

DOUGLAS-CHEROKEE
ECONOMIC AUTHORITY, INC.

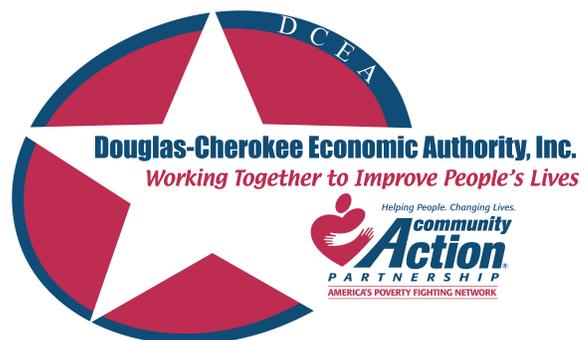
2020

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



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About Us

Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. is celebrating its 55th Anniversary this year. February 16, 1965, the Charter of Incorporation for Morristown-Hamblen Economic Opportunity Authority, now know as Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc., was filed with the State of Tennessee. The Economic Opportunity Act created funding opportunities for Community Action Agencies across the Country.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was introduced by President Lyndon B. Johnson. President Johnson felt, "the cause (of poverty) may lie deeper in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities, in lack of education and training, in a lack of medical care and housing, in a lack of decent communities in which to live and bring up their children," (Cooley, A. 2/18/2020). Fast forward 55 years later and Douglas-Cherokee's mission statement still reflects President Johnson's beliefs.



Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority's mission is to provide resources, tools, and opportunities that help low-income families and individuals of all ages achieve personal, economic, and social stability.

Along with original programs, such as CSBG and Head Start, DCEA has continued to expand services to adapt to the residents of the Agency's six county service area and beyond. With an annual budge of over \$19 million in 2019-2020, many people were helped and lives were changed.

This report provides an overview of the Agency's programs along with a little history to mark the 55th Anniversary. Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority's impact can not measured by numbers alone, but by the impact on peoples' lives.

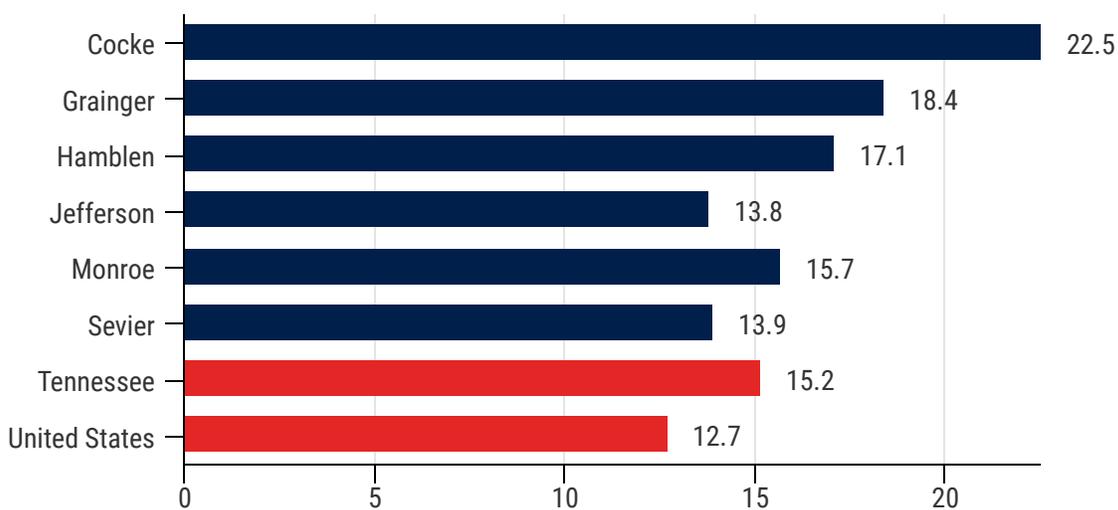
Service Area



Located in Morristown, TN, Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. serves six core counties in East Tennessee. These counties are: Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Monroe and Sevier. Twenty-four additional counties in Tennessee and two in Kentucky are served by programs within the Agency.

As a Community Action Agency, DCEA offers direct support to people who live in poverty. The poverty rate for the United States is 12.7%. The State of Tennessee has a higher poverty rate at 15.2%. DCEA's core counties also have higher poverty levels than the US average.

% of Persons in Poverty



Community Action

The service areas of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) cover 99% of the nation's counties. Our agencies are connected by a national network that includes the Community Action Partnership national association, regional associates, state associations, a national lobbying organization, and a national association of Community Service Block Grant administrators.

CAAs are a primary source of direct support for the more than 34.5 million people who live in poverty in the United States. Of the 7 million families served by Community Action, 83.1% were in poverty, nearly 33.8% were in severe poverty, living below 50% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The Community Action Network serves more than:
15.8 million individuals per year
7 million families per year

CAAs serve all regions and populations:
54% of CAAs serve rural areas
36% of CAAs serve areas considered both urban and rural
10% of CAAs serve urban areas

The average population a CAA serves is approximately 300,000 people. The average number of low-income people within each service area is 37,600.



Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place in which to live.

We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and others.

Board of Directors

As the governing body of Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc., all members of the Board fully participate in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs offered by the agency in its service of low-income communities. The Board of Directors have supervision, control, and direction of affairs of the agency, actively promote and pursue the agency's objectives, identify the needs of the area served by the agency's programs, and supervise the disbursement of the agency's funds.

	Representative of Low-Income	Representative of Low-Income	Public Elected Official	Other Public	Private
Cocke	Linda Branam	Charlotte Tweed	Crystal Ottinger represented by April Devotie		Bettye Carver
Grainger	Linda Roberts	Terry Acuff	Mike Byrd		Michael Collins
Hamblen	Roxanne Bowen	Lauren Carroll	Bill Brittain		Barbara Mason
Jefferson	Nancy Farris	Scott Tipton	Mark Potts represented by Rene Tabor	Rita Musick	Janice Wilder
Monroe	Shannon Wheeler	DeAnna McClendon	Mitch Ingram represented by Lori Millsaps	Roger Thomas	Conlie Rasnake
Sevier	Kris Human	Marty Temple	Larry Waters represented by Ann Montgomery	Wayne Helton	Beth Connatser

Board Officers:
 Rene Tabor, Chairman
 Michael Collins, Vice-Chairman
 Roxanne Bowen, Secretary

Executive Director

I cannot believe that another year has passed!!! This year started off with numerous people being served and numerous services being provided through the programs administered by Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. Serving people of all ages is so special. It is certainly a good feeling to know that DCEA provides support for so many and we are able to see successes in so many that move on to improve their lives or the lives of their children and families.

In this report, you can clearly see the numerous opportunities for support that DCEA offers. We are always striving to provide services to meet the needs in our communities. Our board represents the agencies core counties and provides us with feedback for needed services in the communities where they live. For that we are very thankful. The support the board provides to the agency is tremendous.

As the agency's year progressed, we encountered many challenges as others in our communities did as well. Yes, COVID-19 became our new reality! We struggled with keeping our staff safe and well. We also struggled with how to continue to provide services to our most vulnerable populations and to all participants in all of our programs.

It is with great pride that I tell you that our program directors and staff have worked through so many obstacles during the pandemic and services continue to be provided. Services have been provided in so many new and different ways. Even though the agency was diligent to ensure the safety of employees, we were also focused on continuing support those in need in our communities. A big THANK YOU to all of our staff for going above and beyond during this unprecedented time. THANK YOU for your innovative ideas, your willingness to meet the new challenges and to learn a brand-new way to provide services.

Our agency continues to be financially strong. As always, we will continue to look for ways to meet needs in our communities. We will look for new and innovative programs and we will continue to grow the programs offered by DCEA.

Thank you to our board, community partners and volunteers for all the support you provide to DCEA. It would not be possible to provide so many services without the support we receive from all of you.

It is a pleasure to work with DCEA and be a small part of all the successes we see in so many people.

Kay Hale
Executive Director



Neighborhood Service Centers

Community Services Block Grant

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Neighborhood Service Centers have been part of the Agency since we began in 1965. The goal of the program is to provide services to eligible low-income individuals and families to improve the communities in which they live. Allowable services range from "safety net" emergency services through job development, adult education, and self-sufficiency programs.

Client eligibility for all services is based on income eligibility and the need for service. Income eligibility means that the household is at or below 125% of the US Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines. Income eligibility and documentation of the client's need for service must be completed in order to establish client eligibility prior to the delivery of services.

Since the year 2000, the Neighborhood Service Centers have provided services to over 21,843 unduplicated households and 54,456 unduplicated individuals. \$4.9 million has been provided to households and individuals through these services which total approximately 98,783 units of service.

As of July 2020, the Neighborhood Service Centers have served 3,165 households for the fiscal year 2020. These households were provided with housing and emergency assistance, health and nutrition services, linkage, and self-sufficiency services. Of these clients, 4,392 received housing and emergency assistance.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has led to a new partnership between the Dollywood Foundation and the Sevier County Mayor to provide assistance to any household in Sevier County directly affected by a household member testing positive for COVID-19. Also, \$250,000 has been provided from the CSBG CARES Supplement to provide additional assistance to those in most need during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



12,390 bags/boxes of commodity food have been distributed

160 households benefited from gardening supplies and seeds

Over 1,000 children were provided assistance with school supplies

NSC Success

Teresa visited the Sevier Neighborhood Service Center seeking assistance when faced with having to move. The Sevier NSC staff discussed the Partners for Success Services with her. Teresa began setting goals for herself and working towards them with the help of the NSC staff. As a result of her hard work and dedication, a bit of encouragement from the NSC staff, she was able to get into a brand new apartment; she received her Associate degree in Early Education; and the school district offered her a permanent position. She is very grateful for the support, guidance and direction she has received during her journey with the Sevier NSC and Partners for Success.



Margaret, an 82 year old Monroe County resident, was brought into the Monroe NSC by a neighbor who had been helping her. Margaret found herself homeless after her home was sold. Neighbors helped her find a suitable apartment, but Margaret could not afford the deposit and first month's rent on her SSI income. The Monroe NSC staff were able to help Margaret with her first month's rent which then allowed her to have money remaining to purchase what she needed to start over in her new apartment.



Ann, a single parent, came to the Sevier NSC looking for resources. She was working part-time and her hours were going to decrease. The staff discussed the Partners for Success services and began meeting with Ann once a month in support of the goals she set for herself. Ann was interested in applying for an open position with DCEA Head Start. The staff assisted her with the application and she got the position. Ann has now been working with DCEA Head Start as a Child Care Aide since January 2020. She is continuing to work toward her other goals and aspirations. She is very appreciative for her continued partnership with the Sevier NSC and Partners for Success.

Head Start

Head Start

Head Start is the national commitment to give every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, an opportunity to succeed in school and in life. In the 50+ years since its inception, nationally, Head Start has improved the lives of more than 37 million children and their families.

When Head Start was first launched in 1965, the idea of providing comprehensive health, nutrition, and education services to children in poverty was revolutionary, if not radical. The Head Start Model, developed over the decades has been built on evidence-based practices and is constantly adapting- using the best available science and teaching techniques to meet the needs of local communities.

There are 4 major components included in Head Start:

1. Education-Providing a variety of learning experiences to help children grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally.
2. Health-Providing health services such as immunizations, dental, medical and mental health, and nutritional services, and early identification of health problems.
3. Parent Involvement- Involving parents in the planning and implementation of activities. Parents serve on Policy Councils and committees that make administrative decisions; participate in classes and workshops on child development; and volunteer in the program.
4. Social Services- Provide outreach to families to determine what services they need.

DCEA Head Start serves 892 children in eight counties and Early Head Start serves 72 pregnant women, infants, and toddlers in Hamblen County. During the 2019-2020 school year, 1,004 three and four year old children were served.

Although the school year started out just like most others, things certainly changed mid-March. All of the classrooms were closed due to the pandemic. During this time, staff were engaging families to ensure they had everything needed during the closure.

763 children received dental exams

149 HS/EHS Start children with Individual Education Plans and therapy services provided by local school systems

98% of HS/EHS children were below federal poverty guidelines



Head Start Success

Godrick, the youngest of 4 brothers, was enrolled in Harrisburg Head Start. When he came to Head Start he could barely speak. His family didn't encourage him to speak and always referred to him as "the baby." When he did speak, he would say things like "yummy yum yums" for food, etc. The Head Start staff found it difficult to understand him. He couldn't pull his pants up by himself or use a fork by himself. The staff worked with him and before long he was doing it by himself and was so proud. The staff along with speech therapy worked with Godrick encouraging him to ask for what he wanted or needed and helped him find the words. The staff spoke with Godrick's mother about encouraging him to use his words at home. By the end of the year, he was becoming more self-sufficient and was speaking in full sentences and smiling all the time. His parents were thankful. Thomas, Godrick's father, said Harrisburg Head Start had done wonders for his son.

Alicia started her career with DCEA Head Start as a driver in 1995. Although nervous at first, she soon adapted to the position and loved it. Several years later, Alicia decided to pursue her Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education. After receiving her degree, she was transferred to a Teaching Assistant position. Shortly after, Alicia transitioned into an Acting Teacher position at another center. When Alicia was offered the chance to pursue her Bachelor's Degree, she jumped at the chance to earn it. In her 25 years with DCEA Head Start, Alicia has learned to have more confidence in herself and her abilities.

At the first home visit, Kayla, a parent who had multiple children was preparing to send her oldest child to Head Start. It was noticed during afternoon pick-up time that Kayla was always with her mother-in-law. When asked if she didn't like to drive, Kayla replied that she did not have her driver's license. The HS staff gave Kayla information on picking up the study guide at the DMV. After a couple of months, Kayla passed the test and got her driver's license. She now has 2 more children enrolled in Head Start and has started working a part-time job.

As a new resident of Tellico Plains, Lynn enrolled her child in DCEA Head Start. She began volunteering in the classroom. After awhile, Lynn decided she wanted to be a part of DCEA Head Start. She was hired as a substitute for the Mt. Vernon center. Eventually, wanting a more permanent position, Lynn was hired as a Teacher Assistant at the Sweetwater Center. Lynn believes DCEA Head Start is so helpful to children transitioning into the school system. As part of the staff, she stays involved with both the children and their family members. Lynn knows that the staff have the children and families' best interest at heart and will go above and beyond for these families.

Meals on Wheels

Senior Nutrition



Meals on Wheels/Senior Nutrition

The Meals on Wheels Association of America is the oldest and largest organization composed of and representing local, community-based senior nutrition programs. These dedicated Senior Nutrition Programs collectively serve a nutritious meal, a warm smile and the safety check that enable over two and a half million seniors to be more independent in their own homes across the nation.

A delicious meal is delivered to older adults (60+) who are confined to their homes and unable to prepare themselves a nutritious meal for various health reasons. A registered dietician plans the meals served.

The DCEA Senior Nutrition Program successfully served over 108,000 meals during 2019-2020 to over 700 clients in 8 different counties. A new pilot program through Meals on Wheels America and Humana allowed more client in the 6 core counties as well as Rhea and McMinn Counties to be served. During the holidays SNP was able to receive enough donations to get the clients a box of items for them to use throughout the year. The DCEA Afterschool Program and others throughout the communities were nice enough to decorate and fill the boxes with all of the donations.

More SNP clients have been added since the COVID-19 Pandemic started due to additional funding. The Senior Nutrition Program was also showcased on three different segments of WATE Channel 6 News with Don Dare.

2019-2020 was a very successful year for Senior Nutrition.

108,592 meals were served

4,570 meals were served using additional COVID-19 funds

4,349 meals were prepared by small business restaurant partners



Meals on Wheels Success

After a lot of hard work, organizing, planning, preparing and distributing all of the Christmas boxes to the clients along with maintaining the normal deliveries, the staff received an amazing "Thank You" card from Sonja, one of the clients in Cocke County. Sonja wanted to let the staff know how much it meant to her. She had given up on Christmas and had mostly given up on life. She no longer cared about Christmas or holidays because she enjoyed going shopping for others, being able to cook a meal for them to enjoy and watching the smiles on children's faces when they opened gifts. However, she can barely leave the house now due to her health.

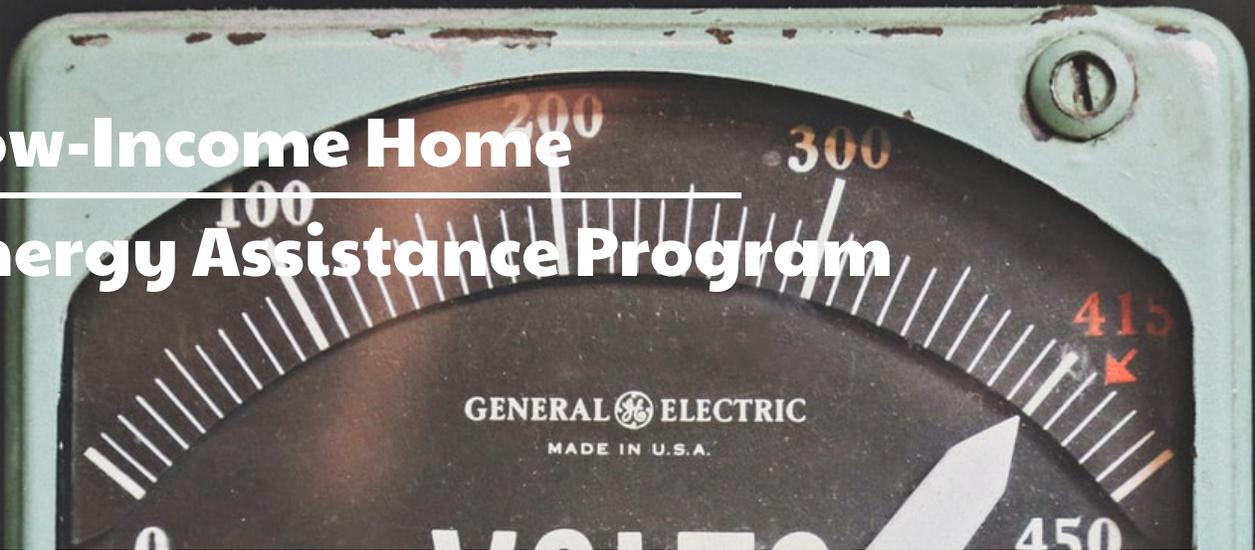
At what she felt was the lowest point of her life, T.J. her SNP delivery driver, pulled up with a box of gifts for her. The box had been decorated by kids and it was filled with stationery items, a SNP calendar, a blanket, cards made by kids from varying schools and programs, soaps, shampoo and conditioner, and many other items. But according to Sonja, the best gift was the back scratcher which she had desperately needed for quite some time. In the card she even stated that the box had filled her heart with joy and her whole outlook of the holidays and life changed when she looked in it. What Sonja didn't count, on was the feelings of joy and happiness her "Thank You" brought the Senior Nutrition staff.

The SNP staff decided to call Sonja to thank her and let her know how much it meant to them that she had sent the card. In spite of the gratitude, she apologized because she didn't feel the card was "appropriate." She had intended to go out and purchase a special card for the staff, but was not able to get a ride to the store. After speaking with Sonja, the staff decided to get her more cards so that she would have what she needed on-hand. The staff collected cards that had been donated to the Neighborhood Service Centers and by individuals at DCEA.

Penny Blakeley, the Community Outreach Advocate, and Kate Luker, SNP Program Director, personally delivered the cards. The first thing noticed after walking into Sonja's home was the back scratcher hanging on a nail next to where she normally sits during the day. After talking with Sonja, it became more clear she was very lonely and didn't have a lot of people in her life on a daily basis. However, as Penny and Kate had learned firsthand, Sonja was able to help others solely with her words written in a simple card. Before leaving, Penny and Kate encouraged Sonja to write cards for others. Her words of encouragement could be given to other clients who receive meals to put a smile on their faces. Since the visit, Sonja has sent cards to everyone who works in Senior Nutrition, including Kay, our Executive Director, and to other SNP clients. Every card has put a smile on our faces, tears of joy in our eyes, and happiness in our hearts.



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program



LIHEAP

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) aims to assist low-income households, primarily those who pay a high portion of household income on home energy, in meeting their immediate energy needs. LIHEAP is a one-time assistance offered to help defray heating and cooling expenses, as long as funding is available.

THDA administers the federally funded LIHEAP. Eligible households must be below 150% of the federal poverty standards. Priority in energy assistance, as well as the level of assistance, is based on the energy burden, income, household size, and the presence in the household of, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and young children.

When LIHEAP began at Douglas-Cherokee, it was a very small, once a year intake process. Funds were available to assist elderly, disabled, and families with very young children to receive a one time benefit to be placed on their energy bill in January. DCEA received around \$200,000 in LIHEAP funding annually. 2008 saw the program expand into a year-round program with new guidelines and policies.

Today, our LIHEAP program averages around \$3.5 million in funding per year. The administrative staff has grown from 3 employees to 10. Neighborhood Service Center staff administer the LIHEAP program in our six county service area.

LIHEAP now provides year round heating and cooling assistance, as well as an Assurance 16 Initiative which provides energy efficiency resources to help residents lower their utility bills. This initiative also provides energy efficient fans and heaters to residents. The Assurance 16 Initiative began in July 2019. In the first month, 87% of LIHEAP clients had substantially lower energy bills than over the past year.

Not only does LIHEAP relieve some of the burden of energy costs, it also teaches the clients how to become or maintain self-sufficiency.

4,582 households received regular energy assistance

2,957 households received emergency energy assistance

3,464 disabled individuals received regular energy assistance

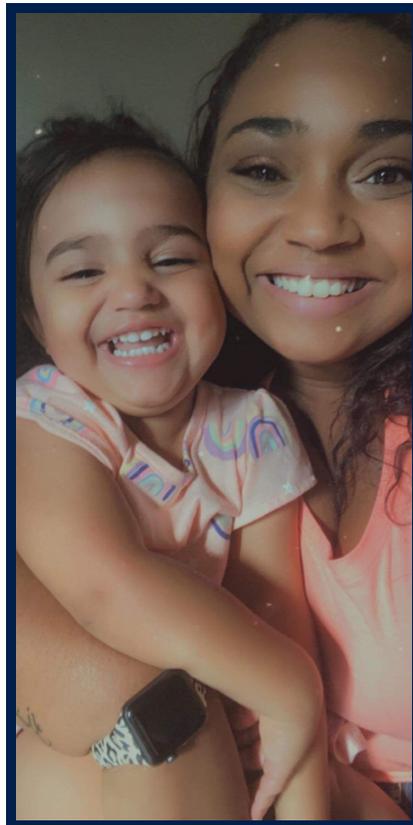


LIHEAP Success

Alexus works full-time at a local restaurant. She regularly earns enough income to support her family. Alexis has an admirable work ethic and determination. However, Alexis found herself unemployed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Alexis was proactive in filing for unemployment during this time, but it took almost 8 weeks for her unemployment to begin. During this time, Alexis' savings dwindled and she began to panic.

Alexus discovered DCEA and the Hamblen County Neighborhood Service Center through a friend. The resources provided by DCEA were life changing for Alexis and her daughter Ezra. Alexis received \$500 from LIHEAP which gave her enough of a credit that she didn't have to worry about the bill for a couple of months. She also received rental assistance and food through DCEA's partner, Morristown Hamblen Central Services. The peace of knowing the pressing burdens that had haunted Alexis every morning were taken care of for a little while, allowed Alexis to assure her daughter everything was going to be okay.

Although, Alexis is not sure of what the future holds, she is back in full swing making sure her family is taken care of. She works 6 days a week, picking up shifts whenever they are available. She says she is preparing for the possibility of loss of work at anytime. With the assistance she received from DCEA and others, she feels more confident that her community will be here for her on her path to self-sufficiency.



Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing

The Affordable Housing Program began in 1970 when Volunteer Housing Development Corporation was chartered by Ray McElhaney. Ray's intention was to provide more affordable housing options to low-income, underprivileged individuals under Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority's umbrella of programs.

In 1976 VHDC and DCEA received their first round of funding through a 221d3 loan provided by THDA and HUD, to build their first apartment complex, Gateway Village, in Sevierville, TN. At the time, the management of Gateway was contracted out to another entity in the area while Ray focused on seeking more funding to build additional apartments.

In 1982, the housing program was approved to build College Park Apartments in Morristown, TN. This was housing's first 202 apartment complex for seniors and Kathy Boatman became the first apartment manager for Housing. Kathy later became the Program Director for the Affordable Housing Program. College Park Apartments started the ball rolling with funding between HUD and the Housing Program, allowing it to grow year after year. While 202 elderly housing was the primary type of property being built, Housing slowly expanded to include family properties, tax credits and rural development properties. At one point, Housing also managed two group homes, KC Homes and Victory House in Morristown and Knoxville.

By the year 2000, the housing program owned/managed 29 different properties and continued to grow until reaching the 59 properties currently overseen in 24 different counties across Tennessee.

Starting with only 35 units in one county, the Affordable Housing program now provides 1,559 affordable units.

2,737 Individuals avoided eviction

1,102 Seniors maintained independent living situations

80 Seniors were provided with in-home care services



Affordable Housing Success

Britta Snow, Apartment Manager at Brookwood Terrace in Wartburg, has worked super hard during 2019 to rent all of the apartments. Starting with almost half of the apartments vacant and no prospects, she was able to reach an average occupancy rate of 92% during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Britta was able to completely fill Brookwood by May 2020 and still enjoy time with the residents. Having 0 vacancies and making Brookwood feel like home was a huge success for Britta!



Greenbriar Village was voted "Best Apartment Complex" in Hawkins County by The Rogersville Review. Generally, a banquet is held for the winners to receive the awards, but due to Covid-19, the banquet was canceled this year.

Thanks to Apartment Manager, Candice Mayes, Maintenance Technician, Eric Mays, and Service Coordinator, Teresa Adkins for going above and beyond to make the tenants feel at home.

Britta Snow, Apartment Manager of Brookwood Terrace was contacted by Etta in February. Etta was living with family, but had a falling out and was now homeless. She was staying in a hotel. Etta was 93 and recovering from a recent hip surgery. Britta had one apartment which was going to be available soon. Etta and her little dog moved in as soon as the apartment was ready. She didn't have much furniture to start with, but she was so proud to have her own home. Etta is a pleasure and is so loved by all the other tenants.



Educational Opportunity Centers



EOC

The Educational Opportunity Center program provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified adults who want to enter or continue a program of postsecondary education. The program also provides services to improve the financial and economic literacy of participants. An important objective of the program is to counsel participants on financial aid options, including basic financial planning skills, and to assist in the application process. The goal of the EOC program is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll in postsecondary education institutions.

The Douglas-Cherokee EOC Program began during the 1980's. In the beginning, DCEA EOC served 34 counties across Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia. While serving these counties, over 16,000 participants were served. In 2002, DCEA EOC's service area was narrowed down to include Hamblen, Cocke, Jefferson, Monroe, Claiborne, Hancock and Grainger counties in Tennessee and Harlan County, Kentucky. The program received \$1,726,224 in funding to served 1,000 participants in these counties during a 5 year period.

Today, EOC serves seven counties: Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Hancock Jefferson and Monroe in Tennessee. EOC served 1,000 participants during program year 2019-2020.

67.2% of participants were both low-income and first-generation

91.6% of participants received a High School diploma or equivalent

59.4% of college ready participants enrolled in post-secondary education



EOC Success

Alexis entered the DCEA EOC program in January 2016 when she wished to enroll at Carson-Newman University for the fall of 2016. No stranger to obstacles, Alexis was diagnosed at age 2 with an extremely rare bone disease, a growth disorder of the tibia bone. She has had numerous surgeries assisted by Shriner's. Alexis is in a wheelchair the majority of the time. Alexis can only walk a short distance. At age 5, she was diagnosed with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. As a result of the diabetes, she developed cataracts in both eyes. Through all of her obstacles with her health, her determination has not waived. Alexis can be seen traveling back and forth in her wheelchair in rain, snow, sleet or shine across campus. Following eye surgery, her first question to her physician was , "When can I read my textbooks?"

During her time at Carson-Newman, Alexis has made the Dean's List all four years. She has served as President of the Honor's Society. She has served as Orientation Leader, which assists incoming freshmen in adjusting to campus life. Alexis volunteers each week at Appalachian Outreach, a poverty relief ministry serving East Tennessee. She assists families with filling out the application for services, and helps distribute food and clothing.

In February 2020, Alexis' mother passed away unexpectedly. Alexis shared at her mother's memorial service that she and her mother didn't always agree on her choice of major at Carson-Newman. Alexis was majoring in Human Services, but her mother felt Political Science was a better fit. Alexis convinced her mother that Human Services was the right choice when she shared with her doctor the excitement she felt when she gave a coat to someone in need while volunteering at Appalachian Outreach. After hearing this, her mother finally agreed with the major and said that Alexis was put on this Earth to help other people.

Alexis graduated in May 2020 with a Bachelor's of Science in Human Services. She graduated top 10 in her graduating class. Her plans are to continue her education at Carson-Newman by pursuing a Master's in Mental Health Counseling.



Talent Search



Talent Search

The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. The program publicizes the availability of financial aid and assists participants with the postsecondary application process. The goal of Talent Search is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete high school and enroll in and complete their postsecondary education.

DCEA Talent Search began in the fall of 1991. At the program beginning, 800 students in 19 target schools were served at a funding level of \$231 per student. Today, 779 students in 8 target schools are served at a funding level of \$485 per student.

Some of the changes over the years have included more intensive counseling services, more emphasis on high quality tutoring and mentoring and STEM content. One of the biggest changes was the creation of a summer program in 2004.

When Talent Search began, the students received 3 short visits per year to disseminate information on financial aid, college and career exploration. Now the program offers intensive counseling contacts a minimum of 9 times per year to students and offer them more intensive experiences through hands-on learning, mentoring and field trips.

844 students were served during the 2019-2020 academic year

67% of students were both potential first generation college students and low-income

72% of students attended weekly counseling sessions



Talent Search Success

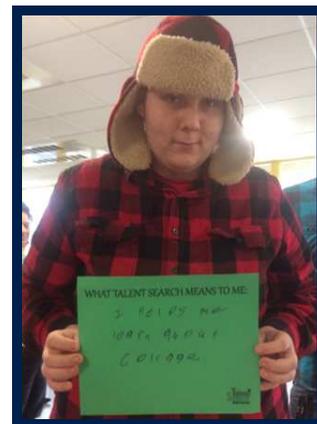
Ernest is a 5-year member of the Educational Talent Search program in Middlesboro. Through the past 5 years, Ernest has embodied what it means to be an active, committed member and has worked hard to not only prove to himself he can do it, but everyone around him. Ernest has been key in helping recruit new members as well as mentor some of the younger members. He has participated in 3 summer trips with Talent Search. During those trips, Ernest left an impression on every student who was on the bus with him.

Ernest says, "Talent Search has been such a blessing and a huge help to me throughout the years. It has helped me grow as a person, it helped me to become an adult. Although it may sound odd, it also helped my physically because we were always active and on the go. Spiritually it helped me realize that I am the leader of my own destiny, and it's MY choice to decide my path in this very short life. It helped me at some of my lowest points in life, some days it was my only motivation to keep going to school. Some days it was my only motivation at all. But those stumbling stones in life are quickly washed away, because of the comfort and confidence Talent Search has brought to me and/or taught me. Talent Search understood not only my problems, but problems that all teenagers face. The program was a judgement free zone where the advisers listen about an issue a student was having or just a funny story."

"I have grown and matured and become who I am today thanks to Talent Search! I appreciate and can never repay Talent Search and the amazing staff enough for what the organization and those people have meant to my life. One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that no one can hold me down. No one can tell me I can't do something. Talent Search taught me that if I set my mind to it, I can do it. Talent Search has instilled in me the foundations of a healthy life and how to prosper and make college a reality, even when you are from a small town like Middlesboro."

Aside from Talent Search, Ernest is an outstanding student and well-liked by his former teachers and administration at Middlesboro High School. He worked hard to get good grades and was awarded several scholarships to help him on his way to the University of the Cumberlands. College has always been a driving force for Ernest from the day he joined Talent Search.

Ernest will start his freshman year at the University of the Cumberlands this fall and is planning to study education. He plans on becoming a history teacher. Ernest is a great representation of the Talent Search program.



Upward Bound

Upward Bound

Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education. Nationally, Upward Bound was launched in the summer of 1965 at 17 colleges and/or non-profits with 2,061 participants, as a result of Lyndon Johnson's "War of Poverty." That fall, 80% of those students entered college. The program changes every five years, by design, due to an extremely competitive grant process.

Appalachian Upward Bound I & II are federally funded programs that have been based at Douglas-Cherokee for 25 years, UB I (Morgan and Scott counties) started in 1995. UB II (Grainger and Hawkins counties) started in 1999. The primary goal of the Upward Bound programs is to generate the skills and motivation necessary to complete high school and to successfully enroll in and succeed in post-secondary education.

The program is academically based with course offerings in mathematics, laboratory sciences, composition/literature and foreign language. Qualified personnel serve as instructors in their respective areas, with an emphasis on their individual weaknesses. Each year consists of two components: an extensive six week summer component and an academic year component encompassing weekly meetings with Upward Bound Education Specialists and nine Saturdays September through May. Both components consist of the following:

- ACT/SAT Prep
- Tutoring
- Financial Literacy Training
- Academic and Social Counseling
- Career Information and Advising
- Basic Skills Development
- Postsecondary Education Orientation
- Selected Motivational and Cultural Experiences
- Seminars and Workshops

160 attended career counseling workshops

82 participated in an apprenticeship/internship

160 participated in voter education



Upward Bound Success

Emily graduated from Cherokee High School in 2014 and attended Tennessee Technological University the following fall. She attributes Upward Bound for teaching her that college is a realistic goal for anyone, regardless of financial or educational background.



She graduated in May 2019 with a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Mathematics. She is in a technical rotation career plan with General Motors where she will rotate through three jobs in two years. Emily is currently a Group Leader in the body shop and manages 29 hourly workers.

Her advice for any student is to WORK HARD. "Your work ethic and mindset is the biggest key to success. Don't be afraid to put in some extra hours to get better at what you do. There are a lot of things beyond your control, like your background, life situation, race, gender, etc. But one thing you can always control is how hard you work. When I first started college, I saw a quote that said, "Do the work others aren't willing to do, and you'll get the things others will never have." And it has been so true. Always give 110% and never stop trying to be the best you can be."

Destiny joined Upward Bound in September 2012. She wanted to join because no one in her family had attended college, much less graduated. She wanted to be the one to enhance her education.

Destiny graduated from Sunbright High School in 2015 and attended Roane State Community College the following fall. During her time at college she was able to reach out to her UB Education Specialist when she had issues with her financial aid. She graduated in May 2018 with an Associate of Allied Health in Radiologic Technology.

She has since been certified as a medical assistant, phlebotomist, and EKG tech. She currently works as an x-ray tech/medical assistant at Morgan County Medical Center. When asked what her advice would be for those looking to attend college, she said, "Take care of yourself- you can't pour from an empty cup."



Victoria is a 2019 graduate of Grainger High School and a Douglas-Cherokee Upward Bound alumna. She enrolled at Lincoln Memorial University in the fall of 2019. LMU offered her an opportunity to be a member of their University Honors Scholars Program. Victoria made the Dean's List for Fall 2019. Facing all the changes that come with moving away from home, making new friends, and getting acclimated to the new environment can sometimes distract students and make the academic side harder. Victoria was able to push through all of the obstacles and set a benchmark for herself that will set her up for success the rest of her academic career.

Victoria says that through Upward Bound she discovered what she really wanted to study in college and what she wanted to achieve and do. She says she would not be where she is today or experienced what she has without such an amazing program.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st CCLC

In 1994, the US Congress created the 21st Century Community Learning Centers through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Originally, all community members were welcome to use these centers, not just students. The first grants were distributed in 1998. Three years later, the US Congress expanded the program through the No Child Left Behind Act, changing the distribution method to give the money to the states, rather than directly to schools. The amount of money allocated to each state is now based on the percentage of schools within a state that qualify as Title 1 schools. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs.

Douglas-Cherokee's first 21st CCLC grant was awarded \$200,000 in 2003, for four schools, two schools in Grainger County (Joppa and Washburn Schools) and two schools in Union County (Luttrell and Maynardville Elementary Schools). 240 students attended during the first year of programming.

Under Cathy Kitts', the first Program Director, guidance the program continued competitive re-funding and expanded with various 21st CCLC grants to include schools in Hamblen, Grainger, Union, Cocke and Scott Counties.

Currently, under the directorship of Betsy Hurst, DCEA administers two 21st CCLC grants; one specifically in Hamblen County and one that spans Hamblen, Union and Grainger Counties. The Hamblen County grant, with a funding award of \$272,500, supplies Fairview Marguerite, John Hay, and West elementary schools and Meadowview Middle School with afterschool services. The Hamblen, Union, Grainger grant, with a funding award of \$330,000, serves students at Lincoln Heights Elementary and Middle School in Hamblen County, Luttrell, Maynardville and Paulette elementary schools in Union County, and Bean Station Elementary School in Grainger County.



201 students were enrolled in the Hamblen County grant

263 students were enrolled in the Hamblen, Union and Grainger Counties grant

Lottery for Education Afterschool Programs (LEAP)



LEAPs

In November 2002, Tennesseans voted to create a state lottery. The General Assembly established that profits from the lottery be used for specific educational programs: college scholarships, early childhood programs and afterschool programs. In accordance with TCA Title 4, Chapter 6, Part 7, 100% of monies constituting an unclaimed prize shall be deposited into an afterschool account for the purpose of administering a system of competitive grants and technical assistance for eligible organizations providing after school educational programs within Tennessee. The overall goal of Lottery for Education: Afterschool Programs is to provide Tennessee students with academic enrichment opportunities that reinforce and complement the regular academic program. (LEAPs Program Manual, Tennessee Department of Education, October 2016)

The first LEAP grant was awarded to DCEA in 2005 in the amount of \$440,764 for Morristown East High School in Hamblen County. The following years saw an expanded use of LEAP funding in Hamblen, Grainger, Union, Scott and Monroe Counties. Over the years, the Tennessee Department of Education combined grant competitions to limit the number of active LEAP grants, so that more recently, DCEA only administers one LEAP grant at a time.

Currently, under the directorship of Betsy Hurst, the most recent DCEA LEAP grant served schools in Hamblen, Grainger and Union Counties. Hamblen County schools served are Hillcrest and Union Heights Elementary. Grainger County schools served are Joppa, Rutledge and Washburn Elementary Schools. Horace Maynard Middle School is served in Union County. During the 2019-2020 school year, 278 students were served.

46.5% teachers reported completed homework

46% of students improved their English Language Arts skills based on report cards

45% of students that they feel safe in the program



21st CCLC & LEAPs Success

By their very nature, middle school students often interact only with their friends, excluding others, which unknowingly causes them to feel sad. This exclusion can create unintentional bullying. At the same time, the middle school students can knowingly exclude others or seek to intimidate or make fun of others outside their group. Bullying can cause many years of pain for the student who is the target of bullying.

At Meadowview Middle School, students were lining up along racial and ethnic lines. The students were openly antagonistic toward others outside their reference groups. Students who were targeted were very sad and isolated. As a result, the Afterschool Program undertook a comprehensive anti-bullying program to reduce the number of bullying incidents and to make students feel better and safer in school. During the entire school year, time was spent during English Language Arts reading and talking about bullying, how to prevent it, and what to do if it happened.

By the end of the year, students reported fewer bullying incidents, students who had said that they had been bullied in the past said they felt much better in the classroom. Several students showed a willingness and seemed more comfortable in working with others outside their racial and ethnic lines.

Ulises is a Latino 4th grade student at Fairview-Marguerite Elementary School whose parents speak very little English. He was struggling in class because his parents were unable to help him with his assignments. He was recommended to our program by his teacher and his parents who were grateful for the opportunity. Our program staff worked with him to explain the assignment in detail, assist him with areas he didn't understand, and practice the needed skills with him. By the end of the school year, his grades had improved and he had made significant progress. On our End-of-Year Parent Survey, his parents expressed their gratitude for our program and for the staff who helped him become a successful student. They also shared that his attitude toward school had improved as well.



One day during the 2020 DCEA Summer Program at West Elementary, the 1st and 2nd grade class was going to play a game during gym. The gym teacher told the class beforehand that they needed to be good sports during this game or they would be told to sit out for the rest of the game. As the game started the team that had a particularly competitive student on it was winning. The excitement began to rise and the teacher watched as the student started to get a competitive look in his eye. Suddenly, the other team scored a point. The student looked as though he was going to make a negative comment about it, but caught himself instead and said, "Hey, nice shot!" to his classmate. For the rest of the game he was in very good spirits and was not a sore winner when his team won. The gym teacher high-fived the whole class and congratulated them for a job well done in good sportsmanship!

Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)



SRAE

Due to high teen birth rates for Hamblen and Hancock Counties and DCEA's prior success with the TOP Program under Teen Pregnancy Prevention, DCEA received funding in 2018 to implement the SRAE Program using an evidence-based curriculum *Teen Outreach Program (TOP)*. After the first year, *Game Plan* curriculum was implemented in Miller Boyd Alternative School. Using these two curriculums, youth in Hamblen and Hancock Counties received a program using positive youth development framework that include abstinence-based education. Students were encouraged to focus on graduating high school, focus on a career, and then get married before having children.

Youth received lessons such as the benefits of self-regulation, healthy relationships, goal setting, resisting sexual coercion/dating violence, and avoiding other youth risk behaviors such as illicit drug use and underage drinking. Two of the main focus areas were healthy choices and avoidance skills. Students planned and carried out various community service-learning projects at school and in the community.

A component of the program is parent education and parent involvement. Parents were invited to participate in parent education sessions called Coffee and Conversation that covered a broad range of topics such as healthy relationships, dangers of violence in relationships, and the importance of talking to children about the dangers of alcohol/drugs/sex. Parents were encouraged to become involved and volunteer in assisting with community-service learning projects or by serving on a parent committee.



340 students participated in curriculum classes and service-learning

3795.75 hours of service learning were completed

After completing the program, 100% of students feel they are able to say "no" to sexual activity

SRAE Success



One of the most prevalent issues identified in the Hancock County community is bullying. Community residents, Community Advisory Group members, and students all agreed that bullying is alive and well in their community and expressed the need for intervention.

During the school year, students enrolled in SRAE planned a community service-learning project with an anti-bullying theme. The project allowed for students to give out anti-bullying messages and to take a strong stand against bullying. Having a float in the annual Christmas parade was the platform the students chose. Students named the float "Be a Blessing not a Bully" for their entry.

One student, Kaylee, was particularly interested and seemed to step into a leadership role for the anti-bullying project. Ordinarily, Kaylee was quiet and reserved and her taking the lead surprised the TOP facilitators. Facilitators learned that Kaylee is a victim of bullying and she wanted everyone to understand how hurtful bullying can be. The Christmas parade float gave Kaylee what she was looking for, a way to tell the whole community to stop bullying.

As Kaylee encouraged students to participate, others who had been bullied stepped forward to get the message out. TOP students decorated a float for the parade and prepared various items to throw out into the crowd. Items with anti-bullying messages were used including message bracelets that had sayings such as "Bullying Stops Here," "Bully-Free Starts with Me," and "Put an End to Bullying."

At the conclusion of the parade, the "Be a Blessing not a Bully" float entered by our students won first place in the civic division. Students were elated when they were presented the first place trophy.

After this successful CSL project, Kaylee has come out of her shell and has become more talkative. She has strived to remain active in TOP online activities during the COVID-19 shutdown. She has become an outstanding student and the TOP Program gives her the opportunity to be a strong voice in her community.



Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

RSVP

RSVP is funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. CNCS is a Federal Agency that helps millions of American improve the lives of their fellow citizens through service. While working hand in hand with local partners, CNCS taps the ingenuity and can-do spirit of the American people to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing our nation. CNCS invests in thousands of nonprofit and faith-based groups that make a difference across the Country.

Douglas-Cherokee's RSVP Program serves Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen and Jefferson Counties.

The Volunteer Telecare Program is designed to enhance aging in place, reduce social isolation and promote healthy futures. RSVP volunteers make phone calls to DCEA Meals on Wheels home-bound participants 2-3 times per week. The volunteer reports any concerns to the DCEA SNP staff who then make referrals to family or other programs.

The Volunteer Driver Program transports home-bound seniors to medical, dental, and other health-related services. The RSVP volunteer will help the senior into their appointment and wait for them to take them back home.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic many people have expressed more interest in volunteering remotely/virtually. The RSVP program transitioned into the Community Connect Program on July 1, 2020. Most volunteers plan on continuing to serve in the new program.



11 volunteers provided 23 homebound senior with telephone reassurance

9 volunteers provided transportation for 72 homebound seniors

3 volunteers served meals to 30 homebound seniors

RSVP Success

RSVP volunteers go above and beyond to help others in need. Velda of Jefferson County is one of the program's super volunteers. She has served as a TeleCare Volunteer through RSVP since January of 2019. During her time volunteering with the program, she has called to check in on two ladies who live in Jefferson County, Marjorie and Beverly. The friendship that has grown between these ladies and Velda has been amazing to witness.

One day when Velda attempted to reach Beverly on the phone, she didn't answer and Velda became concerned. She tried calling back later, and still there was no answer. At this point, Velda was concerned for Beverly's safety. Velda called the Jefferson County Police Department to do a well-check. When the officers arrived, they didn't see anything out of place and could not see anyone through the windows. They advised Velda to check with the hospital to see if Beverly had been admitted. Velda knew from previous conversations with Beverly which hospital to call. She was able to get connected to Beverly's hospital room and learned that she had fallen but that she was lucky enough to be able to reach the phone to call for help. After undergoing surgery, Beverly had to go to physical therapy at a nursing home and during that time Velda continued to call her. Beverly's daughter, Marci, called the RSVP office to say how much Velda's phone calls have meant to her mother and that she believes Velda helped to bring her mother a sense of "normal" while she was in a strange place during her physical therapy stay.

Marjorie's husband became very ill and was in the hospital for several weeks and Velda was very worried about her during this time. She had often heard Marjorie speak about her daughters and she was very happy to get the opportunity to talk with one of her daughters on the phone one day. Marjorie's daughter stated that she felt that Velda's voice had such a calming effect on her mother and that it was very clear that her mother really looked forward to receiving her phone calls. She asked Velda if she would stop by the hospital. A few weeks later, Marjorie's husband passed away and Velda was asked to attend the funeral by Marjorie's daughter. Velda attended Marjorie's husband's funeral and provided the strength that only a true friend can give someone when they are grieving.

Velda is an amazing volunteer and made a huge impact with the RSVP Program.



Cocke County Rural Accelerator Initiative

Cocke County Rural Accelerator Initiative

The Rural Accelerator Initiative (RAI) was launched in May 2019. The initiative broadly seeks to accelerate progress toward cradle-to-career outcomes for children in Cocke County/Newport City. The primary focus for the first year has been kindergarten readiness, with the addition of early grades literacy and ready graduate for years two and three.

The RAI Leadership Team recognizes that no one organization owns education and that it takes a collective effort of all community stakeholders to reach the goal:

"All Cocke County students will graduate from high school with the necessary skills to pursue post-secondary opportunities and to become productive citizens."

The success of this goal hinges on all children entering kindergarten ready to learn, all students exiting 3rd grade reading on grade level, and all students graduating from high school meeting the "ready graduate" criteria.



54% of children entering kindergarten met the benchmark for kindergarten readiness

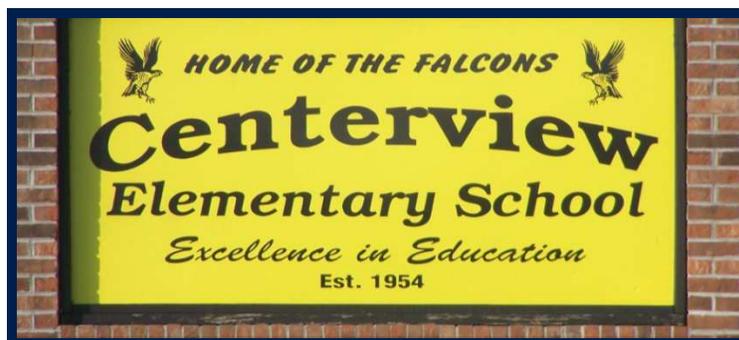
85% of parents were aware of the *Countdown to Kindergarten* program.

63% of children had at least one parent attend the parent monthly meeting.

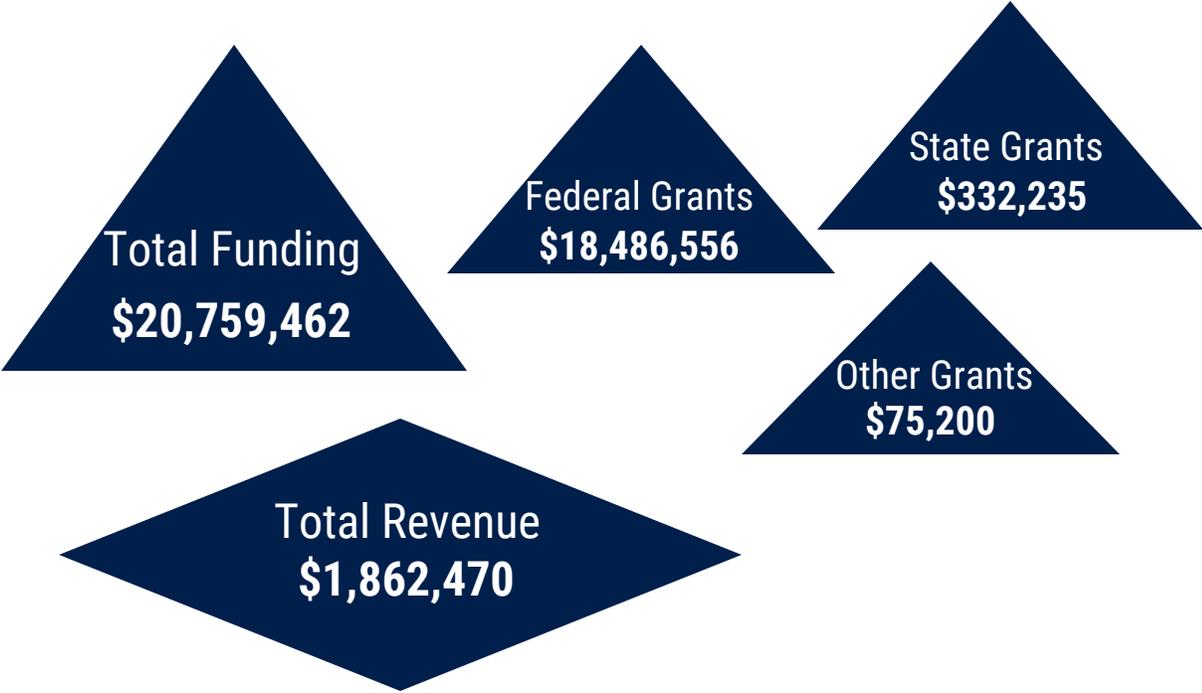
Cocke Co. RAI Success

When the Rural Accelerator Initiative began in Cocke County in May, 2019, the goal was that all children will enter kindergarten ready to learn. Through the data gathering and factor analysis, the Leadership Team identified "awareness" as a factor that was negatively impacting children having the necessary skills to enter kindergarten ready to learn. A universal strategy was developed and launched to help parent/caregivers be more knowledgeable about kindergarten readiness skills. The program, "Count Down to Kindergarten," was presented to the public through local media and community events.

Based on data, Centerview Elementary School was identified as a "target population" to receive direct services. Working with school administrators, teachers, and the cafeteria staff, a plan was developed to have parents/caregivers attend a monthly breakfast meeting. The parent/caregivers would have breakfast with their Pre-K children and then attend a "Count Down to Kindergarten" meeting. At the meeting, resources and activities were distributed to support skill development. Parents were able to share successes and barriers. As of March 2020, 75% of Pre-K students enrolled in Centerview's Pre-K program had a parent attend at least one monthly meeting. The average monthly attendance was 63% of parents/caregivers, with 78% of children having a parent/caregiver present at our last breakfast meeting in March. Brigance screening was completed for Pre-K students in August 2019 and again in December 2019. The class average increased from 58.61 to 78.63. The Pre-K teacher attributed this growth to parents/caregivers using the monthly "Countdown to Kindergarten" logs to practice skills at home.



Funding

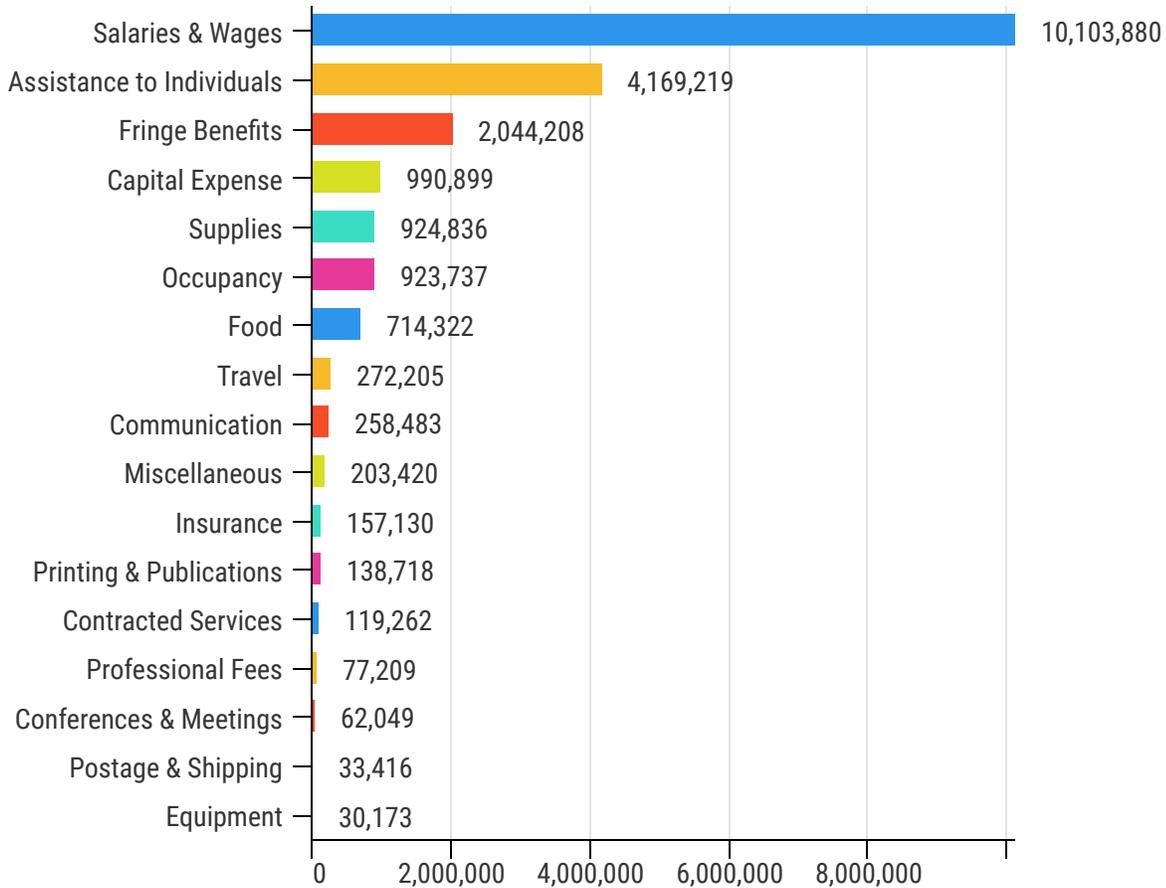


Funding Sources

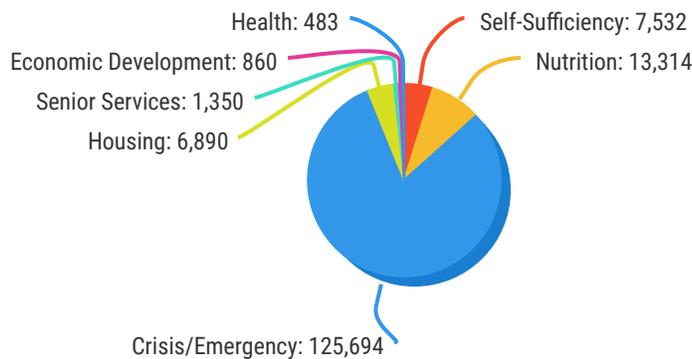
- Corporation for National & Community Service
- East Tennessee Foundation
- East Tennessee Human Resource Agency
- TN Department of Agriculture
- TN Department of Education
- TN Department of Health & Human Services
- TN Housing Development Agency
- US Department of Education
- US Department of Health & Human Services
- US Department of Homeland Security
- US Department of Housing & Urban Development
- US Department of Labor
- United Way
- Walters State Community College

Expenditures

2019-2020 Expenditures



CSBG Benefits Paid



Highlights



27,086
College Prep
Hours
Completed



676,373
Pounds of
Commodity Food
Distributed



2,981
Families Obtained
Safe & Affordable
Housing



926
FAFSAs
Completed



146 Hours
Calling
Homebound
Seniors



9,457
Miles
Transporting
Seniors



4,444
Community
Service Learning
Hours



108,592
Meals Served
to Elderly

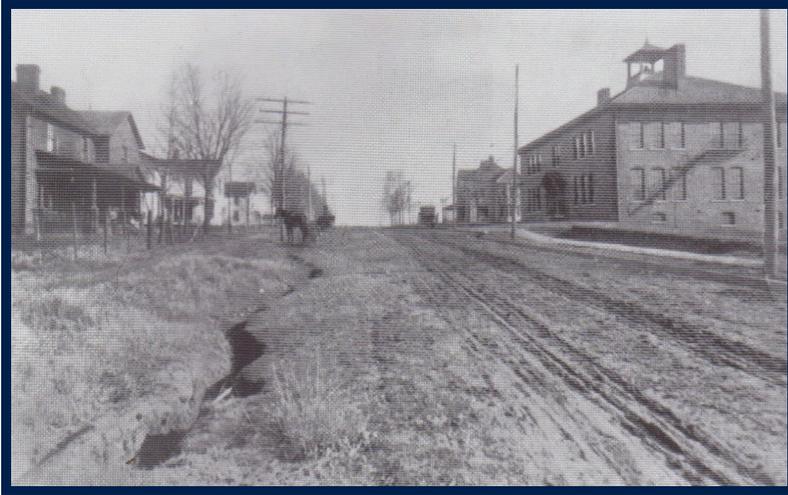


8,808
Volunteer Hours
Donated



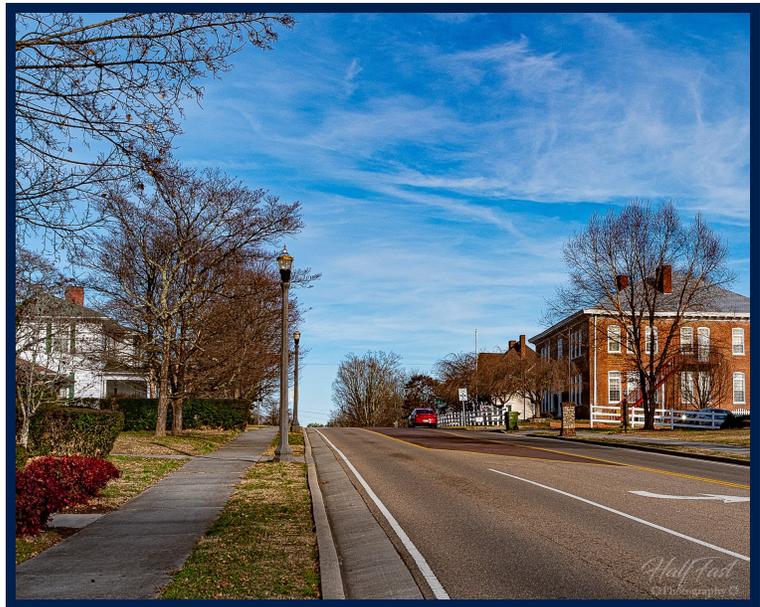
\$16,269
Client Utility
Payments

Past and Present



The old Roberts School was originally built in c1901 and was named East Side School. The name was later changed to Marion Roberts School. Marion Roberts was partner in Roberts-Turner Drug Store. After a few years, Marion was dropped from the name and it remained Roberts School until it closed.

The Roberts School building has been the home of Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority's administrative and program offices for the last several decades.



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