

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Division of Social Services



Community Services Block Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2023-24 Application for Funding

Project Period July 1, 2023– June 30, 2024

Application Due Date: January 13, 2023

Agency Information			
Agency:		Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc.	
Agency:		Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc.	
Federal I.D.		560840196	
DUNS Number:		P6KMS6HXV228	
Administrative Office Address:		1300 West Bank Street Salisbury, NC 28144-3910	
Mailing Address (include the 4-digit zip code extension):		1300 West Bank Street Salisbury, NC 28144-3910	
Telephone Number:		704-633-6633	
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Proposed Funding:	CSBG: \$542,850	Additional Resources: \$510,061,372.00	Agency Total Budget: \$10,604,222.00
Application Period:		Beginning: July 1, 2023	Ending: June 30, 2024
Board Chairperson:		Wendell Fant	
Board Chairperson's Address: (where communications should be sent)		1300 West Bank Street Salisbury, NC 28144-3910	
Board Chairperson's Term of Office (enter beginning and end dates):		Date Initially Seated – July 2017 Current Term Expiration – July 20, 2023	
Executive Director:		Dione Adkins	
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Agency Fiscal Officer:		Tanya Branch	
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CSBG Program Director:		Sherry M. Tillmon	
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Counties Served with CSBG funds:		Rowan County Cabarrus County	
Agency Operational Fiscal Year:		2023-2024	

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Economic Opportunity –
2420 Mail Service Center / Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2420

**Community Services Block Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2023-24 Application for Funding
Planning Process Narrative**

1. Explain in detail how each of the following was involved in the planning and development of this strategic plan.

- a. Low-Income Community:

The Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency (SRCAA) 2020 Community-Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment provides information and analysis on issues relating to poverty in the agency's core service areas. As part of the assessment, qualitative data was collected from the low-income community by way of surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Representatives of the Low-income population are seated on the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc.'s (SRCAA) Board of Directors to ensure broad community participation and involvement. The Head Start Policy Council Advisory is made up of low-income persons who meet once per month to review programs and to address meeting the needs of the low-income community. Members from that Council are represented on the board, and each representative of the low-income community participates in the focus groups, surveys and interviews intended to identify the needs of the communities. Representatives of the low-income community advocate for the needs of the participants at varying levels, and participants themselves are free to express their concerns with staff and the program director. In addition, they are surveyed during workshops facilitated to improve their personal and professional development.

Client satisfaction data is also collected throughout the year to assist the agency with identifying needs and to create strategies for meeting the needs of the low-income community. Understanding the needs of the community and what the report data indicates, helps to provide a more accurate report on the significant findings and trends in the Community Needs Assessment Document. Understanding the data also enables the agency to make more informed decisions on service provisions to enable more customers to achieve their goals.

The customer and community surveys completed included the opportunity for people completing the survey to indicate identifiable information, so that the agency is clear on who the need belongs to in terms of demographics and characteristics. Results were used in the planning and development of the agency's strategic plan.

- b. Agency Staff:

Staff is encouraged to participate in partnerships and collaborations with community partners and task forces designed to meet the needs of mutually served participants. These partnerships and collaborations offer opportunities for staff to participate in forums to share input and to address causes of poverty, concerns, and resources in low-income communities where staff works. Staff as well as partners serving the same populations were surveyed during the community assessment process. Staff and partner feedback is considered in the revisions of the strategic plan and the management of service delivery at the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA) as part of the strategic plan's Collaboration Project, which is aimed at identifying overlap in the service delivery as well as procedures and processes used by various departments

c. Agency's Board Members:

The Board utilizes the strategic planning process to provide direction for the agency and the staff in order to address the needs of the community. The Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA) utilizes the Six National Goals to guide the process. By integrating ROMA into the development of the plan the Board of Directors were able to:

- Assess poverty needs and conditions within the community.
- Define a clear agency anti-poverty mission for community action and a strategy to address those needs.
- Identify both immediate and longer-term strategies in the context of existing resources and opportunities in the community.
- Identify specific improvements, or results, to be achieved among low-income people and the community; and
- Organize and implement programs, services, and activities, such as advocacy, within the agency and among "partnering" organizations, to achieve anticipated results.

During the implementation of planning, the Board of Directors decides on whether it is necessary to abandon any programs, discontinue serving a particular population or provide specific services. This provides an opportunity to determine goal achievement, during which time the agency can report and evaluate goal progress and compare progress to benchmarks. The strategic planning process also provides opportunity for the agency to then self-assess to determine what adjustments need to be made to the plan in an effort to stay current on the needs of the community and remain an organization that is cognizant of the needs of the low-income community in order to proactively strategize against and eliminate the causes of poverty.

2. Describe how and what information was gathered from the following key sectors of the community in assessing needs and resources during the community assessment process and other times. These should ideally be from each county within your agency's service area:

- a. Community-based organizations:
- b. Faith-Based Organizations:
- c. Private Sector:
- d. Public Sector:
- e. Educational Sector:

Community Partners, members of the faith-based community, public and private sectors were surveyed to obtain the most up-to-date information on their assessments of conditions and changes in the agency's service areas.

Qualitative data was gathered and presented in the Community Needs Assessment by way of the following:

- Surveys- completed by Head Start Parents and CSBG Participants, community partners, local service providers and board members
- Focus groups- conducted with program participants and front-line agency staff
- Interviews- conducted with community partners

Client satisfaction data was also included. This data was beneficial in identifying what services have been most effective in meeting the needs of the community, as well as identifying if the needs and wants of the customers have changed.

3. Describe your agency's method and criteria for identifying poverty causes including how the agency collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data in identifying those causes.

Our agency identifies poverty causes by staying abreast of current local, state and national poverty reports, and staying active members of the North Carolina and National Community Action Agency Association. Another method used to identify poverty is assessing the needs of the low-income community as well as the agencies and organizations who serve them. The 2020 Community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment conducted for our agency included feedback from low-income individuals in our service areas, and community organizations serving those individuals about the socio-economic landscape of our counties and state.

Qualitative data was gathered and presented in the Community Needs Assessment by way of the following:

- Surveys- completed by Head Start Parents and CSBG Participants, community partners, local service providers and board members
- Focus groups- conducted with program participants and front-line agency staff
- Interviews- conducted with community partners
- Customer satisfaction surveys

Understanding the needs of the community and what the report data indicated helped to provide a more accurate report on the significant findings and trends in the Community Needs Assessment Document. Understanding the data also enabled the agency to make more informed decisions on service provisions to enable more customers to achieve their goals.

In an effort to determine the top needs, the top six (6) percentages of needs were identified for each service area under the needs categories listed from information gathered from both data sources, then the top need of each category was prioritized from highest to lowest, with the highest percentage of identified needs being listed first.

The assessment trends and findings indicated the following needs:

- Employment opportunities
- Increased services to support an adequately educated and skilled workforce
- Affordable housing

Factors that are determined to impact poverty or change the current landscape are consistent over the years. However, other socio/environmental factors such as economic downturns, fluctuation in the job market, growth in various industries or simultaneous decline in others, impact communities and the ability of residents to gain, maintain or improve employment options.

Strategies implemented to best meet the needs of low-income persons and address poverty causes include:

- a. Focusing on wages that would move a family above poverty based on family size and identifying job opportunities for families that would most likely result in success for them

- b. Creating a more intensive work search/employment plan that requires job seekers to be accountable to their Family Development Specialist.
 - c. Requiring families to take incremental steps toward achieving self-sufficiency through the attainment of specific job skills; therefore, filling the skills gap for employers who indicated a lack of for their specific job openings.
4. Describe activities that your agency has undertaken to advocate for and empower low-income individuals and families to achieve economic independence and security.

SRCAA's approach used with families is one of empowerment and strengths. This model called "Family Development," requires the entire network to think of ways to empower families to achieve their own goals and to improve the internal systems of service delivery. The model teaches workers to partner with families and help them set proper goals and activities for themselves so they can become self-sufficient.

In addition, SRCAA staff is credentialed as Global Career Development Facilitators. As Global Career Development Facilitators (GCDF), staff is trained to assist individuals with informed decisions when considering their individual career development through the utilization of best practices, a variety of personality, interest and employment assessment tools, and career development models.

The last few years in North Carolina and in the United States have left many families in the lower socio-economic strata to be faced with more challenges to their economic independence and their present and future security. So, by empowering families and teaching self-advocacy, families have the ability to identify, and reach attainable goals.

Other strategies involve inviting families to participate in volunteer activities and to represent the agency at community forums, as well as other agency events, to tell their story and to be proud to share their accomplishments when asked. Success stories are being published regularly in the agency's electronic newsletter and Family Services' participants who have risen above poverty or achieved several program successes, represent the program at the Annual Board meeting.

SRCAA also provides various educational and professional development sessions/workshops, as well as other training mechanisms to empower low-income families and individuals. The overall goal of SRCAA is to assist low-income individuals to gain a sense of ownership and a stake in their community while strengthening their families. The agency will continue to be an active member of state and national associations that advocate on behalf of low-income families to eradicate poverty.

5. Describe how your agency plans to make more effective use of, coordinate and form partnerships with other organizations and programs including: State welfare reform efforts; public and private resources; religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations.

SRCAA staff, program managers and the Executive Director participate on relevant Boards, Committees and planning entities in both Rowan and Cabarrus Counties such as the NC Workforce Development Committee, Goodwill Industries - Business Advisory Council, Equus Workforce Solutions partner meetings, and other sponsored managers meetings which include Department of Social Services', the Salisbury and East Spencer Housing Authority partner meetings, the Project Re-Entry, and Project Safe partners meetings.

SRCAA has solidified several other partnerships and collaborative efforts in both Rowan and Cabarrus County that enable us to leverage both services and funds to increase support provided to the community. These partnerships validate how relationships and collaborations between public-private and nonprofit organizations can address and reduce barriers to poverty for community residents. Our agency will continue to increase our visibility and our impact by forming new partnerships emphasizing on building stronger relationships within the faith-based community, in addition to continuing to host community forums.

The agency continues to have involvement of the development of an Employment and Training Advisory Committee to improve linkages and leveraged support for program participants in Rowan and Cabarrus County. The purpose of the committee is to (a) Provide expertise or advice on employer needs, industry changes and training requirements or prerequisites for training, (b) provide opportunities for employment, internships and apprenticeships, (c) provide feedback and assess the agency's impact to further enhance services, (d) serve as an unbiased and independent sounding committee.

Target linkages include employers and occupational training providers under the following industries:

- Healthcare
 - Manufacturing
 - Culinary
 - Hospitality
 - Construction
 - Information Technology
 - Transportation and Logistics
 - Office Occupations
 - Small Business Administration
6. Describe how your agency will establish linkages between governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals, to avoid the duplication of such services and to fill identified gaps in services, through the provision of information, referrals, case management and follow-up consultations.

SRCAA, Inc. collaborates with the local Departments of Social Services programs, specifically the Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) Program in an effort to provide training and employment support to participating families. This partnership allows case managers from both organizations the opportunity to leverage support and resources for families, as well as promote the accountability of the participant. Additional collaborations with our local, Divisions of Workforce Development, Crisis assistance providers, Goodwill Industries, and various faith-based and nonprofit organizations enable SRCAA to serve, refer and minimize the duplication of services. By attending monthly partnership and committee meetings, staff are keenly aware of services provided by other agencies and organizations. By continuing to collaborate with other human service agencies, this helps to close any service gaps in SRCAA's service areas.

SRCAA is closing service gaps internally as well, by making internal collaborations for dual enrollments more intentional. For example: Head Start/ Early Head Start parents who are eligible for CSBG services are enrollees of the program. Likewise, CSBG participant's eligible are enrollees of Head Start/ Early Head Start. Internal staff and external agencies consult and execute

service strategies to ensure the needs of the families are met. In real time, there can effectively be several persons assigned to one family. By investing time in case conferencing, and strategizing, service duplication is eliminated, and the chances that families are less overwhelmed and able to achieve attainable goals in addition to meeting the requirements of multiple organizations are increased.

7. Provide a description of how your agency will support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of the Community Services Block Grant (fatherhood initiatives and other initiatives with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging effective parenting).

SRCAA continues to participate in community-wide coalition-building and resource development to meet the needs of individuals and families and reduce barriers to family and community growth. At the beginning of the school year, parents sign a partnership agreement that they will be fully involved with their children and set goals for their family. This gives low-income families the capability to make decisions, initiate programs, and obtain resources to encourage stronger families in our area. Parent training is also offered in areas such as: Parenting skills, child and health development, preparation of food, and child abuse and neglect. By offering these services, parents' skills are strengthened, and parents understand the responsibility they have to their children. SRCAA continues to provide support to families as they learn new skills.

Internally, SRCAA is making an Intentional effort to train Family Development Specialists of Head Start in the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework. The ultimate goal of the framework is to ensure families understand what school readiness is. One way to improve and enhance the families in Head Start will be to ensure they are enrolled in the Family Self Sufficiency program. Imminently, Family Development Specialist will train families in core competencies of parenting and school readiness.

SRCAA also focuses on the engagement of fathers. Family Services (CSBG) partners with Head Start to improve the way fathers are treated as integral family members in the goal attainment process. SRCAA believes that by improving fathers' ability to be actively and positively involved in the lives of their children, the efforts will strengthen families and further combat the continued causes of poverty, particularly in the number of children facing poverty in our service areas. Services are designed to be a catalyst for moving individuals and families out of poverty by addressing barriers that impact employment, skills training, financial literacy and other social services support needs, that can assist fathers toward becoming economically stable as well as an emotional and financial support to their children.

8. Describe activities that your agency has undertaken or plans to undertake, on an emergency basis, for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals.

Salisbury Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA) staff ensures that income eligible participants are enrolled in Food and Nutrition Services through the Department of Social Services. In addition, SRCAA has established partnerships with local food banks, churches, and nonprofit organizations for the purpose of providing participants referrals for emergency food assistance. Referrals are provided to participants to apply with the local Department of Social Services for the Food and Nutrition Services Program. For those families and individuals who are ineligible for Food and Nutrition Service benefits, SRCAA staff will provide emergency food assistance or a referral to eligible food banks.

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Planning Process Narrative (continued)**

9. Describe how your agency will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce investment systems under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Provide the dollar amount of your allocation that will go towards employment training.

Since 2013, when Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Services in NC were transferred through contractual agreement from the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) to the private contractor Equus as part of the Integrated Service Delivery model being implemented statewide. The contracted provider in both Rowan and Cabarrus (our service area) has become a partner with SRCAA and referral source. Initially, meetings were held, in both counties to forge an existing relationship that is mutually beneficial for both entities which reduces duplication of services in similar populations. Connections with employment and training activities have been instrumental in providing interventions and a direct link to the labor market.

The Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency will expend \$62,347 or 75% of the supportive services budget for employment training and education during the 2023-2024 fiscal program year

10. Describe how your agency will ensure coordination with the emergency energy crisis intervention program under title XXVI (relating to low-income home energy assistance).

SRCAA, Inc. provides office space for case managers of the Weatherization Assistance /HARRP Program which provides services to Rowan County residents in an effort to save energy and reduce expenses. Community residents in need of these services will continue to be referred to the Weatherization Assistance Program. In addition, referrals will be provided to participants to enroll in the Energy Assistance Program through the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the crisis assistance programs through Cooperative Christian Ministries, Rowan Helping Ministries, The City of Kannapolis and the Salvation Army.

11. Describe the needs of low-income youth and your agency's efforts to promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of low-income youth.

SRCAA is committed to ensuring that the youth receive support through the coordination of services offered by both SRCAA as well as WIOA. In addition to offering General Education Diploma (GED) opportunities, youth participate in employment and professional development workshops offered through the CSBG program. Additionally, the youth and their families are encouraged to apply for the CSBG program to provide further support in obtaining self-sufficiency

12. Describe your agency's method for informing custodial parents in single-parent families that participate in CSBG programming about the availability of child support services. In addition, describe your method for referring eligible parents to the child support office[s].

Family Development Specialist completes a comprehensive assessment with program participants to address the needs of the families. When a non-custodial parent does not provide adequate financial and emotional care of the child/children, the participant is informed of the availability of child support services and provided a referral in both Rowan and Cabarrus County to the Department of Social Services' Child Support Division to enable the participant to file for child

support. In the event that the participant needs assistance with completing the necessary paperwork to file for support or are in need of transportation to the Department of Social Services, the Family Development Specialist will provide the necessary supportive services to ensure access to services.

13. Describe activities that your agency has undertaken or plans to undertake, to address the Department's priorities which includes:
- Combat the **Opioid Crisis** by focusing on policies and practices that prevent opioid misuse, addiction and overdose.
 - Develop better outcomes for **Early Childhood** learners to ensure that they are healthy, safe and nurtured, learning and ready to succeed.
 - Expand **NCCARE360**, a statewide database that provides resource information for medical providers and human services professionals in response to social determinants of health like housing stability, food security, transportation access and interpersonal safety; and
 - Implement **Healthy Opportunities** that improve the health, safety and well-being of North Carolinians by addressing conditions in which people live that directly impacts health.

According to the NC Department of Health and Human Services the increase in overdose deaths in recent years is driven by illicit opioids, such as heroin and fentanyl. In 2020, more than 70% of overdose deaths in the state likely involved illicitly manufactured fentanyl, often in combination with other substances. More than 60% of overdose deaths involve multiple substances, and the involvement of stimulants, like cocaine and methamphetamine, is increasing

Between November 2021 – October 2022, Rowan County has experienced 107 Opioid related Emergency Department deaths as compared to 107 in 2021. Cabarrus County has experienced 158 opioid related Emergency Department deaths as compared to 157 in 2021. Those emergencies were documented by the Emergency Medical Services with the month of February and March reporting the highest deaths for the year in Rowan County and the months of April and June the highest deaths in Cabarrus County. (Injuryfreenc.dhhs.gov).

Due to the overwhelming impact that both service counties are still experiencing, it is the intent of the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. to continue assisting in the ongoing fight against opioid misuse, addiction and overdose by educating staff on the signs of misuse, and the identification of treatment centers. Staff will also continue partnering in county initiatives lead by Opioid Task Forces

Early Childhood:

For more than fifty (50) years, the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. has operated the Head Start/Early Head Start education program as well as the Child and Adult Food Care Program. As an addition to the program, SRCAA, Inc. has worked to increase partnerships that directly enhance the learning environment for students. One of the partnerships is with the newly emerging technology non-profit organization, AppSeed.

AppSeed provides computer tablets named Seedlings to every Head Start/Early Head Start student enrolled at SRCAA, Inc. Each tablet comes preloaded with educational apps that teach

reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children are also allowed to take the tablets home to allow parental engagement in learning.

SRCAA, Inc. has also developed a community-wide initiative by way of natural outdoor learning environments that meet the nutritional and overall health related needs of children and their families enrolled in SRCAA's Head Start/Early Head Start Program.

The natural outdoor learning environments consist of gardens with edible fruits and vegetables. Head Start students, parents, staff and volunteers all participate in the development and completion of each project.

The natural outdoor learning environments provide children with the following opportunities:

- Equal opportunity and access for children with disabilities to increase physical fitness, and interact with non-disabled peers
- Improved overall nutrition
- Increased physical activity
- Enhanced gross motor skills and cognitive abilities
- Enhanced creativity
- Increased social interactions

NCCARE360:

The Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. is an active member of the NCCARE360 database, and provides resource information and referrals to program participants, and any inquiring community member in need of various services. Additionally, staff at SRCAA, Inc. provides information about NCCARE360 to community partners who may be unaware of the data base to help enhance usage and expand the volume of referral resources.

Healthy Opportunities:

The Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. is a partnering member of the Healthy Rowan Coalition. Through this coalition SRCAA, Inc. participates with other partnering agencies to address issues of health, quality of life and nutrition within Rowan County. SRCAA, Inc. also makes ongoing referrals for healthcare, mental health and nutrition services to all interested community members and program participants in both Rowan and Cabarrus County.

**Community Services Block Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2023-24 Application for Funding
OEO Form 210**

Agency Strategy for Eliminating Poverty

Planning Period: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Section I: Identification of the Problem (use additional sheets if necessary)

1. Give the Poverty Cause name(s), rank the poverty cause(s) and identify which one(s) the agency will address.

SRCAA will address the needs of employment skills training and education attainment for low-income individuals and families. The agency will provide supportive services for families or individuals to develop occupational and life skills to increase income so they may rise above the income poverty level.

SRCAA's Family Services will use the Family Development approach to partner with participants and the community to:

- Develop/Sustain a strategy to address those needs, both immediate and longer term, in the context of existing resources and opportunities in the community.
 - Identify specific outcomes to be achieved among low-income people and the community; and Organize and implement program services, and activities, such as advocacy, support and guidance within the agency and among "partnering" organizations, to achieve anticipated results.
2. Describe the poverty cause(s) in detail in the community with appropriate statistical data (include data sources).

Socio/economic factors such as working below the poverty wage rate, in addition to the need for occupational skills development, impacts communities and the ability of residents to gain, maintain or improve employment options, consequently creating the foundation of poverty.

According to the United States' Census bureau, the estimated population in Rowan County as of April 2020 was 146,875. Of that population, currently 19.1% live in poverty. In Cabarrus County, the estimated population as of April 2020 was 225, 804. Of that population 9.9 % currently live in poverty.

- (A) Explain why the problem exists

In accordance with state law, the Department of Commerce annually ranks the economic health of each of North Carolina's counties based on four factors: average unemployment rate, median household income, percentage growth in population and adjusted property tax base per capita. Rowan county currently sits on Tier 2 of the ranking system. Their upgrade to this tier was current as last year as they were previously at Tier 1 (most distress). Their upgrade demonstrates the county's ability to bounce back from the effects of COVID 19. The primary culprit for Rowan County's regression in the rankings is its unemployment rate. Rowan County as compared to Cabarrus County, who currently sits on the Tier 3 (least distress) residents are able to work from home because they have white collar jobs tied to Charlotte. There's some of that in Rowan County, but the economy is largely still blue collar. As reported in the Salisbury Post, the local tourism industry has been devastated by COVID-19 restrictions, with some hotels going from employing

dozens of workers to just 12. Tourism attractions, too, have been faced with sharply decreased revenue,

When individuals lose their jobs, they also lose security, health insurance, and have a significant negative impact on their mental health. Rowan has a very large service, hospitality, leisure, entertainment, recreation sector that disproportionately has been hit much harder than counties where individuals had more opportunity to stay-at-home for business operations. (rowancountync.gov)

The economy of Cabarrus County, NC employs 105k people. The largest industries in Cabarrus County, NC are Health Care & Social Assistance (13,906 people), Retail Trade (12,985 people), and Manufacturing (9,505 people), and the highest paying industries are Utilities (\$82,017), Finance & Insurance (\$78,168), and Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction (\$71,875).

Males in North Carolina have an average income that is 1.32 times higher than the average income of females, which is \$49,357. The income inequality in North Carolina (measured using the Gini index) is 0.47, which is lower than the national average.

From 2019 to 2020, employment in Cabarrus County, NC grew at a rate of 2.05%, from 103k employees to 105k employees.

The most common job groups, by number of people living in Cabarrus County, NC, are Management Occupations (11,825 people), Sales & Related Occupations (11,728 people), and Office & Administrative Support Occupations (11,023 people)

The economy of Rowan County, NC employs 63.2k people. The largest industries in Rowan County, NC are Health Care & Social Assistance (10,714 people), Manufacturing (10,103 people), and Retail Trade (7,017 people), and the highest paying industries are Management of Companies & Enterprises (\$90,414), Utilities (\$66,206), and Finance & Insurance (\$56,645).

Males in North Carolina have an average income that is 1.32 times higher than the average income of females, which is \$49,357. The income inequality in North Carolina (measured using the Gini index) is 0.47, which is lower than the national average.

The most common job groups, by number of people living in Rowan County, NC, are Production Occupations (6,957 people), Office & Administrative Support Occupations (6,200 people), and Management Occupations (5,174 people). (Datausa)

Challenges since COVID 19: (NC Department of Commerce)

With the current rates of unemployment in both Rowan County's and Cabarrus County's unemployment, there are some notable differences in the level of occupational skills between participants in each of the service counties, with Cabarrus having a more skilled labor force than Rowan. In addition, Cabarrus has more opportunities for growth and is adjacent to Mecklenburg County, one of the nation's fastest growing municipalities, which increases employment opportunities for residents. Additionally, Mecklenburg County is in excess of 45 miles from Rowan County, and according to the US Census Bureau, more than 4,900 Rowan County residents commute there; however, for those constituents working the lower paying jobs, the cost of commuting alone negatively impacts their personal budgets, therefore hindering the family from moving above the federal poverty level.

The Charlotte Region Report and Labor Market Survey indicated that COVID-19 had a tremendous impact on the region's manufacturing employment. The automotive industry was among the most commonly impacted industries, followed by health care, aerospace and defense. Key findings from the impact of COVID-19 on manufacturing employment found that employers did not lay off significant numbers of staff permanently. However, 11% of employers did lay off 50% or more of production staff temporarily as social distancing regulations and supply chain challenges led to partial shutdowns of production operations.

87% of hospitality employers in North Carolina say hiring has gotten harder since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen in the labor market data: in 2021, the number of job openings for food service workers reached an all-time high in North Carolina, but restaurant employment remained below pre-pandemic levels as employers struggled to fill open positions.

The number of North Carolina workers primarily employed in the Food Services and Drinking Places sector ("restaurant workers") increased by around 18,000 between 2017 and 2019. Restaurant employment declined sharply during the COVID-19 recession in spring 2020, but then rebounded in late 2020. Despite this partial recovery, as of 2021, the number of restaurant workers in North Carolina was still below its pre-pandemic level. Our state had 504,000 restaurant workers in 2021—around 39,000 fewer than the number we'd expect if restaurant employment had continued to grow at its pre-pandemic pace. Nearly half (47%) the 2021 shortfall in restaurant workers is accounted for by an increase in individuals leaving the restaurant sector to work in a different industry. Around one-third (32%) is explained by an increase in individuals leaving the workforce entirely. The remainder is due to workers staying on the sidelines: fewer employed workers transferring to the restaurant sector (19%) and fewer individuals entering the workforce (3%).

Workers who left the restaurant sector following the COVID-19 recession tended to shift into the same industries where former restaurant workers found employment prior to the recession, such as Administrative and Support Services; General Merchandise Stores; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Food and Beverage Retailers. While the industries former restaurant workers shifted to remained unchanged after the COVID-19 recession, workers left the restaurant sector at a higher rate than in previous years. For example, 14,000 workers switched from the restaurant industry to General Merchandise Stores between 2019 and 2021, compared to only 10,000 between 2017 and 2019.

Significant strides toward recovery were made, but true economic healing has still not been realized in many communities across North Carolina.

Several rounds of federal aid have helped families navigate tough times and made the recovery from the COVID-19 recession much faster than we saw in the wake of the Great Recession. North Carolina has recovered most of the jobs that were lost in the first few months of the pandemic, while at this point in the Great Recession our state was still losing jobs. These are very different kinds of crises to be sure, but there's no doubt that massive federal assistance in the form of Unemployment Benefits, housing assistance, deferred student loan payments, and more have kept families afloat and hastened the economic recovery.

For all of the progress made in the last year, the project of rebuilding is far from over. The statewide unemployment rate for December (3.7 percent) can make it look like North Carolina has recovered from the shock of COVID-19. Sadly, that's not the full story in many communities across the state. Nearly three-quarters of our counties still have fewer people working than before the pandemic arrived. In many cases, the losses during COVID-19 piled on top of longer-term declines

that date back to before the Great Recession. Almost half of North Carolina's counties have fewer people working than before the economic collapse of 2008, a testament to the fact that we have not made the kinds of investments many, particularly rural, communities need to reverse the flight of jobs to a few urban communities. (pulse.ncpolicywatch.org)

Many more employers reported hiring difficulties during the fall of 2021 than in previous years, with 81 percent of those attempting to hire reporting at least some difficulty. A lack of applicants was the top reason chosen by employers. These findings are not unexpected given the current tightness of the labor market, which has become even tighter since the initial months of the pandemic. A lack of basic employability and an unwillingness to accept offered pay levels were also top issues for those jobseekers who did apply, according to employers. Although low pay is an issue that employers can address, it is less clear whether employability can also be addressed through formal training and education programs. Because employability is more frequently mentioned as an issue for entry-level jobs, it is possible it could be addressed more formally through instruction at the high school level, or through the experience gained by working itself. For this reason, work-based learning programs such as apprenticeships (used by only 16 percent of respondents) remain underutilized tools for employers to consider.

Finally, the pandemic may have accelerated certain trends in the economy, particularly by accelerating retirements and revealing the dependencies of workers on reliable childcare and other family obligations. Because the tight labor market means workers are in higher demand, employers may have to adjust to increasing wages and benefits, being more flexible about scheduling and remote work, as well as being creative about recruitment and retention practices.

Employers who indicated that they tried to hire were then asked if they had difficulty filling at least one position in the past year. 81 percent of All Industry employers reported hiring difficulties, up from 56 percent of employers in 2019. Since this survey was first conducted in 2014, North Carolina's labor market has "tightened," with fewer jobseekers available per job opening. Labor markets were already tight in 2019, and although the first few months of 2020 saw an uptick in jobseekers per opening, labor markets have since become even tighter than before the pandemic.

Employers who reported that they experienced difficulty in hiring were asked to indicate which of the following reasons may have contributed to the hiring difficulty for both entry-level and above entry-level positions. While hiring difficulties are often described as the result of "skills gaps," it has been shown that the lack of technical or soft skills are often not the most frequently mentioned explanations for difficulties. Although these types of skills can be important, particularly for some positions and industries, they are often not the most common explanations, mainly during very tight labor markets when employers are more likely to loosen requirements. For entry-level positions, a lack of basic employability skills (such as work ethic) among jobseekers (53%), and applicants who were unwilling to accept the level of offered pay (51%).

The findings of the 2022 Employer Needs Survey reflect the experiences of the state's businesses during the Fall of 2021, a period of uncertainty nearly two years into an ongoing pandemic. When compared to previous years, this survey showed large increases in the percentage of employers experiencing hiring difficulties. While some of this increase in difficulty may be the result of temporary disruptions due to the pandemic, the state's labor market was already tight in previous years and is expected to remain tight in the future due to demographic and other structural changes. Therefore, managing these conditions may be an ongoing challenge for businesses as well as the larger workforce development system supporting them. For this reason, increasing awareness and utilization of existing resources is key.

(B) Identify the segment of the population and give the number of people experiencing the problem.

According to the United States Census, the population of North Carolina is estimated to be 10,439,388 as of 2020. Rowan County's population estimate was 146,875 in 2020 and Cabarrus County which is more densely populated was 225,804 in 2020. The median income in NC is \$61,972; however, at a much lower rate, Rowan County's current median income is \$56,408 and Cabarrus County's current median income is \$79,672. According to the NC Commerce Labor Statistics, As of October 22, Rowan County's unemployment rate was 3.9 compared to 4.2% last year. Cabarrus County unemployment rate was 3.6% compared to 3.8 last year. For the purposes of this grant whose participants must be income eligible, 19% of Rowan's population is below the poverty level and 9.9% of Cabarrus is below the poverty level.

Recent hiring challenges in the restaurant sector have been driven by a number of factors including demographics, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a tightening labor market:

- Labor force participation in North Carolina has fallen over the past two decades, due primarily to demographic factors (e.g., increased retirements), leading to fewer workers available to fill open positions.
- The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the longstanding trend of declining labor force participation, particularly for in-person service positions, like restaurant jobs, which are exposed to the risk of viral transmission. In December 2021, the Census Bureau reported 133,000 North Carolinians were out of work because they were sick with COVID-19, caring for someone with coronavirus symptoms, or concerned about getting or spreading the coronavirus.
- These declines in labor supply have combined with a surge in job openings to fuel the tightest labor market on record, with a record low number of jobseekers per job opening. A tight labor market has given workers more opportunities to switch to higher-paying jobs in higher-paying sectors, leaving lower-paying businesses like restaurants at a disadvantage.

While restaurants had a hard time filling open positions during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, more recent evidence suggests hiring conditions have improved since then. Employment in North Carolina's Accommodation and Food Services sector plummeted 44% during the COVID-19 recession, but has been climbing upwards ever since and, by August 2022, had nearly recovered to its pre-pandemic level [Figure 5].³ Meanwhile, the number of unfilled job openings for Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations has fallen substantially after reaching an all-time high in October 2021.⁴ Restaurants are likely to see continued improvements in hiring conditions as our economy slows down from the rapid pace of growth seen in 2021 and the number of job openings in North Carolina declines to more a sustainable level.

(C) Provide demographic information of those adversely effected inclusive of:

(a) Gender

According to the US Census, 12.8 of families living in North Carolina are currently at or below the poverty level. Families with children experience poverty at a much higher rate. Women and single mothers experience an increased rate of poverty at 34% in comparison to two parent homes. As reported in the US Census Bureau, women make up 50.5% of Rowan County's population and 60.2% of the county's workforce. In Cabarrus County, women make up 51 % of the county's population and 68% of the workforce.

(b) Age

Families face impoverishment due to the lack of employment opportunities, education and

occupational skills training for the employment opportunities that are available. According to the US Census Bureau, North Carolina's High school graduation rate for persons over 25 was 89%. In Cabarrus County, the graduation rate for this same group was 90.7% and persons with bachelor's Degrees or higher was 34.8% compared to the states 33%. In Rowan County, there was a marked difference. High school graduates over 25 years of age, was only 86.9 % and those with bachelor's degrees or higher was only 19.9%.

According to the US Census, in 2021, the estimated number of those living in poverty in Rowan County is 14.4% of the population. The estimated number of those living in poverty in Cabarrus County is 8 % of the population.

(c) Race/Ethnicity for the agency's service area

With regard to race, 70.1% of North Carolinians are White, 22.3% are Black and 10.2% are of Hispanic or Latino origin. In Rowan County 78.9% are White, 17.1% are Black and 10.1% are of Hispanic origin. In Cabarrus 69.6% are White, 21.2% are Black and 11.7% are of Hispanic origin as stated by the US Census Bureau.

(D) Explain how the persons are adversely affected.

With the current rates of unemployment in both Rowan County's and Cabarrus County's Unemployment, there are some notable differences in the level of occupational skills between participants in each of the service counties, with Cabarrus having a more skilled labor force than Rowan. In addition, Cabarrus has more opportunities for growth and is adjacent to Mecklenburg County, one of the nation's fastest growing municipalities, which increases employment opportunities for residents. Additionally, Mecklenburg County is in excess of 45 miles from Rowan County, and according to the US Census Bureau, more than 4,900 Rowan County residents commute there; however, for those constituents working the lower paying jobs, the cost of commuting alone negatively impacts their personal budgets, therefore hindering the family from moving above the federal poverty level.

Section II: Resource Analysis (use additional sheets if necessary)

(E) Resources Available:

a. Agency Resources:

Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA) has the internal capacity to serve its families. Support from our other internal programs Head Start / Early Head Start allows us to assess families' needs beyond what is provided by Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding.

Family Development Specialists in both the CSBG Self-Sufficiency Program and Head Start / Early Head Start collaborate to leverage support, services and referrals to help families overcome barriers and achieve goals. In addition to the Self-Sufficiency Program and Head Start/ Early Head Start, English as Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE)/ General Education Diploma (GED) courses are offered at the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA).

By providing the opportunity for families to participate in multiple services and the internal collaborative efforts of SRCAA staff, the potential for success for program participants increases.

b. Community Resources:

Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA) partners with many nonprofit human service agencies, schools, colleges, community development organizations, governmental entities and faith organizations to aid our participants in reaching their goals and to change the way business is conducted in the community on their behalf. Managers and staff in both counties actively build partnerships and work together with those partners to address poverty causes and seek solutions for the eradication of the barriers to economic self-sufficiency for Rowan and Cabarrus County residents.

(F) Resources Needed:

c. Agency Resources:

SRCAA continues to enhance its internal systems. The information technology systems used by our staff provide outcome data; however, there are multiple departments using different systems. Since January 2013, Information technology (IT) was outsourced to improve internal IT communication systems. This advancement allows staff working with families to serve them more efficiently and expediently. Other resources are needed to develop a database system for interface and tracking the work being done with families agency wide. Reporting of outcomes to various funders would be greatly enhanced if these resources became available.

d. Community Resources:

Community resources that decrease the rising numbers of homeless persons and or those in need of affordable housing in Cabarrus and Rowan County is a resource needed. Community service providers have identified the need for increased strategies to address housing and homelessness. Additional community resources, such as the Homeless Task force in both Rowan and Cabarrus County, work to develop a community-wide strategy to end homelessness through affordable housing and other immediate solutions for low-income families to reduce homelessness or transiency. This is important to our participants to continue to be informed of different avenues and strategies to expedite placements in subsidized housing options.

Section III: Objective and Strategy

(G) Objective Statement:

To provide support and comprehensive services to assist seventy (70) new individuals/families and sixty (60) carryover families to increase their skills and income to rise above poverty level by June 30, 2024

Strategies for Objective:

Provide support and comprehensive services to low-income families and individuals to develop occupational skills and increase income so they may rise above the poverty income level.

Strategies

- To provide family development and case management services for low-income families so that they can rise above the poverty level.
- To ensure that program participants understand their role in the partnership with SRCAA so they are able to identify, create and attain their goals.
- To continue our partnership with area corporate, private and community partners to eliminate the barriers of poverty that prevent our participants from achieving self-sufficiency
- To collaborate with local offices of the Department of Health and Human Services to address the needs of our participants.
- To collaborate with the Department of Workforce Solutions to keep the community abreast of employment trends and available work.
- To continue providing individual participant counseling, mentoring and referrals to increase participant awareness of community and agency resources.
- To plan and implement goals and set strategies with the families.
- To continue to invite low-income individuals to join advisory boards and committees.
- To increase fund development to close the gap between CSBG funding and participants need.
- To continue to research, participate in national and local conversations about poverty and its eradication, expanding the knowledge base of staff and participants

OEO Form 210 (continued)

Section IV: Results Oriented Management and Accountability Cycle (use additional sheets if necessary)

Organizational Standard 4.3 requires that an agency's strategic plan and Community Action Plan document the continuous use of the ROMA cycle and use the services of a ROMA trainer.

- (H) Community Needs Assessment: Please summarize the primary needs of your community as determined through the Community Needs Assessment, and explain which of those are Family, Agency, or Community Needs, and why.

Need 1: Opportunities for job skills training is needed for low-income individuals to obtain skills necessary to qualify for employment (agency)

Through the agency's partnerships with education providers and employment service agencies, low-income individuals will be provided with the opportunity to increase skills which will increase employment placement.

Need 2: Low-income individuals need increased income in order to maintain basic living expenses and reduce the need for crisis assistance.

Through obtaining employment with a living wage, individuals will increase their income and therefore maintain living expenses.

Need 3: The community needs increased development to improve opportunities for low-income people to obtain standard housing.

The community needs additional programs and/or resources to assist the community with obtaining standard housing

- (I) Achievement of Results and Evaluation: Please discuss your agency's achievement of results from last year. What were the successes and why were those areas successful? What areas did not meet targets or expectations and why were those areas not as successful? What Improvements or changes will be made for this year's work plan to achieve desired results and better meet the needs of the community?

The Salisbury- Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. did not achieve all planned outcome targets within the 80%- 120% variance levels for the 2021-2022 program fiscal year, with the exception of the number of low - income participant families rising above the poverty level which was met at 120%, the number of participant families who are employed and obtain better employment which was met at 120%, the number of jobs with medical benefits obtained was met at 100%, and the number of participant families provided educational supports. which was met at 82%.

Notable job gains occurred in professional and business services, transportation and warehousing, construction, and manufacturing. Employment in retail trade declined over the month. With the current rates of unemployment in both Rowan County's and Cabarrus County's unemployment, there are some notable differences in the level of occupational skills between participants in each of the service counties, with Cabarrus having a more skilled labor force than Rowan. In addition, Cabarrus has more opportunities for growth and is adjacent to Mecklenburg County, one of the nation's fastest growing municipalities, which increases employment opportunities for residents. Additionally, Mecklenburg County is in excess of 45 miles from Rowan County, and according to the US Census Bureau, more than 4,900 Rowan County residents commute there; however, for those constituents working the lower paying jobs, the cost of commuting alone negatively impacts their personal budgets, therefore hindering the family from moving above the federal poverty level

Based on the agency's most recent Community Needs Assessment, the number of participants completing training/education programs continues to be a constant barrier for many of our program participants in both Rowan and Cabarrus County. As reported by the Bureau of Labor statistics, when compared to the nationwide distribution, Charlotte area employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including sales and related, business and financial operations, and transportation and material moving. Ten groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including healthcare support, educational instruction and library, and healthcare practitioners and technical. The Salisbury - Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. has implemented a plan of action to support a more holistic approach to serving families and providing continued support, to assist those we serve with achieving self-sufficiency.

The Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. will continue to take both a proactive and continued active role in ensuring that services are designed and provided to combat the issues of poverty. As previously mentioned, the agency's most recent activities involved the development of an Employment and Training Advisory Committee to improve linkages and leveraged support for program participants in Rowan and Cabarrus County. The purpose of the committee is to (a) Provide expertise or advice on employer needs, industry changes and training requirements or prerequisites for training, (b) provide opportunities for employment, internships and apprenticeships, (c) provide feedback and assess the agency's impact to further enhance services, (d) serve as an unbiased and independent sounding committee.

- (J) Please name the ROMA trainer(s) who provided services used in developing this community Action Plan and describe what specific services were provided.

Dione Adkins (NCRI) and Sherry Tillmon (NCRI) provided guidance in the development of the Community Action Plan, which included conducting training for the governing Board of Directors concerning their duties for the implementation of the plan.

**Community Services Block Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2023-24 Application for Funding
One-Year Work Program
OEO Form 212**

Section I: Project Identification				
1. Project Name:	Self- Sufficiency Program			
2. Mission Statement:	Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. provides services for individuals, children and families to enhance their quality of life and promote opportunities for self-sufficiency.			
4. Objective Statement:	To provide support and comprehensive services to assist seventy (70) new individuals/families and sixty (60) carryover families to increase their skills and income to rise above poverty level by June 30, 2024			
5. Project Period:	July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024			
6. CSBG Funds Requested for this Project:	July 1, 2023	To	June 30, 2024	
7. Total Number Expected to Be Served:	130			
a. Expected Number of New Clients	70			
b. Expected Number of Carryover Clients	60			

**One-Year Work Program
OEO Form 212 (continued)**

Section II: One-Year CSBG Program Objective and Activities				
Identified Problem	Service or Activity	Outcome Expected	NPIs (List all NPIs applicable to activity)	Position Title(s)
Low-income participant families are in need of Community Action services and support	Provide supportive services, referrals and goal planning assistance to support low-income families and individuals	130 low-income families and individuals will be served by Community Action	7a, 7z.1	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families are below the poverty level	Provide supportive services, referrals and goal planning assistance to support low-income families and individuals to rise above the poverty level	10 low-income families and individuals will rise above the poverty level	1b, 3d, 3f, 3g, 3h, 7a	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families need to obtain employment	Provide supportive services, referrals, goal planning assistance and employment guidance to assist participant families with obtaining employment	10 low-income individuals will obtain employment	1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 7a	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families need to obtain better employment	Provide supportive services, referrals, goal planning assistance and employment guidance to	5 low-income individuals will obtain better employment	1h, 1h1, 1h2, 1h3	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist

	assist participants families with obtaining better employment			
Low-income participant families need to obtain employment with medical benefits	Provide supportive services and referrals to assist participants families with obtaining employment with medical benefits	5 low-income individuals will obtain employment with medical benefits	1h3	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families need to obtain education and employment training	Provide supportive services, referrals and goal planning assistance to assist participant families with completing education/training programs	15 low-income individuals will complete education/training programs	2f, 2g, 2h, 2i, 2j	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Homeless low-income participant families need to obtain standard housing	Provide supportive services, referrals and goal planning assistance to assist participant families with securing standard housing	2 low-income families or individuals will secure standard housing	4b, 4c, 4d	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families need to emergency/crisis assistance	Provide supportive services, and referrals to provide participant families with emergency assistance	15 low-income individuals and families will be provided with emergency assistance	3a, 3b, 4a, 4e	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families need employment supports	Provide supportive services, and referrals to provide participant families with employment supports	20 low-income individuals will be provided with employment supports	4f	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist

Low-income participant families need educational supports	Provide supportive services, and referrals to provide participant families with educational supports	30 low-income individuals will be provided with educational supports	2z	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist
Low-income participant families need professional and self-development education	Provide 10 professional and self-development sessions / workshops per county for program participant families to enhance employment skills, life skills and personal development	10 workshops sessions per county will be provided to program participant families and individuals	2e, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6a1, 6a2, 6a3	Director of Family Services, Family Development Specialists, Intake Specialist

**Community Services Block Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2022-23 Application for Funding
One-Year Work Program
OEO Form 212 (continued)**

9. Use the tables below to enter your agency's targeted outcome results. The performance measures will be included in the agency's CSBG contract.

All CSBG grantees operating self-sufficiency projects are required to enter program targets in Table 1. Please refer to *Performance Measures and Outcomes Definitions* on page 7 of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 CSBG Application Instructions. If your agency operates more than one project, you will also need to complete Table 2 on the following page and also enter specific program targets. There should be one table of outcome measures per project.

Table 1 Outcome Measures for Project 1 (enter project name)	
Measure	Expected to Achieve the Outcome in Reporting Period (Target)
The number of participant families served.	130
The number of low-income participant families rising above the poverty level.	10
The number of participant families obtaining employment.	10
The number of participant families who are employed and obtain better employment.	5
The number of jobs with medical benefits obtained.	5
The number of participant families completing education/training programs.	15
The number of participant families securing standard housing.	2
The number of participant families provided emergency assistance.	15
The number of participant families provided employment supports.	20
The number of participant families provided educational supports.	30
The average change in the annual income per participant family experiencing a change.	This measure does not require a target but must be reported.
The average wage rate of employed participant families.	This measure does not require a target but must be reported.

Community

**Community Services Block Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2023-24 Application for Funding
One-Year Work Program
OEO Form 212 (continued)**

10. For Community Action Agencies that serve multiple counties, provide a breakdown of the expected *number of persons served* in each designated county in the table below. Show the total *number of persons served* in the table.

Number of Families to be Served Per County											
Agency Name: Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc.											
Project Name: Self - Sufficiency Program											
County	Rowan	Cabarrus									Total
Total Planned	65	65									130
Project Name:											
County											Total
Total Planned											

**Community Services Block Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2023-24 Application for Funding
Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation Plan**

1. Describe the role and responsibilities of the following in the assessment and evaluation of agency programs.

a. Board of Directors:

The Board of Directors is responsible for the overall performance and evaluation of all agency programs. The Planning and Evaluation Committee is responsible for working with the Executive Director and staff to develop agency programs and services. The committee has direct oversight to review, evaluate, and monitor all programs to ensure compliance. The Board of Directors receives and reviews monthly reports detailing the performance of the agency's programs at each Board meeting.

b. Low-Income Community:

The low-income community has input in the agency's programs through public hearings, participating on community forums, and representation on the agency's Board of Directors.

c. Program Participants:

Program participants have the opportunity to evaluate the program by completing evaluations/surveys, participating in community forums and by serving as volunteers.

d. Others:

Partners participate in Community Round Tables during tri-annual Community Assessments in both Rowan and Cabarrus County. This allows the agency and its partners to identify collaboration opportunities and improve service delivery. It also allows others to express concerns about meeting the needs of our participants during a formalized feedback process.

2. Describe the systematic approach for collecting, analyzing and reporting customer satisfaction data to the Board of Directors.

1.0 Purpose – The procedure for collecting, analyzing and reporting customer satisfaction data to the Board of Directors establishes a system for evaluating the services provided by the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA, Inc.)

2.0 Scope – The procedure is applicable to all employees of the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. (SRCAA, Inc.)

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Overview - Customer satisfaction surveys may provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the service delivery of the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc., and may be used to improve the quality systems with the customer in mind; therefore, SRCAA, Inc. encourages comments and feedback from any individual or family which it serves.

3.2 The services provided by the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc. shall be evaluated through the use of customer surveys submitted by the customer in a locked box located in plain view of the customer's entrance or exit of the building.

3.4 Responses to the customer survey shall be collected and analyzed for a thirty-day period. The Administrative Assistant or designee shall forward the results of customer satisfaction surveys to the appropriate management.

3.5 If during review of the responses to the customer satisfaction surveys and it is determined that a complaint needs to be addressed, the complaint(s) shall be followed up by the appropriate Program Director.

3.6 Tabulated results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys shall be reported monthly to the Board of Directors during regularly scheduled meetings. Surveys shall be maintained for a period of one year.

3. Describe how administrative policies and procedures are monitored by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Director's reviews the agencies administrative policies on an annual basis. These policies include fiscal, personnel and procurement. When necessary, the policies are revised and updated. The Manual and an Employee Handbook has been introduced to all staff. The policies are monitored as part of the self-assessment process.

4. Describe how the Board acts on monitoring, assessment, and evaluation reports.

The Board of Directors reviews all monitoring, assessment and evaluation reports. The board also reviews corrective measures and ensures that policies and procedures are modified based on the reports that are received. The Board also ensures that the results of the assessment are put into an action plan to improve the agency's performance.

5. Describe the Board's procedure for conducting the agency self-evaluation.

The Board of Directors along with staff conducts an annual evaluation of the agency's program governance, management systems, fiscal, partnership engagement and program effectiveness. This evaluation is headed by an outside consultant. Upon completion the information is compiled, documented and discussed in order to develop a work plan.

6. Summarize the results of the Board's most recent self-evaluation. Describe how the information has been or will be used to develop the agency's next Strategy for Eliminating Poverty. Indicate the timeframe and planned activities for the next evaluation.

The results from the evaluation include a) the need to expand funding beyond federal dollars, b) Increase board and management system collaborations, c) the need to further enhance our service delivery to provide support and assistance to the diverse families of the low-income community, d) increase our partnerships and collaborations to address the identified needs of the community. The information from the Board's self-evaluation will be used to enhance the strategic plan, departmental work plans and staff performance plans.

Planned activities for the next evaluation will measure progress on the following: 1) effective board governance 2) understanding the role of the governing board under Community Action 3) Understanding the role of financial oversight and monitoring by the governing board. The next scheduled board evaluation will be conducted in March 2023.