

## **SCHUYLKILL COMMUNITY ACTION - 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (JULY 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2020)**

**Introduction:** Schuylkill Community Action has developed this 5 year strategic plan to provide core guidance for the organization, as it fulfills its primary mission. That mission being:

*The primary purpose of SCA shall be to coordinate and focus all available resources upon the needs of low-income Schuylkill County residents, enabling them to obtain adequate affordable housing and secure the opportunities to become self-sufficient.*

The strategic plan was developed through a multi-step process that included the collection of available poverty, housing, and other relevant data for our service area. Additionally, a community needs assessment survey was conducted. The assessment obtained input from three populations: low-income clients of Schuylkill Community Action, social service and other community organizations, and community stakeholders and businesses. Survey results were tabulated to determine a ranked priority of needs and service gaps for each of the survey target groups. All survey results were combined to form a single priority needs list, which was provided to the Board of Directors in an Executive Summary. The Board utilized the results provided in the Executive Summary as a basis for discussion and development of the 5 year strategic plan.

The intention is to utilize this plan as a primary guide for the future direction of the agency. Progress will be reported and assessed annually to ensure the agency stays on mission and fulfills the vision as outlined in this plan.

## **I. SCA will strengthen its organizational structure and leadership ability through the establishment and maintenance of core organizational standards as established by the Federal Office of Community Services.**

In addition to maintaining those standards already addressed, SCA will undertake efforts to complete the following activities to address those unmet standards or those that could be addressed more fully.

### **A. Maximize community and consumer input into agency activities.**

- Develop and implement a customer satisfaction policy that provides a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the SCA Board.
- Conduct a community needs assessment every three years that solicits input from low-income people and other key community sectors.
- Examine Board Membership to ensure representation meets the SCA Mission and Bylaws.
- Strengthen the agency's ability to communicate its activities and results to the community.
- Strengthen community partnerships that provide solutions to poverty issues in the local community.

### **B. Strengthen the ability of SCA's leadership to provide vision and direction for agency activities.**

- Develop and implement a process to provide a structured orientation for SCA Board members within six (6) months of being seated.
- Develop and implement a training process for the Board on duties and responsibilities at least every two (2) years.
- Establish and implement a process, whereas, staff and the Board of SCA are trained by a ROMA certified trainer.
- Complete an agency wide risk assessment and issue a report for Board review at minimum every two (2) years.
- Issue an annual progress report on accomplishment of strategic plan goals for review and discussion by SCA Board.

### **C. Strengthen operations and accountability of agency activities.**

- Develop an organization-wide budget to be presented to the Board of Directors by June of each calendar year.
- Update organization's fiscal policies to comply with the new Super Circular issued by the Federal Office of Management and Budget. Implement a process whereas policies are updated, reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors every two (2) years.
- Develop and maintain a written policy for record retention and destruction.

## **II. SCA will strengthen it's ability to efficiently manage and administer agency resources and program activities.**

### **A. Identify and plan for agency wide technology upgrades that will enhance ability to administer, advertise and track agency services.**

- Conduct an annual review of agency computers and equipment; plan for upgrades as required.
- Research and plan for the acquisition and installation of a new client tracking software if appropriate, to track program activities and outcomes.
- Review existing outreach efforts (via internet and social media) to determine if those efforts could be improved.
- Explore the feasibility of electronic filing for all services throughout the agency.

### **B. Strengthen ability of agency to develop and retain quality staff.**

- Review salary & benefits to ensure appropriate compensation systems are in place to recruit and retain staff.
  - Update the staff complement every two years to ensure starting salary and wage rates are appropriate.
  - Annually assess the health care plan for employees to provide high quality and cost effective services.
  - Undertake a comprehensive review of SCA's pension plan every five years.
  - Review employee evaluation system and explore the inclusion of an employee compensation component that rewards good performance.
- Increase the ability of staff to provide high quality services through the provision of ongoing training.
  - Conduct annual agency wide staff training to keep staff abreast of agency policies and regulations, provide information about agency benefits and human resource issues, and provide informational activities to enhance employee job performance leading to better service delivery and client outcomes.
  - Develop an individualized training plan for each employee to enhance their ability to perform job duties.
  - Explore the increased use of webinars as a means of cost effective training.

### **C. Strengthen Fiscal policies and procedures to ensure agency resources are properly managed.**

- Consolidate all budget functions under the Director of Fiscal Operations for consistency in budgeting program activities.
- Review agency contracting to ensure resources are maximized:
  - Perform a thorough review and evaluation of SCA's insurance policies that includes annual internal review of insurance needs and a more comprehensive assessment and bid process every four (4) years.
  - Review and update the agency procurement process to ensure consistent rules are in place for compliance with all grant guidelines and applicable audit rules.
  - Review contracts and vendors to maximize resources and to avoid conflict of interest.
- Strengthen the ability of the fiscal team to manage the agency's resources.
  - Continue cross training between positions in the fiscal unit.
  - Continue training of fiscal staff in accounting functions as well as human resource functions to ensure agency remains in compliance with the ever changing regulations.
- Review agency safeguards to ensure resources are properly utilized.

- Examine inventory process to ensure effective safeguards are in place to account for agency equipment and materials.
- Examine and develop an improved inventory and distribution system for agency office supplies.

**D. Conduct an annual review of agency assets to ensure adequate reserves are established for long term agency stability.**

**E. Develop and implement an annual planning process that provides opportunity to evaluate and modify program plans and activities.**

- Develop and submit an annual progress report on activities outlined in the Strategic Plan to the Board of Directors.
- Develop and review an annual report of program activities that includes the following:
  - Program costs, outcomes, clients served, and cost per outcome.
  - Client satisfaction surveys.
- Explore and develop ways to measure the community impact of SCA's programs.
- Explore opportunities to obtain additional resources to expand services

### **III. SCA will maximize program outcomes and the efficiency of existing services.**

- A. Sustain and increase SCA's ability to provide food commodities through our food pantry network.**
- Obtain additional resources where possible, to supplement staffing costs for food distribution activities.
  - Obtain additional resources where possible, to offset the operating costs of the truck associated with the food donation program.
  - Expand contacts with private corporations to increase opportunities for food donations to our pantry network.
- B. Expand our volunteer base and explore additional tax preparation sites to increase the number of clients SCA will be able to serve.**
- Strengthen relationships with educational institutions to recruit student volunteers annually.
    - Work with professors to develop a class credit system for student volunteers.
    - Develop an annual stipend program for students who can make a substantial time commitment.
  - Transition to tax preparation sites that have existing equipment present to reduce the need for equipment maintenance/purchase.
- C. Explore the consolidation of homeless intake activities to improve the assessment of homeless needs and the referral to appropriate services.**
- D. Provide expanded Community Services opportunities within Schuylkill Community Action and other non-profits for Work Ready.**
- E. Strengthen SCA's capabilities to effectively administer and manage weatherization activities to maintain a viable program capable of expanding as opportunities become available.**
- Improve operations of weatherization program to make day to day activities more efficient.
    - Explore use of tablets or laptops for direct data entry by Auditors into data bank.
    - Explore the cost effectiveness of obtaining GPS capabilities on weatherization vehicles.
  - Improve the ability of weatherization staff to perform activities:
    - Provide Continuing Education Units (CEU) training for Auditors to maintain Building Performance Institute (BPI) certifications.
    - Develop an additional certified quality control inspector to enhance agency flexibility and capabilities to meet weatherization requirements.
    - Incorporate refresher course training for weatherization staff on DOE Lead Safe Practices and EPA Lead Certification.
  - Improve safety procedures to Reduce Workman's Comp claims.
    - Explore more frequent safety training by weatherization personnel (OSHA 30)
    - Conduct weekly job checks for safety purposes.
    - Undertake long term program planning to ensure contracts for weatherization continue.
    - Prepare for regionalization of weatherization activities in the event viable options become available.
  - Conduct regular meetings between Executive Director and Director of Weatherization to assess production goals and progress to ensure all contract obligations will be fulfilled.
- F. Enhance support services for clients accessing programs through the case management unit.**

- Examine ways to improve the referral process to other services.
  - Examine the client intake process to ensure case managers have adequate client information to assess their primary needs.
  - Encourage case managers to develop stronger community ties and open better lines of communication with other agencies in the county.
  - Explore ways to track agency referrals.
- Explore ways to provide “meaningful” financial counseling to IN OFFICE clients.
- Improve services that can better assist clients to obtain employment or better paying jobs.
  - Improve contacts and resources to assist clients to obtain appropriate attire for a job.
  - Explore improved ways to provide transportation access in order to connect clients with employment opportunities.
  - Strengthen partnerships with agencies such as Career Link, Lifelong Learning Center and STS to help prepare clients for employment and to remove barriers.

**G. Complete analysis/assessment of staffing and unit structure in housing unit.**

- Explore the creation of a ‘Development’ position to assist in the identification, development, grant writing/funding and construction of new affordable housing initiatives and programming.
- Explore the staff structure to determine if SCA’s housing counseling component may be better served outside the housing and community development unit.

**H. Assess agency real estate holdings to determine long and short term implications of management and ownership of assets.**

- Review the 225 N. Centre Street partnership to determine if sole ownership of the building would provide short and long-term financial viability to agency
- Explore ongoing maintenance and management costs of rental units to plan for long-term financial sustainability.
- Assess the long term interest and financial viability of additional agency owned rental units.

**I. Improve outreach efforts to potential clients from racial, ethnic, and cultural minority groups.**

- Develop and implement targeted marketing campaigns to traditionally underserved groups.
- Assess minority participation of Board Members, Staff and clients to ensure diverse representation and equitable distribution of agency services.
- Explore and develop ways to strengthen partnerships with entities that represent underserved groups.

## **IV. SCA will seize new opportunities to address community needs and service gaps outlined in the Needs Assessment.**

### **A. Develop and implement an agency wide strategy to improve access to affordable health care.**

- SCA will strengthen partnerships to improve enrollment in affordable health care plans and to inform clients about compliance with the Affordable Care Act.
  - Collect information about affordable health care plans to improve outreach efforts with clients.
  - Create referral process to track enrollments and outreach efforts.
  - Form partnerships to provide enrollment and education opportunities directly to SCA clients whenever possible (I.E. at food pantry distributions)
- Actively support entities in establishing a Federally Qualified Health Center in Schuylkill County.
- Provide outreach information about one time medical offerings (screenings, flu shot, etc.) to SCA clients.
- Form partnerships to provide opportunities directly to SCA clients whenever possible. (Diabetes screenings at pantry sites, flu shots, etc.)

### **B. Explore opportunities to assist clients in maintaining affordable utilities.**

- Contact borough operated electric programs to determine if a process can be developed to provide low-income consumers with affordable utilities.
- Advocate on behalf of low-income families for affordable utility rates and programs.

### **C. Sustain and increase SCA's ability to assist homeowners with vital home repairs.**

- Develop applications for funding that provide homeowner repair programs for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.
- Advocate for and partner with local municipalities to pursue resources for home rehabilitation services whenever possible.
- Coordinate weatherization services with homeowner repair programs administered by SCA and other agencies in order to maximize program impact.

### **D. Enhance the community's ability to attract businesses that will provide job opportunities for low income individuals and families.**

- Strengthen partnerships with business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Schuylkill Economic Development Corporation, and Manufacturer's Association to improve access to employment opportunities for low-income people.
- Explore ways Schuylkill Community Action can assist in producing a better business climate through its program and development activities.
  - Explore a greater role for SCA in our service area to eliminate blight and provide real estate opportunities for housing and/or business development.
  - Explore administration of Land Bank in regions or communities that have a high instance of blight.
  - Expand SCA's role in community collaboration/ partnerships to eliminate blight and undertake housing improvements in Schuylkill County communities.

### **E. Increase the ability of homeless clients to secure temporary housing.**

- Encourage county service providers to implement a coordinated intake assessment of homeless individuals and families in Schuylkill County.

- Examine current homeless crisis services offered through SCA (hotel/motel voucher) to determine if the process can be improved to include follow up.

**F. Increase access to public transportation for SCA clients.**

- Continue to advocate for services that benefit low-income people through serving on the Schuylkill Transportation Advisory Committee, and through providing public comment when appropriate.
- Develop resources for SCA's Emergency Fund to support transportation needs not funded through State and Federal programs.

**G. Sustain and increase the ability of SCA to assist clients with Financial Literacy activities.**

- Strengthen partnerships with credit counseling agencies and financial institutions.
- Explore and develop ways to promote financial literacy with children.

**H. Sustain and increase the ability of SCA to provide rent assistance and to increase affordable rental opportunities, SCA will:**

- Seek and submit applications for appropriate resources to provide direct rental assistance subsidies.
- Seek opportunities to develop additional affordable rental units for low/moderate income families.