



mid michigan
COMMUNITY
Action

"Helping People, Changing Lives."

Annual Report 2024

Empowering Communities



Board of Directors

We utilize a unique tripartite board structure. It is composed of at least one-third democratically elected low-income individuals who reside in our area of service, one-third chosen from major groups and interests in the communities served, and one-third elected officials.

This means that each of our core counties has three board seats, along with a voting representative from the Head Start Policy Council and a non-voting financial consultant.

Bay County

Kathy Niemiec
William Reder, *Chair*
Carol Goulet

Clare County

David Hoefling
Norm Gage, *Vice Chair & Legal Advisor*
Nancy Jones, *Secretary*

Gladwin County

Karen Moore
Joel Vernier, *Treasurer*
Ruth Johnson

Mecosta County

Jerrilynn Strong
Lori Johnson

Midland County

Steve Glaser
Kathy Wilton
Susan Weimer

Muskegon County

Charles Nash
Joan Rapp
Cassandra Lingle

Oceana County

Tracy Byard
Barbara Sims
Theresa Ortega

Osceola County

Timothy Michell
Doug Bontekoe
Cindy Wertz

Head Start Policy Council Representative

Nikki Sprague

Financial Consultant

Jennifer Dancer

Former Member

Sharron Such

Executive Message



Dear Friends,

As I reflect on my time with Mid Michigan Community Action, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and pride. This marks my final annual message as your Executive Director, and it has been an absolute honor to be a part of this incredible journey of empowering communities.

Over the years, I have witnessed the remarkable strength and resilience of the individuals and families we serve. I have seen how a helping hand, a listening ear, and a supportive community can transform lives. Our work has always been about more than just providing services; it has been about creating opportunities, inspiring hope, and building connections that uplift us all.

This year, as we focus on the theme of Empowering Communities, I am reminded of the power we have when we come together with purpose and compassion. Whether it's expanding our programs, fostering partnerships, or advocating for those in need, we have consistently shown that collective action can create lasting change.

The accomplishments highlighted in this report are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters. You have all played an essential role in ensuring that our neighbors have the resources and support they need to thrive.

As I prepare to retire, I do so with a full heart, knowing that this agency will continue to make a difference long into the future. Mid Michigan Community Action has been my professional home for decades, and it has been the privilege of a lifetime to lead such an extraordinary organization.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this mission. Thank you for your unwavering support. And thank you for continuing to believe in the power of community. Together, we have built something truly special, and I can't wait to see all that you will accomplish in the years to come.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill Sutton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Sutton, Executive Director

Outreach Services

Through our Community Action Centers, we help individuals and families across our region find and maintain safe, stable housing. From rental assistance and emergency shelter to foreclosure prevention and essential home repairs, we provide the support people need to build more secure futures.

Keeping Families in Their Homes

We prevented foreclosure on 227 homes, covering over \$290,000 in mortgage and tax arrears. Emergency housing funds helped 145 families across 21 counties stay housed.

Connecting People with Housing

We helped 177 households, including 71 veterans, move into housing, and supported 86 households with security deposits to reduce barriers to stable housing.

Shelter and Homeless Services

When shelters were full, 10 motels housed 86 households. We supported 211 households and 437 people through homeless services, including rapid rehousing.

Meeting Essential Needs

We partnered with 20 thrift stores to provide 347 people with items like furniture, kitchenware, and work clothing to help them settle into their homes.

Home Repairs and Utilities

We worked with 59 local businesses to complete critical home repairs—like fixing furnaces, plumbing, and septic systems—for 121 homes. We also provided over \$480,000 in utility assistance to 751 households.

Reaching Our Communities

Over \$2 million in housing-related support reached 1,611 households and 3,441 people across 24 counties, with 90% of funds in our core eight counties.

Outreach Services

From housing counseling to tax preparation to emergency food and shelter, our Outreach programs are designed to meet people where they are and help them take the next step toward stability. Whether addressing immediate needs or building long-term financial confidence, these services play a vital role in empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

Housing Counseling

Our Housing Counseling program supported 215 households with one-on-one guidance to understand housing options, navigate the homebuying process, and develop personalized budgets. We also hosted workshops for 92 households on budgeting, credit, and preparing to purchase a home. As a result:

- 175 households improved their financial situation
- 42 avoided foreclosure
- 215 improved their credit scores

Income Tax Preparation

Our volunteer-run tax preparation program operated in 4 counties, serving 846 households, filing 1,694 returns and helping return \$951,202 in refunds. This work was powered by 25 IRS-trained volunteers, including Accounting students from Ferris State University.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)

EFSP supports organizations that provide food, shelter, rent and utility assistance, and other critical services for individuals and families in crisis.

We support local EFSP boards in Clare, Gladwin, Mecosta, and Osceola Counties, helping distribute funds to 21 organizations. We also provide fiduciary support for:

- Sacred Heart Mission in Gladwin
- Third Avenue Soup Kitchen in Big Rapids
- Shepherd's Table in Reed City
- Northwest Osceola Food Pantry in Tustin
- Marion Community Food Pantry

Outreach Services

Our US Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded Food Programs help meet customers' nutritional needs by increasing access to healthy food. Through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), we distribute food boxes directly to individuals aged 60 and over. With The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), we help support households of all ages through our network of partner pantries.

We also expanded our reach through the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program, which brings locally grown foods like produce, dairy, meat, and more into our communities. Through Market Day events, monthly deliveries to partner pantries, and USDA food boxes, LFPA helps connect local farms with local families. These combined efforts empower communities by making food more accessible, supporting agriculture, and strengthening our local food systems.

USDA Food Boxes

37,107 food boxes were distributed to low-income seniors.

1,182,092 pounds of USDA food were distributed to households in need.

Local Food Purchase Assistance Program

36,201 participants USDA food box programs received additional food through the LFPA program.

17 partner food pantries received monthly deliveries of LFPA food.

Participating farms include Arnold Farms, Carigan Family Farm, Far Hills Maple Syrup, Gavin Orchards, Gregory's Asparagus Farm, JNelson Farms, McMillan's Honey Bees, M&M Red Barn Produce, MOO-ville Creamery, Swanstraland Farms, The Recipe Farmstead, Tom's Taters, Traditions Apiary and Produce, Van Ooteghem's Farm and Greenhouse, and Wagner Farms!

Market Day Events

341 households and 971 people served at Beaverton's Ross Lake Park.

516 households and 1,589 people served at Littlefield Park in Farwell.

366 households and 1,081 people served at Ewart High School in Osceola County.

377 households and 1,031 people served at Shelby Community Park.

Early Childhood Services

Our mission is to support families by providing comprehensive, high-quality early education programs that build strong foundations for lifelong success. Our programs serve those who are pregnant and children from birth through age five, strengthening bonds between parents and caregivers and helping children prepare for a smooth transition to kindergarten.

By working alongside families to achieve their goals, we help parents build confidence, stability, and strong connections within their communities. When families have the tools and support they need, children thrive, and communities grow stronger.

Early Childhood Services is a trauma-informed program, using Trauma Smart training to equip staff with strategies that create a calm, safe, and supportive learning environment. Our focus is on fostering strong relationships, helping children develop key skills, and providing families with tools for success.

This year, we introduced Parent Journeys, an opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn practical strategies for creating a positive home environment. These sessions also provide a space for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and build supportive relationships within their communities.

WIC Participation Highlights

96% average client participation per month

77% weekly in-person show rate

67% of infants have initiated breastfeeding in program

442 breastfeeding infants and mothers enrolled

1,442 total individuals enrolled in services as of September 2024

WIC and Early Head Start Collaboration

WIC is excited to announce a new collaboration with Early Head Start to expand support for families. With grant funding from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, WIC has launched a two-year initiative to strengthen connections between WIC and EHS services. As part of this project, a breastfeeding counselor now provides personalized, in-home support to families, helping ensure they receive the guidance and resources they need. Implementation of this initiative began in August 2024, creating new opportunities to support families in both programs.

Early Childhood Services

Children Served

Head Start 181
Early Head Start 286

Families Served

Head Start 142
Early Head Start 216

Pregnant Individuals Served

Early Head Start 23

Average Monthly Enrollment

Head Start 161
Early Head Start 160

Children up-to-date on a schedule of primary and preventative health care

Head Start 95%
Early Head Start 71%

Children completing dental exams and oral health screenings

Head Start 88%
Early Head Start 60%

Children up-to-date on immunizations

Head Start 96%
Early Head Start 95%

Children enrolled with a disability

Head Start 21%
Early Head Start 24%

Family Involvement

74% of Head Start Families participated in Head Start parent meetings.

The average monthly Early Head Start parent meeting attendance was 15 with 176 parents and children attending in total.

The average monthly Early Head Start socialization attendance was 19 with 233 parents and children attending in total.

882 children and their families participated in collaborative events.

22 “Men in the Lives of Kids” events were held with 80 males attending.

18 Trauma Smart Parent Journey events were held with 208 parents and children attending in total.

Early Head Start participated in 140 collaborative community events and actively planned 35% of those events.

A strong family foundation is essential for preparing children for school and lifelong learning. Families create the supportive environments children need to develop key skills and confidence for a smooth transition into kindergarten. Throughout the 2023-2024 program year, we provided families with opportunities to engage in educational experiences designed to support their child’s growth and success.

Early Childhood Services

Early Head Start

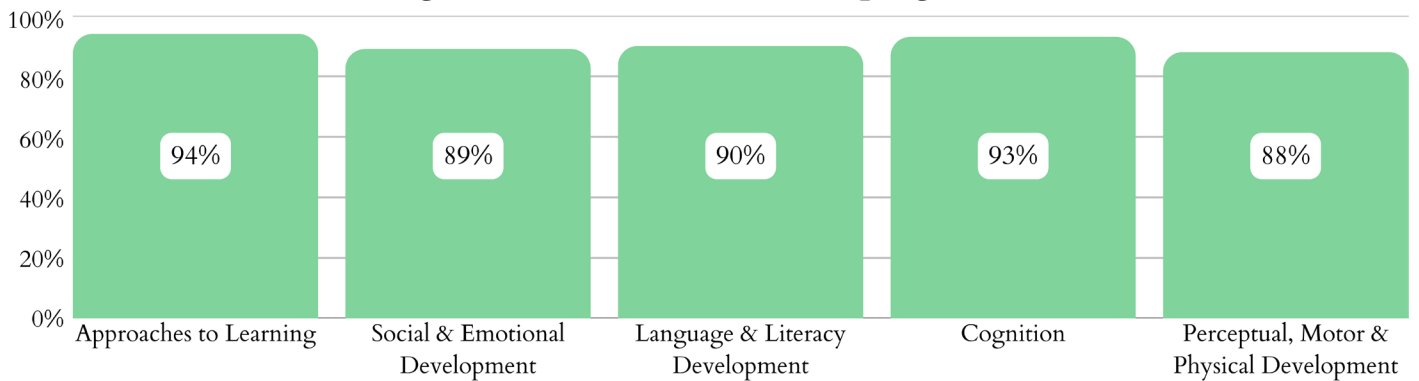
Head Start

	Budget/Allocation	Actual Expense
Personnel	\$1,741,132.34	\$1,817,121
Fringe	\$502,099.80	\$377,269
Travel	\$20,829.35	\$78,412
Equipment	\$91,020.00	\$90,560
Supplies	\$185,218.13	\$133,084
Contractual	\$109,230.14	\$199,443
Other	\$361,205.43	\$357,304
Total Expenses	\$3,010,735.19	\$2,973,193

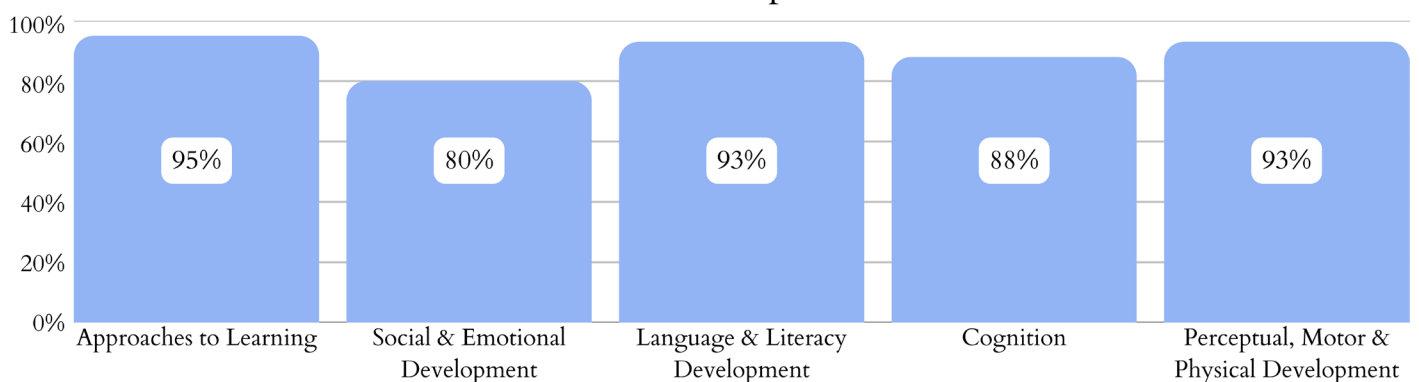
	Budget/Allocation	Actual Expense
Personnel	\$1,538,302.47	\$1,614,655
Fringe	\$446,215.93	\$353,809
Travel	\$12,789.93	\$41,355
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0
Supplies	\$61,394.83	\$90,242
Contractual	\$143,544.05	\$95,434
Other	\$143,544.05	\$246,618
Total Expenses	\$2,428,705.42	\$2,442,113

School Readiness Goals

Percentage of Early Head Start children who are meeting or exceeding school readiness goals at the end of the 2024 program



Percentage of Head Start children who are meeting or exceeding school readiness goals at the fall checkpoint



Weatherization Services

Empowered communities start with safe, stable, and efficient homes. Through our Weatherization program, we help families reduce energy costs, improve home safety, and create healthier living environments. By providing essential home upgrades—such as insulation, air sealing, and energy-efficient improvements—we empower households to take control of their energy use, lower utility bills, and focus on building a more secure future.

Safer, more energy-efficient homes don't just reduce costs—they promote better health, prevent costly repairs, and create stability that allows families to thrive. Families experience fewer respiratory issues, reduced stress, and improved overall well-being when their homes are free from hazards like mold, poor ventilation, and unsafe temperatures. In 2024, our investments in Weatherization strengthened neighborhoods by ensuring more families had access to safe, affordable, and sustainable housing. Sometimes, a home needs repairs before we can make it energy efficient. These deferral funds are critical to prepare a home for Weatherization. When homes are stable, communities flourish.

Weatherization Assistance Program

\$3,875,229 invested in local homes

\$8,028 average invested per home

190 homes were weatherized

- 133 homes with seniors
- 100 homes with people with disabilities
- 46 homes with children under 18

384 people served through weatherization services

- 142 seniors
- 124 people with disabilities
- 100 children under 18



Weatherization Deferral

\$308,540 invested in Weatherization deferral

\$2,173 average invested in deferral funds per home

142 households served through Weatherization deferral

Staff Spotlight

Mid Michigan Community Action thrives under strong leadership, and several of our directors achieved prestigious professional credentials that enhance their ability to guide our programs and serve our communities. Through study, testing, and real-world application, they have demonstrated a commitment to excellence, innovation, and the mission of Community Action.

Earning the Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) credential is a distinguished achievement that requires understanding of how to lead, innovate, and advocate for lasting change. Mark Polega, our Operations Director, and Eva Rohlman, our Outreach and Opportunities Director, have both successfully earned this credential.



The CCAP process is rigorous, requiring candidates to demonstrate expertise in the core competencies of Community Action, from leadership and strategic planning to effective poverty reduction strategies. By earning this credential, Mark and Eva have strengthened their ability to guide Mid Michigan Community Action into the future, ensuring our agency continues to evolve, empower, and serve communities effectively.



To lead a program that ensures homes are safer, healthier, and more energy-efficient, a strong foundation in construction, safety, and building science is essential. That's why Johnny Mills, our Weatherization Director, earned his Builder's License which requires a thorough comprehension of construction methods, state and local building codes, energy efficiency, project management, and safety regulations. The exam tests a broad range of skills, from structural integrity and insulation techniques to mechanical systems and legal compliance.

With this certification, Johnny brings an enhanced ability to oversee complex projects, ensure high-quality work, and implement best practices that maximize the impact of Weatherization services. His expertise strengthens our ability to help more households with safe, energy-efficient, and sustainable housing solutions.

Staff Spotlight

Across our agency, staff members have pursued specialized training and received professional recognition through formal leadership programs, mentorship, or professional certifications. Equipping staff with skills to support individuals and families more effectively helps ensure we remain a strong and forward-thinking resource for the communities we serve.



Melissa, our Lead Housing Counselor, and Jake, our Lead Energy Auditor, took their leadership skills to the next level by completing Michigan Community Action’s Leadership Development Institute (LDI). LDI is designed to help Community Action leaders grow in management, communication, advocacy, and more. Through this training, Melissa and Jake gained valuable tools to support their teams, strengthen programs, and better serve the individuals and families who rely on us.

Coralie, our Media Coordinator, and Kaylee, our Operations Manager, completed Michigan Community Action’s Emerging Leaders Development Program to learn, grow, and build their skills to support their teams and our agency. This program provides rising leaders with a strong foundation in key areas of Community Action, helping them develop the skills to make a lasting impact.



Jenn, our Homeless Program Manager, earned Central Michigan University’s 2023-2024 Field Instructor of the Year award for her mentorship of Social Work interns. Jenn was recognized for her exceptional supervision and guidance, helping her intern gain hands-on experience in the field while fostering the skills needed to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others.

As one of our dedicated Veteran Coordinators, MaryJo, became certified as a Workplace Wellbeing Ambassador through the Midland Wellbeing Coalition, equipping her with tools to foster meaningful connections and promote growth. With this certification, MaryJo is helping to create a workplace culture that prioritizes well-being, resilience, and support—values that extend beyond our organization and into the lives of the veterans and families she assists every day.



Staff Spotlight

Our strength comes from our people—their skills, dedication, and drive to keep learning. Through trainings and certifications and years and decades of commitment to our mission, their work makes a real difference in empowering individuals, supporting families, and building stronger communities.



Rebecca, our Compliance Coordinator for Early Childhood Services, trained dozens of people in CPR and First Aid. Thirty eight employees earned or renewed their Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED certification. Five participants through Michigan Works! and 6 individuals enrolled in Early Childhood Services programs received certifications, expanding safety knowledge to even more families.

Santana, our Grants and Data Administrator, was trained in Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA). ROMA training focuses on data-driven decision-making, strategic planning, and continuous improvement, ensuring that Community Action agencies like ours can effectively track progress and outcomes to maximize impact.



We are honored to celebrate staff members across the agency who have achieved major milestone anniversaries, marking years of dedication to our team and communities.

Jill Sutton, *Executive Director*, celebrated an incredible **35 years** with our agency. Her leadership and commitment have shaped who we are today. We'd also like to recognize:

15 Years

Leslie Czarnecki, *Family Service Associate*
Jennifer Whitehouse, *Classroom Aide*

10 Years

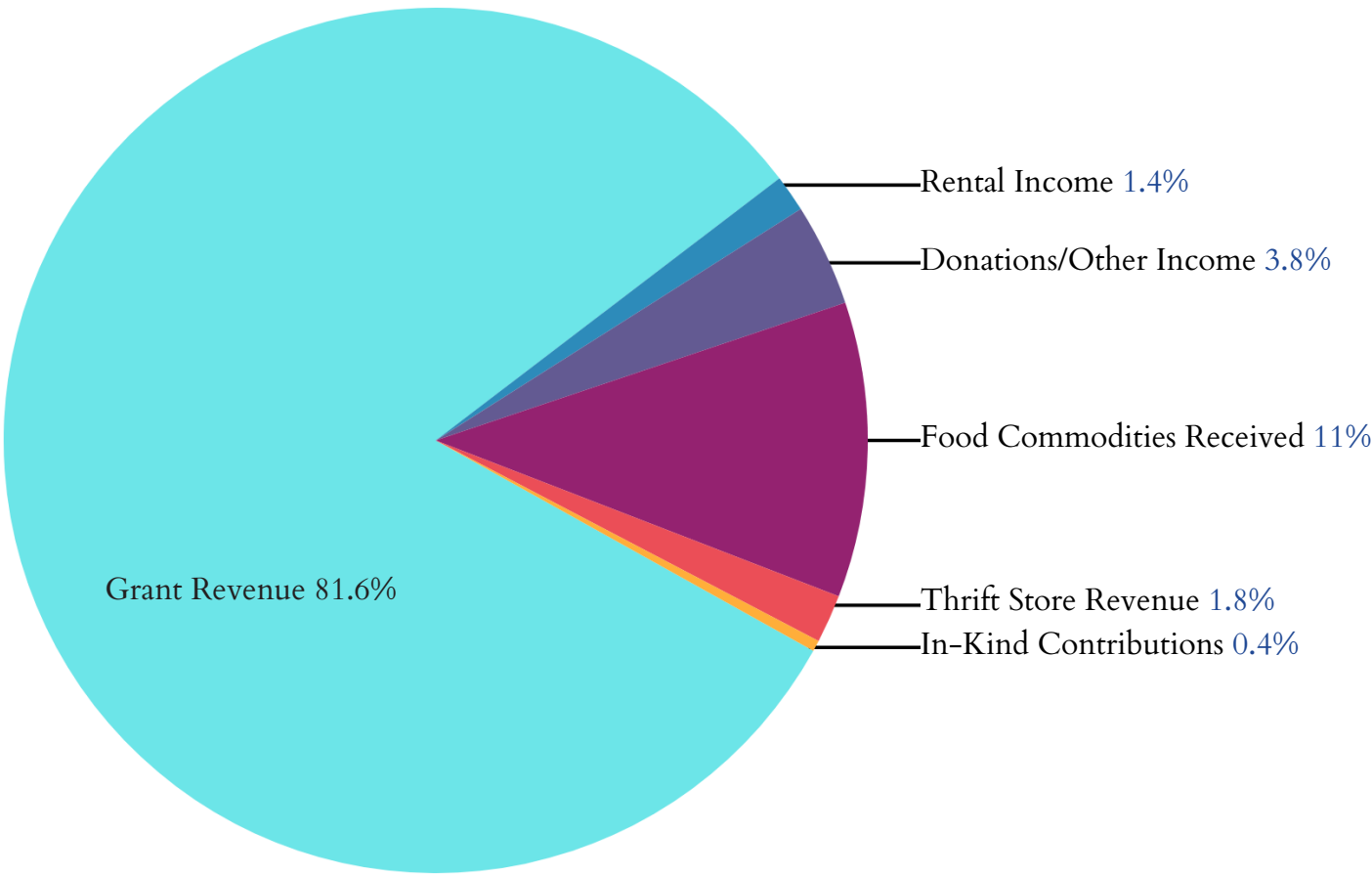
Stephanie DeGeer, *Head Start Regional Coordinator*
Stephanie VanderElzen, *Head Start Director*
Amyee Carson, *Early Head Start and WIC Director*

5 Years

Ammith Richard, *Data Entry Specialist*
Brinn Zaika, *Early Head Start Program Manager*
Johnny Mills, *Weatherization Director*
Ronda Runyan, *WIC Clerk Supervisor*

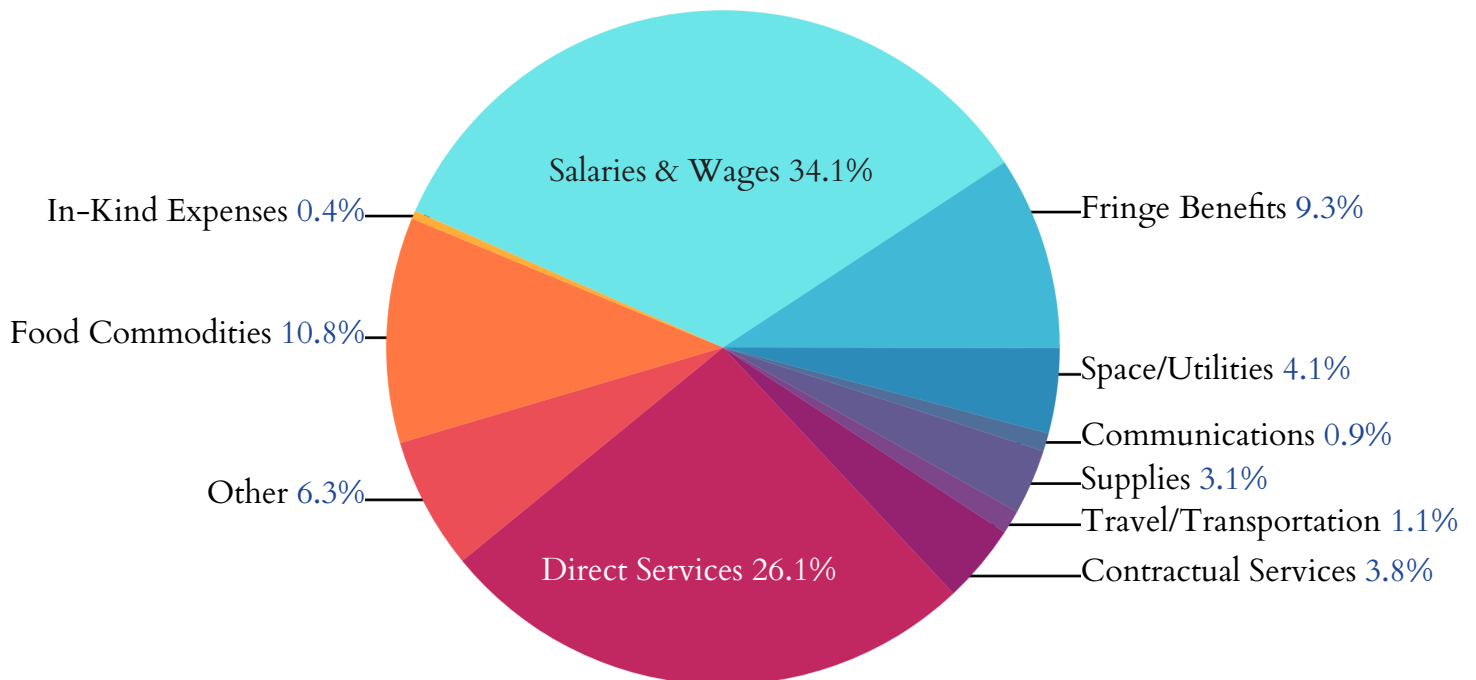
Fiscal Year 2024 Information

Grant Revenue	\$16,957,031
Rental Income	\$286,070
Donations/Other Income	\$794,776
Food Commodities Received	\$2,292,662
Thrift Store Revenue	\$373,303
In-Kind Contributions	\$84,280
Total Revenue	\$20,788,122



Fiscal Year 2024 Expenditures

Salaries and Wages	\$7,227,599
Fringe Benefits	\$1,966,717
Space/Utilities	\$864,579
Communications	\$184,347
Supplies	\$660,496
Travel/Transportation	\$241,757
Contractual Services	\$798,887
Direct Services	\$5,527,648
Other	\$1,341,642
Food Commodities Distributed	\$2,292,662
In-Kind Expenses	\$84,280
Total Expenses	\$21,190,614



Locations

**Administrative Office
Clare County Community
Action Center
Early Head Start
Farwell Community
Action Preschool**
1574 E Washington Rd
Farwell, MI 48622
989-386-3805

**Bay County Community
Action Center**
114 S Washington Ave
Bay City, MI 48708
989-894-9060

**Beaverton Community
Action Preschool**
106 Tonkin St
Beaverton, MI 48612

**Clare Community Action
Preschool
Weatherization Office**
502 Beech St
Clare, MI 48617

Coleman Early Head Start
4839 N Coleman Schools Rd
Coleman, MI 48618

Farwell Early Head Start
2050 W Cadillac Dr
Farwell, MI 48622

**Gladwin County
Community Action Center
Early Head Start
Gladwin Preschool**
1302 Chatterton
Gladwin, MI 48624
989-426-2801

**Harrison Community
Action Preschool**
224 W Main St
Harrison, MI 48625

**Mecosta County
Community Action Center
Early Head Start**
706 Maple St
Big Rapids, MI 49307
231-660-0271

**Midland County
Community Action Center
Early Head Start
WIC**
1717 Ridgewood Dr
Midland, MI 48642
989-832-7377

**Muskegon County
Community Action Center**
878 Jefferson St
Muskegon, MI 49442
231-557-7622

**Oceana County
Community Action Center**
195 N Michigan Ave
Shelby, MI 49455
231-557-7622

**Osceola County
Community Action Center
Early Head Start**
240 E Church St
Reed City, MI 49677
231-791-7078

**Food Warehouse
Clare County Food Pantry**
2300 E Ludington Dr
Clare, MI 48617

**The Cat's Meow Thrift
Store**
1465 W Center Rd
Essexville, MI 48732
989-229-0850

Administrative Office Toll Free: 1-877-213-5948

Head Start Preschool: 989-386-8075

Early Head Start Toll Free: 1-877-386-4406

WIC Toll Free: 1-877-210-3169

Homeless Assessment & Resources Toll Free: 1-877-213-5955

Email: contactus@mmcaa.org

Website: www.mmcaa.org

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