ICAA Annual Conference

This year ICAA celebrated its 35th Anniversary during the Annual Conference, “Time for Change”, April 30-May 3, 2006. The conference began with the Families of Distinction Banquet which honored 19 families from around the state who have worked hard to attain self-sufficiency. A video that highlighted three of the families was shown as well as a powerpoint presentation. Each family had a formal portrait taken and the Springfield Southeast High School Sensations choir performed. The evening was memorable for all.

On Monday everyone got down to business with the Legislative Committee of the Whole meeting and the ICAA Membership Business meeting. The workshop tracks began and Richard Male, Development guru, gave an inspirational lunch speech. In the afternoon several attendees toured the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. In the evening the conference was moved to Lincoln Park for an outdoor picnic, volleyball, washers, bocce ball and board games. Luckily the rain held off and everyone had a good time.

Tuesday brought more workshops and business meetings. That evening everyone enjoyed the first annual Community Action Awards Gala. The atmosphere was festive with the jazz music of West 52nd Street. After dinner the Community Action Awards were presented. The Grey Warner Friend of Community Action Award was presented to Lauri Peterson of National City Bank for her help with the IDA Program. The Harry Ring Outstanding Service Award was presented to Gaila Barcus for her stewardship during CIEDC’s Executive Director transition. U.S. Representative Lane Evans and State Representative Marlow Colvin were the recipients of the Martin Luther King Award and the Vince Demuzio Legislator of the Year Award, respectively. Neither were able to attend the Gala but arrangements are being made to present the awards at an appropriate time. Also, during the Gala, the 2006-2007 ICAA Board was commissioned, the Agencies that participated in the first round of the IDA Program were honored and the 2005-2006 FCD Specialists received their diplomas in a graduation ceremony.

All in all, the 2006 Annual Conference provided learning, networking and fun activities for all in attendance. Thank you to the ICAA Membership for their support!
Statewide Dialogue on Poverty

On Wednesday, May 3 the ICAA, along with event co-sponsor Heartland Alliance, hosted a Statewide Poverty Dialogue at the Springfield Hilton. The Dialogue had the purpose of engaging representatives from the low-income, business and non-profit sectors, as well as elected officials, in a discussion on poverty; its goal was to develop state and national strategies aimed at the alleviation of poverty. Facilitator Michael Ayers of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, ICAA President and CEO Dalitso Sulamoyo, Director of the Mid-America Institute on Poverty Amy Rynell, and Social Worker and Counselor Vince Flammini motivated audience members and stressed the importance of the day’s activities.

The Dialogue focused on the four topic areas that were identified at the local Dialogue level as most pressing for impoverished Illinoisans: Jobs, Healthcare, Housing, and Transportation. Participants were asked to select one topic they would like to focus on for the day’s breakout sessions. Experts from organizations such as Chicago Jobs Council, Housing Action, Illinois Public Health Association, and Work, Welfare and Families were invited to participate in panel discussions during each breakout, which laid the groundwork for Dialogue participants to establish a variety of possible solutions for each topic. At the end of the day the four breakout sessions reconvened in a general session to report back to the group at large. The ICAA and the Heartland Alliance will use the solutions developed during the individual sessions to implement an action plan and policy agenda in the ongoing campaign to end poverty.

Rental Housing Support Program

Illinois’ new Rental Housing Support Program (RHSP) Act was established to help localities address the need for decent, affordable, and permanent rental housing. The Program allows the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) to make grants to local administering agencies in order to provide subsidies to landlords, which will enable landlords to charge rent that is affordable to very low and extremely low income households. Grants under the Program may also be made directly for long term operating support for the development of affordable rental housing.

The proposed rules for RHSP have been released in the April 14, 2006 issue of the Illinois Register. The first public notice period for the Rental Housing Support Program will expire on May 29, 2006.

Final rules are to be published by June 2006. The request for proposals will be issued in July. Program contract awards will be made in Spring 2007.


Agency Corner

If you have something you would like to report to the Membership please submit it to Sara Ratcliffe via email, sratcliffe@icaanet.org, or fax, 217-789-0139 by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the ICAA E-News.
FCD Specialist Summer Training Opportunities

Mark your calendars for FCD Specialist Training!

On June 6, 2006, FCD Specialist recertification training will be held in Springfield at the ICAA Training room. FCD Specialists certified between 1996 and 2001 are encouraged to attend the training. Hours for the recertification training are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and includes lunch. The cost is $125.00 per specialist.

Beginning on June 12 to June 15, FCD Specialist Summer session will begin at the ICAA Training room. The twelve days of training will focus on case management for community action customers utilizing a family strengths approach. The other summer session dates are August 1-4 and August 28 - 31. All trainings will begin at 9:00 a.m. The cost is $950 per candidate.

RCAP

RCAP will be conducting its first statewide training for small rural communities Wednesday, May 31 in Carlinville. Other training locations include Ottawa, Effingham and Carbondale. The focus of this event will be to discuss community needs for financing drinking water and wastewater projects.

The training includes a panel discussion on funding possibilities and will allow community leaders to meet directly representatives from USDA-RD Area Offices. Other invited speakers include representatives from the IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, IL EPA and IL Finance Authority.

As we prepare for the endeavor we will be inviting ICAA member agencies, within the area of the training locations, to join us. This would provide an opportunity for members to inform communities of the wonderful work and diverse services that your agency provides.

For additional information please do not hesitate to contact Tim Olmsted, John Bowersmith or Sarah Mueth at (217) 789-0125.

Locations for the RCAP Funding Roundtable Statewide Training:

May 31  Carlinville
Blackburn College
Olin/Alumni Science Bldg.
700 College Avenue
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

June 15  Ottawa
Ottawa Housing Authority
1810 Seneca
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

June 29  Effingham
Knights of Columbus
1501 W. Fayette Road
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

July 12  Carbondale
Location: TBA
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Update of the General Assembly Spring Session

Below is a brief summary of issues ICAA was involved with during the Spring GA Session. For more information you can visit the hot links provided or you can call John Colgan at ICAA.

SB 2579 (Collins): Creates an Illinois income tax check off whereby a taxpayer may make a contribution to the State LIHEAP Supplemental Fund. This bill passed both chambers and is on the Governor’s Desk. More details at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=2579&GAID=8&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=23498&SessionID=50&GA=94

HB 1744 (Colvin) became SB 2030 (Raoul): The content of this bill was added to SB 2030 and it passed both chambers. The bill provides that the State LIHEAP Supplemental Fund will receive $5.2 million from the General Revenue Fund. This amount is the equivalent to 50% of the average amount of Gas Revenue Tax paid by LIHEAP customers in State fiscal year 2005. More details at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=2030&GAID=8&DocTypeID=SB&LegId=20459&SessionID=50&GA=94

HB 4615 (Kelly): Creates the Safe Homes Act and provides that in an action by a landlord against a tenant for rent, the tenant has an affirmative defense and is not liable for rent if the tenant was under threat of domestic or sexual violence at the premises. It also provides that in an action by a landlord against a tenant to recover rent for breach of lease, a tenant has an affirmative defense and is not liable for rent if the tenant was a victim of sexual violence on the premises and the tenant vacated the premises because of the sexual violence. More details at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=4715&GAID=8&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=23126&SessionID=50&GA=94

SB 75 (Martinez): Creates the Comprehensive Housing Planning Act. Provides that the State of Illinois will prepare and be guided by an annual comprehensive housing plan, and addresses certain underserved populations, including households earning below 50% of the area median income, low-income senior citizens, and low-income persons with a disability. Sets forth items that must be included in the plan, including (i) the identification of all funding sources for which the State has administrative control that are available for housing construction, rehabilitation, preservation, operating or rental subsidies, and supportive services and (ii) goals for the number and types of housing units to be constructed, preserved, or rehabilitated each year for the specified underserved populations. It requires the Illinois Housing Development Authority, in consultation with the Interagency Subcommittee, to annually issue a joint Notice of Funding Availability to notify potential applicants of funding for specific programs expected to be available through State agencies to meet housing and supportive service needs identified in the Annual Comprehensive Housing Plan. This bill has been signed by the Governor. More details at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?GA=94&DocTypeID=SB&DocNum=75&GAID=8&SessionID=50&LegID=14710

HR 842 (Philos): This resolution (which means it does not have the force of law) urges the United States President and Congress to support the federal LIHEAP program and to provide an increase in funding for LIHEAP in order to keep pace with rising energy costs. More details at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=842&GAID=8&DocTypeID=HR&LegId=24234&SessionID=50&GA=94

Housing

Planning for September’s Eighth Annual HUD Peer-to-Peer Homeless Provider Conference continues. An advisory panel of service providers is working with ICAA staff and HUD officials. The current focus is on trying to narrow down the list of potential workshop topics from the extensive suggestions garnered from various sources, including attendees of the 2005 conference.

On other things HUD, ICAA handled the logistics for the annual HUD SuperNOFA Training at the Holiday Inn Express in Normal on April 6. Despite terrible weather in the morning, the meeting room was packed. ICAA is also handling the logistics for HUD’s Start-Up Training for new grantees on June 28. That training will be at Heartland Community College in Normal.

At the end of March, Al Timke attended a Board Retreat for Housing Action Illinois at Starved Rock State Park. Al has been on the Housing Action Board since 1989 and currently chairs the organization’s advocacy committee. Keith Brown from BCMW Community Services and Rob Schroeder of Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council also serve on the Housing Action Board and were in attendance at the retreat. Rob is Co-Chair of the Board along with Mike Wasserberg of South Suburban PADS in Homewood. Having co-chairs helps to ensure a Chicago Metro/Downstate balance.

And finally, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) has just released draft rules for the new Rental Housing Support Program. (See the Illinois Register at http://ilsos.net/departments/index/register/register_volume30_issue15.pdf, pages 65-94.) Since the issue is important to ICAA members, and since they are eligible to become Local Administering Agencies for the program, ICAA will be examining the rules and submitting comments to IHDA before the May 29 deadline. The final rules should be out by June. The RFP to select LAAs will be out by July. Awards will be made by the Spring of 2007.
Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) in Illinois

Main Goals

- Make home energy more affordable for low-income households
- Prevent shutoffs
- Promote regular bill paying among low-income customers
- Reduce or eliminate arrears
- Provide energy assistance to at least as many households as are served currently (assuming continued funding at current level)
- Promote energy efficiency and conservation

Key Components

All households enrolled in LIHEAP and served by regulated utilities will be required to subscribe to a levelized billing plan. State will make monthly payments throughout the year on behalf of these households.

The amounts of monthly LIHEAP payments will be equal to the difference between monthly energy service charges and a percentage of customers' monthly household incomes up to a predefined maximum amount per household.

A minimum payment level may be set. In some cases, this amount would exceed the amount that would be based on the percentage of the customers' monthly household incomes.

The percentage of income that LIHEAP payments will be based on, as well as maximum and minimum payment levels and LIHEAP enrollment levels, will be determined annually based on anticipated funding.

Utilities will write-off the portion of LIHEAP customers' arrears equivalent to the amount that would be expected to remain uncollectible under current business practices and LIHEAP rules. The remaining portion of customers' arrears will be paid by the state over time after customers' enrollment in LIHEAP.

Utilities will not disconnect service to any customers enrolled in LIHEAP.

Weatherization services will be targeted to LIHEAP households with higher than average energy usage.

Planning and Implementation

Launch PIPP as a pilot in multiple counties by September 2007 or earlier if possible. Program evaluation will start concurrently.

Rollout of PIPP throughout the state by September 2010 or earlier if possible.
ICAA Store

A. End Poverty Now T-Shirt - $12.00

B. “Time for Change” ICAA 35th Anniversary T-Shirt - $12.00

C. “Time for Change” Poster 11”x14” - $20.00

Order Form

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Address: ____________________________
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ICAA Store
3435 Liberty Drive
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Work, Fun and Family at the ICAA Annual Conference