Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

...strengthens communities by providing opportunities for people experiencing social and economic challenges

What are your household's greatest gifts and strengths...

Collage of answers from low-income households

2012 Annual Report
Sustainable Employment through Training and Trade (SETT) Program Connects Low-wage Community Members with Green Jobs

In the fall of 2011, AEOA was awarded over $230,000 from the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the US Department of Energy through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to provide innovative training to unemployed and underemployed people in the green energy industry. These funds allowed AEOA to provide the Sustainable Employment through Training & Trade (SETT) Program through a partnership with two local community colleges: Mesabi Range Community & Technical College (MRCTC) and Hibbing Community College (HCC).

Each campus provided industry-specific training in either green construction or sustainable manufacturing. MRCTC’s program provided college credits to the students, while HCC’s program included an industry-recognized customized training certificate. Each emphasized process efficiencies, sustainable techniques, and lean work environments. Throughout the programming, the 30 students were connected with Employment Counselors who helped navigate the college enrollment process, acted as job coaches in the placement setting, and assisted in resolving barriers to success.

Upon completion of the specialized certificates, 16 of the students were provided a paid internship position with a local employer, implementing green practices. These placements provided an opportunity for students to utilize the skills they learned in the classroom in an on-the-job setting. Seven internship sites hired the students on a permanent basis after the program ended, offering a living wage and benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans. SETT participants will be utilizing the knowledge and skills received in our local green industries for many years to come.

Blue Cross Foundation to the Rescue

Shirley is 81 years old. She lives on just over $14,000 a year. She fell behind on her utility payments because of the cost of monthly MediCare for Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s and her need to buy groceries and other necessities. Shirley’s daughter is moving in to care for her mother. Without Blue Cross Foundation funding and her landlord’s assistance, Shirley’s power would have been disconnected.

This year, the Blue Cross Foundation awarded $500,000 to Community Action statewide to help address basic needs for struggling households. AEOA was one of eight agencies to receive a share of that funding and was awarded $60,625. The program began in April and by the end of June, 68 applications had been approved—over $18,000 spent. Most requests were under $400 and many participants were able to pay a portion of the cost themselves. Over one-third of the requests were housing-related including rent, mortgage assistance, and utility payments. Over 20% were related to transportation and, more specifically, personal vehicle needs. The average age of those requesting funding was 43 years old, with the oldest being 88. The average household annual income was under $15,000 a year.
In 2008, the Blandin Foundation pulled together community partners including Arrowhead Transit to solve county transportation issues identified in a United Way Community Needs Assessment. The Foundation contracted with the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and the Center for Transportation Studies to provide the in-depth analysis needed to determine solutions.

The needs of low-income workers, students, and the elderly were examined, as well as their location in relation to current transportation routes, employment opportunities, schools, health care facilities, and other sources of basic needs in the community. Three major issues were identified: Itasca County is difficult to navigate without access to transportation; residents don’t know about available transit services; and that schools and transit providers are disconnected. Recommendations were also provided. It was suggested that Arrowhead Transit engage in enhanced marketing efforts to raise awareness of the transportation resources it provides in the county. The Blandin Foundation helped fund a new marketing concept for Arrowhead Transit, including a new logo, bus and uniform colors, and motto. Changes began in Itasca County and will move Arrowhead Transit-wide by January, 2013. The new look has inspired a new sense of pride with employees and the new motto, “Your ride,” instills the fact that Arrowhead Transit is here to serve the community at-large, no matter your background, employment status, or age.

Over the past several years, Housing Services has been focusing on community partnerships to target specific neighborhoods to meet housing improvement needs. One multi-year effort with the City of Eveleth has yielded fantastic results and become a model for other communities.

The Olde Town Eveleth Revitalization Project began in 2009 as a partnership between the City of Eveleth, AEOA, and the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund. One of the oldest neighborhoods in the community was chosen and work began on organizing residents to get involved in improving their properties. An innovative City-sponsored mini-grant for exterior home improvements got the ball rolling. Since 2010, over 40 homes received a grant for exterior improvements, 8 were weatherized, 3 have been purchased for AEOA development, and 6 families have requested rehabilitation dollars. Based in large part on the success of Olde Town Eveleth, other cities in the region have been working on neighborhood revitalization; and on June 14 of this year, the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) approved $500,000 for a Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Its intent is to provide resources to homeowners and owners of rental units of four units or less to make energy-saving improvements to their buildings. AEOA is the lead organization in administering this work in partnership with cities throughout the Taconite Assistance Area (TAA).
Kevin Adee/Terry Murray, 1st
Vice-Chairperson
Public Official

Thomas Bakk
Public Official

Paul Bergman/Brad Jones
Public Official

Helen Budisalovich
Community Sector

Marcia Campbell, 2nd
Vice-Chairperson
Private Sector

Katherine Patricia Carlson
Community Sector

Thomas Cvar, Treasurer
Private Sector

Mike Forsman
Public Official

Sue Hakes/Jan Hall
Public Official

Lorraine Hill
Community Sector

Jeff Kletscher, Secretary
Public Official

Bob Larkin
Private Sector

Andra Lilienthal
Community Sector

Jennifer Lund
Community Sector

Howard Mallory
Community Sector

Mark Mandich
Public Official

Cherie Averill Manner
Private Sector

Hope McKay
Community Sector

Lisa Mount
Community Sector

Brian Napstad
Public Official

Keith Nelson (St. Louis County Alternate)
Public Official

Les Northrup
Private Sector

Laura Perry
Private Sector

Thomas Proulx
Public Official

Steve Raukar, Chairperson
Public Official

Nathan Sager
Private Sector

Peg Sweeney
Public Official

James Varichak
Private Sector

Dana Waldran
Private Sector

Isabelle Westman
Community Sector

Celeste White
Community Sector

ARROWHEAD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AGENCY
2012 ANNUAL BUDGET
TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET AS OF 6/30/12 = $27,263,399

CENTRAL SERVICES
$366,426  1%

HEAD START
$3,623,913  13%

SENIOR SERVICES
$4,031,062  15%

TRANSPORT
$5,821,216  21%

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
$3,454,831  13%

HOUSING
$9,965,951  37%
AEOA Programs and Services

Central Services: To guide, support, and unify AEOA services to maximize resources and ensure progress and accountability in carrying out the mission of the Agency

- Administration
- Fiscal Services
- Information Technology
- AEOA Foundation Fund
- Human Resources
- Planning

The mission of Employment & Training is to enhance the employability and skills of individuals so that they may achieve their life goals.

- Minnesota Family Investment Program
- Diversionary Work Program
- Food Support Employment & Training Program
- Adult Scholarship Program
- Adult Basic Education
- Job Skills Training
- Lives in Transition
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Dislocated Worker Program
- YouthBuild
- Free at Last
- Vocational Evaluation
- Work Experience Program
- Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota

Arrowhead Head Start works in community partnerships to provide comprehensive support to young children and families in need on their journey toward social and economic growth; together, we build a stronger future.

- Center-base
- Early Head Start Center
- Center/Home Combination
- Family Child Care Homes
- Early Head Start Home Base
- In-home Counseling

The mission of Housing Services is to build communities by helping people meet their basic living needs; have affordable, quality housing; and to improve their quality of living.

- Single-family Rehabilitation Loans
- Multi-family Rental Rehabilitation Loans
- Homeownership Education & Financial Assistance
- Energy Assistance
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program
- Housing Technical Assistance for Communities
- Homeless Programs & Shelters
- Housing Development
- Energy Conservation Education
- Weatherization

Senior Services helps older adults meet the demands of daily living while providing opportunities to improve the quality of their lives.

- Senior Nutrition Services
  - Senior Dining
  - Meals on Wheels
  - Bundled Services
  - Nutrition Education
- Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- Northland Volunteer Services
  - Tax Aid Program
- Food & Clothing Shelves
- St. Louis County Coordinator on Aging
  - Annual Senior Carnival
  - Trip Excursions

Arrowhead Transit provides affordable, safe, accessible public transportation and supports independent living and self-reliance.

- Arrowhead Transit
- Rural Rides

Aitkin ◊ Carlton ◊ Cook ◊ Itasca ◊ Koochiching ◊ Lake ◊ Pine ◊ St. Louis
AEOA Area Offices

Aitkin Office
321 Minnesota Avenue North
Aitkin, MN 56431
800-243-3209
(218) 927-7046;
(Fax) 927-5624

Cloquet WorkForce Center
Suite 140
14 North 11th Street
Cloquet, MN 55720
(218) 878-5000;
(Fax) 878-4409

Duluth Office
Suite B
3112 Truck Center Drive
Duluth, MN 55806
(218) 624-7625 or
628-0877; (Fax) 624-7679
(Weatherization/Energy Assistance)

Duluth WorkForce Center
402 West First Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 302-8400;
(Fax) 723 4734

Ely Office
St. Louis County Government Service Center
320 Miners Lake Drive East
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-3359 or 365-3137

Grand Marais Office
PO Box 331
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 387-1134

Grand Rapids WorkForce Center
1215 SE Second Avenue
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
(218) 327-6746;
(Fax) 327-4179

Grand Rapids Service Center
421 SE 13th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
(218) 327-1138;
(Fax) 327-0283;
800-642-6143 (Transit);
(218) 326-3505 (Transit)

Hermantown Family Resource Center
5028 Miller Trunk Highway
Duluth, MN 55811
(218) 729-5509 or
729-5510; (Fax) 729-0370

Hibbing Office
2125 Second Avenue East
Hibbing, MN 55746
(218) 263-8487;
(Fax) 263-8235

Hibbing WorkForce Center
3920 13th Avenue East
Hibbing, MN 55746
(218) 262-6777;
(Fax) 262-7316

International Falls Office
Forestland Annex, Lower Level
1000 Fifth Street
International Falls, MN 56649
(218) 283-6271

International Falls WorkForce Center
Rainy River Community College
Room SC128
1501 Highway 71
International Falls, MN 56649
(218) 283-9427;
(Fax) 283-4042

Two Harbors Office
Norden Industrial Park
2124 Tenth Street
Two Harbors, MN 55616
800-223-1850
(218) 834-2280;
(Fax) 834-5269

Virginia Central Office
702 Third Avenue South
Virginia, MN 55792-2797
800-662-5711
(TDD) 800-862-0175;
(218) 749-2912;
(Fax) 749-2944

Virginia WorkForce Center
820 Ninth Street North
Virginia, MN 55792
(218) 748-2200;
(Fax) 748-2280

Adult Basic Education Learning Center
Room #18
327 First Street South
Virginia, MN 55792
800-662-5711, Ext. 400;
(218) 749-4352;
(Fax) 749-4336

Arrowhead Transit
1001 Arrowhead Drive
Gilbert, MN 55741
(218) 741-0724;
(Fax) 741-5715

Arrowhead Weatherization
1001 Arrowhead Drive
Gilbert, MN 55741
(218) 749-2912;
(Fax) 741-5715

Virginia Youth Foyer
302 12th Street South
Virginia, MN 55792
(218) 749-0766

702 Third Avenue South, Virginia, MN 55792-2797
(218) 749-2912 ◇ 1-800-662-5711 ◇ 1-800-862-0175 (TDD)
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