Will County Center for Community Concerns

2021 Annual Report

From the Executive Director

2021 was another difficult year for us all. The COVID-19 pandemic continued, and challenges abounded. However, our community is resilient. According to the American Psychological Association, resilience is "the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences." Will County Center for Community Concerns (WCCCC) promoted the resilience of our neighbors most in need by providing support to help them get through the challenges of 2021 - helping keep our neighbors housed, helping keep the electricity and water on, helping people find jobs or access education, and more. WCCCC adapted to the challenges of 2021 through new housing programs (including a Down Payment Assistance Program, a Homeowner Assistance Fund, and Illinois Rental Payment Plan), by hiring a new Outreach Coordinator to interact with the community and inform those in need about the services we provide, and by hiring a new Employment Coordinator to work with our customers to write resumes, improve interviewing skills, and provide referrals to available positions. A new WCCCC staff member also assisted our Homeless Services Department with Landlord Engagement, finding landlords willing to work with those experiencing homelessness. Due to this new effort, our list of potential landlords grew from 8 to 20 in just a few short months. We also partnered with Governors State University to help customers interested in the field of education obtain free training to become a Para-Professional in an Early Child Education Program, helping 33 people obtain the credentials needed for a new job. I am proud not only of these new efforts, but also of our continuing programs and services that make a real difference in the lives of thousands of Will County residents. I would like to thank all of the people - our Board, our staff, our volunteers, our donors, and our partners - who helped WCCCC assist people in need in 2021. Together, we make Will County a better, more resilient place.

Kris ■ KRIS WHITE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Will County Center for Community Concerns

community Action

Providing Hope Through Self-Sufficiency

From the Board Chair

Every year, Will County Center for Community Concerns (WCCCC) works to meet the needs of low-income individuals and households through a variety of vital programs and services. Although this year was no different, the continued COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges continued to keep the level of demand for our services high. We are proud to have provided 13,813 services in 2021 - services that saved homes from foreclosure and kept people from being evicted, that helped people find a place to live or helped those who are homeless access assistance, that helped heat homes in the winter and cool homes in the summer, that kept the lights on and the water running, that ensured homes were safe and livable, that taught budgeting and financial literacy, that helped fight hunger, that helped people find jobs, and more. As Board Chair, I would like to thank everyone who helped promote the resiliency of not only WCCCC, but also the low-income individuals and families we assist. In a year characterized by distress and anxiety, we provided hope to those in need, promoting a brighter future for our community.

Linda ■ LINDA POTE, BOARD CHAIR

leadership

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Frank Costa ▪ TREASURER
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WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE & EMPLOYEES
WILL COUNTY SIDING & WINDOWS
WILL TOWNSHIP
WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORP

2021 Services Provided

PROGRAM		SERVICES PROVIDED
Back-to-School		60
Case Management		323
Clothes for Work		4
ComEd Special Hardship Program		374
Substance Abuse Counseling		22
Economic Development / Work Readiness	1	1
Case Management - Rent		418
Emergency Food & Shelter Program		225
Emergency Solutions Program (ESG)		369
Employment Support		16
Energy Savings Kits		1,355
Financial Literacy		79
Single Family Rehab (SFR)		4
Emergency Rental Assistance		484
Nicor Aide Program		105
Home Accessibility Program (HAP)	1	1
Homeless Case Management-Intake/CES		358
Homeless Services Program-CoC		952
Homeless/Street Outreach		199
Housing Counseling		219
Information / Referral		771
LIHEAP		4,582
Water Assistance		260
Mortgage Assistance		35
Nutrition Program		735
Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)		1,033
REH-Unrestricted Home Repair		15
Scholarship Program		10
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)		369
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance		320
Weatherization		115
TOTAL		**13,813**

Programs and Services

WCCCC works to reduce poverty, to revitalize low-income communities, and to empower low-income families to become self-sufficient. WCCCC's programs and services are designed specifically to meet the needs of the Will County community. Certified Family and Community Development Specialists provide intensive case management to promote self-sufficiency.

WCCCC Provides the Following Programs

Back to School: This program provides school supplies for children in need in partnership with MorningStar Mission's "Jump on the Bus Program." WCCCC contributed $9,000 to help 60 children have the supplies they needed to increase their success in school.

Economic Development/Work Readiness: WCCCC staff provide employment counseling and career coaching, help customers enroll in work-readiness programs, provide work clothing, and help customers find permanent employment. Throughout 2021, WCCCC helped 1 individual become ready to work in an effort to help them become more self-sufficient.

Employment Support: WCCCC's employment support provides assistance with expenses directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment, such as the purchase of uniforms or tools required for a job, assistance with child care, assistance with car repairs, etc. In 2021, Employment Support was provided to 16 people.

Clothes for Work: WCCCC provides people with professional and quality clothing for interviews or for work. In 2021, WCCCC provided clothing to 4 people.

Financial Literacy: Customers participate in an educational program to improve their knowledge about budgeting, money management, insurance needs, identity theft, credit repair, etc. In 2021, 79 individuals participated in this program.

Homeless Case Management: Services include assistance with identification, employment, education, health, and other related expenses for which resources are otherwise unavailable in the community. In 2021, 358 individuals experiencing homelessness were assisted through this program.

Mortgage and Rental Assistance: Customers with mortgage delinquencies can be assisted with mortgage payments, mortgage modifications, and/or property taxes. Customers with delinquencies on their rent can be assisted with the payment of their rent. In 2021, WCCCC helped 937 individuals/families pay their rent, mortgage, or property tax to ensure they would not lose their homes.

Nutrition Programs: Funds are available for meals for seniors, holiday food boxes for families with children, and food boxes for other income-eligible customers. In 2021, WCCCC provided food for 735 individuals in need.

Case Management: WCCCC provides strength-based case management to individuals and families in need. In 2021, WCCCC helped 323 individuals and families.

Scholarship Program: WCCCC is able to offer scholarships up to $1,000 toward tuition, books, and supplies. WCCCC helped 10 people further their education in 2021.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA): Specially trained staff offer free tax preparation and e-file services for households with income of less than $54,000 per year. For the 2021 tax season, WCCCC helped 320 individuals/families prepare and submit their taxes accurately and on time.

Water Assistance: This program provides assistance with overdue water bills. In 2021, WCCCC helped 260 individuals keep their water on.

Substance Abuse Counseling: WCCCC works with Stepping Stones Treatment Center in Joliet to provide substance use and related mental health disorder treatment services. In 2021, WCCCC assisted 22 people through this service.

Information & Referral: WCCCC offers information and referrals for customers to other agencies and services within our community. Throughout 2021, WCCCC provided information and referrals for assistance to over 771 Will County residents.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Through the VITA Tax Preparation Program, WCCCC helped me file past taxes and get refunds that were due. I felt so anxious about my taxes, but working with your volunteers, I can rest assured they were done and submitted. Now I don't have to worry.

LIHEAP and Utility Assistance Programs: Energy costs can greatly stress the household budget and force families to decide between what bills to pay and what to do without. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help low-income households pay their energy bills. Assistance is provided as a one-time direct payment to the utility provider. Reconnection assistance and furnace replacement is also available to households in need. In 2021, 4,582 households received utility assistance through LIHEAP totaling $4,150,219. Many of those households (1,355) also received special home energy saving kits that included items like LED light bulbs and power strips.

In addition, WCCCC helps low-income Will County residents manage their energy costs through the PIPP (Percentage of Income Payment Plan) program. PIPP is an extended payment arrangement where clients make payments based on a percentage of their household income and WCCCC assists with the remainder of their utility bill. If clients pay their portion of the bill on time, some prior overdue payments are forgiven. In 2021, WCCCC provided $649,383 in assistance to 1,033 households through the PIPP program.

ComEd Special Hardship Program: The ComEd Special Hardship Program helps income eligible families with certain special hardships. Special hardships include medical bills, military service, disability, senior hardships, family crisis, property damage, loss of employment or income, or being the victim of a crime. In 2021, 374 households were assisted through this program. A total of $160,225 in financial assistance was provided

Weatherization: The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) is designed to help income-eligible Will County residents increase the energy efficiency of their homes, reduce their heating and cooling bills, and increase the comfort of their homes. Through IHWAP, participants receive heating system inspections (including repair or replacement of the furnace, if necessary), caulking, insulation of exterior walls and attic areas, weather stripping, and other energy conservation measures, such as replacement of old refrigerators with new energy efficient models. The Weatherization program is available to both homeowners and renters. In 2021, WCCCC assisted 115 households through this program at a total cost of $1,390,027.87.

Nicor Aide Program: The Nicor Aide Program helps families obtain repairs for their home to increase their energy efficiency. In 2021, 105 families were assisted through the Nicor Aide Program.

Home Repair: WCCCC's Home Repair Program provides necessary home repairs at no cost to income-eligible homeowners. Simple home repairs are unaffordable, yet repairs left undone can lead to unsafe living environments, code violations, and evictions. WCCCC's Home Repair Program addresses this need and helps residents turn around their substandard housing conditions, comply with building codes, and remain in their homes, thus avoiding homelessness. Typical repairs include window replacements, furnace or water heater repairs or replacements, roof repair, gutter repair, replacement of gas shutoff valves and gas pipes, and more. This program is entirely funded through generous donations provided by grant funds, foundations, businesses, civic groups, and individuals. In 2021, 15 homes were repaired at a total cost of $52,113.42, and over 190 homes have been repaired since the program was created in 2002, ensuring low-income homeowners and their families are able to remain in their homes, avoid homelessness, and live in a home that is safe and functional.

Home Accessibility Program: WCCCC's Home Accessibility Program provides home repairs or modifications that allow seniors and people with disabilities to live independently in their own homes in the community, preventing premature or unnecessary institutionalization. Projects completed through this program include:

- Installing ramps into homes.
- Widening doorways to accommodate wheelchairs and other assistive devices.
- Replacing doorknobs with openers that operate by lever.
- Repairing and/or installing hand and stair railings.
- Lowering shelving/storage.
- Installing sensor-controlled lights.
- Installing accessible showers, grab-bars, bath benches, transfer benches, raised toilet seats, and other equipment in bathrooms.
- Lowering sinks and countertops in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Installing wheelchair accessible vanities.

In 2021, WCCCC increased the accessibility of one home through this program at a total cost of $23,276.

New Housing Programs: Three new housing programs in 2021 helped Will County residents obtain or maintain their housing. The Down Payment Assistance Program (DPA) provides up to $25,000 towards the down payment on a home. The Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) provides up to $30,000 to help home-owners experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic catch up on mortgage payments. The Illinois Rental Payment Plan (ILRPP 2.0) program helped people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic pay their rent, preventing them from losing their housing.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"WCCCC helped me get into a new home. Now my children have stability, and we all feel safe."

Housing Counseling: The Housing Counseling Program provides counseling and education to homeowners and prospective homeowners on topics such as budgeting, property maintenance, insurance, landlord/tenant relations, mortgage default and delinquency, and other family and life skills. WCCCC's housing counselors meet with individuals and families to determine the best course of action and means of assistance for their circumstances. In 2021, a total of 219 households received the following no-cost services:

- Loss Mitigation Counseling
- Pre-Purchase Counseling
- Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (Reverse Mortgage) Counseling
- Homebuyers Education Class
- Fair Housing Workshop
- Hardest Hit Fund

Emergency Food and Shelter Program: The Emergency Food and Shelter Program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and distributed through local United Way offices. The program assists with feeding, sheltering, and providing critical resources to qualified households. In 2021, WCCCC provided assistance totaling $23,543 to 225 households through this service.

Holiday Food Baskets: WCCCC's Holiday Food Basket Program assists low-income families in Will County with children under the age of 17. Each December, WCCCC hosts participating families for an evening of holiday celebration where staff and volunteers greet guests, offer refreshments provided by local businesses, and provide each family with a generously filled food box that includes a frozen turkey, pantry staples, and everything needed for a holiday meal. Each child also receives a visit with Santa Claus and an age-appropriate toy, a new winter coat, and hats and gloves. In 2021, this program provided a holiday meal to 159 families as well as toys and winter attire for 319 children.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"The WCCCC Holiday Food Basket event was great. You provided my family with food, coats, and gifts for the kids. It made our Christmas wonderful!"

Homeless Services: WCCCC's Homeless Services Program is designed to fill gaps in services for Will County's homeless population. Our program offers case management, bus passes, clothing, prescription assistance, gas cards, food vouchers, employment training,and

assistance with fees related to education, obtaining birth certificates, driver's licenses, and ID cards. In 2021, WCCCC served 952 individuals through this program and conducted homeless/street outreach to 199 individuals.

WCCCC also assists homeless households or those at imminent risk of becoming homeless by providing rental assistance, security deposits, and relocation/stabilization services for rapidly attaining permanent housing through our Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG) and the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program. In 2021, WCCCC helped 369 individuals and their families exit homelessness by providing services in the amount of $94,315.12 through the ESG Program as well as an additional 369 individuals and their families in the amount of $103,763.38 through the TBRA Program.

Will County Continuum of Care: WCCCC administers the Will County Continuum of Care and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database. The Continuum of Care is concerned with the broad issues surrounding homelessness in Will County, including education/support services, grants/funding, housing/plan to end homelessness, etc. The Continuum's vision is to create a seamless, comprehensive system of services that prevents homelessness, supports the emergency and ongoing needs of the homeless, provides the tools necessary to sustain independent living, and leads to permanent self-sufficiency. In 2021, the Will County Continuum of Care identified a total of 237 persons (11 unsheltered, 121 in emergency shelter, 98 in transitional housing, and 7 in safe haven) within Will County through the annual Point In Time count mandated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Single Family Rehab: The Single Family Rehab provides low-income families with a forgivable loan for home repairs such as roof replacement, flooring, In 2021, 6 homes were repaired through this program, and we expect to complete repairs to 12 more homes throughout the remainder of the grant.

2021 Financial Summary

Unrestricted Revenues

Federal Grant Revenue	$11,399,819
State Grant Revenue	$1,071,042
Other Grant Revenue	$854,091
Interest and Dividend Income	$439
Donations	$54,337
Other Income	$4,798
Total Unrestricted Revenues	$13,384,526

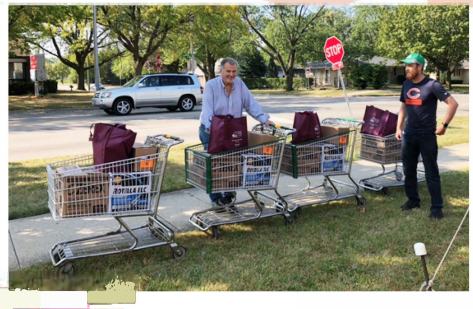
Expenses

Program Services	$12,365,668
Management and General	$655,634
Total Expenses	$13,021,302

Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	$363,224
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	$1,692,101
Net Assets - End of Year	$2,055,325

Mission

The mission of Will County Center for Community Concerns is to assist and enable low- and moderate-income individuals to obtain the opportunities needed to prepare themselves for self-sufficiency.



Outreach and Expo Events

DATE	EXPO/OUTREACH	LOCATION	SPONSORED BY
05/15/21	Curbside School Support Day	Singleton Elementary/Compers Junior High, Joliet	Will County Regional Office of Education, Joliet School District, United Way, WCCCC
05/16/21	Community Building Outreach Activities Initiative	Joliet	Midland States Bank, Community Service Council, WCCCC
05/26/21	Drive Thru Job Fair	Village of Romeoville	Workforce Center of Will County
06/26/21	Oykoyta's Vaccine Clinic	Humphrey School, Bolingbrook	Will County Health Dept.
DB/03/21	Workforce Resource Fair	Workforce Center of Will County	Workforce Center of Will County
DB/07/21	Back to School Support Day	Crete-Monee District Admin Center	School District
DB/07/21	Resource Fair	All Nation Church - Joliet	All Nation Church
08/19/21	Bicentennial Bluff Neighborhood Meeting	St. Peter's Lutheran Church - Joliet	St. Peter's Luthern Church
09/11/21	Village of University Park Resource Fair	University Park	Will County Executive's Office, Will County Health Department, Will County Workforce Division
09/18/21	WCCCC & Aunt Martha's Resource Fair	WCCCC	Aunt Martha's, WCCCC
09/24/21	Veterans Stand Down Resource Fair	Hope Manor - Joliet	VOA Illinois
09/25/21	Child Care Resource Fair	CCR&R Office - Joliet	Child Care Resource & Referral
10/12/21	East Side Community Meeting	Nowell Park - Joliet	East Side Community Group
10/14/21	23rd Annual Citizens Against Abuse	Joseph & Sarah Levy Center - Bolingbrook	Citizens Against Abuse Organization
10/14/21	Education Symposium - CDC & WC ROE	Professional Development Alliance - Joliet	CDC & WC ROE
10/15/21	10th Annual HERD Helps Event	Romoville Athletic Center - Romeoville	WC Executive's Office
10/16/21	Family Fun Fest	Slammer's Stadium - Joliet	Family Fun Fest Organization
10/21/21	Community Service Council Meeting	Virtual Zoom Meeting	CSC
10/26/21	R3 Collaborative Community Meeting	Nowell Park - Joliet	R3 Collaborative
11/02/21	Career Fair for Individuals w/disabilities	JTHS Admin Center - Joliet	Workforce Center of Will County
11/04/21	Health and Resource Fair	Fairmont Community Center - Lockport	Aetna
11/05/21	Resource and Food Drive	Our Lady of Mount Carmel - Joliet	Nicor / GoodR
11/09/21	Illinois Assiciation for Education of the Young Child	Virtual Conference - Zoom	IAEYC
11/13/21	Will County Community Care Fair	Mt. Zion Baptist Church - Joliet	BCBS of Illinois
11/16/21	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Meeting	JTHS Admin Center - Joliet	GRG Organization
11/18/21	Community Service Council Meeting	Virtual Zoom Meeting	CSC
12/15/21	Holiday Food Basket Giveaway	WCCCC	WCCCC

Will County Center for Community Concerns

community Action

Providing Hope Through Self-Sufficiency

Office Hours

Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday:
8:00am - 4:00pm

Wednesday:
8:00am - 7:30pm

Address

2455 Glenwood Avenue
Joliet, Illinois 60435

815-722-0722

www.wcccc.net

Will County Center for Community Concerns is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization as determined by the IRS. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.