



Tri-County Action Program Spring 2021

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.

Recently the CDC announced new health and safety guidelines for people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. As a result, I've been thinking about what the "new normal" will look like as our organizations, businesses, and communities move into the next phase. That is, what actions and opportunities will ultimately become lasting changes in the way we do things post pandemic?

As a natural optimist and person who seeks to find the silver lining, I reflect on COVID-19 and am inspired by the way our communities pulled together to care for one another. While there are many things about the pandemic I'll be glad to see in the rearview mirror, this idea of caring for one another and the whole community is not one of those things. Being community focused and inviting everyone's participation in solving challenges is foundational for community action. As of matter

of fact, we have national goals and organizational standards that require agencies like Tri-CAP to engage the whole community because that is the way to create lasting change.

At Tri-CAP we are excited to see the progress being made to get everyone vaccinated so that we can safely return to the "new normal". I invite you to join community action in getting your COVID-19 vaccination, reestablishing some of the interactions you've been missing since March 2020, and holding onto the new and improved activities you've learned this last year.

Regards,
Lori Schultz, CCAP
Executive Director



Tri-CAP is a nonprofit organization that was incorporated January 12, 1965 as the first non-metro Community Action Agency in Minnesota, and is one of 1,000 Community Action Agencies across the country. Community Action comes from the Economic Opportunity Act, introduced by President Lyndon B. Johnson, that created programs such as Community Action, Head Start, Foster Grandparents and Summer Youth Programs.

Community Action is the poverty-fighting network that serves 99% of counties

across the country. We are different because while we are a part of a nationwide network, we fight poverty based on the local needs of the communities we serve. Tri-CAP, like many Community Action Agencies, offers many programs and services, providing opportunities to local families including Energy Assistance Program, SNAP Outreach, Public Transportation, Housing Assistance, Rebuilding Lives, Financial Literacy Classes and Weatherization.



Throughout the pandemic and now Tri-CAP continues to follow our COVID Business Continuity Plan. While our offices are not currently open to the public, all along we have been providing access to our programs and services through telephone, email, website, and our administrative building. Public transportation is providing rides with all riders and drivers wearing masks. You'll certainly see the Tri-CAP buses on the road and around town. Home visits and weatherization audits are happening and we completed our tax season by appointments and following mask and social distance guidance. Continue to check back on our website and our Facebook page for updates for future access changes.



Rebuilding Lives (MN Family Resiliency Partnership) is seeking new program enrollments! Read a success story below.

Shawn, single father raising two boys, was laid off from his job due to COVID-19. He received assistance from Tri-CAP through the Rebuilding Lives program. Tri-CAP was able to help Shawn with paying his rent, gas cards so that he was able to use his vehicle, and other financial assistance to meet his family's basic needs. When Shawn got a new job, Tri-CAP was able to provide assistance acquiring new work shoes. "Because for me if it wasn't for programs like this one I don't know how I would've made it through some tough times.... another part was how quick and friendly everyone was with helping my family."

Tri-CAP's Rebuilding Lives program serves households in the nine-county service area who experienced the loss of income due to death or disability of a spouse, divorce or separation. If you have been responsible for caregiving of home and children and have lost income due to one of the reasons mentioned, you may be eligible for our free pre-employment services. We are here to help you through this challenging life transition. For more information call us today at 320.251.1612.





Are you a team player and like to have fun while helping people? Then check out our exciting employment opportunities.

Tri-CAP employees make a significant difference in the lives of others. We are a non-profit organization that envisions a world in which the residents of central Minnesota achieve social and economic well-being and are supported by the community as a whole through the building of meaningful relationships. We make a difference by making life better for those we serve every day. www.tricap.org



The Energy Assistance Program assistance timeframe has been extended through the summer, until Sept. 1, 2021. Also, applicants are eligible for assistance at 60% of the State Median Income levels. [Check out our website for details.](#)



WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Weatherization Assistance Program provides free home energy upgrades to income-eligible homeowners and renters to help save energy and make sure your home is a healthy and safe place to live.

If you are interested in Weatherization for your home or apartment, make a check on the Weatherization line on your Energy Assistance Program application



On December 31, 2020, 32-year-old "JR" purchased an affordable used vehicle from Tri-CAP through their DRIVE Donated Vehicle Purchase Program.

JR's lack of personal transportation was causing her stress as she worked on figuring out rides to her frequent local and out-of-town doctor's appointments. JR felt that without transportation she was missing out, not living her life to the fullest.

"This program will help me gain my life back and my independence. Having a car will allow me to go back to church, to school, and to make it to all of my appointments. I am excited for 2021" JR stated.

Jr said "what helped me the most was my self-sufficiency counselor, both her passion and communication...I would recommend this program, without a doubt!"

Tri-CAP is excited that with this vehicle, JR a fresh-start, thanks to a generous vehicle donor.

Tri-CAP needs your help to see more personal transportation success stories in our communities. To make this happen we are looking for generous community members who have a vehicle to donate. Donating is easy and, in addition to helping someone in the community, you may receive a tax benefit. To learn more, visit our website [D.R.I.V.E Personal Transportation | Tri-CAP \(tricap.org\)](https://www.tricap.org)

Volunteer Drivers Wanted

Our Volunteer Driver Program needs volunteer drivers! It's a great way to help seniors in the community while bringing in some extra cash for your mileage. Meals and parking are reimbursed, as applicable. Set your own schedule! [Learn more on our website.](#)



Tri-CAP provides SNAP/food support application and renewal/recertification assistance to seniors and others in our community.

Recent program updates: Farmers markets are opening across Minnesota for the summer (May-Oct) bringing the opportunity to purchase local, fresh foods grown by our very own local farmers! Many markets are set up to accept SNAP/EBT and some are participating in the “Market Bucks” program allowing an additional \$10 in free produce with the purchase of \$10. More information about Farmers Markets and the Market Bucks program is available at: www.hungersolutions.org/programs/market-bucks



For a limited time, Tri-CAP has funds for the Vehicle Repair Program

With the Vehicle Repair Program, Tri-CAP provides financial assistance, paying a portion of road worthiness and /or safety issues vehicle repair costs for eligible households in Benton, Sherburne and Stearns County. Examples of the kinds of repairs included are brakes, tires, struts, shocks, and battery. Vehicle repairs must take place at Tri-CAP designated vendors.

To learn more about the program and other requirements for eligibility visit Tri-CAP's website.

A recent Vehicle Repair Program Recipient wrote the following about her experience with Tri-CAP.

“I am unemployed and needed help paying for a repair on my vehicle. I appreciate the help I was given, it was a blessing for me.”



Tri-CAP is pleased to assist you with scheduling your public transit rides. Our Dispatch Center is open to make ride reservations or changes Monday – Friday from 8:00 – 4:30.



Tri-CAP

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