

# Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

## Year Summary

### 2015

The **Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (EOC)** the designated anti-poverty agency for Saratoga County, dedicated to providing and promoting opportunities for individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency. In 2015, the EOC helped thousands of local residents move closer to economic self-sufficiency through the following EOC programs and services:

**COMMUNITY SERVICES** provides qualified individuals and families with services to encourage them to grow from poverty toward sustainability through:

- Community Lunch Program served **25,479 lunches while, making community referral services available;**
- Rural Food Delivery delivered **960 food packages** to the homebound throughout the county;
- Emergency Food Pantry provided **2,485 families (8,308 individuals)** with a three day supply of food and screened them for additional needs and providing guidance;
- The Adopt-A-Family Thanksgiving Project addressed food insecurity during the holiday through **79** volunteers who packed/delivered **670 baskets**, delivered **620 meals** and served **110 on-site meals;**
- VITA Free Tax Service – **164 families/individual tax returns** completed; resulting in \$274,406 in refunds
- Summer Lunch Program provided **3,416 lunches** for low-income children Monday – Friday during July and August in **Malta 1,222 and Saratoga 965 and Corinth 1,229;**
- Dress for Work provided **245 clothing vouchers** to individuals who were becoming work ready;
- Advocates responded to **754 calls** and helped **359 individuals** with referrals, services and advocacy;
- Latino Community Advocacy (LCAP) provided ESL services to **135 students** and responded to over **1,310 advocacy calls** during the year with **194 individuals**. Advocacy needs included securing health insurance for families, school enrollment, prenatal care, GED information, housing, employment and tax preparation assistance. LCAP provided interpreter services to the Saratoga County EOC Head Start Program, the WIC Program, Saratoga County DSS, Saratoga DVRC, Saratoga Springs City School District, Saratoga County Public Health, Saratoga Hospital and many other educational, health, and social service agencies throughout the county. LCAP also hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> annual **Visión** cultural awareness event featuring photographs by ESL students; **200 community members attended.**
- Community members have donated **26,784** pounds of food and Hannaford alone donated **50,114** pounds. **2,572** pounds of pet food and treat donations and **802** pounds of non-food donations, such as personal care items, hats, mittens and books.

**HEAD START** is a comprehensive child-development school readiness program designed to increase school success for families of young children from low-income families. In 2015, more than **571** children and pregnant mothers were served through **15** pre-school classrooms, one Toddler room and several home-based offerings. **434** children and pregnant mothers successfully completed the 2015 program year with **100** of those **children** participating in New York State Universal Pre-Kindergarten.

**ENERGY SERVICES** – The **WEATHERIZATION Assistance Program** offers income and categorical-eligible individuals throughout Saratoga and Schenectady County with a comprehensive energy audit and energy conservation work that helps improve home heating efficiency and reduces utility costs. This increases discretionary dollars in the home and improves the overall quality of life for the household members. The **number of unity (homes) served to date has been 87**, affecting a total of **181 residents** in both counties. Coordinated funds with **EmPower NY** allowed this department to serve an additional **68 homes** in the region. Through the local Department of Social Service's Office and NYSHEAP Cooling Initiative, **39 residents received air conditioners.**

**WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)** improves the health of pregnant women, new mothers and their infants and children. **1,711** pregnant women, breastfeeding and post-partum women, infants and children under the age of 5 have access to nutritious foods through the dissemination of \$108,678 in supplemental WIC checks on a monthly basis at a rate of \$63.70 **per participant**. Each WIC participants receives nutrition education, breastfeeding information and support. Breastfeeding initiation rates among our newly delivered WIC moms averaged **71.6%** for the **first 11 months** of 2015 based on our monthly Breastfeeding Initiation reports. The upstate breastfeeding initiation rate is 70%.