

Community Action Programs: Educate > Empower > Succeed

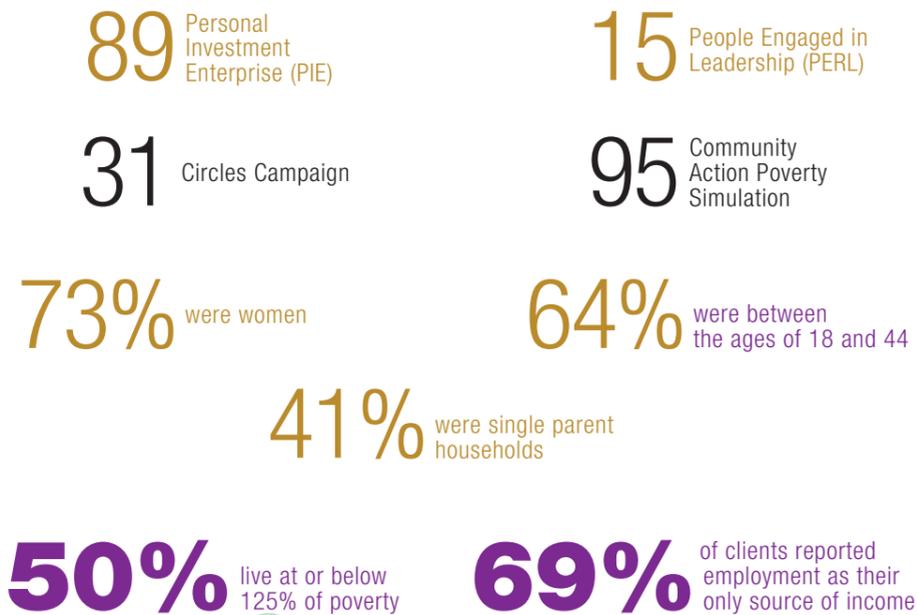
"There are no problems we cannot solve together and very few that we can solve by ourselves." – President Lyndon B. Johnson

As a part of LBJ's War on Poverty, Boulder County Community Action Programs (CAP) has been working since 1965 to empower people struggling with poverty and those underrepresented in the community to become self-sufficient and have their voices heard.

CAP, working collaboratively with community partners, works with small groups of clients to foster long-lasting changes in their lives. We work an "inch wide and a mile deep" to move people closer to their goals of self-sufficiency, self-determination and success.

Populations Served

CAP manages several programs, including the Circles Campaign (Circles), the Personal Investment Enterprise (PIE), and the People Engaged in Leadership Program (PERL). In 2019, CAP served 230 clients and other program participants. These include:



Partnering to Make a Difference

CAP understands and believes that collaboration is the best way to serve the community. All CAP programs work in partnership with nonprofit organizations, county and city departments, faith communities, educational institutions, and others to accomplish our goals. Our external partners include:

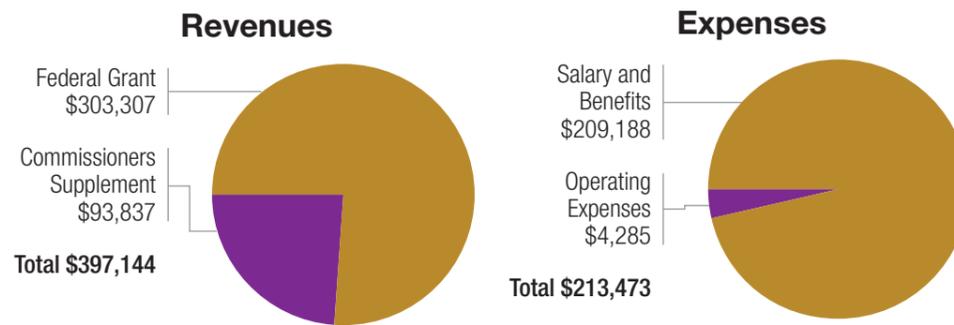
- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sister Carmen Community Center | Small Business Development Center |
| EFAA | Front Range Community College |
| OUR Center | City of Longmont |
| Foothills United Way | City of Boulder |
| R-12 Charities | Community Foundation Boulder County |
| A Woman's Work | Longmont Community Foundation |



Stewarding our Resources – CAP and CADC Boards

CAP is funded primarily by the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) through the Office of Community Services, which supports staff and some program costs. CSBG requires that CAP's advisory board include members that are either low-income or can represent low-income communities. This board is appointed by the Boulder County Commissioners and provides input and oversight to CAP. Board members are Elizabeth Antus, Gina Barajas, William Benjamin, Susan Boucher, Stephanie Burke, Robin Chavez, Mariana Grosz, Bhola Katuwal, Melanie McGinn, Brittney Wilburn.

In 1984, the Community Action Development Corporation (CADC), a registered 501(C)(3), was formed to help fundraise and support CAP programs. CADC has its own governing board that oversees its finances and provides input into CAP programs. The board members are Erika Moats & Michelle Orge.



*\$89,834.03 will be spent by the end of the grant reporting period in 2020.
*In years past, CAP's budget has been funded by Boulder County Commissioners. Due to vacancy savings and budgeting changes in 2019, CAP did not use the \$93,837 from the Commissioner's supplement.



2019 COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS ANNUAL REPORT



Circles – Building Community to End Poverty

The Circles Campaign, an evidenced-based program model, is part of an innovative national campaign to end poverty in our community, one family at a time. Individuals and families take charge of their lives and are assisted by community volunteers called Allies. Allies help participants realize their potential through networking, listening, and guidance.



Satisfaction with Program

Satisfaction with the program is extremely high among participants.

84% of participants increased their social capital

84% of participants increased their income

75% of participants saw a decrease in public benefits

78%

of participants saw an increase in assets

96% of participants who attended the poverty simulation increased their understanding of poverty

Social Empathy Board Game



In September of 2019, CAP piloted a social empathy workshop at an E-Source Forum. This forum blended content, fun, and created a unique atmosphere to foster collaboration and networking among more than 700 utility professionals from across the U.S. and Canada. The event was aimed at helping utility professionals and partners manage and improve customer relationships, as well as navigating an ever-changing utility industry.

CAP presented a social empathy workshop where utility billing employees, CEOs, and other management teams stepped in the shoes of an average low-income customer to navigate everyday life. The goal of the activity was to demonstrate everyday financial decisions that impact low-income people in the utility sector. The task given in this exercise was for utility staff and management in the workshop to stay financially afloat by making the best financial decisions with the resources at hand, which then included the hard question to answer: *Will you pay the utility bill or buy groceries this month for your family?*

The social empathy game was a 45-minute experience based on CAP's Poverty Simulation Workshop that supports a deeper understanding of the daily challenges of our community's low-income workers. At the end of the exercise, participants developed a more holistic understanding of low-income customers/workforce, experienced the challenges and choices faced by those living in circumstantial or chronic poverty, and identified opportunities to better engage and serve low-income customers or the workforce. As one workshop participant from Duke Energy stated, "Utility company managers, VPs, and operators are not usually flexible. Seeing the game played out made me think there is room for flexibility."

Personal Investment Enterprise (PIE) – Building Assets to Change Lives

PIE is a financial empowerment program that provides education and access to opportunities that help participants reach a variety of personal goals, including first-time home ownership, education advancement, or the development of a new business enterprise. PIE provides a maximum match of \$4,000 toward one of these goals, and requires participants to save their own money as a part of the program. Participation in the program results in families and individuals becoming more active members of the community through greater economic and personal growth.

Program Participants

Since the Personal Investment Enterprise program began in 2001, PIE has celebrated a total of over 300 graduates.

PIE Outcomes

In 2019, PIE participants saw a number of significant outcomes:

71% of PIE participants continue saving on a regular basis

93% of PIE homebuyers still own the home that they purchased through the PIE program

61% of PIE participants' debt remains the same or lower since leaving PIE

74% of PIE homebuyers think that they influenced others' ability to access or maintain housing

81% of PIE participants achieve new savings goals after leaving PIE

66% of PIE homebuyers are actively involved in their community



In the words of a program participant, Perla described her experience with the PIE program. "PIE helped me pay down debt and see how easy it was to save money. It helped me develop an education around saving money that I passed along to my family." Perla is a graduate from the PIE program and now a nursing graduate with a Bachelor of Nursing degree from Regis University.

"I was helping my two younger brothers pay off their tuition on top of my own, and it became too financially challenging," Perla said. "That's when the PIE program offered much-needed financial support. I was able to pay off most of the bills acquired from school, and stay out of credit card debt."

"The PIE workshops were helpful, especially because my parents did not have savings and lived paycheck to paycheck. PIE encouraged my entire family to talk about savings and work towards achieving savings goals."

– Perla, 2018 PIE Participant

Additional Initiatives and Programs - Changing the Community, One person at a Time

In addition to Circles and PIE, the CAP program manages other initiatives designed to support and acknowledge the contributions of people of color and those living in poverty.

People Engaged in Leadership (PERL)

PERL is a four-week training designed for people of color and people with low-income across Boulder County to learn about, and become a member of, a governing board. PERL helps increase the number of individuals from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds who join non-profit boards and government commissions.

17 participants served on boards or commissions in 2019

64% of PERL clients have served on boards and/or commissions since 2008

Multicultural Awards Banquet (MCAB)

MCAB, held since 1989, honors people of color and provides educational scholarships to those who have made significant contributions to the community.

266 award winners since 1989

200 attendees at the 2019 MCAB to celebrate our award winners

\$162,971 raised for community scholarships since 1994



Poverty Simulation

The Community Action Poverty Simulation is an interactive immersion experience that was held three times in 2019 for participants. This simulation was designed to sensitize community participants to the realities of poverty.

95 people participated in the poverty simulations