

Lakewood Community Services Center Agency Narrative

1. History/Background

Lakewood Community Services Center (LCSC) was founded in 1982 by 12 Lakewood churches with the purpose to provide food assistance to Lakewood residents in need. For 27 years the organization maintained its presence out of storefront properties with space limitations that significantly limited the scope and quality of the organization's services. With the exception of the Executive Director, all staff positions were part-time. In 2009 LCSC relocated to its current 5,200 square foot space, which has had a positive impact on the quality and scope of the programs and services offered to the community. All LCSC staff has been hired since the relocation in an effort to provide appropriate and professional services to consumers. The LCSC professional staff is supported by 60+ volunteers who share our commitment to providing the highest quality service in the most respectful environment.

In March 2011, the Board of Directors unanimously approved changing the name of the organization to Lakewood Community Services Center (from Lakewood Christian Service Center) to better reflect our mission and the clients we serve. This was a significant move that had the support of the 12 founding churches and was done with input from the lead pastors at the four Lakewood churches that provide significant financial support to LCSC.

Food service has significantly expanded from our walk-in pantry to providing door-to-door delivery service to more than 500 seniors in subsidized senior housing in Lakewood and Rocky River and to securing healthier food options funded by United Way. We continue to partner with the Cleveland Clinic Western Region to offer healthy cooking classes to seniors in Lakewood's Westerly Apartments and in Fedor Manor. United Way provides the primary funding for our summer lunch and enrichment program for school-aged children who qualify for free/reduced meals during the school year, but who do not have access to meals during the summer months. This program has just completed its fourth year and will be fully described in the following section of this narrative.

The most significant evolution has come as a result of the 2011/2012 strategic planning process. At that time, LCSC determined that we were not delivering on our mission to move clients towards self sufficiency, but remained focused on meeting basic needs. Since May 2012, LCSC has implemented both programs that staff and board felt most critical if we were serious about helping to move clients towards becoming more self-reliant. In 2013 we launched a strategic partnership with Murtis Taylor Human Services System for the provision of onsite mental health assistance and in 2014 we launched the partnership with Towards Employment, Inc. which resulted in the establishment of the *Networks* Job Resource Center at LCSC. After three years, we made the decision to terminate our relationship with Towards Employment and have now entered an agreement with The Centers El Barrio Workforce Program for the launch of HireLocal Lakewood.

2. Purpose/Mission

Lakewood Community Services Center, with its partners, serves the community by providing basic needs assistance and personalized resource and referral services with the goal to empower each individual to move toward greater self sufficiency.

3. Geographic Service Area

LCSC provides emergency food assistance to residents of Lakewood, Rocky River and Westlake per our contract with the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland; United Way-funded emergency food delivery to seniors in senior housing is provided to residents in Lakewood's Westerly Apartments, the South Westerly, Fedor Manor and Lake Shore Towers and to residents in Pinzone Towers in Rocky River. There is no subsidized senior apartment building in Westlake. The Summer Lunch and Enrichment Program serves Lakewood school students in grades K-5. Homelessness Prevention and Short-Term Temporary Shelter is provided to residents of Lakewood only. Case management is provided to any walk in or referred client (services to Lakewood residents are charged to CDBG program funding; other clients are supported by foundation/donor funding). Onsite mental health services are provided to any LCSC client and to clients referred by community partner agencies. HireLocal Lakewood services are available to any referred client (again, CDBG support is used for low/low-mod Lakewood residents only; all other clients are supported by foundation/donor funding).

4. Target Population

Emergency food is provided to individuals who meet the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services income guidelines. The Summer Lunch and Enrichment Program targets those children whose households qualify for free or reduced cost meals during the school year. Homelessness Prevention services are available to Lakewood residents at imminent risk of losing their housing and who meet HUD's Extremely Low income guidelines and who have enough income to become stable after one-time support in the form of cash assistance for rent/utilities. Short-term temporary shelter services are provided to Lakewood households who are literally homeless, who meet HUD's Extremely Low income guidelines and who can become stable after a relatively short stay. Please note that we have extended the former limit of a 30-day stay in Breathing Room as re-housing individuals with court-ordered evictions in Lakewood has become exponentially more difficult. CDBG-funded services target low/moderate income Lakewood residents. Mental/behavioral health services are available to any client referred for assistance. HireLocal Lakewood serves Lakewood residents who meet HUD's income guidelines (those services funded by CDBG; with private foundation/donor funding, El Barrio/HireLocal Lakewood can provide services to any referred client).

5. Services Provided

Food Service

LCSC is the third largest food pantry in the Greater Cleveland Hunger Network and is the designated hunger center serving Lakewood, Rocky River and Westlake. Emergency food service is offered to income-qualified Lakewood individuals as well as to residents of Rocky River and Westlake who come to the Center for food. In FY 2017 LCSC provided emergency food to 6,598 *unduplicated* Lakewood individuals (this represents 94% of the total number of clients who presented for assistance) who came into the Center and to 500 seniors who took advantage of door-to-door delivery at four senior buildings in Lakewood and one in Rocky River. Each *unduplicated* walk-in client averaged four visits, which equaled 26,392 food service "events" at the Center; each of the seniors received an average 10 deliveries during the year, which added an additional 5,000 "events" and brought the total FY 2017 food service "events" to 31,392. With careful attention to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's on-line ordering process, LCSC's pantry manager is able to take full advantage of the no charge USDA, Ohio Food Program and Harvest for Hunger product to secure at least 50% of the total food ordered every week for free. In 2017 LCSC received \$57,829 in county credit at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, which made the average cost per service "event" (12 meals) just \$1.84.

Homelessness Prevention

As sub-recipients of the City of Lakewood's HUD funding for extremely low income residents, LCSC offers homelessness prevention in the form of case management and rent and/or utility assistance to qualified Lakewood households through the Emergency Solutions Grant program. Potential recipients of this assistance must meet stringent income guidelines that place them at or below the Area Median Income (AMI) level for our area, which is only \$14,250 per year for a household of one. Clients also must meet multiple barriers to housing stability in order to be served, which results in the need for intensive case management for all applicants and recipients. In FY 2017, LCSC provided homelessness prevention cash assistance in the amount of \$81,420 to 332 Lakewood individuals in 140 household families. It should be noted that YTD August, \$73,753 in homelessness prevention assistance has been approved for 214 individuals. While the number of individuals served each month remains the same year-over-year, there has been a 36% increase in the amount of cash assistance provided each month. Because it is almost impossible for a family/individual with a court-ordered eviction to relocate in Lakewood, we no longer have the option of moving a family and paying first month's rent and security deposit for a new unit. We now have to negotiate with the current landlord to pay rent in arrears so that the eviction can be cancelled and the tenants can remain in their units. This almost always requires more ESG cash assistance.

Individuals/households seeking utility assistance have to apply for the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) before they qualify for utility cash assistance and families must apply for PRC (Prevention, Retention & Contingency) funding through ODJFS before they are eligible for ESG funds. This is a labor-intensive activity that has to be coordinated with each family's ODJFS case worker; takes six weeks and caps at \$750/household. Many of our client families are unaware of this program and need help in accessing the service and in many cases, assistance in getting the ODJFS case manager involved at all.

Breathing Room

Breathing Room provides very short term temporary housing in a two-bedroom apartment located above the LCSC office and pantry. Qualified program participants (who must be Lakewood residents) work closely with LCSC case managers and human service providers to address the issues that resulted in loss of housing and to access assistance in critical areas including education and employment, health and legal services, mental health and chemical dependency services and access to mainstream benefits. In 2017 and even more significantly YTD 2018, moving literally homeless families into new housing in Lakewood has become incredibly difficult as more and more landlords refuse to take any tenant who has a court-ordered eviction. We have established relationships with some Lakewood landlords who are willing to work with us, but the supply of available apartments continues to shrink. Securing housing has become much more time-consuming and the process is often lengthy, which means families can be residents in Breathing Room for several months. As members of the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care, LCSC adheres to the policy of providing shelter priority to families. In 2017 27 individuals in 9 families resided in Breathing Room and all but one exited to affordable permanent housing. This family had an EDEN voucher and we were unable to identify a Lakewood landlord who would accept it

Access to Mental Health Services

In the first-ever local collaboration of its kind, Murtis Taylor Human Services System (MTHSS) staff is on site daily at LCSC to offer free mental/behavioral health services to LCSC clients. This is a groundbreaking partnership that was made possible in Year 1 by funding from Community West Foundation. It provides clients with access to the care they need in a familiar and local setting - one that has little or none of the stigma attached to presenting at a mental health facility. LCSC case manager and the MTHSS team work closely together to ensure that ongoing supports are maintained for this fragile population. One hundred and fifty (150) individuals have received or are currently receiving ongoing MTHSS services. Because Murtis Taylor can bill Medicaid for their services, this program is and has been self sustaining for the past four years. Our onsite counselor and case managers continue to develop very successful relationships with LCSC clients referred to them for services. Of all our partnerships, this collaboration with Murtis Taylor is a model.

Our staffs work together as a true team; management at both LCSC and MTHHS communicate openly and often and share goals for our clients and for the program; our organizations are very similar in our community-based approach to service delivery and we both strive to work efficiently and with very low overhead. Murtis Taylor has plans to add an additional part-time case manager at LCSC to handle the client caseload.

HireLocal Lakewood

HireLocal Lakewood is a partnership with The Centers El Barrio Workforce program that will replicate their successful HireLocal Detroit Shoreway initiative here in Lakewood. HireLocal Lakewood will offer job seekers actual connections to employment and training. LCSC will be the local business community employment site where Lakewood businesses can share their workforce needs, hold job fairs and other job-matching activities. The program's objectives are to decrease unemployment, eliminate transportation as a barrier to employment and to impact local economic development by bringing livable wages to Lakewood neighborhoods and making hiring processes easier to local businesses. According to a 2015 report by the Brookings Institution, "proximity to jobs can affect the employment outcomes of residents. People who live closer to jobs are more likely to work. They also face shorter job searches and spells of joblessness...In order to grow economies in ways that promote opportunity and upward mobility for all residents, findings point to the need for more integrated and collaborative regional strategies around economic development, housing, transportation, and workforce decisions that take job proximity into account."

A full-time Workforce Coordinator (and Lakewood resident) has been hired by The Centers El Barrio; program branding has been designed and approved by both agencies; building renovation has been completed by The Centers El Barrio; outdoor signage has been installed; marketing/recruiting materials have been designed/printed in anticipation of an October soft opening.

Case Management

We continue to provide case management services to approximately 25% of the food client population each month. This percentage does not include one-time referrals to community and mainstream benefits, but only reflects ongoing services to individuals and families. Thirty percent (30%) of our clients are single female heads of household who often require more lengthy and intensive support. In 2017 we provided ongoing case management to 1,603 Lakewood individuals and are on track to exceed that number by approximately 200 individuals in 2018 if the YTD monthly numbers continue through the remaining four months, which has historically been the case. Clients are presenting with increasingly complex issues, many due to housing insecurity as a result of management companies continuing to purchase Lakewood apartment buildings that have up until recently held monthly rents at an affordable level. A monthly rent increase of \$200 - \$250 inevitably results in a need to relocate and often with only one or two month's notice. We are fortunate that some of the burden for case management can be managed by our Murtis Taylor partners, but only if a client presents with a mental health diagnosis. We will be hiring a second full-time case manager in December 2018, which we feel confident will improve client outcomes; it will also require securing additional salary support.

Summer Lunch and Enrichment Program

LCSC piloted participation in this federally-funded program (managed locally by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank) in summer 2014. Thirty Lakewood school-aged kids who qualify for free/reduced meals during the school year participated in the free lunch program to which LCSC added very limited enrichment activities. In year two, funding from United Way, the Presidential Fund at Community West Foundation and the Jennifer Fund at Community West Foundation allowed LCSC to offer much healthier lunches than during our first year, and provided us with the funds to hire two part-time program coordinators. With over 100 kids left on the waiting list, we were challenged to provide this program to a larger number of kids without incurring significant additional costs. The solution going forward was to offer the program in two four-week sessions instead of one seven-week session, which allowed 80 Lakewood kids in grades K-5 to participate.

Grace Lutheran Church provides the program's home base free of charge and with four program coordinators and the incredible support from the community, we continue to offer this successful summer program to low income Lakewood students. Free programming is offered by the Lakewood Public Library, the City of Lakewood Recreation Department (swimming lessons), the Rocky River Nature Center and Mahall's 20 Lanes. We are able to offer summer employment to five Lakewood High School students through Youth Opportunities Unlimited's summer work program for at-risk youth.

Community Garden

We have completely handed over the management of the 5,000 square foot community garden to the client gardeners, which was our goal when we introduced this program. We have formalized an application process to help select clients who are willing and able to maintain their garden plots through the growing season and have secured volunteers from St. Edward High School and the Lakewood Anglican Church to help plant, water, and weed. We are currently in our eighth season and anticipate that over 2,000 pounds of produce will be donated to the Center after the client gardeners take what they need for their own families.

Onsite Programs & Services

LCSC offers client services and supports in collaboration with community partners: 1. An LCSC volunteer is on site every week to assist clients complete and submit food stamp applications directly to the OWF office at W. 98th and Lorain; and 2. An attorney from the Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistance Program is on site one evening each month to provide free legal counsel for civil matters;

6. Number & Demographic Profile of Clients Served (FY17)

Please note that the numbers below represent Lakewood clients only, which equals 94% of the total number of clients served through LCSC programs and services. Programs have different reporting requirements. CDBG-funded programs receive additional support from foundations/United Way/LCSC donors.

CDBG-Funded Programs

1. Pantry

Total Unduplicated: 6,598; Female heads of household: 1,980; 62+: 1,332; Low/Mod income: 93; Low income: 433; Extremely low income: 6,072

2. Case Management

Total Unduplicated: 1,603; Female heads of household: 577; 62+:212; Low/Mod income: 3; Low income: 132; Extremely low income: 1,468

3. Employment (Jan – Oct; part-time Mar - Oct)

Total Unduplicated: 92 Female heads of household: 14; 62+: 1; Low/Mod income: 0; Low income: 7; Extremely low income: 85

ESG-Funded Programs

1. Shelter Services – Breathing Room (please note: Shelter closed for renovations Sept & Oct 2018)

Total Unduplicated (applied): 58; Total Unduplicated (stayed) 27; Adults: 12; Children: 15; Extremely low income: 27; Disabled: 4; Victims of Domestic Violence: 4; 62+: 2

2. Homelessness Prevention

Total Unduplicated (applied): 377; Total Unduplicated (received cash assistance); 332; Adults: 222; Children: 110; Disabled: 40; Victims of Domestic Violence: 40; 62+: 24; Extremely low income: 332

Programs funded by Private Foundations/United Way of Greater Cleveland/Individual Donors

1. Mental/Behavioral Health Services

Total Unduplicated: 76; Female heads of household: 10; 62+: 4; Low/Mod income: 4; Low income: 9; Extremely low income: 63

2. Summer Lunch and Enrichment Program

Total Unduplicated: 80; Low/Mod income: 6; Low income: 22; Extremely low income: 52

3. Senior Delivery – United Way

Total Unduplicated: 499; Low/Mod income: 0; Low income: 40; Extremely low income: 459

7. Organizational Qualifications To Implement The Proposed Project

Leadership

LCSC is headed by an Executive Director who has 18 years of management experience in the nonprofit environment with a focus in program management, marketing and fundraising. The ED was recruited in 2008 to realign staff with mission, raise performance outcomes, public awareness and funding support for this 36-year-old organization. In the 10 years she has held the position there have been very significant improvements to the programs and services, to the financial health of the organization and to its infrastructure. These improvements include, but are not limited to: relocating the center in 2009; continuing to increase the pass through HUD funding from the City of Lakewood; growing foundation funding; creating a sophisticated proprietary client database and moving to paperless client record keeping; recruiting and retaining new staff; leading the name change, board development (with consultant David Kantor) and strategic planning processes; securing first time United Way funding and continuing to be funded for seven years in the face of UW's new impact focus areas; opening a short-term temporary shelter; creating collaborations with Murtis Taylor Human Services System and with Towards Employment and with The Centers El Barrio; growing and maintaining community partnerships. The full-time Executive Director has overall program, staff and financial oversight and all reporting responsibility to the Federal Government, the City of Lakewood, Cuyahoga County, United Way and to funders and donors. The ED is currently working with the Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services to implement Bowman Systems' Self Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix Model as part of ServicePoint v5. This will allow LCSC to measure client outcomes for six of the 17 measurements available in the matrix. (Paper copy available if requested)

Staff and Volunteers

- LCSC currently employs a full-time case manager who is an LSW and a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor II with over 20 years experience working with individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with mental health and chemical dependency issues. He manages walk-in clients as well as referrals to Murtis Taylor and HireLocal Lakewood. A second LSW will join the staff in December, 2018 and will share the management of walk-ins and referrals and will also provide support to client families residing in Breathing Room, work to identify and secure housing upon exiting shelter and provide follow-up case management to these fragile families.
- LCSC employs a part-time (31 hours/week) Operations Manager with specific responsibility for the food service program. He is supported by 40 regularly scheduled volunteers for on-site client intake and party delivery, a minimum of 25 additional monthly volunteers for the United Way-funded delivery to seniors in senior housing and another 20 volunteers for the five seasonal Farmers Markets held on site at LCSC during the growing season.

- A part-time Office Manager is responsible for collecting and reporting client data to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland and to United Way from the Access database; managing the donor database and for all clerical needs of the organization and its staff.
- The part-time Volunteer Coordinator (open position) works successfully with Business Volunteers Unlimited (BVU), Greater Cleveland Volunteers, United Way, the City of Lakewood, local high schools and community groups to recruit new volunteers as well as working to train and retain existing volunteers.
- LCSC retains a local CPA firm, Laskey Costello, in the role of Finance Consultants. Laskey Costello works closely with the Board of Trustees Treasurer for P&L reporting, investment oversight and the annual audit.

8. Capacity to Serve Non-English-Speaking Persons

LCSC works closely with Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services to provide telephone translation services for clients who need assistance. Telephone translations services are available through US Together, an organization formed to respond to the needs of the refugees and immigrants in Ohio. International Services Center provides initial translation services for refugees who are working with LCSC’s employment program, but their assistance is less than consistent. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank has updated the Spanish and Somali translation of the “Federal & State Funded Food Programs Eligibility to Take Food Home” form and three new translations have recently become available: Chinese, Russian, and Turkish. LCSC translated our grievance policy and food service documents into Spanish and Arabic years ago.

9. Does your organization maintain the following?

- Personnel Policy Manual* Yes
- Affirmative Action Policy* Yes
- Staff Grievance Procedures* Yes

10. Does your facility comply with ADA accessibility requirements? Yes

11. Agency Budget

FY18 Operating Expenditures

Expenditure Type	Amount	% Budget
Salaries & Fringe Benefits (includes fees to Job Program outside staff)	\$360,739	47.8%
Operating Costs	62,600	8.3
Capital Costs	0	0
Indirect Costs	57,150	7.6
Other: Direct Client Assistance	273,556	36.3
Other: Fundraising/PR/Programs		
Total Annual Budget	\$754,045	100%

Top (3) FY18 Revenue Sources

Source	Amount	% Budget
HUD Pass-through Funding from City of Lakewood	\$289,388	38.4%
Private Foundations	156,000	20.7
Donations	58,700	7.8
Total	\$504,088	66.9%