



**Commitment,
Partnership,
& Opportunity**
2025 Annual Report

Needs Across Lancaster & Saunders Counties

Community Action is charged with addressing the unique **causes and conditions of poverty** within our service area. The below data is from our most recent Community Needs Assessment* and represents some top community needs.

Poverty Rates Across Counties

“Our challenges felt insurmountable. We did not have a safety net.”
- Community Action Participant

	Lancaster	Saunders
All ages (residents)	11.7%	6.4%
Children under five years	12.4%	2.4%

Lack of Affordable Housing

In 2025, calls for rent and utility assistance **rose 21%** compared to 2024.

44% of Lancaster County households **spend more than 30%** of their income on housing.

“If you’re at 45% of your income towards housing, you’re never going to make it. It doesn’t matter how much money you make.”
- Community Survey Participant



When you must choose between buying groceries or paying your rent, you are at risk of homelessness.

High Cost of Quality Childcare

In Lincoln, the average **annual cost of infant care is greater than one year’s worth of tuition** at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Average Annual Center-Based Costs, Lancaster Co.

\$12,915 Infant care
\$12,196 Toddler care
\$10,912 Pre-K care

86% of Nebraska families **cannot afford continuous infant care.**

If you cannot afford childcare, it is more difficult to work, attend school, or otherwise achieve your goals, including long-term stability.

Food Insecurity

14% of Lancaster County and 12% of Saunders County residents experience a lack of access to healthy food.



Nearly 50% of this population do not qualify for benefits, meaning they likely face difficult decisions each week regarding whether to pay for food or other needs.



When basic needs go unmet, life becomes extremely challenging. Over the past several years, need for basic supports has increased across our community.

*See communityactionnetwork.org for the most current Community Needs Assessment data.

Community Action Responds

Mission: We partner with our community in fearless pursuit of anti-poverty solutions so we all have the opportunity to live well.

You helped provide programming to address local needs across four impact areas. This report highlights just some of the successes you made possible last year.

Homelessness Prevention

The majority of participants in our homelessness prevention programs maintained safe and affordable housing for at least 180 days. **Less than 1% of participants returned to homelessness.**



82% of participants experienced **improved health and safety** as a result of weatherization improvements made to housing stock.



"You have provided us with a wonderful foundation for our life." -Supportive Housing participant

13%

Studies show that a comprehensive, high-quality early childhood program like **Head Start** has a **13% ROI**.



Early Childhood Education

Nine percent more children (482 total) received Community Action Head Start services compared to 2024.

85% of children demonstrated **improved school readiness** at the end of last program year.



In its first year, **the Parent Place welcomed 90 caregivers for 332 visits**, becoming a vital hub for support, connection, and community.

"Thank you that you believed in the mission. Thank you that you believed in me." - Head Start parent



Financial Well-Being

80 community members participated in Free to Save, our matched savings and financial well-being program. For the first time, classes were held in English and Arabic.

Participants gained financial literacy tools, education, and support (such as a 4:1 savings match for asset purchases) to **break the cycle of financial stress.**



Assets Purchased

Home: 2
Vehicle: 23
Business Improvement: 4
Post-Secondary Education: 2



Fearless Partners

From our beginning in 1965, Community Action has been committed to addressing more than just the conditions of poverty. We provide access to the resources and supports neighbors need to move forward into stability and beyond—to truly thrive.

Your partnership makes this possible.

Partners work together. From financial literacy classes taught in multiple languages to Weatherization services reducing neighbors' energy burden while improving community housing options, we meet our community members where they are, and address needs unique to where we live.

Partners respect each other. Our youngest learners continued to grow and thrive in their Head Start classrooms. Their caring adults are building community and resilience in the Parent Place, a living room of support designed specifically for the busy caregivers of young children.

Partners treat each other with dignity. The Gathering Place holds steady as a cornerstone of support during a year of uncertainty and rising need.

Thank you for your fearless belief in our community's potential. You ensure we all have the chance to pursue opportunities to live well.

"You treat me and my family with dignity and respect."

- Community Action participant



Hunger Relief & Healthy Food Access

Community Action's Gathering Place free meal program operates daily from 5-6 PM serving hot, nutritious, free meals. Guests can dine-in or take their meal to-go. There are no eligibility requirements.

In 2025, the Gathering Place served -

55,330 meals to approximately **2,767 neighbors**. In October, our busiest month, we served **5,400 meals**. On average, we served **157 meals per night**.



"We have a very specific job. We make sure people have access to food."

- Gathering Place staff

Did you know?

The Gathering Place relies entirely on community support to operate. This allows us to distribute meals with no questions asked.



In 2025,
18,575 neighbors
received **over**
150,523 Community
Action services.

This represents a **6% increase** in services from 2024.

Who we serve

Information represents those from whom demographic information was collected.

50% of program participants identified as non-white (a 3% increase from 2024). Meanwhile, **17% of the overall population** in Lancaster and Saunders Counties is non-white.



Most households had children in the home.

The most common household makeup was single mothers.

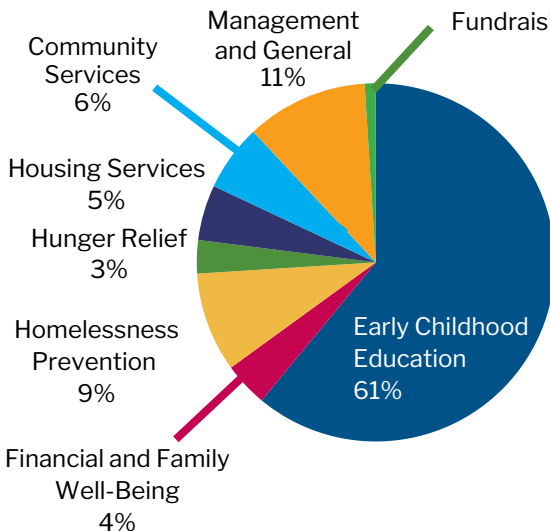
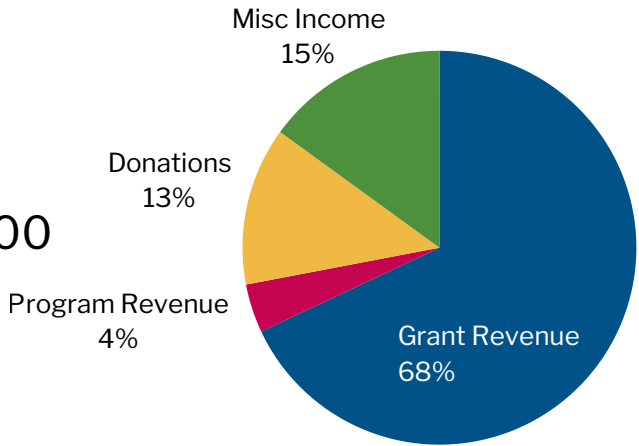


40% of those served (age 25+) had at least some post-secondary education. **79%** had graduated high school, obtained a GED, or equivalent.

Financials

Financials are preliminary (unaudited).

Revenue:
\$21,103,954.00



Expenses:
\$20,565,740.00



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Note: The artwork on the cover page was created by community members at our 60th anniversary block party celebration. Attendees were asked to draw something to answer the question, **“What does Community Action mean to you?”**

Early Head Start & Head Start / Foster Grandparent / Emergency Services: rent, utility, and deposit assistance / Supportive Housing / Tenant Support Services / Affordable Housing / Youth Homeless Demonstration / Free to Save / Weatherization / LanguageLinc / The Gathering Place: hot evening meals / Healthy Food Access