

### **PRIVATE SECTOR**

Bryan Geiger

John Consugar

John F. Patton

Norm Zwolenik - **Board Vice President**

Reginald Edwards

Sarah Donohue - **Board President**

Trudy Umholtz

### **PUBLIC SECTOR**

Chairman Commissioner Barron Hetherington

Rep: Paul Buber

Commissioner Gary Hess

Rep: Paul Straka

Commissioner Larry Padora

Rep: Ron Zimmerman

Dan Lynch - Mahanoy Area School District

Rep: Karen Yedsena

Mayor Dave Clews

Rep: Mary Ann Dragna - **Board Secretary**

Senator David Argall

Rep: MaryBeth Dougherty

Sheriff Joseph Groody

Rep: Brian Tobin

### **LOW-INCOME SECTOR**

Amy Wahalec

Alternate: Sean Haldeman

Deanna Mease

Alternate: Jody Dunnigan

Jeanette Triano Sinn

Alternate: Heather Boher

Lt. Betty Ellen Barrett

Alternate: Mary Metzger

Maria Doyle - **Board Treasurer**

Shirley German

Alternate: Verna Ebling



## Our Mission

At Schuylkill Community Action (SCA), our mission is simple yet profound: **to focus all available resources on low-income Schuylkill County residents, empowering them to achieve self-sufficiency.** Since our establishment as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1965, we have remained dedicated to this mission.

Our commitment centers on providing essential resources and support to individuals and families facing economic challenges in Schuylkill County. By coordinating our efforts, we aim to address immediate needs while also creating opportunities for long-term stability and independence.

At the core of our mission is the belief that every person deserves access to adequate, affordable housing. By providing housing assistance and support services, we help

individuals and families secure stable living arrangements, laying the foundation for a brighter future.

Through a range of programs and services tailored to the unique needs of our community, we strive to break the cycle of poverty and empower individuals to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency. While our services may evolve over time, our commitment to serving the most vulnerable members of our community remains unwavering.

As we move forward, we will continue to focus on our core mission, adapting and expanding our efforts to meet the changing needs of our community. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient Schuylkill County where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

## Poverty in Schuylkill County

According to the American Community Survey One-Year Estimates for 2022, the following is true about poverty in Schuylkill County:

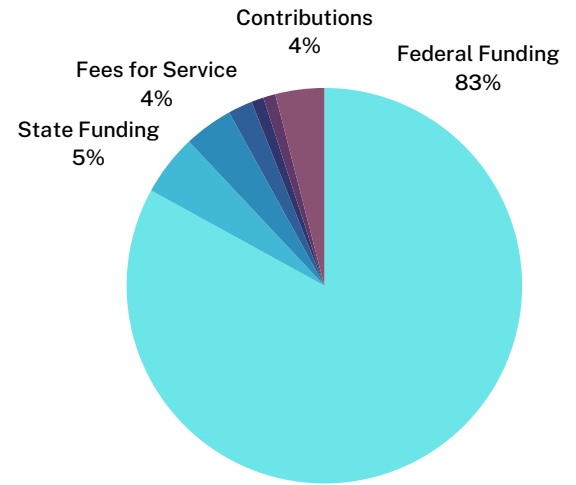
- Approximately **15,921** or **11.8%** of residents live below the poverty level.
- Approximately **4,411** individuals under the age of 18 live in poverty. This represents **16%** of all residents under the age or 18.
- Approximately **17.8%** of households receive food stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) payments.
  - **55.9%** of those households contain one or more people with a disability.
  - **82.9%** of those households have had at least one worker within the past 12 months, **36.5%** have had two or more.
- The unemployment rate in the county is **4.9%** compared to **4.3%** rate nationally.
  - For those living below the poverty level, there is a **20.8%** unemployment rate.
- Despite being employed in some capacity during the past 12 months, approximately **3,948** residents, 16 or older, live in poverty.
- Approximately **11.5%** of residents who are grandparents living below the poverty level are raising their grandchildren.
- Approximately **28.4%** of renter occupied households and **4.1%** of owner occupied households are living below the poverty level.

# Financial Impact

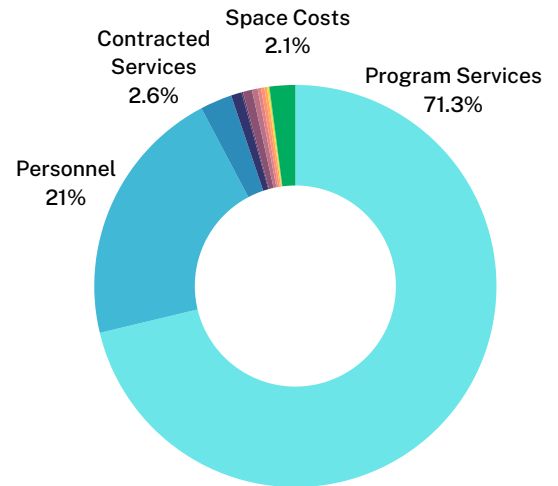
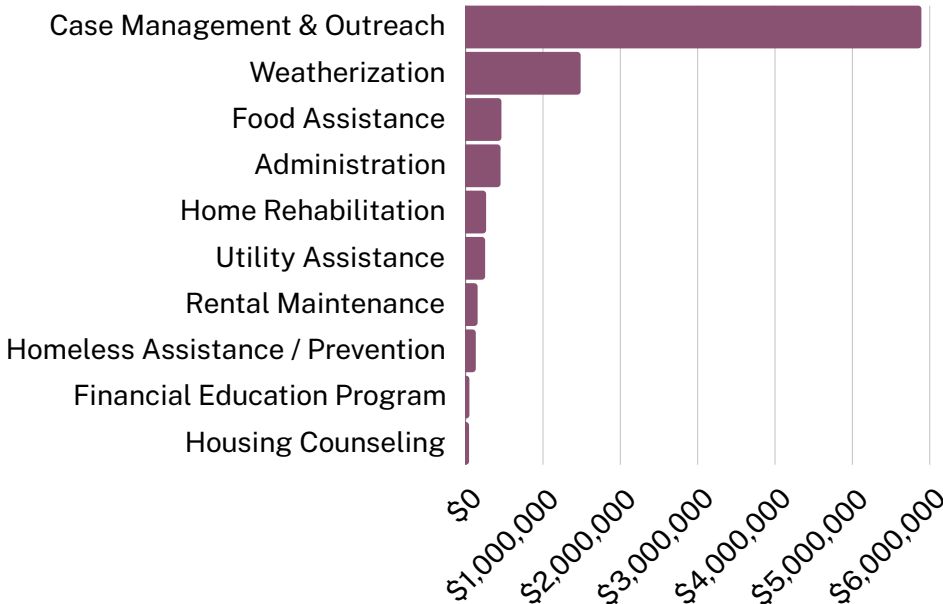
## Statement of Activities for fiscal year ending 6/30/2023

**\$9,220,364** Total Revenues

Federal Funding	\$7,609,808
State Funding	\$501,809
Fees for Service	\$355,580
Contributions	\$344,867
Local Funding	\$219,990
Rental Income, Interest, Misc.	\$127,584
Administration	\$60,726



**\$9,223,648** Total Expenditures

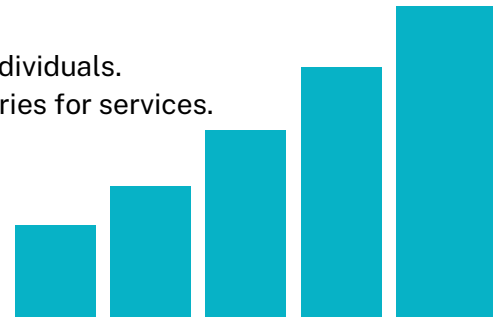


**71.3%** of total expenditures went towards Direct Program Services.

### SERVICE COUNT 2022-2023

SCA served an unduplicated total of **9,498** households and **23,899** individuals.

SCA responded to **20,350** telephone inquiries and **1,268** walk-in inquiries for services.



# Services by the Numbers

## Housing Services

**10 households** received total home rehabilitation through Owner-Occupied Home Rehabilitation Programs

**14 homeless individuals**, including **6 children**, obtained permanent housing through the Rapid Rehousing Program

**22 households** containing **58 individuals** resided in SCA's rent-restricted rental units

**15 households** were able to avoid losing their homes through mortgage assistance and foreclosure diversion programs

**2 households** received home repairs that allowed them to receive weatherization services through the Weatherization Deferral Program

**8 homes** of seniors and/or individuals with a disability received repairs to major systems and/or increased accessibility

## Weatherization Services

**30 households** received weatherization services, reducing their energy burden

**313 households** received repairs to failing major heating or cooling systems (or AC window units and fans) through LIHEAP Crisis and LIHEAP Cooling Programs

**44 households** received routine maintenance to their heating systems through the Clean and Tune Program

## Self-Sufficiency Programs

**4,745 nights** of transitional shelter were provided to **28 households** containing a total of **38 individuals** through the Bridge House Program

**174 households** received financial education coaching

**10 individuals** graduated from the Bridge House Program and obtained permanent housing with the Pottsville Housing Authority



## Outreach Services

**11 households** benefitted from ongoing support through Bridge House's aftercare program, Project Care

**432 low-income pre-school children** received financial education lessons across 7 Child Development locations

**2,446 individuals** benefitted from SCA related services through our outreach office located in Tamaqua

# Services by the Numbers

## Continued

### Nutrition Services

Pantry participants accessed local food pantries **16,666 times**, receiving an estimated **33,332 boxes of food**

**991,220 pounds of food** at an estimated value of **\$1,785,737** were provided to Schuylkill County residents

**1,850 households** containing **4,123 individuals** received food from their local food pantry

**172 pantry distributions** were held during the 2022-2023 fiscal year with the help of over **400 volunteers**



### Emergency Services

**2,786 individuals** including **1,087 children** avoided eviction through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program

**268 households** were able to purchase a range of essentials such as state ID's and work clothing through the Emergency Fund and Anne's Fund

**99 households** received emergency food through emergency food pantry efforts feeding **254 individuals**

**104 homeless households** received a total of 352 nights of emergency shelter utilizing hotel/motel vouchers

### Utility Services

**6,457 PPL customers** received utility assistance benefitting **17,269 household members**

**212 UGI customers** received utility assistance benefitting **586 household members**

**157 households** received utility assistance through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program benefitting **406 household members**

### Brighter Holiday Project

**\$6,300** was donated by local businesses and individuals to provide holiday gifts to families in need

**15 households** received holiday gifts and clothing for their combined **40 children** along with a festive meal for the entire family

## Staffing: Navigating Challenges and Seizing Opportunities

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, we experienced significant changes in our staffing dynamics, with both successes and challenges shaping our agency's operations.

One notable success was the addition of the Food Network Assistant Coordinator in February 2023. This new position marked a significant milestone for us, enhancing our capacity to collect and distribute donated food. The addition of the Assistant Coordinator allows us to expand our outreach efforts and increase our impact on the community. With their support, we are better equipped to ensure that no one in Schuylkill County goes hungry.



However, staffing challenges were encountered in several other departments, including Bridge House, the Housing Department, and the Weatherization Department. At Bridge House, we faced difficulties in staffing part-time positions that required evening, overnight, and weekend shifts. This led to recruitment obstacles and resulted in vacancies throughout the year.

In the Housing Department, turnover among HUD-certified housing counselors required extensive retraining efforts. Additionally, contractor shortages impacted home rehabilitation projects, affecting service delivery. Similarly, the Weatherization Department operated with a smaller team than in previous years, with only one or two crews at a time compared to up to five crews in the past. Despite having fewer team members, they were able to maintain productivity and keep up with the workload.



Despite these challenges, our agency staff demonstrated resilience and dedication, ensuring the continuity of our services. We remained committed to our mission of serving the community, adapting to the circumstances and finding solutions to overcome obstacles.

Moving forward, we aim to address these challenges through targeted recruitment efforts and professional development initiatives. By strengthening our workforce and enhancing our operations, we are better positioned to continue serving the needs of Schuylkill County effectively.



# Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



During the fiscal year 2022-2023, we achieved a significant milestone with the establishment of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. This initiative, driven by responsible and informed leadership, represented a pivotal step towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable organizational culture. Comprised of Schuylkill Community Action (SCA) staff from all levels and departments, the DEI Committee brought together diverse experiences and perspectives, ensuring that the voices of all employees were heard and valued.

Together, the committee embarked on the creation of a foundational DEI Policy Statement, outlining our unwavering commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion across all aspects of operations. This statement served as a guiding document for subsequent efforts, providing a clear direction for the development of a comprehensive DEI Policy for our organization.

Under the guidance of leadership, the DEI Committee undertook a comprehensive

review of our organization's employee handbook. This involved analyzing existing policies and procedures through a DEI lens to identify areas where inclusivity and equity could be strengthened. While the handbook review process extended beyond the fiscal year, the completion of the DEI Statement marked a significant milestone in our agency's journey towards creating a more inclusive workplace environment.

Looking ahead, the DEI Committee remains committed to its mission, with several key initiatives on the horizon. These include finalizing the comprehensive DEI Policy, conducting introductory training sessions for all SCA staff members, and integrating DEI principles into strategic planning and program development efforts. By continuing to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion, we aim to not only cultivate a more inclusive workplace but also extend the benefits of DEI initiatives to the broader community we serve. This commitment reflects our proactive stance in fostering positive change and promoting social justice within Schuylkill County.



## **ERAP 2: Moving Forward with Service Enhancements**

As part of our ongoing commitment to serving low-income individuals and families effectively, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) at Schuylkill Community Action (SCA) has embarked on strategic modifications to promote long-term housing stability.

Recent observations have revealed a concerning trend: a significant number of participants exhaust eligible rent and financial assistance without achieving housing stability. This insight underscores the necessity to address underlying issues contributing to sustained housing instability, moving beyond immediate financial needs.

In response, ERAP has initiated several changes to enhance service delivery. Emphasizing housing stability counseling, we provide tools and guidance for enduring housing challenges. Our expanded scope now prioritizes individuals facing eviction, intervening early to prevent homelessness and address root causes. Financial assistance has been diversified to cover rent, utilities, court costs, legal fees, and security deposits. Additionally, budgeting workshops have been introduced to empower participants in managing financial resources for sustained housing stability.

These modifications reflect our commitment to a proactive and data-driven approach. Thorough analysis informs our ongoing efforts, identifying areas for improvement and ensuring that our programs evolve to meet the changing needs of our community. Collaboration with local partners further enhances our understanding and effectiveness.

As we continue to monitor outcomes and gather feedback, we remain dedicated to achieving our goals. We are confident that these enhancements will lead to positive impacts on housing stability in the future.

ERAP's journey toward improvement is a testament to our unwavering commitment to the well-being of our community. Together, we move forward, striving for a future where every individual and family has access to safe and affordable housing.

## **Transition to a 4-Day Work Week: Enhancing Employee Well-Being**

In an effort to improve employee recruitment and retention, SCA implemented a four-day work week for our Weatherization department. This change has been well-received, providing multiple benefits.

The shift to a four-day work week has greatly improved work-life balance for our staff. With longer shifts, employees have more time for personal and family activities, leading to increased job satisfaction.

Additionally, the new schedule allows our weatherization crew more time each day to complete projects in homes throughout the county. This increase in daily work hours has led to greater efficiency and productivity.

SCA remains committed to supporting our employees' well-being, and this transition is a significant step in that direction.

# Community Engagement, Partnership, & Volunteerism

Here at Schuylkill Community Action (SCA), we are deeply committed to community engagement, forging partnerships, and promoting volunteerism to uplift Schuylkill County.

In January 2023, we collaborated with Truist Bank to establish the Schuylkill Community Coalition, an initiative that brought together several non-profit agencies to provide vital resources at the Pottsville Outdoor Market. This collaborative effort addressed diverse community needs, ranging from food insecurity to access to senior services. The coalition's formation marked a significant step in our mission to foster community well-being and resilience.

Additionally, our financial education coach partnered with multiple banks throughout the year to deliver financial literacy classes to low-income preschool students at Child Development centers across the county. These engaging sessions equipped young learners with fundamental financial skills, empowering them to make informed decisions in the future. Moreover, through a collaboration with CareerLink, we conducted a series of budgeting workshops, offering practical tools and strategies to individuals seeking financial stability.



In June 2023, three administrative staff members attended a Collaborative grant writing seminar organized by Schuylkill United Way, joining forces with several other non-profit organizations from the area. This seminar facilitated discussions on community needs, services, and initiatives, providing an opportunity for organizations to join forces and maximize their impact.



Participation in the Schuylkill Leadership class organized by the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce also provided four staff members from different departments with valuable opportunities for professional development and networking. This engagement not only strengthened internal ties within the organization but also enhanced our connections with other community stakeholders, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing local challenges.



# Community Engagement, Partnership, & Volunteerism Continued

In August 2022, several SCA case managers attended the Salvation Army's backpack drive, collecting 60 backpacks filled with essential school supplies to provide to client families in need. By ensuring that children have access to necessary educational resources, we reinforced our commitment to breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting academic success among youth.

Moreover, in May 2023, four dedicated staff members volunteered their time for Schuylkill United Way's Day of Caring. At the Schuylkill YMCA, they engaged in hands-on service by replacing ceiling tiles in childcare rooms, creating safer and more welcoming spaces for children to learn and play.



Looking ahead, we eagerly anticipate hosting the Schuylkill Food Network Volunteer Banquet in 2024, an event dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the invaluable contributions of over 400+ food pantry volunteers who selflessly serve their community. Throughout the year, these volunteers dedicate their time to boxing, transporting, and distributing food to those in need, ensuring that no one in our community goes hungry.


Moving forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to strengthening partnerships and ties within the community. By fostering collaborative relationships and actively engaging with stakeholders, we endeavor to ensure that our programs and services effectively meet the evolving needs of Schuylkill County.


## How You Can Get Involved

There are numerous ways to support Schuylkill Community Action: volunteer at our food pantries, lead fundraisers, donate directly, sponsor our Brighter Holiday Project, spread the word about our services, and more. Visit our website or check out our social media pages for information on how to get involved.

Every contribution, big or small, makes a meaningful impact on our community!

 [schuylkillcommunityaction.com](https://www.schuylkillcommunityaction.com)

 [facebook.com/SchuylkillCommunityAction](https://www.facebook.com/SchuylkillCommunityAction)

 [instagram.com/schuylkill.community.action.pa](https://www.instagram.com/schuylkill.community.action.pa)



## **Administrative Office**

206 North 2nd Street  
Pottsville, PA 17901



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# For Services or Information, Contact:

## **Administrative Office**

206 N. 2nd St., Pottsville, PA 17901  
Telephone: (570) 622-1995  
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM

## **Bridge House Office**

400 N. 7th St., Pottsville, PA 17901  
Telephone: (570) 624-7764  
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM

## **Main Program Office**

225 N. Centre St., Pottsville, PA 17901  
Telephone: (570) 622-1995  
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM

## **Schuylkill Food Network**

200 N. 2nd St., Pottsville, PA 17901  
Telephone: (570) 622-1995  
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM

## **Tamaqua Outreach Office**

246 E. Broad St., Tamaqua, PA 18252  
Telephone: (570) 516-6119  
Hours: Thursday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM

## **Weatherization Office**

500 N. Centre St., Suite 102, Pottsville, PA 17901  
Telephone: (570) 622-1995  
Hours: Monday - Thursday, 7 AM - 5 PM

[schuylkillcommunityaction.com](http://schuylkillcommunityaction.com)

