

2019-2020 Annual Report



EMBRACING THE NEW NORMAL

From the desk of the Executive Director

Year 2020 has been a year of tests and challenges in the midst of a pandemic (COVID-19) and hurricanes Laura and Delta. The economic effects have weighed heavily on those who are in poverty as well as those who would have normally been able to withstand. The toll that these events have had on the residents of Rapides Parish have been overwhelming. The loss of jobs, income, homes, family members, and lives has caused a tsunami effect for Community Action Agencies.



As Cenla Community Action celebrates

55 years of dedicated service to the residents of Rapides Parish, we have been a light shining in the midst of this tsunami and have brought hope to many by providing the top three essential needs: utility assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, food assistance, and a host of other important services to our residents. Having the opportunity to help our residents, gives us joy in knowing that our mission is being fulfilled.

Together, we are stronger as we build alliances with like-minded agencies to meet people where they are and help them to overcome their circumstances and get back to a place of normalcy in their lives. Cenla Community Action truly lives up to its motto! We are **Helping People, Changing Lives!**

Agency Staff

Sally C. Cowan, MBA
Executive Director

Pamela Ballott
Program Director

Tony Alonzo
Finance Manager

Carolyn Dixon
Financial Assistant

Shirley S. Coutee
Executive Secretary/
Board Administrative Assistant

Tina Guidry
Neighborhood Service Center
Coordinator

Gwendolyn Groves
Neighborhood Service Center
Coordinator

Quanita Walker
Neighborhood Service Center
Coordinator

Clayton Williams
Neighborhood Service Center
Coordinator

Elisa Smith
Accounting Clerk

Wondietra Valley-Jack
Temporary Receptionist/File Clerk



2011 MacArthur Drive • Alexandria, Louisiana 71301
Phone: (318) 314-3480 | Fax: (318) 487-5858
Email: info@cenlacac.org | Website: www.cenlacac.org

Irene Thomas, President
Board of Directors

Sally C. Cowan
Executive Director

November 16, 2020

From the Desk of the President,

On behalf of Cenla Community Action Committee Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to extend congratulations to the Executive Director and Staff for another year of exemplary service to improve the quality of life for many in Rapides Parish. The longevity of the agency, 55 years, speaks to the dedication, commitment and perseverance of all who have helped to make the agency a viable organization.

Again, congratulations and continue to do what you do best – helping to improve the quality of life for Rapides Parish citizens.

Sincerely,



Irene Thomas, President
Cenla Community Action Board of Directors

IT:ssc



About Cenla CAC

Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc. (Cenla CAC) was incorporated as the anti-poverty agency for Rapides Parish in 1965. The objective and purpose for this corporation was and still is to promote and develop economic opportunities in the community comprising all of the Parish of Rapides in the State of Louisiana; the provision of services directly and indirectly to those in need of increased economic opportunities; to act as a liaison between Public Housing Authorities, Private Sector Landlords and low-wealth to moderate income individuals and the homeless; to provide housing counseling services designed to enable clients to obtain, retain and/or maintain ownership or rental rights of acquired housing; and to link clients with other available resources to combat poverty and economic instability in Rapides Parish.

The roots of Community Action’s work are in intervention to alleviate the most immediate, destabilizing effects of poverty in the lives of individuals and families, as well as in the larger community. Over the years we have come to interpret our mission broadly to include, not only people who have lower incomes, but others who are marginalized, such as youth and members of minority groups. Our desire to secure our community’s future health and prosperity, and our sense of ethical practice, compelled us to offer primary prevention services in order to get ahead of the need for intervention. While many of our programs are targeted to intervene with specific issues or populations, many also incorporate prevention practices and are open to all who meet state income guidelines.

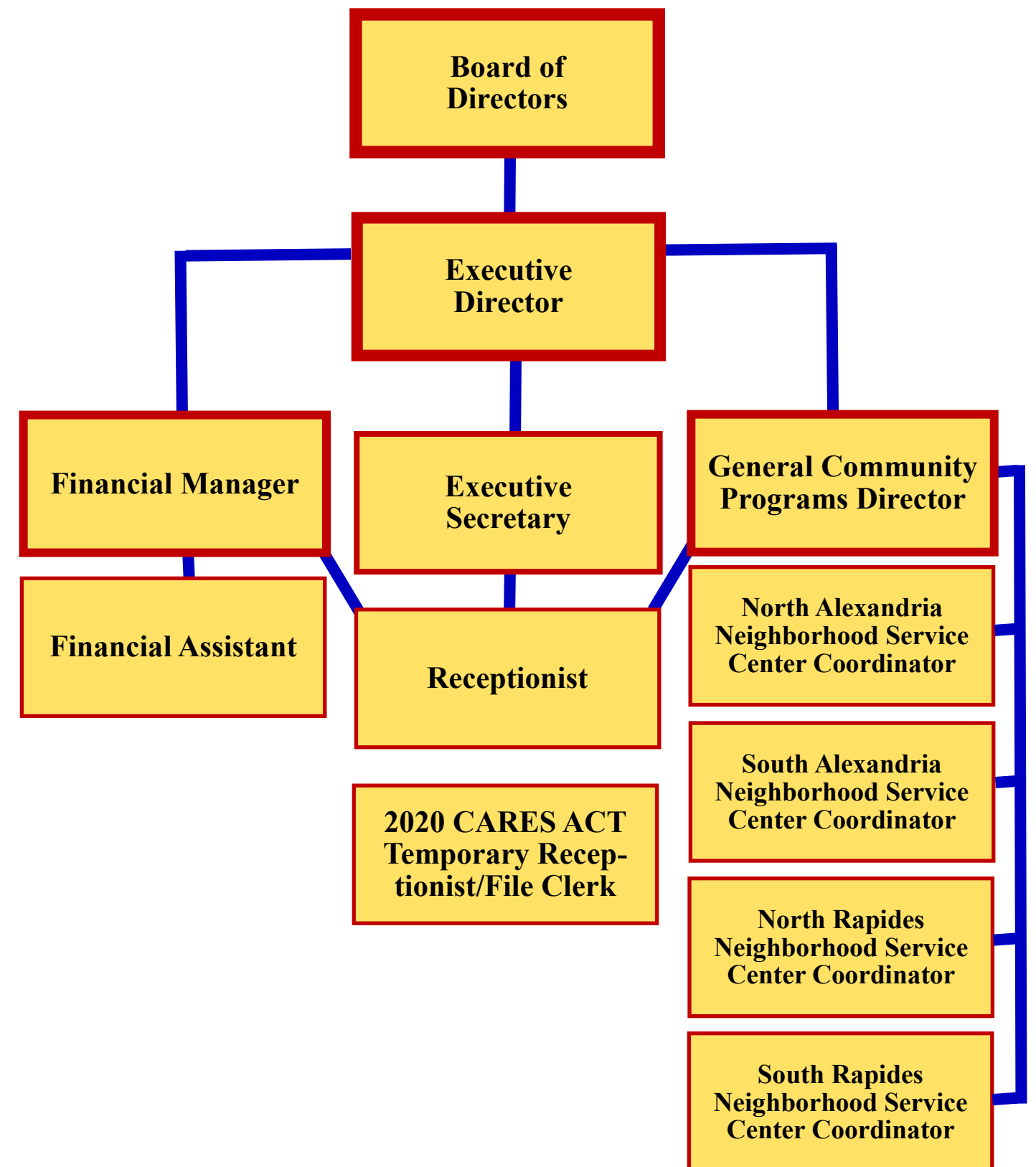
As we celebrate 55 years of providing services for the low-moderate income residents of Rapides Parish, we reflect on the many successes as well as the many challenges this agency has faced throughout the years. Nothing could have prepared us for the challenges we would face as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which prompted a national emergency as well as a Louisiana State-wide Stay at Home Mandate. We immediately revised our normal methods of service provision, putting an electronic process into place which allowed us to continue providing those much depended upon services to our clients and putting us into position to be recognized statewide as a “Best Practice” agency.

Cenla CAC currently operates under the administration of Executive Director Sally C. Cowan. She oversees a managerial staff that includes Finance Manager, General Community Programs Director and Executive Secretary/Board Executive Assistant. Cenla CAC is governed by an 18 member Board of Directors, representing a cross-section of the public, private and low-income sectors of Rapides Parish. The volunteer board serves as the legal entity of the organization.

Mission Statement:

To alleviate immediate suffering caused by poverty and to stop the cycle of poverty from generation to generation by working to make Rapides Parish citizens self-sufficient.

Organizational Chart



Statement of Functional Expenses for Program Year 2019-2020

Louisiana Workforce Commission Community Service Block Grant	
Administrative	261,104.94
Program/Client Assistance	298,021.16
Total CSBG	559,126.10

Louisiana Housing Corporation (LIHEAP)	
Administrative	140,425.59
Client Assistance	1,231,784.08
Total LIHEAP	1,372,209.67

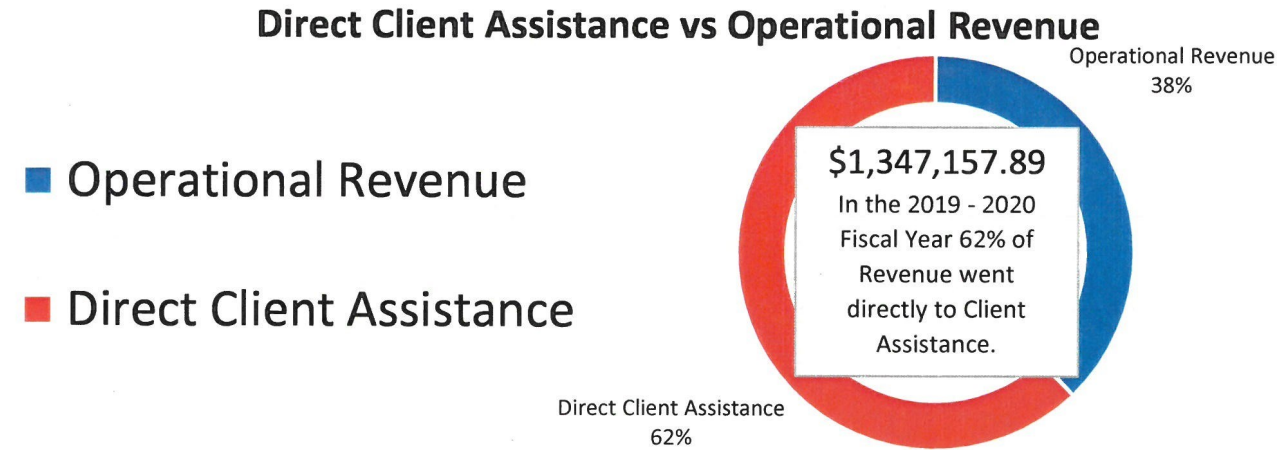
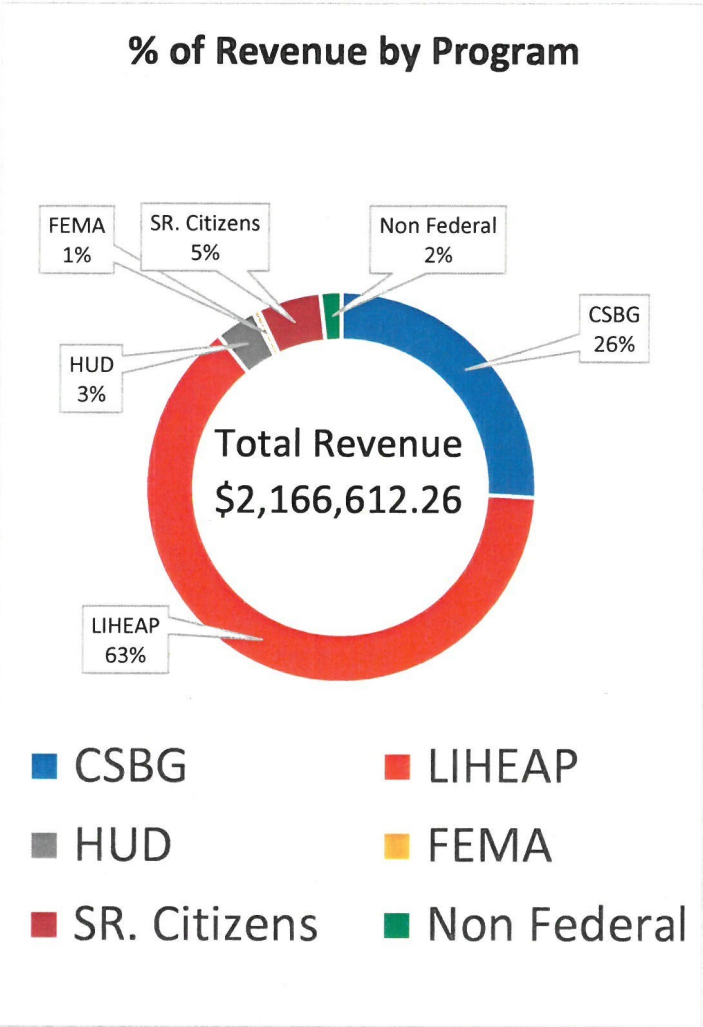
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):	73,744.81
---	-----------

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):	
Unity Way of Cenla Louisiana	10,287.50

Rapides Parish Police Jury: Senior Citizens Assistance	113,208.00
---	------------

Non - Federal	38036.15
---------------	----------

Total Revenue	2,166,612.23
----------------------	---------------------



Cenla CAC Programs & Services

The following are brief summaries of Cenla CAC’s programs and services provided throughout our Rapides Parish service area

CSBG Emergency Assistance Program
Provides assistance with utilities, rent/mortgage, prescription drugs, must have disconnect, termination of services or eviction notice, high medical bills and some sort of income.

CSBG CARES ACT Emergency Assistance
Provides assistance with utilities, rent/mortgage, prescription drugs, must have disconnect, termination of services or eviction notice, high medical bills for those individuals impacted by Covid-19.

LIHEAP
Provides assistance with utilities, must meet Federal Income Guidelines. Eligible participants are allowed to receive one heating and one cooling benefit per program year.

LIHEAP Crisis
Provides assistance with utilities, must have disconnect or termination of services notice. Eligible participants are allowed one crisis benefit per program year.

Senior Citizens Assistance
Provides assistance with utilities, rent/mortgage, prescription drugs, must be 60 years or older, meet Federal Income Guidelines and have not been assisted in the last 6 months.

Food for Families/Food for Seniors
Seniors receive 40 pounds of food monthly, must be 60 years or older and meet USDA Income Guidelines.

Adopt-A-Senior
Seniors receive 50 pounds of food monthly, must be 65 years or older, meet USDA Income Guidelines and have a sponsor. The sponsor is responsible for paying The Food Bank \$150.00 that will entitle recipient to receive the food box for 12 months.

ATMOS
Provides assistance for ATMOS Energy customers, must have a disconnect notice, reduction in income or an increase in necessary expenses. Priority shall be given to the elderly, families with young children and persons with disabilities.

HUD Housing Counseling
Receive free counseling in the areas of first-time homebuyers, reverse mortgage, budget/money management and renter’s rights.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
Free Income tax preparation with automatic EITC determination and e-filing for clients earning up to \$54,000 annually.

DHS Medicaid and Food Stamp Application
Provides assistance with online completion of applications for services provided through the Department of Human Services. These services include Medicaid and Snap Benefits.

FEMA
Provides assistance with emergency food purchase, must meet Federal Income Guidelines, demonstrate a need for food and receive little or no food stamps.

HiSet Exam Reimbursement
Reimburse students who have successfully completed the Adult Education Course at CLTCC and passed the HiSet (GED) test. These students must be referred from CLTCC.

Pamper Me With Love
Provides assistance with the purchase of diapers and diapering/incontinence supplies. This program is designed to raise awareness of diaper need in our service area and to do our part in eliminating that need by distributing supplies to low to moderate income families.

Services Provided Program Year 2019-2020

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Program	Families Served	Aggregated Dollar Amount
CSBG Emergency Rent/Mortgage	95	\$36,020.52
CSBG Emergency Utility	161	\$58,234.26
CSBG Emergency Prescription	2	\$484.48
LIHEAP Non-Crisis Assistance	2,457	\$881,350.00
LIHEAP Crisis Assistance	198	\$67,306.96
Emergency Food & Shelter Program	183	\$8,496.91
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance	825	\$1,199,993
ATMOS	33	\$9,701.43
CSBG Cares Assistance	45	\$96,766.27

HOUSING SERVICES

Program	Families Served
HUD Housing Counseling Services	627

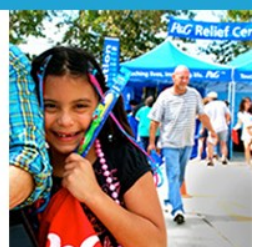
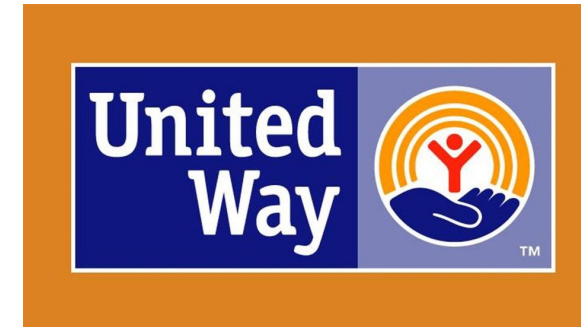
SENIOR SERVICES

Program	Families Served	Aggregated Dollar Amount
Senior Citizens Rent/Mortgage	71	\$23,788.30
Senior Citizens Utility	214	\$72,513.19
Senior Citizens Prescription	3	\$979.86
Food for Families/Food for Seniors	817	Not Applicable
Adopt A Senior Food Boxes	25	Not Applicable

EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION SERVICES

Program	Families Served
HiSet Exam Reimbursement	2
Information and Referral	18

Community Partners



The New Normal



Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc. 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Private Sector Representatives

Irene Thomas, President
Eunice Fuller, Vice President
Roxane Barnes, Secretary
Sandra Franklin
Flora Keys
Clifford T. Person, Jr.

Public Sector Representatives

Mary Wardsworth, Treasurer
Patsy Peterman
Lonnell Clark
Janice Johnson
Yuvonka Brown
VACANT

Low-Income Sector Representatives

Stephen Fontenot, Parliamentarian
Anita Faye Hayes
Howard Shaw, Jr.
Charles W. Allen
Tobey Bowie
Edith Beard