

# Achieving Self-Sufficiency

## Annual Report 2022



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## AGENCY PROFILE

Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. (RKCAA) has successfully operated anti-poverty programming in Racine County since 1967 and in Kenosha County since 1978. The RKCAA mission is **“Stabilizing lives by providing supportive programs and access to community resources for individuals and families.”** RKCAA’s vision is **“Partnering in a thriving Community.”** The agency is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors, that includes representation from civic, low-income and government sectors of Racine and Kenosha Counties.

## LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

I am honored to be elected to serve as the Chair of the Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency Board of Directors. It is a pleasure to collaborate with the committed members of both communities who serve on the Board of Directors and the hardworking and dedicated staff who make the agency function so well.

RKCAA serves families in so many important capacities. We help children get a good start in life through our Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and our lead testing for children. RKCAA was instrumental in helping families pay their rent and stay in their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic through our Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program and our Kenosha Rental Assistance Program. Our Weatherization Assistance Program keeps people warm and comfortable in their homes by providing access to energy-saving measures and emergency furnace repairs. The Skills Enhancement Program gives people access to skill-building and education to take the next steps forward. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program makes sure that seniors have access to proper food and nutrition.

Through my work in the community, I see the many important ways that the agency helps make a better life for families in Racine and Kenosha. Thank you for partnering with us to make our vision and mission a reality in both communities. The Board and staff remain committed to providing essential services and support for families moving toward economic stability.



**Susan Spicer,**  
Board Chairperson

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One can only reflect and appreciate that 2022 brought with it a more hopeful outlook on the health and well-being of families, friends, and community residents served by RKCAA.

RKCAA staff embraced the opportunity to serve individuals and families in Racine and Kenosha Counties. As the team navigated changes in service delivery, the ability to work together and the enthusiasm to serve, assist and support the most vulnerable individuals and families in communities remained high.

Dedication, strong alliances, and partnerships enabled staff to stay on task, maintain critical programs and deliver quality services. Energized by the desire to help others, the RKCAA team worked diligently, and by year’s end more than 51,000 individuals and families seeking assistance had utilized programs focused on meeting basic needs; housing, food and nutrition, health screenings, weatherization home repairs, emergency furnace repairs and replacement, and educational opportunities that led to higher wages. The availability of services provided individuals and families with the tools needed to move forward in uncertain times.

As always, thanks to the many volunteers, partners, individual donors, and funders; your support made the sometimes seemingly impossible, possible.



**Essie Allen,**  
Chief Executive Officer

# HOUSING ASSISTANCE

## Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

The Weatherization Assistance Program is a partnership between RKCAA, the State of Wisconsin, and community partners. RKCAA provides services to low- and moderate-income households in Racine and Kenosha Counties. The goal of the program is to reduce energy costs for eligible households by improving the energy efficiency in homes. The annual average energy cost savings per home is **\$350.00**/per year.

The Weatherization Assistance Program served **604** individuals residing in **232** dwellings, increasing the number of households gaining access to cost-saving energy measures. The program also served **101** individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the program provided emergency furnace repair services to **290** families enrolled in the Home Energy Plus (HE+) Emergency Furnace Program. The new Home Energy Plus (HE+) Water Conservation Program installed **17** water heaters in 2022.



## Kenosha Rental Assistance Program (K-RAP)

To decrease the number of households unable to pay rent, RKCAA partnered with the City of Kenosha, Kenosha Rental Assistance Program (K-RAP), to assist eligible households in the City of Kenosha adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional **29** households remained shelter secure, resulting in fewer families experiencing homelessness. Benefits distributed totaled more than **\$98,000**.

## Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program (WERA)

To decrease the number of individuals and families without a place to live, RKCAA worked with the State of Wisconsin and community partners to assist residents adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program, more than **10,000** individuals and **3,000** families were able to find shelter or remain in their homes, pay utility bills, and gain access to additional services. Nearly **\$13,749,000** in benefits were distributed to communities served by RKCAA.

# IN THE COMMUNITY



## Kenosha Uptown Health Fair & Back to School Event

In partnership with Kenosha County Public Health Dept., RKCAA hosted the Kenosha

Uptown Health Fair & Back to School event. More than **375** families participated and had the opportunity to interact with **23** community organizations to receive timely information on food and nutrition resources, vaccines, mental health services, and housing assistance, thereby increasing their access to community resources through this interactive and family-friendly event.

# ASSET ATTAINMENT

## Skills Enhancement Program (SEP)

SEP provided opportunities for participants to move closer to self-sufficiency, by offering financial assistance for tuition, books, transportation, childcare, and other unmet financial obligations, not covered by financial aid. Individuals who successfully exited the program in 2022 accomplished the following:

- **100%** of the individuals who successfully exited SEP are working in chosen fields, with an average hourly increase of **\$12.97/hr. or \$19,729** annually, increasing their ability to provide for themselves and their families.
- The individuals completed postsecondary education, earning Associate of Arts degrees as Licensed Professional Nurses, enabling them to increase their wages and obtain employer-sponsored benefits.

## Overcoming Extreme Barriers

Pictured: Each year, there seems to be at least one participant who overcomes extreme barriers to successfully complete their program of study. This year, Ms. Malone best depicts that participant. She is a single mother of one. Ms. Malone entered the Skills Enhancement Program in July 2021, studying to become a Registered Nurse (RN) through Bryant & Stratton College. When she entered the program, she was working on campus earning \$15.00/hr. While caring for her child, she completed the RN program, graduating in May 2022. In October 2022, she passed the State exam, and is now employed as an RN, earning \$34.00/hr.!



**“The Skills Enhancement Program helped me a lot. Without the financial assistance of this program, I would have never been able to graduate”** ~ Ms. Malone

## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

RKCAA implements direct service programs and convenes stakeholder groups that are focused on impacting the health of residents in Racine and Kenosha Counties.

### The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

To assist Kenosha families in getting the best start to a healthy life, RKCAA provided WIC services to women, infants, and children, resulting in increased access to healthy food, nutrition, breastfeeding education, and connections to health and community resources. In an effort to improve the intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, WIC clients also received WIC farmer market checks alongside nutrition education, recipes, and opportunities to participate in virtual cooking classes.

### Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

RKCAA partnered with the State of Wisconsin's Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Festival Foods, The Potato King, Inc., and the Shalom Center, Inc., enabling seniors to gain access to healthier food options, resulting in an average of 799 additional seniors per month receiving nutritious food boxes in Racine and Kenosha Counties.

### Holiday Food Basket Distribution

To ensure eligible residents in Racine and Kenosha Counties could prepare healthy meals during the holiday season, RKCAA worked with community partners, providing holiday food boxes to individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and others.

### Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program

RKCAA provided Kenosha Veggie Vouchers to income-eligible Kenosha seniors, resulting in improved access to fresh produce from local farmer markets and approved farm stands, and ensuring resources to healthy food for health improvement and maintenance. In 2022, the redemption rate for the Kenosha Senior Veggie Voucher Program was **78.9%**, which resulted in improved consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among senior citizens residing in Kenosha County.

## Health

### Kenosha County Public Health

In 2022, The KCPH Uptown Clinic, located on the second floor of RKCAA's Kenosha office, ensured access to public health services by offering lead testing and other resources.

### Fit Families

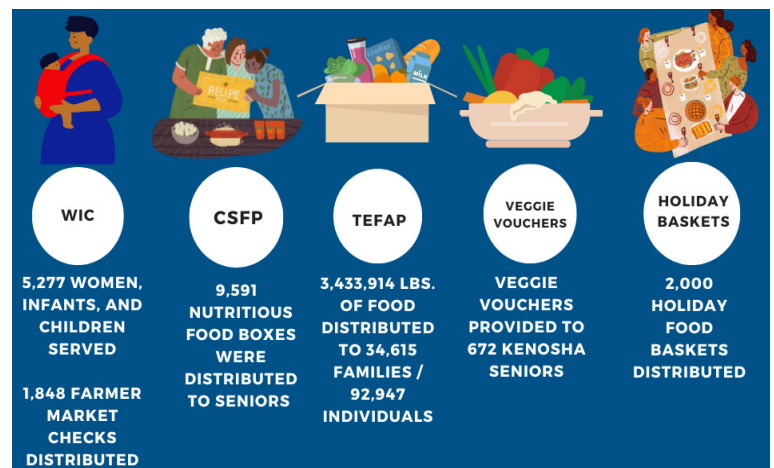
In 2022, RKCAA's Fit Families' coach provided monthly support, tools, and nutrition education reinforcement items to 195 families as they developed strategies to incorporate daily physical activity, reduce screen time, and increase fruit and vegetable servings to decrease childhood obesity and incorporate lifelong wellness practices that positively impact their health and wellness.

The Fit Families Program provided four virtual events in 2022, resulting in families engaging in activities that encourage physical activity and a reduction in screen time for children. The screen time reduction rate increased from **69.8% to 85.7%**.

### The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

RKCAA serves as the lead Emergency Feeding Organization (EFO) for Racine and Kenosha Counties. The agency administers programs that assist food-insecure households, focusing on access and nutrition. Food is a necessity; healthy food is key to overall health and wellness. To increase the number of shelters, food pantries, and meal sites having access to state commodities, RKCAA partnered with the State of Wisconsin, Racine County Food Bank, and community partners.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT



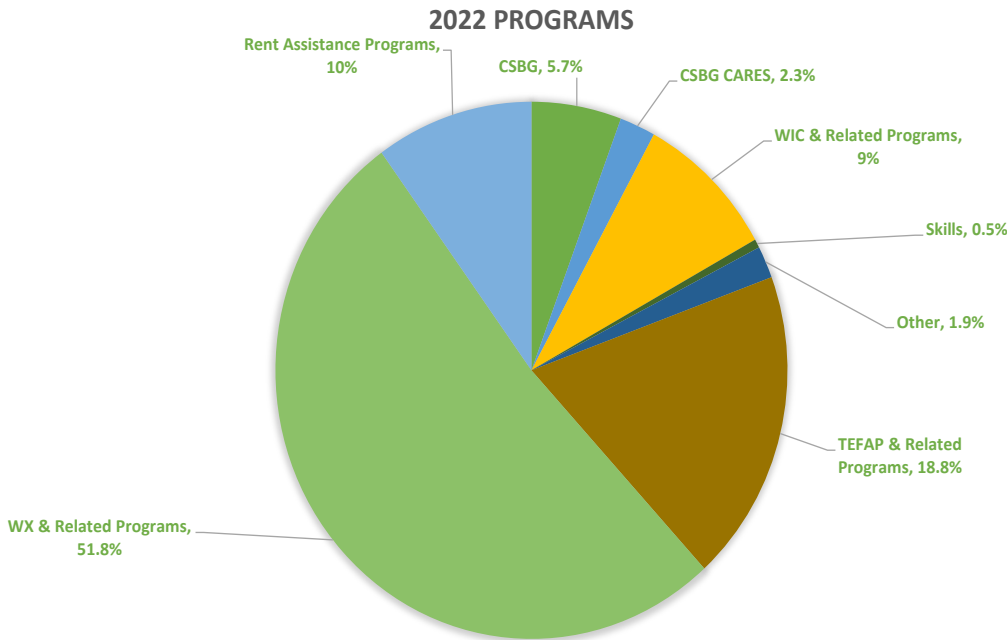
# Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Program Highlights



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of financial means to address basic needs remained apparent in the community. CARES Act funding enabled RKCAA to implement programs that provided many needed items:

- ▶ **3,296** packs of diapers for WIC infants and children
- ▶ **1,458** packs of incontinence supplies for seniors
- ▶ **1,556** boxes of food for income eligible families
- ▶ **450** backpacks equipped with school supplies for 1st through 12th grade students

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION



Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. receives federal, state, local and private funding.

RKCAA's Finance Department records all funds in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and funding source requirements. An independent Certified Public Accounting firm performs annual audits and funding sources perform required regular fiscal and program monitoring.

During 2022, the agency managed twenty seven programs totaling \$9.74 million in Racine and Kenosha Counties.

## DONORS AND FUNDERS\*

- Associated Bank
- City of Kenosha
- CNH Industrial America LLC
- Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Division of Workforce Development
- Equus
- Festival Foods, Inc.
- Forest County Potawatomi Community Foundation
- Goodland Montessori PTA
- Greenlite
- Kenosha Achievement Center
- Kenosha Area Family & Aging Services, Inc.
- Kenosha County Department of Human Services
- Kenosha County Division of Health
- Landmark Credit Union

- PayPal Giving Fund
- The Potato King, Inc.
- Progressive Missionary Baptist Church
- State of Wisconsin
- State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration
- State of Wisconsin, Department of Children and Families
- State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services
- United Mechanical, Inc.
- US Department of Agriculture
- US Department of Energy
- US Department of Health and Human Services
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- US Department of Treasury
- Wisconsin Community Action Program Association

\*Individual Donors also contributed to the success of RKCAA in 2022.

# RKCAA Board of Directors 2022

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