

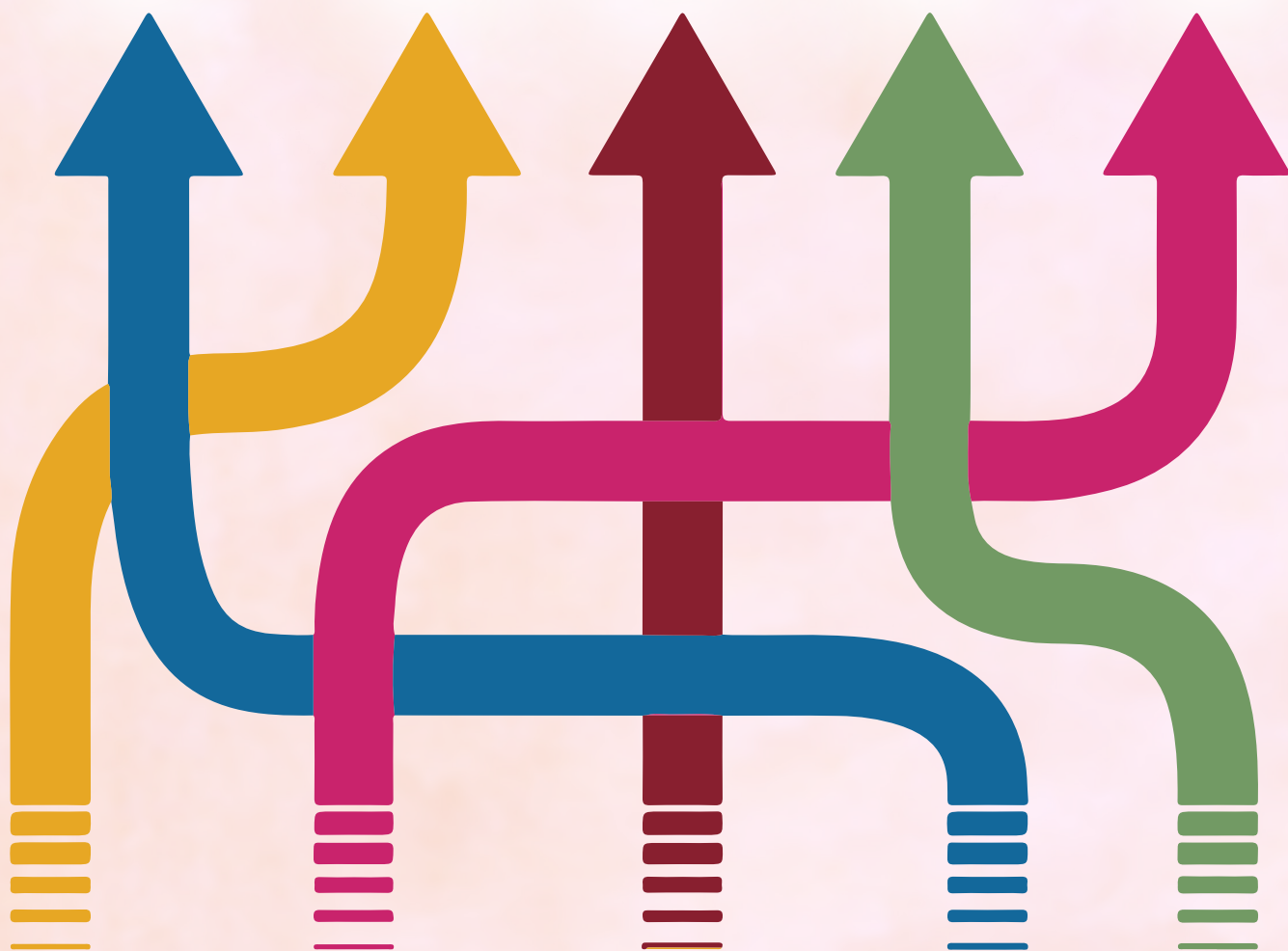
ARKANSAS COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES ASSOCIATION



ACAAA

2020

IMPACT REPORT



NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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County (EOAWC)
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Van Buren

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Spring, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Lonoke,
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Pulaski, Saline, Sevier, Union

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Clay, Lawrence, Randolph

Staci Albert, Batesville • *Interim Executive Director*
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Garland

Carolyn Davis, Warren • *Executive Director*
Southeast Arkansas Community
Action Corp. (SEACAC)
Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Desha, Drew

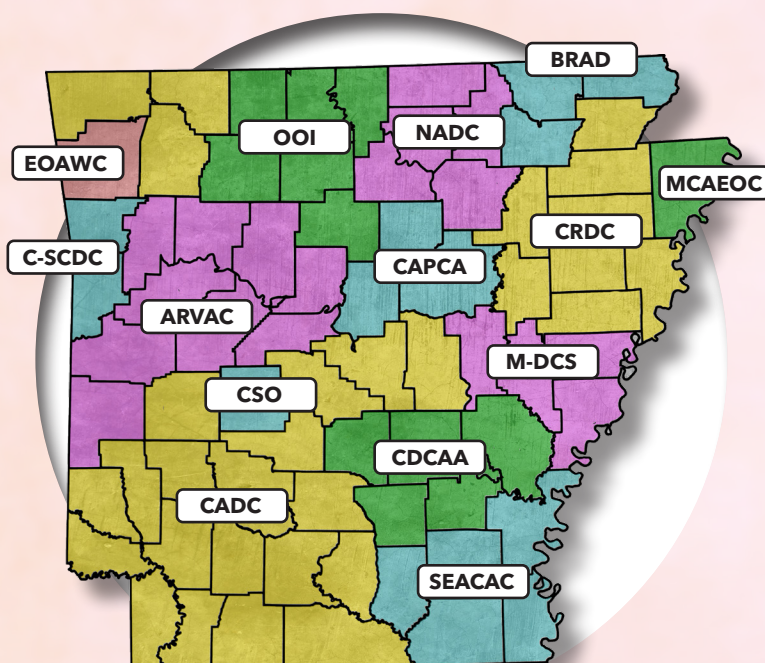
Stephanie Garner, Dardanelle
Chief Executive Officer
Arkansas River Valley Area
Council, Inc. (ARVAC)
Conway, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Perry, Polk,
Pope, Scott, Yell

Priscilla Johnson, Blytheville • *Executive Director*
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Mid-Delta Community
Services, Inc. (M-DCS)
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Helen Snyder, Rison • *Executive Director*
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Arkansas, Cleveland, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln

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Chief Executive Officer
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Poinsett, St. Francis, Woodruff



EDUCATION

As was the case with so many endeavors worldwide, ACAA's educational efforts in 2020 began normally as the year first got underway, but soon enough had to be refashioned into a new, virtual environment to ensure participants' safety. This made for some special challenges: Not only did the existing curricula have to be adapted from an in-person approach to a previously untried, online medium—in many cases, these adjustments were being made on the fly, midway through the instruction period!

ROMA



A critical pillar of ACAA's mission is working with the state's network of member Community Action Agencies to build a robust cohort of ROMA trainers and implementers. • ("ROMA"—which stands for Results Oriented Management & Accountability—is an essential component of the network's performance management system, ensuring that the agencies' work is both measurable and transparent.)

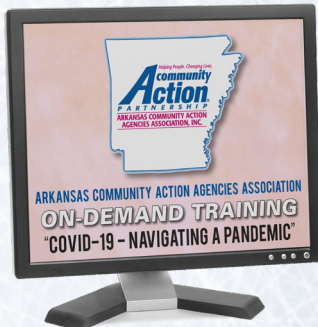
In this area, it is to the association's great benefit that ACAA Executive Director Terry Bearden is the state's only Master ROMA Trainer!

In response to the "new normal" created by the coronavirus pandemic, ACAA demonstrated its innovation and initiative by hosting the **very first virtual classroom in the nation** for those training to be Nationally Certified ROMA Implementers (a.k.a. NCRIs). • See photo, above right, for a screenshot—full participant listings appear at the bottom of the page. • All of the candidates from 2020's cohort would go on to receive their certificates. Meanwhile, ACAA continued to host ROMA Work Groups throughout the year and offer ROMA-related trainings to agency boards upon request.



ONLINE TRAINING

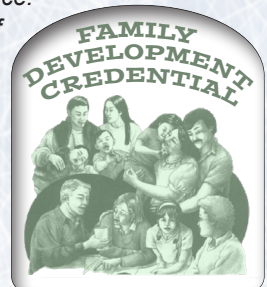
In 2020, the association worked with employment law firm Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus to create a special set of online training videos to make available to ACAA's member agencies through the association's website. Topics included **COVID-19—Navigating a Pandemic; Harassment Prevention & EEO Training for Employees; Harassment Prevention & EEO Training for Supervisors; and Managing Employees in the Legal World of Today.**



FDC Class is in session...virtually! • see full caption, below

FDC The Family Development Credential program — or FDC — is an in-depth, intensive course designed to teach family workers how to coach families in setting and reaching their goals for healthy self-reliance.

• The pandemic would require the first of ACAA's 2020 FDC instructional terms to switch, mid-program, from classroom to virtual sessions, while the second session would be fully online. • As well, ACAA provided ongoing training to agency FDC instructors in adapting their own courses to a virtual format.



NCRI Virtual Class: Pictured are (top row, from left to right) Master ROMA Trainers Carey Gibson, MSW, NCRP, PRI Project Manager; and Dr. Barbara Mooney, Director, Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers & Implementers; and (top row, far right) NCRI candidate Robin Moses, C-SCDC; additional candidates included (middle row, from left to right) Cathy Brownell, OOI; Lacey Outlaw, CAPCA; and Alex Lynch, BRAD; and (bottom row) Helen Snyder, CDCAA.

FDC (Virtual) Class is in Session: Pictured here, wrapping up the final exercise on their last chapter, are (top row, from left) Rachel Williams, CADC; FDC instructor Tamerdis Baker, ACAA Programs & Development Director; Roger Powell, CSO; (bottom row, from left) Shakara Lomack, CADC; Tamicka Taylor, CADC; and Angela Smith, CSO.

NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

UNIFIED VOICE



ACAAA Executive Director **Terry Bearden** is pictured above being interviewed on KATV News' "Seven on Your Side" about the imminent danger of a pandemic-induced eviction crisis.

When Arkansas's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) resolve to speak as one, ACAA is strategically positioned to serve as that communal voice.

During 2020's COVID-19 pandemic, the association sought to collect stories from the state's agencies in order to synthesize and amplify the message that Community Action was uniquely well-qualified to provide critical relief during the coronavirus emergency.

Association Executive Director **Terry Bearden** also serves as the Board President of the Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers and Implementers (ANCRT).

While ACAA Executive Director Terry Bearden was speaking with multiple media outlets about pressing pandemic concerns such as the mounting eviction crisis, the association was working with the National Community Action Partnership (NCAP) to adapt a public service announcement for airing at the local level to tout CAAs' relief efforts.

ADVOCACY



The customized PSA was modified to run as a TV advertisement to encourage statewide awareness of Community Action's work and mission. As well, ACAA tailored agency-specific versions for each CAA for use on social media and at the agencies' websites.



ACAAA Executive Director **Terry Bearden** (pictured, middle) speaks with **Arkansas United's** Celina Reyes and Jackson Hignite in an online interview to discuss assistance being made available through the state's Community Action Agencies.

SERVICE

AR FRESH
START

With the dire economic fallout from COVID-19 mounting over the course of 2020, ACAA spearheaded an ambitious undertaking to coordinate rental-assistance relief through the state's Community Action Agencies via a new program known as "Arkansas Fresh Start."

This new program—made possible by \$10 million in combined grants received through the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and the Arkansas CARES Act Steering Committee; and administered by the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association—offered two & a half months rent to eligible Arkansans with a household income at or below 80% of their area's median income.

Working swiftly to offer assistance to in-need Arkansans in the face of an imminent eviction crisis brought on by pandemic-created unemployment, ACAA coordinated the program's quick conception, overseeing the structuring of the program's parameters and requirements and the creation of the ARFreshStart.com website—as well as providing ongoing programmatic administrative oversight courtesy of association Grants & Special Projects Director Erin Jacobson.



ARFreshStart.com screenshot



ARKANSAS COUNTS! In 2020, ACAA worked in conjunction with a variety of organizations, in particular the Arkansas Census 2020 Complete Count Committee, to help coordinate the state's agencies in encouraging full Census participation. As part of these efforts—before the COVID-19 pandemic made in-person events unworkable—association representatives attended numerous agency functions in order to distribute Census materials and answer questions. • As the coronavirus necessitated a switch in focus from one-on-one interaction to a more virtual campaign, ACAA redoubled its social-media efforts to include specially-tailored messaging for Arkansas and its various counties.



Above, right, ACAA staff member Tamerdis Baker is pictured distributing Census materials at a Paragould Point-in-Time Count & services fair hosted by the local Continuum of Care; above, left: samples of association-created social media graphics.

NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

COVID-19 RESPONSE

As the grim reality of the pandemic became apparent and Arkansas's Community Action Agencies swung quickly into response, ACAA made its website a one-stop catalogue of all things COVID-relief-related.

During the coronavirus crisis, ACAA changed its homepage to now be headed "**COVID-19 and Community Action**" and provided updates on such critical topics as **Emergency Services**, **Consumer Alerts**, and **Community Action Makes a Difference**—the last of which collected news stories of agencies' pandemic-relief efforts from around the state. As well, the website began featuring a **Professional Development Resources** section that collected links to available recordings of educational webinars of potential interest particularly to those agency staff members working from home. • ACAA's COVID-19 response also included spearheading the creation of the **Arkansas Fresh Start rent-assistance program** (see "Service," previous page).



ANNUAL CONFERENCE



ACAAA would dub its online conference—rescheduled to unfold over a series of days in late September & through October—**Virtual-osity**. Every effort was made that it offer as varied & in-depth a range of valuable workshop options as more conventional such Conferences in the past. • Not surprisingly, topics would include such timely subjects as **Coping with COVID** and **How to Thrive in a Radically Changing World**, while other offerings included a multi-day Family Development Certificate program. The association was greatly gratified by the enthusiasm of the agencies' participation in this exciting new experiment as well as for their positive feedback!

After its traditional, in-person annual meeting—originally scheduled for May of 2020—was canceled due to safety concerns, ACAA was required to pivot and re-create the event as the association's first-ever virtual conference.





COMMUNICATIONS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

The “e-Action” newsletter, edited by association Communications Director John Moran, offers subscribers monthly updates on ACAA’s latest activities, new training offerings from the association, significant developments from the state’s agencies, major notices from our national partners, links to relevant publications, and newly available webinars of potential interest to agency staff members. During the pandemic, it became an additional means of sharing up-to-date resources and announcing new programs such as Arkansas Fresh Start.



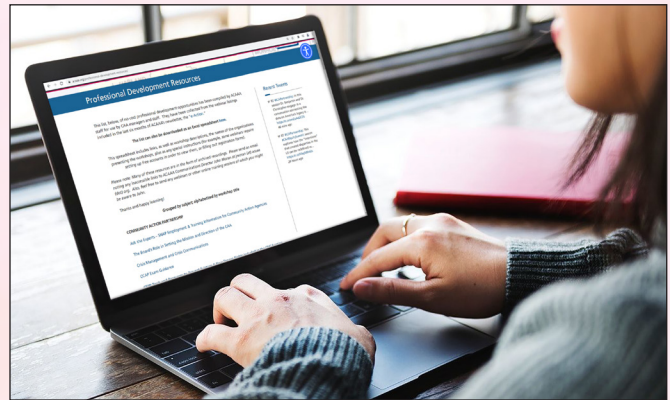
SOCIAL MEDIA

ACAAA’s Facebook and Twitter feeds keep friends & followers apprised of the latest ACAA goings-on and news of interest, both locally and nationally, while also aggregating posts from the state’s Community Action Agencies (CAAs). Particularly so this year, it has been an opportunity to share news of the tireless efforts that Arkansas’s CAAs have expended in their mission to provide relief to those afflicted by the economic fallout from the pandemic.



www.acaaa.org

ACAAA’s website serves multiple functions: For those seeking the Community Action Agency in their area, acaaa.org is an informational hub, with contact particulars for all of the association’s member agencies. As well, the website is the go-to location for updates on the association’s latest training offerings and upcoming functions, such as the Annual Conference. During the pandemic, the website also became a repository for COVID-19-related news (see opposite page), and has always served as a clearinghouse of reports, newsletter archives, agency employment listings, resources and templates on ROMA and Organizational Standards, and the Arkansas Implementation Manual and Best Practices Manual.



ASSISTANCE WITH AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

ACAAA also provides communications assistance upon request to its member agencies. • Recent such projects included advertisements and promotional materials created for the Community Action Program for Central Arkansas’s annual **Project Homeless Connect** undertaking to provide relief to area unhoused. The ads were employed via social media and also ran regularly in Conway’s Log Cabin Democrat in advance of the event.





MISSION



To provide education, advocacy, and a unified voice for Community Action Agencies to reduce poverty and promote thriving communities in Arkansas.



THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



ARKANSAS COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES ASSOCIATION



1111 WEST 6TH ST., SUITE C • LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201

www.acaaa.org

(P) 501.372.0807

(F) 501.372.0891

twitter.com/AR_CAA • facebook.com/arcommunityaction