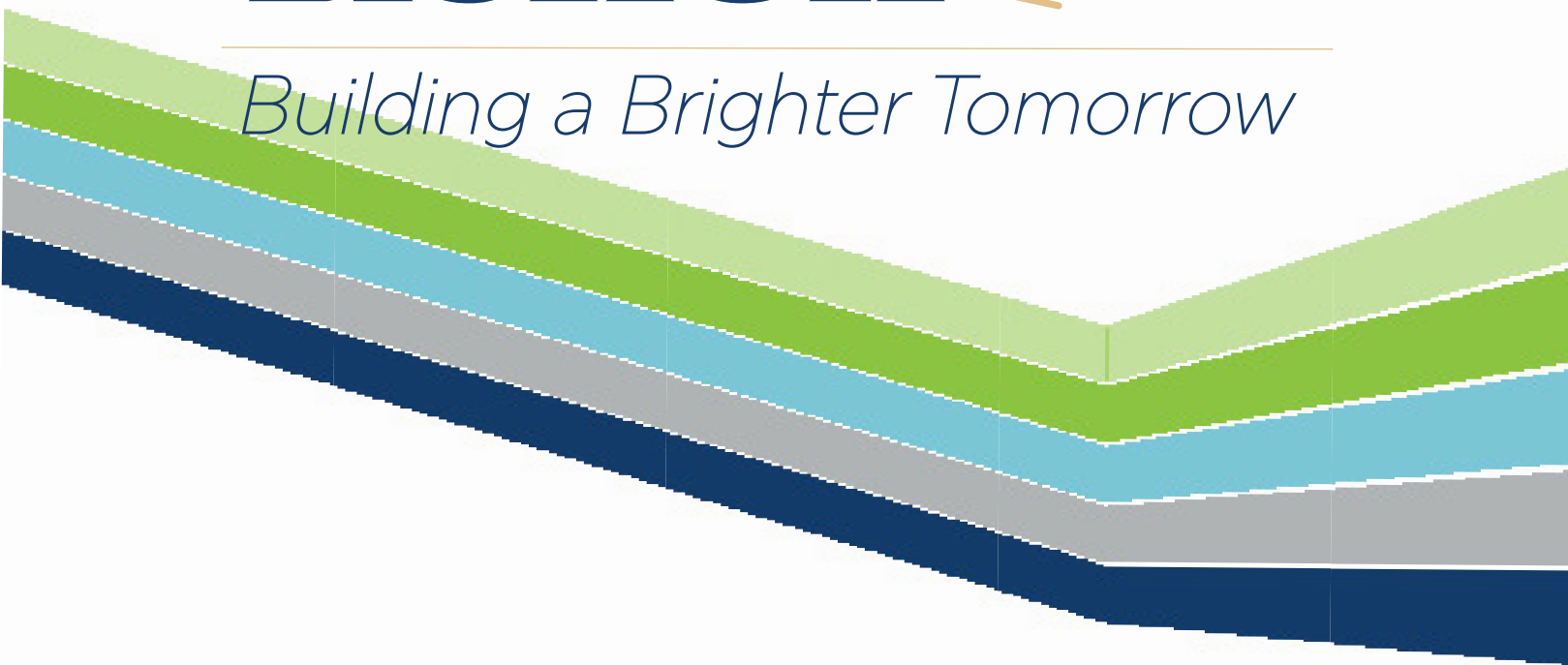


Hope in Action



Building a Brighter Tomorrow



2025 MCA Summer Conference Preliminary Program

Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel
Grand Rapids, MI
July 14 – 17, 2025



Conference Schedule

Monday July 14 | 2025 Pre-Conference

10:30 - 11:30 AM	MCA Finance Committee
12:00 - 1:00 PM	MCA Board of Directors
1:00 - 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 - 3:00 PM	MCA Directors Council
1:00 - 6:00 PM	Exhibitor Set Up
3:00 - 6:00 PM	Registration Open
6:30 - 9:00 PM	Directors Dinner

Tuesday July 15 | 2025

6:30 - 7:00 AM	Gentle Yoga
7:30 AM	Registration Desk Open
7:30 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 AM	General Session
9:30 - 9:45 AM	Break
9:45 - 11:00 AM	Breakout Sessions
11:00 - 11:15 AM	Break
11:15 AM - 12:30 PM	Breakout Sessions
12:30 - 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:45 - 3:00 PM	Breakout Sessions
3:00 - 3:30 PM	Break
3:30 - 4:45 PM	Breakout Sessions
<i>Dinner on your own</i>	
7:00 - 9:00 PM	Networking Mixer (on the patio)

Schedule subject to change

Wednesday

July 16 | 2025

6:30 - 7:00 AM	Gentle Yoga
7:30 AM	Registration Desk Open
7:30 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 AM	General Session
9:30 - 9:45 AM	Break
9:45 - 11:00 AM	Breakout Sessions
11:00 - 11:15 AM	Break
11:15 AM - 12:30 PM	Breakout Sessions
12:30 - 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:45 - 3:00 PM	Breakout Sessions
3:00 - 3:30PM	Break
3:30 - 4:45 PM	Breakout Sessions
6:00 - 9:00 PM	LDI Graduation / Dinner Auction/Entertainment

Thursday

July 17 | 2025

7:30 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 AM	General Session
9:30 - 9:45 AM	Break
9:45 - 11:00 AM	Breakout Sessions
11:00 - 11:15 AM	Break
11:15 AM - 12:30 PM	Breakout Sessions
12:30 - 12:45 PM	Closing/ Giveaway Drawing

Featured Speakers

Shannon Cohen

Shannon Cohen, Inc.

Andrew Campbell

Introduction to Upward Mobility Framework
The Urban Institute

Panel/Podcast

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change as speakers and session content continues to be confirmed.

Breakout Sessions

Navigating the Evolving Employee Benefits Landscape

Rose Street Advisors

Designed with HR professionals and Community Action staff in mind, this session will provide strategies to help organizations optimize their employee benefits programs while supporting the well-being of their workforce. Participants will gain insights into navigating the Michigan healthcare landscape, controlling benefit costs, and increasing employee engagement. Emphasis will also be placed on fostering a healthier, more engaged workforce through tailored benefits offerings that attract and retain top talent.

Attendees will leave this session equipped with tools and strategies to ensure their organizations stay competitive and continue to embody the spirit of hope and self-sufficiency, ultimately fostering stronger, more resilient communities.

Beyond the Office: Safe and Successful Off-Site Visits

Community Action Agency

This session will explore the importance of meeting clients in their own environment as a way to build stronger relationships and gain a deeper understanding of their needs. By engaging with clients in their personal environments, staff can foster trust, improve service delivery, and tailor support more effectively. The session will highlight the mutual benefits of off-site visits for both clients and staff, emphasizing how these interactions create meaningful connections. Additionally, we will discuss essential safety measures to ensure the protection of staff during these visits, providing strategies to balance the need for personal engagement with the importance of maintaining a safe working environment. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how to conduct off-site visits that both strengthen client relationships and prioritize staff well-being.

Beyond Compliance: Building Truly Inclusive Communities

Disability Advocates of Kent County

True inclusion goes beyond legal compliance—it requires a shift in mindset, policies, and community design. This interactive session will explore the foundations of disability, the role of intersectionality in accessibility, and how organizations can move beyond ADA checklists to create truly inclusive communities. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of disability as a social construct, learn how intersecting identities impact accessibility, and participate in an interactive community audit exercise to identify and address barriers. Real-world examples from Disability Advocates of Kent County's initiatives will be used to illustrate best practices in inclusive design and advocacy.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change as speakers and session content continues to be confirmed.

Breakout Sessions

The Early Childhood Investment Corporation as a Community Partner [Early Childhood Investment Corporation](#)

Michigan's Early Childhood Investment Corporation was created in 2005 to be a statewide leader in early childhood. ECIC collaborates with state-level, regional, and local partners to increase public and private investment in the earliest years, to elevate issues affecting young children and their families and to continuously improve Michigan's comprehensive early childhood system.

The Partnership Playbook [Michigan State University Extension](#)

In this presentation, we will delve into strategies outlined in our "Partnership Playbook" to foster collaboration in youth development and community improvement initiatives. Through engaging discussion and practical examples, participants will gain insights into the importance of partnerships, learn how to initiate and pursue a partnership, set SMART goals, build trust and rapport, and evaluate partnerships for continuous improvement.

"More Than Numbers" Humanizing Community Engagement with Personas [Khamai Strategies](#)

Community engagement is more than just outreach—it requires a deep understanding of the people being served. This interactive workshop introduces community personas as an innovative tool to help Community Action Agencies (CAAs) design programs and services that are equitable, responsive, and impactful. Participants will learn how to develop and apply community personas to improve stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, and service delivery. Through a hands-on exercise, attendees will build their own persona and leave with a Community Persona Toolkit to implement this strategy immediately.

This session is designed for front-line staff, leadership, new CAA staff, and board members looking to enhance their organization's connection to the communities they serve.

Smart Solutions for the Community Needs Assessment [Mid Michigan Community Action Agency](#)

This session will provide an in-depth look at the innovative approaches used in conducting Mid Michigan Community Action's Community Needs Assessment (CNA) this year. We will explore how we used structured qualitative research, AI tools, and collaborative data analysis to improve the accuracy, efficiency, and overall impact of our assessment. The discussion will cover the use of focus groups, AI-assisted transcription and analysis, and best practices for refining and finalizing the CNA document to ensure accessibility and usability.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change as speakers and session content continues to be confirmed.

Breakout Sessions

Implementing Trauma Informed Care

Community Action Agency

This presentation explores the implementation of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) within an organization, supported by data collected over the past five years. We will discuss the key principles of TIC, its significance in serving people, and the measurable benefits observed for both clients and staff. By analyzing trends and outcomes, we will highlight how integrating trauma-informed practices enhances service delivery, improves client outcomes, and fosters a more supportive organizational culture. Attendees will gain insights into best practices, challenges, and strategies for sustaining a trauma-informed approach within their own organizations.

Understanding and Working with People in Poverty

Northeast Michigan
Community Service Agency

Understanding and Working with People in Poverty NEMCSA's comprehensive curriculum equips participants with the knowledge and tools to effectively understand and support individuals experiencing poverty. Rooted in over 55 years of hands-on experience and enriched by insights from renowned experts like Dr. Donna Beegle and Dr. Ruby Payne, this workshop offers an exploration into the key concepts and strategies needed to foster meaningful change. By attending this training, participants will be empowered to create lasting, positive impacts in their organizations and communities, improving outcomes for both the people they serve and the systems they work within.

Effective Advocacy to Further Your Mission

Michigan League for Public
Policy

The Michigan League for Public Policy has been in the policy and advocacy space for 113 years! Join us as we discuss what we do and how you can join the advocacy space to further your mission and help your community at a macro level. Participants will learn about legislative advocacy, power mapping, and tips for creating an advocacy action plan.

Leadership Pathways

Panel

This panel will introduce participants to the leadership development opportunities available from Michigan Community Action and the National Community Action Partnership. The panel will cover the Emerging Leaders Program, Leadership Development Institute, CCAP, and Pathways to Excellence.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change as speakers and session content continues to be confirmed.

Breakout Sessions

A Collaborative Approach to Building Community Partnerships to Strengthen Families

Michigan Federation for Children and Families

MDHHS has taken a collaborative approach with community-based organizations to build services that ensure families are supported and strengthened holistically within their communities. Partnerships with community action agencies and family resource centers help families address their self-identified needs by connecting them to essential resources. Access to these resources is often focused on fulfilling basic needs, which, if unmet, can become a significant factor in determining whether families enter the child welfare system.

Are You Managing or Leading?

HRM Services, Inc.

The difference between good management and good leadership can take your team from good to great. Utilizing group discussion, this session will focus on the differences and intersections between those two concepts and will offer strategies for becoming the leader you want to be.

Managing a Multi-Generational Workforce

HRM Services, Inc.

Today's workplaces are more diverse than ever with 5 different generations coexisting and collaborating to meet organizational goals. Each generation brings distinct mindsets and behaviors to their work as well as unique challenges for managers. This session focuses on specific management skills required for effective communication while directing, delegating, developing and motivating a multi-generational team.

NDD MIN Opportunities

Michigan State Housing Development Authority

MSHDA is launching a new streamlined CDBG letter of intent process and this session would be a great way to communicate what NDD resources are available and how they can be accessed. Walking through the funding request, selection and award process and how agencies can participate will be key goals objectives of the panel discussion. The adjustments are being undertaken to encourage local participation, alleviate funding timeline constraints and application barriers and make the program more accessible to non-entitled local units of government to facilitate housing activity.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

From Innovation to Implementation: Creating an Agile Nonprofit Culture

Wayne Metro Community Action Agency

Wayne Metro's Innovation Lab has transformed the way nonprofit programs are developed, tested, and scaled. This session will explore the evolution of the Innovation Lab, highlighting its impact on program development and community service delivery. Attendees will gain insights into the process of launching pilot initiatives, how these programs transitioned into full-scale services, and the lessons learned in fostering an agile, adaptable nonprofit culture. This roadmap for innovation in nonprofit spaces will provide actionable strategies for attendees looking to implement and sustain new ideas effectively.

The Heart of Community Support: Wayne Metro's Connect Center - A Model of Efficiency and Impact

Wayne Metro Community Action Agency

Wayne Metro's Connect Center is a high-performing, client-focused centralized access hub that ensures individuals receive immediate assistance across multiple service areas. With a 95% answer rate, an average wait time of less than 5 minutes, and over 400,000 calls successfully handled, the Connect Center exemplifies efficient, high-impact client service. Operating 24/7 during crisis events and offering multilingual support, this model provides a streamlined, dignified experience for clients while maximizing resources across departments. Attendees will learn how cross-trained staff, integrated service delivery, and technology-driven efficiency create a seamless and effective approach to community support.

ROMA for Boards

MCA and BCAEO

This session will provide Board Members with an introduction to ROMA principles and what the Boards role in in the implementation of ROMA practice.

Transforming Lives Through Comprehensive Supportive Housing

Wayne Metro Community Action Agency

Wayne Metro has expanded its Supportive Housing initiatives across Wayne County, including Detroit, to address homelessness and housing instability through a continuum of care approach. This session will showcase how we provide PATH and street outreach services, manage Coordinated Access Model (CAM), operate a Night Center, and implement innovative housing solutions to support individuals and families in crisis. By utilizing cross-sector partnerships, integrated service models, and trauma-informed care, Wayne Metro is breaking cycles of homelessness and paving the way for long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

Exploring Staff and Volunteer Boundaries

**Michigan State University
Extension**

Clear boundaries are essential for effective volunteer management, yet many staff and volunteers struggle to define, communicate, and uphold them. This interactive session will utilize research and activities from the Ready to Go: Volunteer Training Toolkit to help participants explore personal and professional boundaries, recognize boundary conflicts, and practice effective communication strategies. Through guided discussions and hands-on exercises, attendees will gain practical tools to foster a healthy, respectful volunteer environment.

Essential and Creative Approaches for Actionable Data **Public Policy Associates**

The session offers insight into how to readily develop the essential data for agency action planning. This session is relevant to community needs assessment, housing and homelessness needs assessment, and strategic planning. Attendees will learn about leveraging secondary data for housing and community development, including how to ensure rigorous, transparent, and fully accountable data collection activity for community needs assessments and strategic planning. In addition, attendees can take away a better understanding of critical approaches for successful public engagement, as we share our experiences in using strategies that are dynamic and formed in deep collaboration with the community.

MI Tri-Share Child Care: Benefits for Employers, Employees, and Child Care Providers

**Michigan Department
of Lifelong Education,
Advancement, and
Potential**

In this session, attendees will learn about the MI Tri-Share Child Care program and its benefits for employers, employees, and child care providers. Attendees will leave with information to consider participating as employers themselves and to share with their community's employers, working families, child care providers, and other stakeholders.

The Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), Office of Early Education

**Michigan Department
of Lifelong Education,
Advancement, and
Potential**

Please join us for updates from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), Office of Early Education. This focus session will provide information on the latest MiLEAP Office of Early Education projects and the PreK for All initiative, including the Great Start Readiness Program and the Michigan Head Start programs. There will also be set aside time for Q & A.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

Navigating Detours: How to Effectively Lead through Uncertainty and Change

Nonprofit Nav

This session will provide practical strategies for navigating uncertainty with confidence. Through real-world examples and interactive discussions, you'll learn how to adapt to change, make informed decisions, and turn obstacles into opportunities. Whether you're facing a current challenge or planning for the future, you'll leave equipped with tools to keep your organization moving forward—no matter what detours arise.

Empowered Care: CIE and 211 Transforming Lives with the Jackson Care Hub

Michigan 211

The work of 211 through the Jackson Care Hub is a groundbreaking, community information exchange process in Michigan that connects diverse agencies across Jackson County to improve care coordination for residents. This workshop will explore the Hub's innovative design, its impact on client outcomes, and its potential for replication in other communities. Participants will learn practical strategies for improving interagency collaboration, enhancing resource utilization, and streamlining referral processes to address complex community needs.

Mental Health in the Workplace

BHS Insurance

We want attendees to feel more confident addressing mental health issues in the workplace. They should walk away with the tools and resources needed to navigate this sensitive subject. Ideally, our attendees will also leave feeling like they can share their own personal struggles with at least one person they trust. Lastly, our hope is that those who need help or know someone who does will be willing to seek the reach out and get the support they need.

How to Honor Every Voice: True Collaboration Driven by Communities

Michigan 211

This session explores a transformative approach to community engagement. It emphasizes genuine collaboration with ALICE households and those experiencing generational poverty, prioritizing their voices in shaping solutions. Learn practical strategies for building trust, fostering co-creation, and addressing systemic barriers. The presentation showcases how prioritizing diverse perspectives leads to equitable and sustainable outcomes, moving beyond traditional metrics to measure true community impact.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

Vision to Action: Driving Impact Through Strategic Planning

K. Cain Consulting, LLC

Effective strategic planning is more than just a document—it's a roadmap for lasting impact. This interactive workshop will equip participants with practical tools and frameworks to develop, refine, and execute strategic plans that drive organizational success. Through engaging discussions and hands-on activities, attendees will learn how to assess priorities, set measurable goals, engage stakeholders, and adapt strategies in an ever-changing landscape. Whether you're launching a new initiative or refining an existing plan, this session will provide actionable insights to move from vision to results.

Listening to Lead: Harnessing Community Voices for Transformative Change

K. Cain Consulting, LLC

This interactive session will provide participants with practical tools and strategies to conduct Community Needs Assessments that uncover key insights, empower community voices, and drive meaningful change. Ideal for leaders and changemakers, this training emphasizes equitable engagement, actionable data collection, and turning insights into transformative outcomes.

Building Strong Boards: Governance, Recruitment & Roles in Action

K. Cain Consulting, LLC

In this dynamic session, participants will explore the pillars of effective board leadership. Combining the foundations of board governance, strategic recruitment practices, and clear roles and responsibilities, this session is designed to strengthen board performance and alignment. Whether you're a new or seasoned board member, you'll leave with practical tools to support strong governance structures, attract the right board members, and understand how to fulfill your role with clarity and impact.

Amplifying Impact: The Power of Storytelling & Community Connection

**Northwest Michigan
Community Action Agency
& New Leonard Media**

Discover the magic behind storytelling through an auditory medium and how a Community Action Agency can benefit from sharing more about their services and programs through the perspective of clients, volunteers, employees and community partners. This workshop's goal is to provide an interactive experience for attendees through the perspective of their organization and community. Everyone has a story to tell whether the guest is a client, partner, employee or volunteer, the details of their journey impact their lives and community. Through audience participation, attendees will walk away with the tools they need to develop their own podcast.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

Lessons Learned from Evaluations of Energy Efficiency Programs for Income Qualified Populations

DNV

DNV has been evaluating energy efficiency programs in Michigan since their inception in 2009 for both regulated Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) and municipal and cooperative utilities. In this session, DNV will share the findings from our evaluations of programs focused on serving Income Qualified (IQ) populations.

Putting the Welcome Mat out for Your Organization

2b1 Professional Development

More than ever before, organizations need to ensure that they are putting the welcome mat out to let others know that they are 'welcomed', 'affirmed' and 'accepted' at your place of business. This means that you stand behind your beliefs that everyone is welcomed (no matter who they are) and accepted within the walls of your organization.

Introducing Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility in Your Community

The Urban Institute

This session will delve into a newly updated Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility in Your Community. Participants will learn about how to use the Toolkit to enhance their work in building coalitions, analyzing data, engaging community members, setting targets, and sustaining efforts to increase upward mobility from poverty. The session will include opportunities for discussion and an activity to apply resources from the Toolkit to attendees' specific contexts. Through this session, attendees will deepen understanding of approaches to support upward mobility in their communities.

From Burnout to Balance: The Case for Taking Time Off

Come Alive Creative

In a world where work is never done, taking a break can feel impractical and counterintuitive for a mission-driven business. This session explores how to step away from the constant work grind and how intentional time off can boost creativity, decision-making, and overall productivity. Learn practical strategies to practically incorporate hobbies, rest, and relationships back into your routine without sacrificing your mission.

Stronger Together: Partnering for Healthy Lifestyles

Michigan Fitness Foundation

No one person or organization can do it all, making partnerships essential to optimizing our work. Join this session to learn more about nutrition, food access, and physical activity programming offered through Michigan Fitness Foundation and hear about partnership opportunities to leverage resources and more effectively reach the focus populations you serve.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

Creating 2 - SLGBTQ+ Inclusive Services

Grand Rapids Pride Center

This 75-minute interactive session will equip participants with tools and frameworks to build more inclusive, affirming, and equitable environments for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (2-SLGBTQ+) individuals and families. Grounded in a liberation and equity lens, we will explore how community action agencies can move beyond performative allyship to actively foster safety, connection, and dignity in their programs and workplaces. Participants will engage in reflective dialogue, examine common barriers to access, and leave with concrete strategies for embedding 2SLGBTQ+ inclusivity into policies, practices, and everyday interactions.

“Getting on Board” Reimagining Effective Organizational Communication

The Artifex Group

The term “effective communication” is often used to describe a process that involves clarity, purpose and efficiency. However, what happens to this system as society continues to shift? As organization leaders, we must be equipped to pivot and adjust to an evolving climate as we work towards maximizing our productivity.

Data Options with empowOR

empowOR, CSST Software, LLC

Starting October 1, 2025, agencies will have different options for accessing their data with empowOR. This session will review those options, share how those different options will meet different needs, and provide context for how these options can support agencies in becoming more data-driven.

Moving Forward-Identifying Critical Needs of Your Organization

The Artifex Group

As leaders of a nonprofit, the responsibility to ensure the organization’s success is a massive undertaking, and effective decision-making is crucial. Understanding and knowing when to implement change can help the organization with consistency and sustainability. Often times, day-to-day functions curb long term planning, but both are essential to meeting the needs of the community.

This session encourages leaders to take a step back and analyze the pulse of the organization, to move beyond survival and increase ways to thrive. It will discuss how to identify gaps in the organization, using informed decision-making, effectively allocating resources and more.

Preliminary Agenda

Information is subject to change

Breakout Sessions

Whole Family in empowOR: A Look at Two Varying Approaches to Data Entry

empowOR, CSST Software, LLC

Attendees will learn about how empowOR supports Whole Family practices, workflows, and data collection across all programs within an agency. The session will provide concrete examples of Whole Family practices and setup in empowOR and provide best practices around Whole Family implementation seen across the CAA network nationally. We will dive more deeply into two different models that exist for current customers who are implementing Whole Family.

TBD

Yeo & Yeo

The MI Home Energy Rebates Program: It's Here! What That Means for You

Walker-Miller Energy Services

The Michigan Home Energy Rebates (MiHER) program launched statewide on April 14th, 2025. The program provides \$165M in energy efficiency and electrification rebates to income-qualified single-family and multi-family buildings. In this session you'll receive a detailed overview of the MiHER program, focusing on both the contractor and customer journeys. You'll also learn how the MiHER program could work alongside and directly with the Weatherization Assistance Program and utility Energy Waste Reduction programs.

Preliminary Agenda

Pre-registration is required

Special Sessions / Activities

BCAEO Office Hours

BCAEO Staff

empowOR Office Hours

empowOR, CSST Software, LLC

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences -
Two Concurrent Sessions

Nonprofit Network
and Family Service and
Children's Aid

The Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Training is designed to help you develop the unique skill set needed to support individuals who have experienced adverse childhood experiences and traumatic events. Researchers have recently discovered a dangerous biological syndrome caused by abuse and neglect during childhood. As the new documentary Resilience reveals, toxic stress can trigger hormones that wreak havoc on the brains and bodies of children, putting them at a greater risk for disease, homelessness, prison time, and early death. While the broader impacts of poverty worsen the risk, no segment of society is immune. Resilience also chronicles the dawn of a movement that is determined to fight back.

Weatherization on Wheels: Hands-On Learning
with the Weatherization Trailer

Mid Michigan Community
Action Agency

Weatherization on Wheels offers a unique, immersive learning experience that traditional workshops cannot match. Community Action professionals will gain practical insights to bring back to their communities, making energy savings and home comfort improvements more accessible.

Meditation and Sounds Bath Session

Kula Yoga Grand Rapids

Media Training

Bellwether Public Relations

Preliminary Agenda

Pre-registration is required

Special Sessions / Activities

BCAEO Office Hours

Held Wednesday July 16th, hours may vary

BCAEO Staff

empowOR Office Hours

Held Tuesday July 15th, hours may vary

empowOR, CSST Software, LLC

Sessions below will be held Tuesday July 15th 3:30 - 4:45

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences
Two Concurrent Sessions

**Nonprofit Network
and Family Service and
Children's Aid**

The Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Training is designed to help you develop the unique skill set needed to support individuals who have experienced adverse childhood experiences and traumatic events. Researchers have recently discovered a dangerous biological syndrome caused by abuse and neglect during childhood. As the new documentary Resilience reveals, toxic stress can trigger hormones that wreak havoc on the brains and bodies of children, putting them at a greater risk for disease, homelessness, prison time, and early death. While the broader impacts of poverty worsen the risk, no segment of society is immune. Resilience also chronicles the dawn of a movement that is determined to fight back.

**Weatherization on Wheels: Hands-On Learning
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**Mid Michigan Community
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Weatherization on Wheels offers a unique, immersive learning experience that traditional workshops cannot match. Community Action professionals will gain practical insights to bring back to their communities, making energy savings and home comfort improvements more accessible.

Service Project - Brighten a Box

Get your creative juices flowing while networking with fellow attendees during this fun session. Attendees will have the opportunity to decorate boxes used for food distribution by Kent County Community Action Agency. Write uplifting messages, draw, or add stickers, every little addition is sure to brighten someone's day.

Meditation and Sounds Bath Session

Kula Yoga Grand Rapids

Media Training

Bellwether Public Relations

Conference Activities

Giving Back

2025 Service Project

This year's service project activities benefit the Kent County Community Action Agency and the Grand Rapids Pride Center

Brighten a Box

Join us in spreading joy through art! This year's service project invites you to decorate food distribution boxes for Kent County Community Action's food assistance programs. Add colorful drawings, uplifting messages, and fun stickers to help brighten the day of those receiving the boxes. A small gesture can make a big impact—let's get creative and show the community some love!

Essentials Pantry Donations

Help us support the Grand Rapids Pride Center by donating hygiene and household items for their Essentials Pantry. Your contributions—such as shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, and cleaning supplies—make a meaningful difference for community members in need. As a thank-you, anyone who brings a donation will be entered into a drawing to take home conference greenery. Every item helps promote dignity, health, and self-care—thank you for giving generously!

A list of items we are collecting for the Essentials Pantry is included on the last page.

We want to thank our generous Service Project Sponsors DNV and ICF for their support.

Silent and Live Auctions

The silent and live auctions are back at the conference! Proceeds from the auctions will go towards scholarships for CAA staff to participate in programming like Emerging Leaders, Leadership Development Institute, and the summer conference.

Silent Auction

The silent auction will open Tuesday, July 15, 2025, and will close on Wednesday July 16, 2025, at 3:30 pm.

Live Auction

The live auction will be held Wednesday evening July 16, 2025, after dinner and the LDI graduation. Big thanks to Joe Nolan, Executive Director of Chippewa Luce Mackinac Community Action Agency, for being our auctioneer and emcee.



Health and Wellness

Morning Yoga

Ease into your day with a calming session of gentle yoga designed to refresh your body and mind before a full day of learning. Join us from 6:30–7:00 AM on the patio for a peaceful outdoor practice led by instructors from Kula Yoga Grand Rapids. All experience levels are welcome!

Bring your yoga mat and a willingness to stretch and breathe deeply. Don't have a mat? No worries—we'll have a limited number available to borrow. (In case of rain, yoga will move indoors.)

Begin your morning grounded, centered, and ready to take on the day!

Sponsored by Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency

Evening Activities

Night on the Town

MCA Members will receive gift cards to enjoy dinner at a variety of local restaurants—an opportunity to explore Grand Rapids' vibrant food scene on us! After dinner, keep the connections going at the Patio Mixer back at the Sheraton, where you can unwind and network with fellow attendees in a relaxed, social setting.

Sponsored by Walker-Miller Energy Services

Wednesday Night Dinner Celebration

Join us Wednesday for an evening full of celebration and fun! We will kick off the evening with dinner and recognition of 50 years of Michigan Community Action. We will also celebrate the new graduates of the 2024-2025 Leadership Development Institute Cohort and Emerging Leaders. Finally, we will wrap the evening up with our live auction and dueling pianos entertainment. We look forward to celebrating all things Community Action with you!

Sponsored by Consumers Energy



Essentials Pantry – Most Needed Items

For all essential needs it is important to think of all genders & ethnically diverse options. We struggle with not getting enough femme-specific items. That being said, we do not want to have the opposite problem & not be receiving masc items also. A mix of full size & travel size is also helpful, but for most things full-size is very appreciated.

- Shampoo & conditioner, other hair care products
- Combs & brushes
- Lotions
- Deodorant (full size only)
- Toothpaste
- Razors & shaving creams/gels
- Sunblock (this is one thing it is great to have travel size with a key ring)
- Body wash
- Socks (not anklets)
- Underwear - variety of sizes & styles (femme & masc)
- Tucking panties - variety of styles & colors
- Make-up - any & all
- Tents
- Sleeping bags
- Tent repair kits
- Mini First Aid kits
- Tote bags (reusable bags), backpacks
- Travel sewing kits
- Menstrual products