

Hope, Help, and Change

IN UNCERTAIN
TIMES



IMPACT REPORT
2021-2022


CommunityAction
Helping people. Changing lives.

Community Action leads the way to eliminate conditions of poverty and creates opportunities for people and communities to thrive.





Dear supporters,

Our community has experienced unprecedented change over the last few years. As we emerge from the pandemic, the resilience of Washington County depends on us rebuilding as an equitable community—one where every person has their needs met regardless of their identity or zip code.

I want you to know that the challenges faced by low-income families still exist, and the root causes of poverty remain the same. We know that access to affordable housing, affordable child care, and jobs that pay a livable wage are essential to stabilize families and empower them to be fully involved in their community.

To achieve our mission, we need to understand why communities experience disparities in accessing opportunities and take action to eliminate them. At Community Action, this means we look at community data and target services to those most likely to experience poverty.

We know that people of color are twice as likely to experience poverty compared to white people in Washington County. With this in mind, we actively partner with culturally specific organizations to expand points of entry that are safe and responsive. We recruit and retain a diverse workforce whose lived experiences reflect the community we serve. We center the needs of people first and then employ our wrap-around services to help them move forward.

Thanks to generous supporters like you, Community Action is a source of hope, help, and change. The stories that follow show how your support stabilizes families, connects them to opportunities, and strengthens our community. With your support, Community Action will continue to strive towards a future when every family in Washington County has what they need to thrive.

With gratitude,

Kemp Shuey
Executive Director



Jasmin wanted to make a better life for her daughter. Thanks to you, she found the support she needed to forge a new career path.

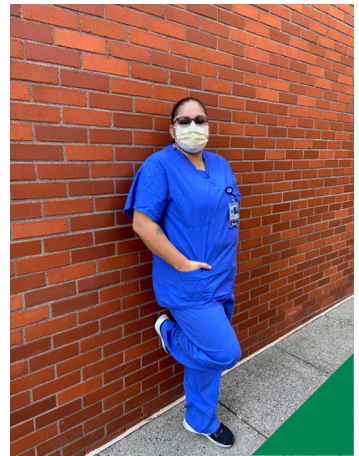
Throughout her childhood and into adolescence, Jasmin, one of ten siblings, lived with the struggle of poverty. So when she became a mom herself, she vowed to make a better life for her daughter. Because of donors like you, Community Action was there to provide critical support that helped her successfully break the cycle of poverty for her and her young family.



"My daughter changed my life. I wanted to be the best person I could be and wanted to give my daughter everything I didn't have growing up as a child," says Jasmin.

When her daughter was three years old, Jasmin enrolled her in our Head Start program. Jasmin and her wife, Lidiana, were thrilled to see their daughter thrive in a caring environment where she was developing critical skills that would set her up for success in kindergarten. And the free child care made it possible to work and support the family.

Jasmin is so grateful to have a new fulfilling career at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital. She says, "I don't think I could have done it without Community Action, and I will always be grateful for that."



It was hard though. Jasmin was working as a caregiver in an assisted living facility and doing in-home care. While the work was rewarding, the pay was low, and the hours were inconvenient and unpredictable.

During this time, Jasmin learned about an opportunity to join our Whole Family Approach program, a job training program designed for parents of Head Start children. Seeing the opportunity to advance her skills and earning potential, she jumped at it.

► **The Whole Family Approach is one example of our holistic approach to helping families increase their income and economic stability.**

The program provides training to become certified as a Sterile Processing Technician, a position in the health care field that promises a career with better pay and opportunities for advancement. The program also provides training on employment-seeking skills such as resume writing and interviewing, as well as ongoing coaching and other support.

Jasmin began the intense 10-week training class. It was hard to keep up with studying while also keeping enough hours at work. But thanks to donors like you, Community Action was able to help pay the family's rent, allowing her to focus more of her mental energy on her studies.

Jasmin worked hard to successfully complete the training, and then immediately landed a job at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital. Her pay has increased by 25%, and she now has health care and retirement benefits. She feels so relieved and proud to have this new level of economic security. And she is also thrilled to have an exciting new career with opportunities for advancement.

As she reflects on how challenging it was to do the program, she says, "I knew it was going to be hard. But it was hard for a short time – instead of a lifetime of hard that you struggle with forever."

When Jessica came to Community Action, she was pregnant, had just lost her job, and was at risk of becoming homeless. With the help of Community Action, Jessica turned this crisis into an opportunity and now supports her family with a thriving child care business.

When all hope seemed lost, your support helped Jessica regain stability and launch a successful child care business.



After summoning the strength to leave an abusive relationship, Jessica found herself in a very difficult situation. She was suddenly a single parent of two and she was expecting her third. She began having complications with her pregnancy that forced her to leave her manufacturing job.

With no income, she was scared. What would happen when she couldn't pay rent? Would she and her children become homeless?

That's when she found Community Action.

Because of donors like you, Jessica received rent assistance for a full year, giving her the stability she needed to prepare for the birth of her daughter and plan for her future.

Jessica also connected with Community Action's Healthy Families, a program that provides support to moms during their pregnancy and during the first three years of the child's life. Jessica's home visitor helped her work through the trauma of her past and plan for her future.

*Jessica is so grateful for your support.
"I am happy where I am right now.
I can afford rent, pay my bills, and buy food."*



Recognizing that Jessica wanted a job that allowed her more time with her own children, her home visitor suggested a child care business. Jessica jumped at the idea and began working with our Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) team, our program that works with child care providers year-round offering support, trainings, and professional development to improve the quality of care for children.

Because of your support, Jessica received the training she needed to get a child care license and to create a safe enriching environment for young

children in her apartment. Starting a business wasn't easy, but she was excited and determined. And because of you, she had support from the CCR&R team every step of the way.

After only two years, her business is thriving and continues to grow. Last year, with the increased income from her business, she was able to move into a larger house, giving her space to expand her business and care for more kids.

She is grateful to have found her true vocation. "I feel like I am a second mom to these kids. And I love that."

Innovation was instrumental in getting critical rent assistance to diverse communities in Washington County.

As the pandemic pummeled the economy for the last two years, families furthest from opportunity due to race, language, and immigration status were being hit hardest.



At the Muslim Educational Trust, the community came together to provide food boxes for families during the pandemic.

We knew we needed a new strategy to break through language, cultural, and racial barriers to get rent assistance to these vulnerable families during this critical time. With that in mind, we created an innovative partnership with several organizations already working with marginalized, culturally-specific communities in Washington County.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Adelante Mujeres • Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon • Bienestar

Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization • Centro Cultural

Department of Human Services • Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

Muslim Educational Trust • Iraqi Society of Oregon • Somali American Council of Oregon • Unite Oregon

For the Muslim Educational Trust (MET), an education and community center serving a diverse Muslim and non-Muslim community, this new partnership was a game changer. Before the pandemic began, MET used donations from their community to help families in need with food boxes and rent assistance. But once the pandemic hit, the need skyrocketed.

Many of the people in this community worked in the service industry and were living paycheck to paycheck. When they got laid off, got their hours reduced, or ended up in the hospital with Covid, they could no longer pay for the essentials: rent, utilities, and food. MET did not have the ability to meet the increased demand on their own.

Jahed Sukhun, MET's Chief Operating Officer, reflects on this time when more and more families with language barriers came through their doors asking for help and says, "You don't have to understand the language to see the desperation in their eyes."

Jahed Sukhun of Muslim Educational Trust reflects on the new partnership: "We see a lot of immigrants and refugees from Somalia, Iraq, Rohingya, Syria and Afghanistan. Many of them face language barriers and are dealing with physical and psychological injuries of war. To have someone from their own culture, who speaks their language, and works for an organization they already know and trust made it much easier for them to apply for the assistance they desperately needed."

Entering this new partnership with Community Action was instrumental in getting critical help to their community effectively and efficiently. We provided technical assistance and training enabling MET staff to do outreach, intakes, and assessments for families in their community in need of rent assistance. Community Action staff then processed the applications and got the rent paid, keeping families safe and secure in their homes.

At Community Action, we know that collaborating with our culturally responsive partners is making us stronger. As we continue working together, we can more easily identify emerging issues that impact the many diverse communities of Washington County. And most importantly, that will enable us to serve those with the most need more effectively and efficiently.





When a job loss threatened Johnathon's housing, your support provided help when he needed it most.

Johnathon had been getting by on his limited income. But when the pandemic wiped out his part-time employment, he got behind on his rent and found himself in eviction court. Thanks to you, Johnathon got the help he needed to keep a roof over his head.

When the pandemic hit, Johnathon was partially retired and had been supplementing his social security income with part-time work at a bowling alley. Covid forced the bowling alley to close its doors. He lost his job and the supplemental income he relied on to cover his living expenses. He knew he couldn't afford his rent without it, and he was worried.

► **"I thought that I would be living in a tent somewhere. I had nowhere to go," Johnathon remembers.**

His worst fears became real when his landlord served him with an eviction notice because they needed the rental unit for a family member. He did not know what to do. He was already behind on his rent and moving would mean a rent increase as well as additional move-in costs.

Luckily, due to Community Action's innovative eviction prevention program, we have a member of our team reviewing the eviction docket and reaching out to tenants who have upcoming court dates. Johnathon received a call from our housing specialist who helped him navigate the court process and much more.

Johnathon describes the call as a turning point in his life, "That was one of the best phone calls I've ever gotten. That meant everything to hear, 'We'll be there. You're not in this alone.'"

Our housing specialist negotiated with the landlord for more time so she could help Johnathon find a new place to live. And even more importantly, it allowed time to get Johnathon the financial help he needed. Because of supporters like you, we were able to help Johnathon pay the back rent he owed as well as rental assistance for his first year in his new home.



Johnathon is now working at the re-opened bowling alley and is once again living with a sense of stability. He is so grateful for supporters like you who made it possible, saying "Community Action helped tremendously. I don't have a feeling of despair anymore."

Thanks to you, Sara found life-changing safety and support at our family homeless shelter.



Sara suddenly found herself in a situation she never imagined. She and her two young children, aged three and four, were homeless and living in a hotel room. Then she found Community Action's Family Shelter and it changed her life.

Sara had lost her home when her husband was arrested for domestic violence. As a stay-at-home mom, she had no income of her own and only had enough money to stay in the hotel for a couple of weeks.

She was scared and stressed as she did her best to create normalcy for the kids while

figuring out how to prepare meals with only a microwave. Due to the pandemic and the wildfires, they stayed in the hotel room all day. While she distracted the kids with TV, she would hole herself up in the bathroom so that she could make calls looking for resources... and so that the kids wouldn't see her cry.

► Sara remembers her fear as her money ran out, “I was freaking out about what to do. The thought of sleeping in our van was so scary.”

That’s when Sara found Community Action’s Family Shelter. Because of your support, Sara and her kids were welcomed into the shelter, providing them with a safe place to live and a community of support, a change that was life transforming.

In the shelter, Sara no longer felt isolated. Her children were able to play with other kids. Sara was surrounded by peers who were experiencing many of the same struggles. They cooked together and supported each other, and this sense of community was a source of encouragement.

With a safe roof over her family’s head, Sara got right to work. She knew she needed stable housing, and she knew she needed an income to pay for it. Sara worked with one of Community Action’s Housing Navigators who helped her through the arduous process of finding affordable housing and helped with rent assistance, making it affordable for the first year. She also helped Sara enroll in Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training, her first step towards a career in health care.

Sara has now been in her apartment for over a year. She wakes up in her own bed, cooks breakfast for her kids in her own kitchen, and has found a network of support among the other young moms in her neighborhood. And most importantly, she completed her CNA training and is now working at Providence St. Vincent Hospital. She is thrilled to be financially supporting her family with such a rewarding career. And, because of supporters like you, she has hope for the future.

“I love living on my own and being independent. I’ve never had the chance to get situated into a good spot until now.”
—Sara, Family Shelter client





Our Impact

7,325

families stayed warm and safe with utility bill assistance.

3,494

families avoided homelessness through emergency rent assistance.

1,460

local child care providers improved their quality of care through professional development trainings and coaching.

926

new parents were supported through education and other resources.

694

children from low-income families received a solid educational foundation in Head Start.

279

homeless families got back into stable housing with short-term rent assistance.

269

families received home-visiting support services helping them maintain a stable home.

188

homes were weatherized making them warmer, safer, and more efficient.

101

homeless children and parents got back on their feet while staying at our Hillsboro Family Shelter.

80

people received career coaching.



Our Programs

HEAD START

Prepares children in low-income families, ages 0 to 5, for success in school and life, including children with special needs.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Provides professional development opportunities and coaching, including support for participation in Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System, called Spark.

HELP ME GROW

Provides phone-based assessment and assistance connecting families with prenatal and early childhood resources.

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Provides home visiting and case management to help families meet their goals, increase housing and income stability, and improve family functioning and parenting skills.

HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

Provides shelter for families experiencing homelessness and assists them in achieving housing stability.

EMERGENCY RENT ASSISTANCE AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Prevents homelessness and assures that families can remain in their homes by providing emergency and short-term financial assistance to families facing eviction.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Prevents homelessness and assures that families can remain safe and warm in their homes by providing financial assistance for heat and electricity services.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Helps families reduce energy bills by assessing home energy use, recommending cost-saving measures and connecting with resources to improve energy efficiency.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Helps families take charge of their finances and plan for their future by providing financial literacy classes and Individual Development Accounts.

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