

Facing Challenges



2011-2012



ANNUAL
REPORT



Forging Success

Holly Abbott

Board President



For the past nine years, I have had the privilege to be a member of the Board of Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. When I first became a member of the Board, I was unaware of how many lives OFC, Inc. had touched, helped and influenced throughout the years. I was amazed at all of the programs under the OFC, Inc. umbrella and what they were doing to improve and enhance the lives of the people of Chenango County. Being a small part of this worthwhile organization has truly been an honor.

Since I have been on the Board there have been many challenges that OFC, Inc. has had to face but probably the most difficult is the decrease in funding sources due to the unstable and erratic condition of our economy. Throughout these trying times, our CEO, CFO, leadership teams and employees have worked on inventive ways of using the funds available to OFC, Inc., as well as seeking and securing other means of funding. Without the commitment and dedication of these individuals, OFC, Inc. would not be the stable and secure organization it is today.

I feel that the next step for OFC, Inc. is to inform the citizens of Chenango County just how important and beneficial this organization is. I am sure that there are many who do not realize what a positive impact OFC, Inc. has had on the many lives of those that it has helped and assisted. We need the support of the people of our county to help us continue to do our job.

In closing, I would like to thank all who have helped and guided me through my first year as president. This was and will continue to be a learning experience for me, and I appreciate all of the assistance I have received.

I know under the leadership of Wayne Viera and all of the employees, OFC, Inc. will continue to thrive and be the best that it can be.

As the global economy continues in turmoil the effects are felt right here at home by those families and individuals who struggle every day, every hour, to make ends meet.

The challenges facing our most vulnerable population continue to increase exponentially, as does the magnitude of the population we serve. Many families and individuals are feeling the effects of economic insecurity, either by job loss, jobs that do not pay a living wage, dwindling assets resulting in loss of housing through foreclosure, food insecurity, the lack of adequate medical care, and yes, unfortunately homelessness.

The challenge facing Community Action Agencies across the United States is to ramp up services to address these needs in the face of broad stroke funding cuts at all levels of government. Despite these challenges we continue to forge ahead with innovative methodology to ensure we are here to serve the most vulnerable among us. Collaborations and partnerships with other local organizations ensure that those in need will be helped and that we all can extend that "hand up" to families and individuals as they continue their journey on the path to self-sufficiency.

Community Action must rise to the cause as the need for support of our most vulnerable has never been greater. The following statistics from an analysis of the 2010 Community Services Block Grant, administered by community action agencies such as OFC Inc., clearly demonstrate the need and impact of our service to our communities. This information was gathered from a report published by the Community Action Partnership entitled, "Facing the New

Reality: Preparing Poor America for Harder Times," released in November of 2011.

"Helping People Help Themselves." That's what it's all about!



Community Impact	National	New York State
Poverty conditions eliminated	37,158,748	890,631
Volunteer Hours	43,512,410	1,013,763
People Served	20,308,955	503,303
Children	5,353,512	186,490
Seniors	2,561,273	52,500
% below 100% poverty	68.2%	70.8%
% below 50% poverty	33.5%	39.3%

Wayne H. Viera
Executive Director

Community Partnerships

Afton Consortium of Schools
Afton Fire Department
AmeriCorps
Area Agency on Aging
Bainbridge-Guilford Central Schools
Broome County Council of Churches
Broome County Homeownership Academy
Broome County Office for Aging
Broome County VOAD
Catholic Charities of Chenango County
CDO Workforce Investment Board
Central Baptist Church – Greene
Chenango County Board of Supervisors
Chenango County Code Enforcement
Chenango County Dept. of Planning & Development
Chenango County Dept. of Public Health
Chenango County Dept. of Social Services
Chenango County Housing Council
Chenango County Mental Health Department

Chenango County Office of Employment & Training
Chenango County VOAD
Chenango Health Network
Chenango United Way
CHIP, Inc.
City of Binghamton
City of Norwich
Cornell Cooperative Extension
DCMO BOCES
Dispute Resolution Center
Empire Development Corporation
First Congregational Church – Greene
GHS Federal Credit Union
Greene Central Schools
Habitat for Humanity
Honeywell Corporation
HSBC Bank
Legal Aid for Broome & Chenango County
M&T Bank
Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network
NBT Bank
NeighborWorks America
New Berlin Methodist Church
New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal

Norwich Housing Authority
Norwich YMCA
NY Council of Non-Profits
NYS Affordable Housing Corporation
NYS Energy Bureau
NYS Office of Community Renewal
NYS Weatherization Directors Association
Planned Parenthood
Rural Housing Coalition
Sherburne Earlville Central Schools
Sherburne Methodist Church
Sidney Federal Credit Union
Southern Tier Independence Center
Springbrook
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
The Gathering Place
Town of Bainbridge
Town of North Norwich
Town of South Otselic
United Church of Christ – Norwich
United Way of Broome County
Upstate Institute at Colgate University
US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

Back on the Rack II

Thrift Store/Employment Skills Training



Gently used clothing for everyone in the family

Back on the Rack II has been an enterprise of OFC Inc. since 1996. In 2011, over \$48,000 worth of merchandise was generously donated by the community.



Job skills trainee working the checkout

Through an agreement with DSS, trainees are placed at the shop to gain experience in retail skills. Trainees are offered basic life skills, in addition to customer service and merchandising training. This learning experience enables trainees to compete in the expanding retail market. In addition, the shop functions as a mini outreach site for local residents. We pride ourselves on getting to know our customers. Many times in conversation customers will verbalize a concern or problem they are facing. Staff are then able to direct the customer to the appropriate services or programs they may be eligible for.

Back on the Rack is an important resource for the community during these hard economic times, where every penny counts. We have experienced many new customers this year, who are facing economic challenges, and are now forced to shop second hand for basic necessities. Many of them comment that

Back on the Rack doesn't make them feel embarrassed about shopping second hand, and allows them to maintain their dignity.



Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Volunteer Opportunities/Senior Involvement

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program assists community members age 55 and older find meaningful volunteer experiences that utilize their valuable life skills and knowledge. The volunteer workforce meets critical community needs, and provides a productive experience enriching the lives of the volunteers and those they serve.

RSVP has been a program of OFC, Inc. and Chenango County since 1995. Last year, 380 RSVP volunteers engaged in volunteer community activities at a variety of non-profit agencies, contributing 73,475 hours of service. If the RSVP volunteers were replaced by paid employees it would have cost the agencies and organizations at which they serve almost \$1.38 million over the past year alone.



In an effort to help families living in or on the edge of poverty eliminate the choice between buying food and paying bills, about 70 RSVP volunteers help at 8 local food distribution sites. Sixty seven percent of the families surveyed reported that using the food pantry prevented them from going hungry, and 76% indicated that they were able to pay other bills with the money they saved by using the food pantry.



RSVP volunteers serving at thrift stores and clothing banks empower families who access these low/no cost alternatives; 90% of the families surveyed reported that they were able to stretch their resources to pay other bills.



Four RSVP volunteers responded to local and national disasters through the American Red Cross. Trained RSVP volunteers were instrumental in opening and maintaining emergency shelters in Norwich, Oxford and Greene with the flooding in 2011.

Eighteen volunteers have provided non emergency medical transportation to 26 seniors for appointments such as nephrology, orthopedic, dialysis, blood work, ophthalmology, and physical therapy. This service has enabled these seniors to live in their own homes independently.

Quaranta Housing Services

Home Ownership, Rental Assistance, & Rehabilitation



This past year, Quaranta Housing Services (QHS) had a significant impact on the lives of their customers in a variety of programs. Families were selected to receive new energy efficient manufactured homes in the Manufactured Home Replacement and Rehabilitation Initiative, and more families than ever before were served in the Weatherization Program, using stimulus funds from the federal government. First time homebuyers crowded into workshops to learn what it takes to become a successful homeowner, and the constant stream of individuals and families looking for assistance in renting an apartment was never ending for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.

The successful Manufactured Home Replacement and Rehabilitation Initiative replaced 9 mobile homes and made repairs to 3 in 2011. The biggest challenge for this program was finding customers who not only owned their mobile home, but also the land where the home is placed. In the case of the repair program, it was difficult to find mobile homes that needed just a few repairs rather than substantial rehabilitation to the entire home.

The Home Repair program tackles health and safety issues, and successfully made repairs to 42 homes during the past funding year. In addition, 14 Well and Septic Program projects were completed.

The First Time Homebuyer Program has not been without its successes and challenges during the past year. Eighty-five families have attended and graduated from the First Time Homebuyer Education Workshop (over 10 hours of extensive training). Of that number, 17 have purchased homes. Many families are finding it difficult to find homes in their price range, and others have found that they are not credit worthy to qualify for a mortgage.



The Weatherization Program, although successful in aiding more customers this year (162 households) with energy saving measures such as insulation, air-sealing, caulking, pipe-wrapping, and window & door replacements, still has a substantial list of customers needing these energy savings measures performed on their homes. To date, 515 people are still on the wait list for these services.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance/Earned Income Tax Credit Program brought \$1.55 million dollars back to families in Chenango County, which was used to pay down bills, put money into savings accounts and to have some disposable income. The VITA/EITC program had a decrease in customers that took advantage of free tax preparation this tax season. The prior year 975 families were served, and this year 701 families were assisted. It is suspected that families were anxious to receive their refunds, and paid to receive rapid refund loans from local H & R Block or Hewlett Jackson offices.



The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) HUD briefings educated 45 families on how to receive and stay on the Section 8 Program for rental assistance. Of those 45 families, thirty-two (32) received vouchers and found apartments to rent within Chenango County. The challenge with this program is locating the family once their name comes to the top of the wait list. A difficulty for the families is finding the appropriate size apartment for their family unit. Three and four bedroom apartments are very hard to locate within the county.



Lastly, the HEAP program saw 1,043 families during the heating season, and approved 935 applications for assistance in paying for their heating bills. This was down by 208 from the year before, which could be explained by the mild winter that Chenango County experienced this past year.

Chenango County Head Start

Early Childhood Education, Nutrition, and Health

In 2011, the Administration of Children and Families awarded Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. \$1,869,927 for the delivery of comprehensive services to 221 preschool children and their families residing within the county. The primary goal of the program is to enhance the social and cognitive development of enrolled children and to improve their school readiness. This is achieved through the provision of individualized services in education, health, nutrition and family engagement.

Classroom activities are designed to support the development of skills related to literacy, numeracy, problem solving, decision making, relationship building and creativity, all of which form a firm foundation for school readiness. A total of 248 children were served over the course of the year as several left the program and new children began. All children demonstrated significant progress in achieving outcomes in all developmental areas.

Chenango County Head Start takes a proactive approach to serving children with special needs and with identifying children who may have disabilities. Fifty-three children were assessed by an outside evaluating agency, were diagnosed with disabilities and received related therapies either within a classroom or their home in 2011. By offering these early intervention services, we have found that some children no longer require them by the time they transition to kindergarten.

Low income families face many challenges in accessing the services necessary for the prevention of disease and the preservation of health. Part of what makes the Head Start experience unique is the focus on wellness for enrolled children. Our program ensures that children receive primary and preventive medical and dental services, both onsite and by partnering with community based providers. All children receive developmental, behavioral, vision, hearing, height, and weight screenings within 45 calendar days of entrance into the program. At the end of the year, 244 children had a continuous source for accessible health care, 230 had accessed dental care, and 245 were determined to be up to date on all immunizations.



Poverty has a pervasive impact on the nutritional health of our children. Chenango County Head Start promotes child wellness by providing nutrition services that supplements and complements those of the home. Each child participating in a center based setting receives meals and snacks that comply with USDA nutritional requirements. Head Start recognizes that developing healthy eating habits at an early age positively impacts lifelong eating habits. Through encouragement and modeling by staff and other children, many preschoolers tried foods for the first time or ate foods in Head Start that they would not eat at home. In 2011, our program served over 33,300 nutritious meals and snacks to enrolled children.



Head Start not only works with children, but extends services to families. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning experience. Every effort is made to establish a partnership with each child's family. There are various ways parents choose to be involved, including volunteering in classrooms, serving on program committees, participating in training and educational opportunities, and by being actively involved during home visits. In 2011, parent and community hours met the federal in-kind requirement by generating over \$650,000 in volunteer goods and services.

Chenango County Early Head Start

Early Childhood Development & Family Education



Parent sharing a book with her child during a home visit

The Chenango County Early Head Start Program has successfully operated for over thirteen years. In 2011, the Administration for Children and Families awarded Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. \$668,301 for the delivery of comprehensive services to 98 pregnant women and children birth to three years of age residing in Chenango County.

In 2011, the program provided year round services to a total of 22 pregnant women and 178 children. Staff members promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, aid in enhancing the development of infants and toddlers, and support healthy functioning in families. Services to families include high quality early education and care, home visits, parent education, health and mental health services, nutrition education and on-going support.

Chenango County Early Head Start staff offer learning experiences in early education and care both in and out of the home. 2,461 weekly home visits and 144 socialization sessions were provided to families in 2011. They included participation in activities related to family development, health, nutrition, literacy and parent involvement.



Socialization field trip



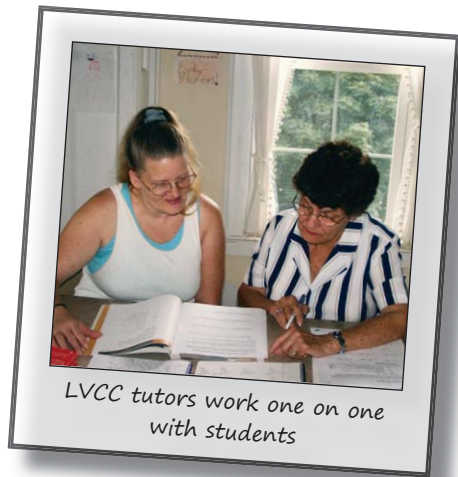
Arts & crafts during Combo class

To ensure that parents feel comfortable with the process, health, nutrition, developmental and social emotional screenings are conducted on home visits to encourage an ongoing sense of a child's well-being and to facilitate early intervention, if necessary. In 2011, 23 enrolled infants and toddlers received disabilities services based on established individualized service plans.

Parent education, including parent-child activities and child observation, allows parents to increase their knowledge about child development. This awareness helps parents identify ways to encourage their own child's growth and development. Nutrition education and health education are supported by providing guidance during meals and snacks within the home and at group sessions.

Literacy Volunteers of Chenango County

Adult Education



Literacy Volunteers of Chenango County provides one-to-one and small group, confidential, and learner-centered tutoring free of charge to adults seeking help with basic literacy (reading, writing, math) or English as a second language. LVCC serves adults 16 years of age and older whose lack of literacy has limited them academically, occupationally, or personally.

LVCC recruits, trains and provides support for volunteers willing to work with the county's low literacy population and maintains close partnerships with agencies and programs in Chenango County working to improve literacy and job readiness. Last year 35 dedicated volunteers tutored over 50 adult learners, helping them achieve economic, family or personal goals. Five specially trained tutors served non-English speaking students.

Approximately half of those served in the 2011-2012 fiscal year were persons between 16 and 21 who left school before graduation and needed to improve math and reading scores in preparation for GED credentialing. Through a shared grant with Guernsey Memorial Library, we were able to serve 15 young adults in a small group, intensive learning setting called MP3. Most have, or will soon, go on to training programs or GED prep classes.

The remainder of LVCC's learners are older adults seeking to improve their job situations, learn English as a second language, or simply be able read to their children and understand and fill out simple forms. Well over half of LVCC's students are dependent on some form of public assistance. About 25% are employed at least part-time.



Funding from NYSED, Community Services Block Grant and United Way support LVCC's small but very active program, providing necessary monies to train and support tutors and purchase student learning materials. Annual fundraising efforts include LVCC's Annual Scrabble® Event. The community responded generously this year with donated items and cash gifts.

LVCC is currently exploring the expanded use of technology to enhance student learning. The demand for skilled and computer literate workers continues to rise. LVCC is finding new ways to meet individual student need within the context of our economically challenged community.

- 8 young adults completed the program, meeting or exceeding their educational goals.
- 3 students advanced in their workplaces after improving their reading, writing, and math skills.
- 2 students will be entering college programs this fall.
- 1 foreign-born student, a published author in his native country, is about to translate his work into English.

Chenango County WIC

Nutrition Assistance for Children & Pregnant Women



*Height & weight measurements
are taken during appointments*

The Federal Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides nutritious foods to pregnant, post partum and breast feeding women, as well as infants and children up to 5 years old. Eligibility is based on income; for example a family of 3 may earn up to \$35,317 annually and receive WIC benefits. WIC checks are redeemed at local grocery stores for milk, cheese, eggs, peanut butter, beans, juice, cereal, brown rice, fruits, vegetables and bread. Infants may receive formula, cereal and jars of fruits and vegetables. WIC encourages breast feeding and additional foods are provided to breast feeding mothers. Four WIC employees are Certified Lactation Counselors who provide instruction and follow-up to 280 WIC participants each month. Along with WIC foods, families receive nutrition education and referrals to other resources within the community.

The WIC Program serves 350 women, 300 infants and 800 children each month at seven locations throughout Chenango County. Each month, checks are redeemed at grocery stores for approximately \$95,000. Every summer families receive Farmers' Market checks valued at \$24.00 to purchase fresh New York State grown fruits and vegetables.

In 2011, WIC employees distributed 60 car seats and 720 bike helmets to WIC families through a grant from the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. WIC employees continue to collaborate with other agencies at local health fairs and community events to increase interest and participation in the WIC Program.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a nutrition education and meal reimbursement program helping providers serve nutritious and safely prepared meals and snacks to children and adults in day care settings. The New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) receives funding from the United States Department of Agriculture to support and further enhance CACFP statewide. Opportunities for Chenango has been approved by NYS DOH to be a sponsoring organization for day care homes in the Chenango County area.

Licensed and registered child care providers or informal providers caring for children being subsidized by the local Department of Social Services can sign up with OFC to participate in the program.

The federal government establishes reimbursement rates for meals and snacks annually. Reimbursement may be received for qualifying breakfasts, lunches, and suppers and morning, afternoon, and late night snacks. A maximum of two meals and one snack or two snacks and one meal may be claimed per participant per day.

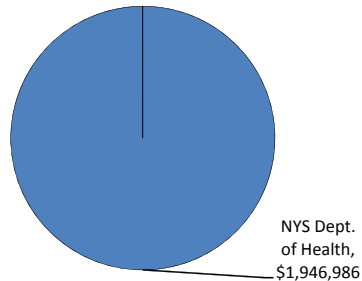


*Day care children receive
healthy meals*

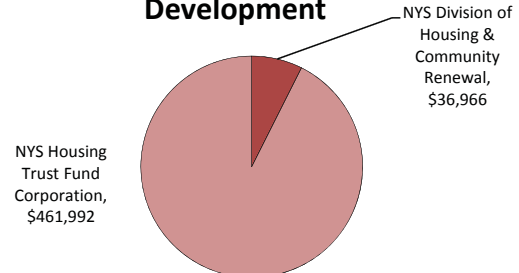
Child-Adult Care Food Program
Child & Adult Nutrition

Funding Sources

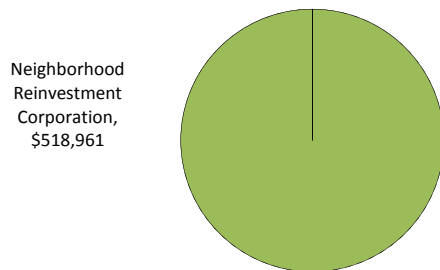
US Dept. of Agriculture



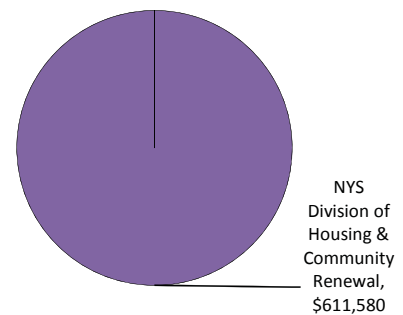
US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development



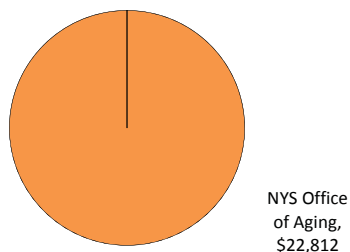
US Dept. of the Treasury



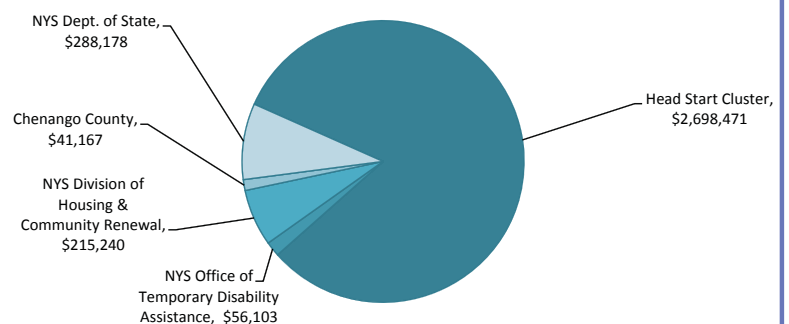
US Dept. of Energy



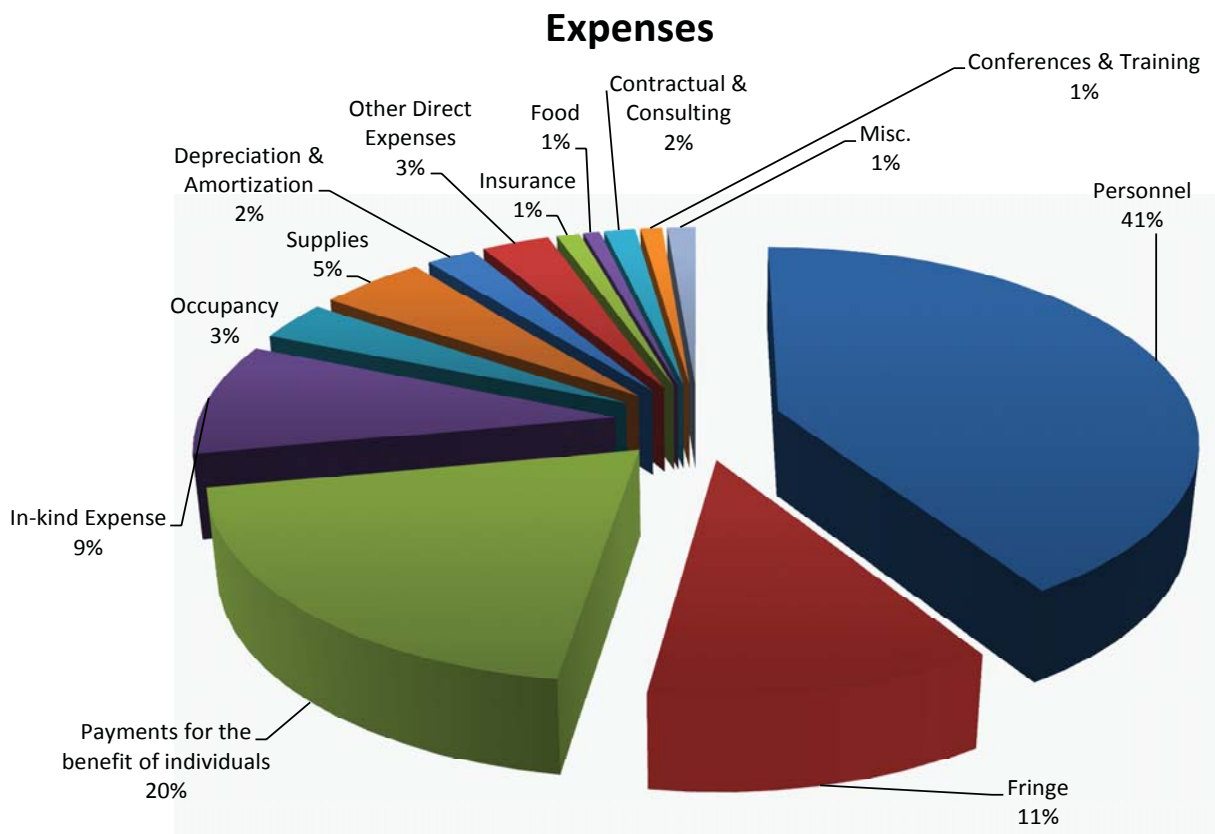
Corporation for National Community Services



US Dept. of Health & Human Services



US Dept. of Agriculture	\$1,946,986
US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development	\$498,958
US Dept. of the Treasury	\$518,961
US Dept. of Energy	\$611,580
US Dept. of Health & Human Services	\$3,299,159
Corporation for National Community Svcs.	\$22,812
In-kind & other sources	\$288,280
Total funding	\$7,186,736



Personnel	\$2,945,845
Fringe	\$812,515
Payments for the benefit of individuals	\$1,416,935
In-kind expenses	\$668,071
Occupancy	\$234,554
Supplies	\$341,472
Depreciation & Amortization	\$157,187
Other Direct Expenses	\$219,375
Insurance	\$73,917
Food	\$53,233
Contractual & Consulting	\$100,570
Conferences & Training	\$69,934
Misc.	\$91,625
Total expenses	\$7,185,233

2011-2012 Board of Directors



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*Retired Senior Volunteer
Program Coordinator*



Nancy Salem
*Back on the Rack Training
Coordinator*



Linn Rifanburg
Facilities Coordinator

Administrative Staff

Locations



Quaranta Housing Services
43 Hale St. Norwich NY
(607) 336-2101



Early Head Start Center
6120 CR 32. Norwich NY
(607) 336-8957



Main Office
44 W. Main St. Norwich NY
(607) 334-7114



Back on the Rack II
12 W. State St. Sherburne NY
(607) 674-5028



RSVP Office
5-9 W. Main St. Norwich NY
(607) 336-6414 x 103

Head Start Centers

Bainbridge Head Start

Greenlawn Elementary School
43 Greenlawn Ave., Bainbridge, NY 13733
(607) 967-8582

Greene Head Start

Greene Elementary School - Primary Building
127 Elementary Lane, Greene, NY 13778
(607) 656-9367

Guilford Head Start

Guilford Elementary School
138 School Street, Guilford, NY 13780
(607) 895-6248

New Berlin Head Start

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
40 South Main Street, New Berlin, NY 13411
(607) 847-8587

North Norwich Head Start

North Norwich Town Hall
188 County Rd. 23, North Norwich, NY 13814
(607) 334-4324

Oxford Head Start

44 North Washington Ave., Oxford, NY 13830
(607) 843-9990

44 W. Main St. PO Box 470
Norwich, NY 13815
(607) 334-7114
<http://www.ofcinc.org>
<http://www.quarantahousing.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/opportunitiesforchenango>

Our Mission

Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. (also known as OFC, Inc.) is a Community Action Agency (CAA) committed to supporting families and individuals to:

Recognize their strengths

Set realistic goals

Make responsible choices

Become successful, self-sufficient members of our community

We achieve our mission through programs that focus on child and family development, housing security, life skills training, education, literacy, health and nutrition, community, employment and economic development.

