



Tri-County Action Program Spring 2020

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

As I write this letter we are in the midst of a historical event, the world-wide Corona Virus pandemic. Tri-CAP is taking all of Governor Walz's directives seriously and following the guidance provided by the CDC because the physical health and safety of our clients, colleagues, and community is our top priority. We are monitoring the situation regularly and, as the situation evolves, we are taking appropriate steps. For the time being, our offices are closed and our staff are telecommuting, providing assistance by telephone. We are available by phone Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm

In addition to physical health, as always, Tri-CAP is concerned with the economic stability of our communities. As it was 55 years ago when Tri-CAP was established, Tri-CAP and our sister Community Action Agencies across the country are finding ways to meet the current needs of our communities while planning for needs that we believe will emerge. In 1965, the year of Tri-CAP founding, the world events were

different, yet then as now our grass roots heritage was designed to allow us to adapt and respond to a changing world. Community Action was built for this.

Right now, I know that many people are anxious. My first message is that while we're "sheltering in place" and "social distancing" know that we are all doing this together. As a community, a state, and a country we are all in this together and together we will overcome the threat.

If you find yourself needing assistance with paying an energy bill, wondering how you'll pay for groceries, or need guidance finding other resources, I encourage you to call Tri-CAP. We've been connecting the people of central Minnesota to resources and assistance for 55 years.

In addition to our existing programs, Tri-CAP is reaching out to partner with other service providers to meet the emerging needs of our neighbors. For example, earlier this week our Public Transportation department worked with a local food shelf, delivering monthly grocery boxes to households that are unable to leave their homes to gather even the essentials. Staff from another department are reaching out to other organizations to offer Tri-CAP assistance where needed.

During this time of uncertainty, as always, Tri-CAP and Community Action Agencies across the land are here, standing ready, to provide assistance and resources to families who are facing economic hardship. We are your Community Action network, and we are Helping People and Changing Lives.

Stay Well.

Best Regards,
Lori Schultz, LSW
Executive Director



On April 1st, Tri-CAP's Transportation Department partnered with the Avon Food shelf. Using a Tri-CAP bus, the drivers stepped up and provided delivery of the much-needed monthly allocation of groceries to 18 households who, due to the COVID-19 virus, were unable to leave their homes and go to the food shelf.

**While Tri-CAP's offices are closed to the public,
we are committed to providing services.**

Call us at 320-251-1612 or 888-765-5597 to:

- Receive a program application by mail
- Ask about the status of your application
- Talk to a Transportation Dispatcher about ride information
- Schedule a phone appointment for program information & referrals

- All other questions

The drop box outside the 1210 Administrative office is available to drop off applications, payments and information. Our website has program information and some applications to download. If you are unsure, call our office and one of our friendly staff will guide you to the information you need.



In July of 2019, Henry purchased a donated vehicle from Tri-CAP, through our DRIVE program, with hopes of being able to secure housing and employment. In our six-month follow up Henry reported that because of his vehicle, and access to transportation, he has been able to secure BOTH housing and employment for himself and his family! Henry has used his car to help others get to the grocery store or hospital as well. Henry said "God bless ALL that you guys and gals do for folks like me. This car helped me get a job, independence, and be able to help others."

census facts

2020 Census data will help inform how billions of dollars are distributed to states and communities every year for the next 10 years.



Tri-CAP reminds you to complete your 2020 Census form. Response rates impact the community in many important ways and everyone needs to be counted.



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Tri-CAP provides outreach services to increase participation in the state-run SNAP program (formerly known as Food Support or Food Stamps). We provide outreach, application assistance, recertification assistance, and referrals to other local food resources. The counties administer the program and will confirm if a person or household

qualifies for benefits or not.

SNAP Qualifications

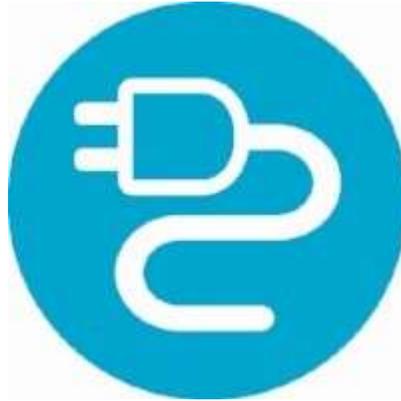
If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, you may be eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

- Do you or anyone who lives with you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?
- Do you or anyone who lives with you receive General Assistance (GA) or Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)?
- Do you receive either Transition Year Child Care or Basic Sliding Fee Child Care assistance (CCAP)?
- Do you participate in the Diversionary Work Program (DWP) or Work Benefit (WB) program?
- Is your gross income below the 2019-2020 guidelines? (see below)

Household Size	Gross Household Monthly Income
1	\$1,718
2	\$2,326
3	\$2,933
4	\$3,541
5	\$4,149
6	\$4,757
7	\$5,364
8	\$5,972

**income guidelines are updated each year. These are October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020*

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions, please call Tri-CAP to receive an application or assistance filling out the applications.



Energy Assistance Program- Application Deadline Extended to July 1, 2020

Energy Assistance Program applications are available on Tri-CAP's website for download or they may be requested by phone to be mailed out. The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households.

EAP is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Grants are:

- For renters or homeowners
- For households with income at or below 50 percent of the state median income
- Based on energy cost, household size, and income

Tri-CAP provides the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) to income eligible households living in Benton, Stearns, Sherburne and Morrison counties. The program pays a portion of home heating costs. The grant size is based on household size, income, fuel type and energy usage.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Provide direct payment to the energy supplier
- Educate consumers to use home heating energy efficiently and safely
- Advocate with energy suppliers and human service providers on behalf of consumers
- Crisis help for utility disconnections or necessary fuel deliveries
- Emergency heating system repair or replacement.

For the latest program updates and for a copy of the application, visit our website <https://tricap.org/assistance/energy-assistance/>



Volunteer Drivers Wanted

Volunteer Drivers:

- Make a difference
- Set their own schedule
- Receive a mileage reimbursement

Volunteer Drivers provide rides using their own private vehicles to residents of Benton, Stearns, Sherburne, Morrison, and Mille Lacs counties. Tri-CAP's dispatch center matches up the passenger with an available Volunteer Driver. Passengers may need the help getting to medical appointments or a variety of other destinations. Volunteer Drivers are reimbursed at the Federal IRS rate and may also be eligible for some meal reimbursements. Our Volunteer Drivers provide a critical service to those in need.

If you enjoy driving and are interested in volunteering, please contact Tri-CAP or fill out an application available on our website: <https://tricap.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/VOLUNTEER-APPLICATIONpdf.pdf>



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