

Maximizing Opportunities to Partner with Community Action Agencies

Anna Lovejoy: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the May 16 webinar on Building Foundations for Economic Mobility. This is Anna Lovejoy from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, and I'll be your host today. Thank you so much for joining us and coming back for another conversation. And thank you for playing along with our lobby activity. We asked you to identify some of the strengths that families bring to your Head Start and Early Head Start programs. And the list we saw were wonderful. We saw parents engaged with their children, bringing ideas and information about their community need, strong policy council members, and many others. So we appreciate it. We appreciate hearing from you and are excited to be with you today. Today's webinar we're going to be focusing on maximizing opportunities to partner with Community Action Agencies. What I wanted to start off by saying is that we know that Head Start and Early Head Start programs are already doing a lot to support the economic mobility of your families. But we know that we can't do it all, but the good news is you don't have to. And we keep coming back to this theme on many of our webinars because community partnerships are so important to the work that you're doing. So today we're going to be learning more about Community Action Agencies and the roles that those organizations can play as your partner. So we're going to discuss what they are, how they can support economic mobility, and how your programs can partner with them.

Some of you may work in Head Start and Early Head Start programs that are already administered by Community Action Agencies. Others of you might have partnerships with your local Community Action Agencies. And some of you might just be learning about them for the first time. But regardless of your level of familiarity with these organizations, this webinar hopefully will offer you some ideas and strategies and tools for partnering with a Community Action Agency that may be in or close to your community.

Before we launch into our conversation and introduce today's speakers, I wanted to just take a quick moment to remind everybody if you haven't already joined MyPeers, we do have an Economic Mobility Learning Community that is in the MyPeers platform, and here are the instructions for how to register for an account. There's a link right there. If you click on it and fill out the form, you should receive an email back that will lead you to the MyPeers platform where you can create a user profile and set up your account. And then once you're in, you can find the Economic Mobility Learning Community and just click join on the landing page. The MyPeers administrators are offering a series of orientation webinars for new users. And so they have two coming up in May. One is on Tuesday, May 23 from 11 to 11:45 am Eastern and then another on Tuesday, May 30 from 2 to 2:45 pm Eastern. So the registration links are there. We will also post them in the the general chat in a few minutes. So let me encourage you if you're interested but want to learn more about MyPeers, we encourage you to go ahead and register for those. And we really hope that you will join our community. We're going to be uploading links and resources and posting poll questions and certainly encourage you all to do the same and share questions and ideas.

The space is there for all of us to participate in peer sharing, so we just encourage you to get online and get in there and start talking. So we'll look for you there. For today's conversation, we're going to do a couple of things. We're going to first make sure that we're all on the same page by starting off with a brief overview of Community Action Agencies and their historic connection to Head Start. Second, we're going to hear about some of the specific opportunities for collaboration between Early Head Start and

Head Start and Community Action Agencies to support economic mobility. And then we're going to dig deeper into the example of one Community Action Agency that has spent many years trying to connect Head Start and other services to help families on the path to greater economic and financial security. But before we get to our speakers we wanted to do a quick poll to see how all of you out there might already be working with or thinking about partnership with Community Action Agencies in your communities. So here's the question: Which of the following statements best describes your Early Head Start and Head Start program? The options are: My program is administered by a local Community Action Agency. My program is currently partnering with or making referrals.

My program is not currently partnering with or making referrals. Or I'm not sure if my program is administered by or partnering with a local Community Action Agency. So we are waiting for folks to weigh in. Looks like we have a minute. I'll give everybody another minute. And while we're doing that I also wanted to take a moment to just remind folks that Nina Zumpalova is on the line. She is our Communications and Technical Support. So we appreciate Nina's support today. Raquan Wedderburn is also with us, and she'll be typing in information into the general chat. So those are some names to look out for. And we will. I'm going to go ahead and broadcast the results. I'm going to end the poll. So it looks like we have about 50% of you are already administered by a local Community Action Agency. We have about 30% of you currently partnering and then a handful of you that are not or aren't quite sure.

So that's actually really great news. We're thrilled to see that there is so many partnerships and awareness of Community Action Agencies already happening. So hopefully this webinar is going to give you some additional information and tips, but we also encourage you to share examples of what you may already be doing, because that's kind of the whole point here that we can share our own experiences as well as hear from experts and folks out in the field. So we thank you and I'm going to introduce our next speaker or our first speaker, that is. We have with us today Seth Hassett who is the Director of the Division of Community Assistance in the Office of Community Services and the Administration for Children and Families at the US Department of Health and Human Services. Seth is responsible for the oversight of specialized technical assistance and performance management efforts for the Community Services Block Grant. He coordinates multiple contract organizations, grantees, and other stakeholders in support of the Community Services Block Grant. He's been with the Office of Community Services since 2009. And we are just absolutely thrilled that he is able to be with us today. So I'm going to turn things over to him and I'm going to lead off with a question for you Seth which is, what can you tell us about Community Action Agencies?

Seth Hassett: Oh okay, thank you Anna. And so we appreciate the efforts of the Office of Head Start and the National Center for Parent and Family and Community Engagement for hosting this webinar and for highlighting the importance of coordination of services and strategies between Head Start and Community Action Agencies at the community level. We have a lot to tell you about Community Action Agencies. First I want to just start by telling you for those of you who are not familiar, you heard a little bit about the Office of Community Services, or OCS, and we are a component of the Administration for Children and Families comparable to the Office of Head Start. And OCS as a whole is responsible for a number of programs including three large block grants: the Low Income Home Energy Assistance, of LIHEAP Program, the Social Services Block Grant, and the Community Services Block Grant. And as the Director of the Division of Community Assistance, I oversee program activities for Community Services Block Grant, or CSBG. And this provides core funding for this national network of over 1000 Community Action Agencies and other eligible entities across the country. And there is a Community Action Agency

in most communities across the US. Most often they're nonprofit agencies, but there are also public Community Action Agencies.

And not all Community Action Agencies have the words community action in their organization title, though many do. Some CAAs have titles that refer to economic opportunity or economic development, and some are known by other names or acronyms. However, all of the eligible entities that receive CSBG, Community Services Block Grant, are responsible for conducting a community needs assessment and developing a community action plan to address high priority needs for low income people in the communities they serve. Community Action Agencies involve low income people, local elected officials, and other community stakeholders in the planning and delivery of a wide variety of services and strategies. Community Action Agencies and Head Start providers have shared history, and in fact in many communities as we've just noticed, the Community Action Agency is the local Head Start provider. In many other instances Community Action Agency and the Head Start provider are separate organizations, but in all instances we encourage coordination and planning of service delivery. Today you will be hearing from the National Community Action Partnership, which is the National Association of Community Action Agencies, and you will be hearing from Garrett County Community Action, which is an agency that has worked to integrate Head Start and other early childhood programs with a variety of services for parents and families. Garrett County has been working at the coordination of multigenerational approaches for some time, but no matter where your agency is currently in terms of coordination of services and strategies, we strongly encourage you to keep working in this area. If your Head Start program is part of a Community Action Agency, then part of this may be about arranging and working on internal coordination in your organization.

Community Action Agencies can be large and complex and they can have components and divisions, and just like any large organization or complex organization, there can be work that can be done to integrate and improve. And there are certain strengths to having the Head Start program in the Community Action Agency, but if your local Community Action Agency is separate, then it may involve external partnerships, and you can sort of think of a continuum of partnerships in which it's always possible to improve. You may begin in the area of work on information exchange. It may be a matter of, in some cases and for example in Garrett County, they really have focused on everything from data collection to financial coordination to even transportation coordination in a variety of ways. But from a family's perspective, the goal is and the focus is to help that family create a pathway to economic security and achievement, goals for children and their parents and their caregivers. So with that, I will hand over back to, I believe, back to Anna and we will hear from our other partners.

Anna: Thanks, I certainly appreciate that overview. So now I'm going to turn things over to our next speaker. And I would like to introduce Denise Harlow who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Community Action Partnership. Denise has been the CEO of Community Action Partnership since December of 2014. And she's been with the agency, the organization itself, since November of 2011. Before that she spent five years as the Head of the New York State Community Action Association and at the same time served on the Board of the New York State Head Start Association and served on the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council. So she brings with her today a wealth of knowledge and experience in working with Community Action Agencies and with Head Start. And so we are just thrilled that she is able to be here today. And Denise, I'm just going to kick you off for your remarks just by asking you to tell us a little bit about your organization, its mission and goals, and what it does.

Denise Harlow: Great, thanks Anna. Thank you everyone for being on the call today. As Seth mentioned, the Community Action Network is incredibly diverse in terms of organizationsó types of organizations and breadth in terms of serving 96% of America's counties. The partnership is the National Membership Association working with the local Community Action Agencies as well as the state associations that help serve their needs in terms of training and technical assistance. A lot of pieces of our network, I think, definitely cross over with Head Start whether your Head Start program is embedded within a local Community Action Agency. And I see through the survey that a number of you are from Community Action, so glad to have you on today. And we also know there are a number of Head Start programs not embedded within CAP agencies, and we have a number of you on the call today as well. So we want to talk a little bit about both internally and externally how the groups can really work together. Community Action Agencies are required to do community assessments every three years, and as Head Start organizations needing to do community assessments, where can we find crossovers? So Community Action Agencies are truly trying to invest in finding what local needs are so they can develop localized solutions to poverty in their own community. Community Action does take a whole family approach. Each CAP agency looks a little bit different, has a different range of services that they provide, but you really try to start where the family is and what the family needs are. Community Action Agencies are known for service coordination. We work with local and state partnerships. Fighting poverty is not something an organization can do by itself. In addition to our thousand agencies, we do have 44 state associations. I know many of those associations do work hand in hand with the Head Start state associations. In some places they do joint conferences, joint events. They share board members. Really it's a creative way to work together across the country. As Seth mentioned, the Community Services Block Grant is what gives the CAP agency its designation as a block grant that does float your state's CSBG offices, which also vary across the country. But they are great partners in helping us connect to other state departments and navigating again this whole family approach to working with families. And last year Community Action served 15 million people and more than 6 million families. Now, when you're working with a family in Head Start, I hope that you'll consider Community Action as a referral source. We provide a range ofóit depends on the CAP agency certainly but agencies tend to offer a range of emergency services, whether that's LIHEAP, shelter services, perhaps some emergency rent, food services, food boxes, food pantry, things like that range of emergency services. Our agencies can also be a referral source for job training and employment., financial capability, asset development for families, adult education, GED programs, literacy programs, tax prep services. A lot of our CAP agencies are VITA sites, voluntary income tax prep sites. And I hope that when you have families during tax season, if they need to file their taxes to please refer them to a local Community Action Agency for assistance. A number of our agencies also provide healthcare whether they run a health clinic. Some of our CAPs run everything from an FQHC, or a Federally Qualified Health Clinic. Some of them will run dental clinics or women's health centers. We even have a CAP agency that runs in a hospital emergency room in rural America. So it really depends on the CAP agency. Weatherization is another program that Community Action is well known for helping low income families weatherize their homes, make them more energy efficient, or decrease the energy burden on families. Weatherization is also a job training and career pathway for many folks as well.

The Community Action certainly takes a family development or a strength based approach when working with families just as at Head Start. We believe that all families have their strengths and on those strengths on which they can build leading toward success. Now if you're not within a Community Action Agency, I think there are a number of ways that we can also be of assistance. We can also be a resource

for your standalone Head Start or Early Head Start program for enrollment. When enrollment season opens, I hope that you're working with your local CAP agency to promote your enrollment times, how families can get in touch with your program, and really try to be a funnel for perhaps board members, policy council members. There are a lot of different places there that I think Community Action can be of help. Also through other community collaborations. As we know many communities are really heading toward the whole family approach, which we are incredibly supportive of. If you're a standalone Head Start, you may not have those wraparound services for mom and dadójob training, other childcare for other age children in the home, emergency services, access to benefit enrollment programs. So if you are looking to go down that whole family approach, we hope that you find Community Action to be a great partner in your local community.

And as with standalone Head Starts, if you're looking to do community assessments or community planning, I hope that you do turn to your CAP agency, whether it's for a partner at the table to help you do the assessments, perhaps some expertise to conduct surveys or focus groups, and certainly to share information and help you think about priorities in your local community. And finally shared services and co-location.. If you're a standalone Head Start, perhaps our CAP agencies can offer support whether it's offering some fiscal management support services, governance work. There are a lot of different kinds of things behind the scenes that perhaps Community Action Agencies can add value to a local organization in a community. And also co-location. As a standalone Head Start, I know many organizations, CAP agencies as well, who run Head Starts have certain classrooms through a community whether they're embedded in a Housing Authority complex or withinówe had one organization in the northwest of our country who was doing a housing development project as well as a health clinic, and they were sure to embed a Head Start classroom in that location. So considering co-location opportunities is another opportunity, I think, for Head Start programs.

There's a lot more information about Community Action up on our website, which is communityactionpartnership.com. We have an annual conference every year. This year it's going to be in Philadelphia the last week or August. And we always have program offerings for Head Start including a Head Start Town Hall that is open to anybody who works with families. So again for more information about Community Action, I encourage you to visit our website, and I'm happy to take any questions as we go through here today about Community Action and how your program can better partner with Community Action. Anna, I'll turn it back over to you.

Anna: Thanks Denise. At this point I just want to stop and pause and see if there are any questions or reflections that anyone has based on what they've heard already from our first two speakers. So if you do have a question, you can go ahead and type it in to general chat and we'll all see it. Thank you Raquan. And I know while we're waiting for any questions to roll in, I understand that May is Community Action Agency Month. Is that right Denise?

Denise: It is. May is Community Action Month. So I hope that maybe you'll take some time during the course of May to use the hashtag #becommunityaction if you go onto Twitter or Facebook or Instagram and put that hashtag in and search, you'll see a lot of different postings. Just last week we had a huggy heart coloring contest and we had Head Start kids all over the country coloring what we call our huggy heart, which is part of our logo. So this is a great time to talk about and tweet and Facebook and talk about the great work that Head Start and Community Action does together to help families.

Anna: That's great. Maybe we can put some information and some links up on our MyPeers networking community. So that's another incentive for everybody to go sign up for that as well. I do see a couple of people have asked< what is LiHEAP? I'm wondering Seth, could you answer that question for us?

Seth: Sure, yeah. LiHEAP stands for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program that's a blockóit's a block grant that goes to states, and then states work through networks and providers, often the Community Action Agencies but not in every state. They have identified providers that provide financial assistance to households for their energy needs, for low income households. So it can be either heating assistance, heating needs, or in some cases air conditioning, but their home energy needs. So in many, many cases those grants, the LiHEAP program may be administered by the local Community Action Agency but not all states.

Anna: Okay, well thank you. Denise, anything to add about LiHEAP? I think someone asked whether it's offered in New York, but I'm not sure if we know that one.

Denise: I believe it's just called HEAP in New York. But yes, energy assistance is a critical piece of sometimes a family's benefit package. And we do run out of it in some states sometimes when the weather gets to be such that HEAP is drawn down. So it is available, and we hope that families referred to Community Action, if they have questions about it.

Anna: Okay. Let's see. Edward Bethia says, "I missed the earlier survey." Oh, but he just wanted to point out that his program is also a Head Start grantee in Southern New Jersey. So thanks for joining us today. I think at this point we're going to move on and you can continue typing your questions into the general chat and we will save them and we'll have another round of Q&A at the end of the webinar. But at this point I wanted to keep moving on because we have a really exciting presentation today. We are delighted to have Tracy Bowman, who is the Director of Child and Family Development at Garrett County Community Action Committee. For those of you who are not familiar with Garrett County Community Action Committee, they are recognized as a national leader in the two generation trends and have shared their story in many places, so we're thrilled that Tracy can be here today to help us learn a little bit more about what their journey has been and what lessons they've learned along the way.

So Tracy's been with Garrett County Communication Action Committee for almost six years in the Child and Family Development. And she is now the Department Director. And upon her arrival the agency had just gone through a reorganization and strategic planning process and was setting the stage for the intensive two-generation services that they have been providing. And their county is also involved with the Annie E. Casey Foundation Two-Generation Initiative and has been part of the White House Rural Council Two-Generations Project. So we are thrilled that she's here today. She's going to tell us about how they are continuing their journey with ongoing data collection and monitoring and analysis and conducting family needs and connecting families to everything that theyó the services that they provide. So I'm going to welcome Tracy. And the first question I have for you

Tracy is can you tell us just a little bit about Garrett County Community Action Agency and what is its mission and vision? Tracy

Bowman: Okay, well thank you for having me. And starting with the mission of Garrett County Community Action, we have that is to improve the quality of life for people in need by empowering them to become more economically secure and by providing essential services in collaboration and cooperation with partners. So our vision would be to provide comprehensive services to all the families in need in our community and to do that in a way that's easy for folks to navigate and work through this system while also identifying their goals and needs.

Anna: Thanks. And can you tell us what motivated your organization to begin its journey towards the organizational change that has really made it a national leader?

Tracy: So around 2009, we saw that the agency saw the need to better integrate services. We saw that assistance was being delivered in silos, and some of this was unintentionally reinforced by funding sources and reporting requirements and tradition. So the deficiencies in that system emphasized the distribution of assistance but not necessarily attempts to improve circumstances that brought the clients to our agency. So we really looked at policies and programs that could address the needs of children and their parents together, really bundling those services to ensure we're harnessing the family's full potential and putting the entire family on a path to permanent economic security. So how we kind of started with that, we saw that there was a lot of extensive outreach going on with different departments. So we were all reaching for the same clients in our community and customers, but we were doing that on an individual and siloed basis. What happened, we had different application forms for every program. People were bringing in the same documents, their IDs, incomes, different information multiple times. Departments had to complete multiple forms with the same information. They went to different departments or different buildings to receive services. There was just a lot of redundancy with the process. So we wanted to have an emphasis on receiving outcomes and not just putting those outputs out there for families. And we weren't really harnessing the community partners that we had available to us or the connection that staff across our agency were able to provide to families.

Anna: And so, you went through a process of identifying where the challenges and roadblocks were. But then what did you identify as kind of what you actually wanted to achieve? What was your theory of change as you continued down this path toward trying to become more coordinated and serving your families better?

Tracy: So as we saw the siloed approach, we also identified gaps as a lot of our families and clients, they needed help with financial coaching and financial management. That wasn't something we offered strongly in the agency. We needed some help with career advancement and, as I said, the silos. So in the same point looking at where we had gaps, it's important to look at your agency's strengths. And we knew we had the quality early education programs through Head Start and Early Head Start. We had a good portfolio of stabilization and asset building resources. And there was the opportunity for external collaboration. We were working with a lot of partners but not necessarily to strongly collaborate services for families. So we started this work with a strategic plan that focused on economic security and

independent living for families, and then we looked at inner integration strategy and was our foundation for our 2G work. What got this work moving was a 12-month pilot period. So from 2010 to 2011, we did an agency restructure, which we'll talk about a little bit in the next slide. We created a new process for goals, which is our Pathway Planning Process known to a lot of folks in the Head Start world as our Family Partnership Agreements. And we did a lot of IT improvements that included an agency-wide database and making sure that remote locations and areas could also be connected to the same technology as our main sites.

And with this in 2012, we got involved with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Learning Networks and Ascend to support our work. On the next slide I talked a little bit about our organizational changes. And we reorganized departments and gave them names that were organized around outcomes and strategic objectives rather than contents. So we now have our Service Coordination, Asset Development, Aging and Nutrition, Child and Family Development, Community and Economic Development, and Transportation Departments. Along with structuring our departments, we also had to look at our staffing structure. So our agency used to have over 80 position descriptions. And with the restructuring we narrowed that down to 12 different description positions that were general, and they reflected the GCCA function of helping families navigate services rather than being specific and narrowed in on program needs. How we address program needs is through individual work plans that relate directly back to outcomes of the strategic plan.

And they provide a platform for expectations of individual employees and allow for performance evaluations. We also infuse different service lenses looking at coaching practices and financial education for all front line staff. It's really important we realized that for families to be engaged in their goals and the work that they do, that they have ownership in that plan and goals. So we were able to implement coaching rather than a more counseling type model. And we looked at bundling services and support for coordinators. So structures to support bundling. And when we talk about bundling, there's a lot of values that we find in that. It allows for a higher utilization of agency resources if you're a multi-service agency, such as our Community Action and others. Better utilization of a client's time. Since we're using universal intake, we're able to provide more services in-house, and we also have a tool called presumptive eligibility in which we've collected requirements for other programs outside of our Community Action, such as WIC, TANF, food stamps, and are able to tell a client, "We don't guarantee it, but based upon the information we've gathered, it's going to be worth your time to look into other services in the community." It's a comprehensive response to participants' needs and strengths and to help them strive to achieve their goals.

And the value of bundling meets the needs of participants and helps them move forward. So when we look at our universal intake, it was kind of our first support system to bundling. And in the case of our agency, we created a no wrong door approach and utilized the universal intake application for all programs and services. And we work with partner agencies to define the eligibility for support services. We have developed a robust client tracking system that all employees can access. They can access the information necessary to their work, but it's used across all of the different position descriptions. And through that we can track our families' pathway plan assessments in real time because regardless of which door they came into the agency or department, that's accessible to other departments. In order to provide the best customer service, one of the most important parts of this is cross-department training. And that's really what the front line staff or folks we call coordinatorsó so in the Head Start world these are our family service workers.

But all departments within the agency here have coordinators. So those folks participate in large group coordinator meetings where they see what other departments are doing and what kind of work they're doing so that they know what would be good services for their families to utilize. We also worked with developing partnerships with other agencies, just the steps of understanding their requirements to build presumptive eligibility. And through that we've obtained information and data sharing agreements, MOUs, and do joint meetings to address gaps in policy challenges and talk about individual client cases. We are looking a little bit at our Family Assessment. So this is kind of the foundation to the work we do with families when they come to the agency. It's a self-assessment tool that addresses the family's well being. So our five primary domains you see are food and nutrition, housing, childcare, transportation, and financial management. And those are utilized through all departments. When a family comes in they're assessed on those scales of 1 to 10.

We also have a longer tool that's 10 additional questions. And that's used primarily with our Head Start program and looks at a larger array of things such as credit, education, job skills, health insurance, energy usage, assets, and so on. So where the family falls on these scales is based upon the participant's response to basic questions of where they fit along the spectrum. So just an example in the transportation domain. If I did not have a vehicle and relied exclusively on friends and family, I would circle number 3 and be considered vulnerable in the domain. In other domains that same person though may be in crisis, safe, stable, or thriving. So we don't put it as a standard across all domains. We can look at where their strengths and weaknesses are. The Family Self Sufficiency Scale information is tracked and updated on a regular basis, at minimum every 6 months but with Head Start we do it more frequently, at least every 3 months. This allows us to look in the system and share the success with the families and celebrate that with them at different stages of our work. This is also the stepping stone for creating pathway plans because we can kind of look across this family's assessment of themselves and use it as a way to coachó look at the areas they're lower in on their assessments, and that's a good place to start moving forward with goals.

Anna: Thanks so much Tracy. The next slide we're going to take you toó we'd love to hear what kind of family outcomes are you seeing from all of this work? And I know it's been a long journey, but what are you seeing as the result?

Tracy: Okay, we have seen an increase on career advancement and financial management services. So how we look at these areas are where are families starting on the Crisis to Thrive Scale? How many different services are they receiving? And that's not just necessarily different programs. It's not just are they visiting programs in service coordination and asset development but are they participating in financial workshops we offer? Are they engaged with our career coach through our SNAP E&T program? What are they doing and then how is that affecting their end or final assessment score? So we saw an increase in the more services they're taking advantage of and working with. They're having higher scores on Crisis to Thrive. It's just been a consistent pattern of improvement for families who are engaged in the process and participating in what we offer. We see a reduction in the number of repeat crises across the agency by this planning and allowing the family to really look at themselves and where they want to go. There's been a major reduction in crises. And one of the biggest things we saw through this process is we've been able to take our Child Assessment scores and look at them with Family Well-Being scores. So we do composite scoring, and it's always been a thought that families who are doing better, those children who are doing better. But we've had data support this now for about 3 years. We've been able to take those Crisis to Thrive scores, put it with the Child Assessment scores and what level they're at,

and we truly do see those kids coming from families who are bundling services, doing well on Crisis to Thrive, and participating in our services. Those children truly are being more prepared to enter school ready to learn.

Anna: That's great. I know we've had a couple of questions roll in for you Tracy. The first is, is the Family Assessment tool, the Crisis to Thrive tool that you described, is that something that you all created yourselves or is it available for others?

Tracy: That tool was created in house. We looked at some other tools that were out there and put something together that really fit us. And I would be more than happy to share that if that would be something Anna I could get to you and you share with the participants. That would be fine. I really think it's important to look at your community where you live, and you might need to edit the dimensions and edit the scoring, but I'd be more than happy to share what we use. Yes.

Anna: Okay, thanks. Well we'll see what we can do to get that out to folks in some form or fashion because I think the sharing of tools is always useful and, in fact, that's another plus for MyPeers as a great place where we can share and upload documents and share them with others. So that's another reason to get online and get signed up for MyPeers because as soon as we can we'll have it available up there, assuming that that's something we can do. All right. So I have a couple of other questions for you Tracy before we open the phones back up to the other presenters and invite other questions from participants. And one is, can you tell us a little bit more about the internal professional development that you all are doing across the different pieces of the organization?

Tracy: Yes, yes. So we know that when we started this process we had a group of staff, and staff turnover is something that happens. So you can't just train your initial group that's going to start this process on what's going on in the agency. It has to be continual. So the part with the coordinators, everyone here is trained on a coaching model, and we put a lot of emphasis on financial coaching training. There's a lot of options out there and available for folks to tune into and use. So on an ongoing monthly basis, there's a staff person within our agency who's a family economic security manager. He's not in Head Start. He works for the agency as a whole. And his role is to pull all of the coordinators together from all departments on a monthly basis as a large group and just have conversations about things that are going on within the agency, talk about what all departments have going on at that time. And it's just really valuable for them to network and communicate and understand what's going on across departments. He also has small group meetings in which we divide the coordinators in half and they can have a little more intense personal conversations maybe about specific clients they're working with together in that setting.

Anna: So thank you Tracy. This has been so helpful. I'm wonderingóthis is my last question for you and then we can turn to the others. Are there any specific lessons from your experience at Garrett County considering where you sit with the Family Support Services. Are there any lessons that you feel you could offer to other Head Start grantees that are situated either within a Community Action Agency or external to them?

Tracy: I do, and my journey here actually started supervising our Family Service Coordinators. And when a lot of this work was just starting, that was my role. And I think support of themó we collect a lot of data and asked what would seem to be when you start this process personal questions. We're really looking at our families deep down trying to understand where they really are at the time we enter their

lives. So supporting them and helping them create a comfort level of working with families in that way, letting them understand where their beliefs and judgments are and getting past that and just working with the families where they are and helping the families truly reach the goals that are important and valuable to them. And letting them see the data they create has also been really important. In all they collect, it's important to make sure they see what we're doing with that or you don't get quality data if you're not showing them you're truly using it.

Anna: Thanks Tracy. So actually there is one more question, but this one isn't from me. It came in from one of the participants. And that is, thinking about the universal intake process that you have, is that intake at all access points and programs, because apparently sometimes some programs do not allow for the sharing of client intake information maybe across programs or divisions. So can you speak to that a little bit?

Tracy: Yes, so our intake is available across the whole Community Action Agency here in Garrett County. And we don't have any programs where that's an issue. Of course families do sign release and consents for their information to be used in the database. But that hasn't been an issue we have. You know, with Head Start we're dealing with thingsó child physicals, health information. That's all protected within our department. Only staff who are working with that data see it. It's not available throughout the agency. So with this common database and intake, only things that are pertinent for staff to see are available.

Anna: So I'd like to turn things openó actually Edward has a followup question. He asks, how many access points do you have?

Tracy: Okay, so I believe thereó let's see, so building-wise in the community I think we probably have five to eight locations. And different departments, there are six to seven different departments here. So there are quite a few different points. All of the coordinators that we talk about would be doing intake with families in this database. So I believe there are around 28 to 30 coordinators.

Anna: All right, well keep your questions coming. Keep typing your questions in. We're scanning for them and we'll be happy to share them with our speakers. I actually have a question for Denise. We just heard about a really incredible example of a Head Start program within a Community Action Agency. But what are some ways that you think programs can partner if their located externally to a Community Action Agency? So where could someone start to make those kinds of connections if they don't already exist?

Denise: I think there are really some great opportunities if you're a standalone Head Start or embedded in another nonprofit school district or other entity to partner with a CAP agency on behalf of your families. If you see a family when you're doing their assessment in terms of what you heard earlier about what are the family's needs, starting where the family's at, assessing them along this continuum if there are crisis services or emergency needs that have to be met before a parent or a family can start moving along that continuum. I think a CAP agency can be a great stop or a first stop on that plan to get the family stabilized. So whether it's emergency services, whether the CAP agency itself does that emergency service provision, they certainly know and are connected to a breadth of agencies in their community who can make the referral, make the connection, in some cases provide transportation. In some spots they may have some online benefit application programs. It really depends on the Community Action Agency, but when you do your initial family assessment, I think the Community Action Agency could be one of your first stops in terms of meeting that family's needs. I also think when

you think about the whole family approach, again in terms of job training, connections to community colleges and career pathways programs, a number of CAP agencies would have access to where those opportunities might sit, what existing programs might be there, the connection to the one stop in terms of WIOA, or the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act and connecting parents into those programs to get job training and eventually employment. I think those are a couple of ways.

Anna: Yeah great, those are some really great suggestions. Is there a wayó oh Raquan just posted it. She beat me to my question. The question was, how can folks find out if there is a Community Action Agency in their communities? Do you want to talk a little bit about the tool that's on your website Denise?

Denise: Sure, and we just migrated to a brand new website, so my apologies if there are any bumps along the way. But on our website, communityactionpartnership.com, there is a space that says Find Your CAA. And in the space, you can search by zip code, by state, in a variety of ways to find your local Community Action Agency and probably even your state association. If you run into any problems, feel free to email me. My contact information is up on the website at dharlow@communityactionpartnership.com. And we'll make sure we connect you to your local CAP agency and your state association. Again there might be great ways that your Head Start association can partner with your local CAP association in terms of training and technical assistance.

Anna: Thank you. I think another question came in for Tracy asking about how staff allocate their time when there are multiple funding sources involved. Can you speak to that Tracy?

Tracy: Okay, so within our department across programs we allocate, but each department in the agency has their allocation plan and works with the families. So they're doing intake for our programs, and we don't really allocate. So if a Head Start coordinator was assisting a family in getting energy assistance, LIHEAP, we wouldn't code that time to that department. That when it comes to Head Start is just part of our work in helping families progress and move forward, so if that's a goal they have, that's what's in our allowable use of time to do that without coding it to another department or funding stream.

Anna: That's helpful. Well keep those questions coming. We still have a few more minutes. I think while we we're waiting for any final questions to come through, I have one question that I would love for each of our presenters to answer. And maybe we'll start with Seth first because we haven't heard from him in a little while. Seth, if you could indulge us with your thoughts on the most important adviceó maybe one or two or three things that you would give to Head Start grantees as they start or continue the work of building partnerships between Head Start and Community Action Agencies. Is there anything that you would recommend that they do?

Seth: Well I think some of the basics, depending upon where you are, it will matter, whether of course, if you are external to the Head Start agency, and I think starting with that tool at the partnership if you're not familiar with your local Community Action Agency is just to look them up. You may find that in most cases they'll have a website. I certainly constantly am looking up local Community Action Agencies on their websites. But I would say just let them know that we encouraged the contact, and make that contact with your counterparts. And again it's part of the mission of a Community Action Agency to work in partnership and serve the entire community. And so whether it's from their community when they're in the process of conducting their community needs assessment, you can be a critical partner from the very get to in terms of identifying needs. And I think you heard some really good things today about sort of when you're serving families and you know if you have researched the

range of services that they have available and have built relationships with your local local Community Action Agency or even the other components of your agency that provide if you're in the Community Action Agency, that you have resources. And I think also just know that for most Community Action Agencies, if they're a Head Start provider, you're one of their most valued assets in terms of reach to the community and in many cases one of the most important ambassadors to find families and to find families who need a range of services and can benefit from the assistance. So the Community Action Agency needs that Head Start relationship as much as you need it, and it can be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Anna: Thanks. Denise, do you want to take a crack at that question? What would be your pieces of advice to give to any Head Start grantees?

Denise: I think it's the willingness to partner with. I think Seth is dead on. If you are part of a local CAP agency and your Head Start's embedded in that organization, your Head Start program is probably a big chunk of that organization's budget and one of its key calling cards in the community. So being aware of the full breadths and depths of services that that local CAP agency has within it. It's hard to know sometimes what a family may need. Sometimes they're asking about their immediate service needs. And if you are embedded in a Community Action Agency, you have the opportunity to perhaps connect that family with a myriad of services that fall kind of outside of what they may be thinking of when they come to Head Start, whether that's weatherization, whether that's job training, whether that's entrepreneurial work, whether that'só it could be really a myriad of projects. So become familiar with the breadth of services that your CAP agency provides. And if you're in a standalone Head Start, find your local CAP agency. Figure out what breadth of services again that they have at their fingertips. I know when I was a case manager, you always had that referral list with you in the back of your binder or the back seat of your car or kind of in the back of your mind and who were your go-to people when you need to refer a family for services. those agencies that are going to return your call, those agencies that are actually going to meet with the family and give that sense of hope and opportunity and a level of respect. And I hope that you find your local CAP agency is that resource. Whether you're within the CAP agency or you're external to the CAP agency, I hope you find that's a great partner.

Anna: Thanks. Tracy, do you want to give it a shot? What would be your advice?

Tracy: I do. Denise kind of went the route I was thinking, but I think you can turn that around. And as the Head Start grantee within your agency or if you're not in the agency, it's important to make sure your partners and the folks in the Community Action know what you have to offer. So making sure they understand that your quality education program, the comprehensive services you can provide to families, you ensure that they're a good referral source for you that when a family comes across their department or agency, they're making sure they send them to you to get that child enrolled in services.

Anna: Great, thank you. We're going to have to leave it there. I just wanted to mention before we lose everybody to please save the date for the next webinar. It will be July 20th at 3 o'clock Eastern. The topic will be Back to School Time for Parents, Helping Families Pursue Education and Training Opportunities. So be sure to subscribe to our newsletter so that you can be sure to get the registration information when it comes out. I would just like to take this last 10 seconds to thank our speakers today. We really appreciate your time and effort to share all this wonderful information. Thank you to all the folks behind the scenes supporting us. And thank you to everybody else who continues to come back. And we hope that you learned something today and that you'll come back next time. We are going to

keep the lines open for another 15 minutes. The audio is shutting down, but you can continue to use the chat box to post questions or share ideas. We'll still be typing in another 15 minutes. And also just to remind folks that certificates will be emailed once you fill out the webinar survey that you will receive via email very soon. So you can keep an eye out for that. So thanks so much for joining us. And we look forward to seeing you again in July. It's July 20. Okay? Thank you. Bye bye.