

VALLEY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL



2018 PROGRAM GUIDE

The Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. is dedicated to eliminating poverty by providing the opportunity for our low and moderate income neighbors, families, and friends in the greater Hampden County area to achieve greater independence and a higher quality of life.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ADULT EDUCATION:

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION	PAGE 4
BRIDGE TO COLLEGE AND CAREERS	PAGE 5
CITIZENSHIP	PAGE 6
ENGLISH SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)	PAGE 7
DISTANCE LEARNING	PAGE 8
ESOL AND FAMILY LITERACY	PAGE 9
WIOA OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAM	PAGE 10

COLLEGE ACCESS AND CAREER PATHWAYS:

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER (EOC)	PAGE 11
GEAR UP	PAGE 12
PRESCHOOL ENRICHMENT TEAM (PET)	PAGE 13

EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE:

CENTER BASED CHILD CARE	PAGE 14
FAMILY BASED CHILD CARE	PAGE 16
AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS	PAGE 18
PRESCHOOL EXPANSION GRANT	PAGE 20

ENERGY ASSISTANCE:

FUEL ASSISTANCE (LIHEAP)	PAGE 21
GREENING THE GATEWAY CITIES (GTGC)	PAGE 22
HEATING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE RETROFIT TASK WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEARTWAP)	PAGE 23
UNITED WAY GRANTS (BASIC NEEDS AND FEMA)	PAGE 24

HOUSING:

HOUSING MANAGEMENT	PAGE 25
--------------------	---------



The Business of Opportunity Building

MAIN STREET SHELTER	PAGE 26
SCATTERED SITE FAMILY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	PAGE 27
MONEY MANAGEMENT:	
VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX PROGRAM (VITA)	PAGE 23
NUTRITION:	
CHICOPEE FARMERS' MARKET	PAGE 28
GOOD FOOD FOR GREAT FAMILIES	PAGE 30
SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM	PAGE 31
WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)	PAGE 32
SENIOR SERVICES:	
SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM	PAGE 33
YOUTH SERVICES:	
CABOT MANOR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	PAGE 34
CABOT MANOR SUMMER CAMP	PAGE 35
CABOT MANOR SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	PAGE 36
REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD YOUTH WORKS	PAGE 37
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:	
AGENCY ORGANIZATION CHART	PAGE 38
AGENCY PROGRAMS PHONE NUMBERS	PAGE 39



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Adult Basic Education

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik

Director of Adult Education

jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: Free classes designed to help participants to acquire the skills and credentials they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency and engage meaningfully in their communities in their roles as workers, parents, and community members.

Adult Basic Education Classes, including preparation to earn the high school equivalency credential by taking the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) or GED test. Classes are designed to improve skills in reading, writing, math, and digital literacy. There are three levels of adult basic education classes, from beginning literacy through high school equivalency preparation. These classes meet three to four mornings per week. Upon completions, the Education and Career Advisor helps students register for the test, locate a test center, and identify their next steps to employment, college or vocational training.

Classes include:

- One-on-one tutoring support offered by volunteers.
- Digital literacy integrated into all classes.
- Advising and one-on-one assistance in resume development, interviewing, and online job searching.
- Advising to remove barriers to retention and to assist with transition to college, training or employment.
- Referral to community resources.

Eligibility: The Adult Basic Education Program eligibility guidelines are as follows:

- Education programs are offered for people 16 years of age and older who are not enrolled in high school.
- Students of all income levels are welcomed.

Service Area: The Adult Basic Education Program is open to any resident of Massachusetts no matter their income. A percentage of seats is reserved for Chicopee residents.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Bridge to College and Careers

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik
Director of Adult Education
jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: This class meets three days per week for 14-16 weeks each fall and spring. The focus is on improving students' math and writing skills to a level that will enable them to enroll in and succeed in college, vocational training, or on the job. One-to-one advising is offered to help students to identify a career path that will ultimately lead them to economic self-sufficiency.

Classes include:

- One-on-one tutoring support offered by volunteers.
- Digital literacy integrated into all classes.
- One-on-one assistance in college or training application, resume development, interviewing, and online job searching.
- Advising to remove barriers to retention and to assist with transition to college, training, or employment.
- Referral to community resources.

Eligibility: The Bridge to College and Careers class enrollment guidelines are as follows:

- Are a high school or high school equivalency graduate.
- Scoring at or below grade level equivalent 10.9 as measured by assessment
- Have a goal of entering college, vocational training or employment
- Students of all income levels are welcomed.

Service Area: This program is open to any resident of Massachusetts no matter their income. A percentage of seats is reserved for Chicopee residents.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Citizenship

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik
Director of Adult Education
jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: Working together with Jewish Family Services of Western MA, VOC offers two ten-week citizenship classes that meet one evening per week. During these classes, students will practice answering the oral questions of the N-400 application form to gain confidence in their interview skills. The classes will cover essential topics on the one hundred (100) USCIS civics study questions. Classroom topics include an overview of U.S. history, geography, civics, and government. In addition, students will practice pronunciation, reading aloud, writing, dictation, and orally answering the civics questions. The textbook for the class is provided free of charge to students. Classroom activities include interactive games and activities as well as traditional study. Students are referred to area resources for help answering specific questions about their individual situations and filling out the N-400.

Eligibility: Anyone is eligible.

Service Area: This program is open to any resident of Massachusetts no matter their income. A percentage of seats is reserved for Chicopee residents.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik
Director of Adult Education
jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: Classes are designed to help students to understand, speak, read and write in English. There are four levels of class. Classes meet either Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday.

Classes include:

- One-on-one tutoring support offered by volunteers.
- Digital literacy integrated into all classes.
- Workshops and one-on-one assistance in resume development, interviewing, and online job searching.
- Counseling to remove barriers to retention and to assist with transition to college or employment.
- Referral to community resources.

Eligibility: The Adult Basic Education Program eligibility guidelines are as follows:

- Education programs are offered for people 16 years of age and older who are not enrolled in high school.
- Students of all income levels are welcomed.

Service Area: The Adult Basic Education Program is open to any resident of Massachusetts no matter their income. A percentage of seats is reserved for Chicopee residents.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Distance Learning

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik
Director of Adult Education
jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: Designed for English for Speakers of Other Languages students who are unable to attend regular classes due to their work schedule, family obligations or other reasons. Students meet with the Distance Learning Coach for intake and assessment to determine their eligibility for services

Classes include:

- Eligible students are referred to a hub where a teacher communicates with them online
- Students work at their own pace on software designed to help them improve their understanding, speaking, reading and writing in English
- Students are supported online by the teacher and the coach
- Occasional in-person meetings with the coach for assessment and advising

Eligibility: The Adult Basic Education Program eligibility guidelines are as follows:

- Education programs are offered for people 16 years of age and older who are not enrolled in high school.
- Students of all income levels are welcomed.

Service Area: The Adult Basic Education Program is open to any resident of Massachusetts no matter their income. A percentage of seats is reserved for Chicopee residents.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: ESOL and Family Literacy

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik
Director of Adult Education
jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: Morgan School and Sullivan in Holyoke

Description: This program is designed to assist the parents of children who attend either Morgan or Sullivan School to improve their English while their children are in school. In addition to learning English, the participants of this program will learn how to support their children's education, including how to help them improve their reading and writing and to support them with their homework.

Eligibility: Parents/guardians of the children who attend either Morgan School or Sullivan School in Holyoke. Enrollment priority will be for those who have children in VOC's PEG (Preschool Expansion Grant) program.

Service Area: Holyoke



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: WIOA Out of School Youth

Contact Information:

Judith Kocik

Director of Adult Education

jkocik@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: This program is designed to help participants earn their high school equivalency while also increasing their workforce readiness. This program provides adult education classes four times per week, case management services for every student, teaches students the skills they need for employment and independent living, provides stipends for the students while they are in class and offers paid, subsidized work experiences in the Holyoke/Chicopee area.

Eligibility: Participants of this program need to meet the following requirements:

- 16-24 years old
- Cannot have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Are Chicopee or Holyoke residents

Service Area: This program is for residents of Chicopee and Holyoke



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)

Contact Information:

Kristen Wing

Director of College and Career Readiness

kwing@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue 3rd Floor Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) is a federally funded TRIO program that helps adults and high school seniors begin or continue their postsecondary education. EOC offers educational access services to low-income individuals and potential college students. While the majority of EOC's clients seek financial aid assistance, other services including academic and career advising, college searches, admissions application assistance, student loan counseling and referrals to additional supportive services are available to participants.

EOC services focus primarily on individuals who are low-income and are seeking more education and training. EOC staff members provide professional assistance tailored to individual needs and circumstances.

An Educational Opportunity Center can help participants:

- * Find and apply for student financial aid study
- * Explore career options and programs of
- * Choose a post-secondary institution that is a good financial fit
- * Find ways to overcome barriers to education
- * Solve problems with student loans

Eligibility: Primarily, but not restricted to, low-income adults who are potential first generation college students or students with a limited income (150% of federal poverty levels).

Service Area: Can serve any resident of Massachusetts



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: GEAR UP

Contact Information:

Hillisa Byer
GEAR UP Regional Program Coordinator
hbyer@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a program of the Valley Opportunity Council, Inc., administered in cooperation with Massachusetts Education and Career Opportunities, Inc. (MassEdCo), the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, and funded by the US Department of Education.

Approximately 2,000 students in grades 8-12 are served at six participating sites in Springfield and Holyoke, MA. At each site, GEAR UP Advisors/Coordinators counsel middle and high school students on the importance of higher education while advising them to have high expectations, study hard, stay in school, and take the correct courses to go on to college.

GEAR UP offers a wide range of services including: in or after-school tutoring, college and educational field trips, attendance and retention programs, faculty support/professional development, parent/guardian financial literacy workshops, MCAS, SAT and ACT preparation, assistance with the entire college and financial aid processes, career assessment, 9th grade transition programs, mentoring programs, and one-on-one advising.

All GEAR UP students are also eligible for a scholarship.

Eligibility: GEAR UP uses both a cohort and priority model. Due to grant status, we are currently serve students in grades 9-12 only. We anticipate welcoming a new 7th grade cohort in 2018-2019. GEAR UP advisors provide services to the cohort students throughout middle school and into high school, as long as they attend a GEAR UP high school. For the priority model, students at a GEAR UP high school who meet the income based eligibility requirements can enroll at any point prior to their senior year. Beginning with the senior class of 2013, GEAR UP advisors will also follow the students into their first year of college.

Service Area: GEAR UP can only serve students attending participating GEAR UP schools in Springfield and Holyoke.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Preschool Enrichment Team

Contact Information:

Kimm Quinlan

Program Coordinator

kquinlan@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: Preschool Enrichment Team (PET) is funded by the Department of Early Education and Care to be the lead agent for the Educator and Provider Support (EPS) grant of Western Massachusetts. PET has roots (over 40 years) in the field of early childhood education including out of school time, family child care, and training for educators and providers across the mixed delivery system.

What does PET offer?

- Academic and Career Planning
- Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Scholarship Program
- EEC Core Competency Development, CEU and College Courses
- Maintaining or Achieving NAEYC or NAFCC Accreditation
- Upward Movement on Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- Leadership Development
- Child Development Associates credential (CDA) classes
- Assistance for directors in developing individual professional development plans for their staff
- Coaching and Mentoring to support all of the above

Eligibility: You may qualify for services PET provides if you are an early childhood or out of school time provider working in Western Massachusetts.

Service Area: Preschool Enrichment Team serves educators and providers in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Center Based Child Care

Contact Information:

Jennifer Malone
Director of Early Education and Care
jmalone@valleyopp.com

Location: 300 High Street 3rd Floor, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-552-1559

Description:

What does Center Based Child Care offer?

- An Early Education Program for children ages 12 months through 12 years.
- Classrooms staffed by qualified Early Education Teachers.
- A Center Director who coordinates all activities and is available to help families receive full benefit of the program and access to other VOC services.

What can you expect at your child's center?

- Each center provides a full schedule of age appropriate activities that promotes child development and learning.
- Activities include pre-kindergarten literacy, the arts, science, math, language development, large motor development, and social development.
- Classroom teachers are warm, caring, and devoted to the education and development of each child.
- Each classroom has planned activities, using The Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD.
- Nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks are served each day.
- Parents are welcome to visit and encouraged to participate in center activities.

Most centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Eligibility for Tuition Assistance:

- In order to be eligible for Center Based Child Care tuition assistance, a participant must meet one of the following qualifications:
- Working 30+ hours
- Attending school part-time (6 credits) and working part-time (total school and work time must add up to at least 30 hours)
- Parent attending postsecondary education full time, or a full-time training program (12 credits)
- Parent attending high school
- Parent of a child with a documented special need Parent who is incapacitated
- Grandparent or foster parent who has custody of a child and is seeking to enroll her/him
- New England Farm Workers' Council vouchers and DCF referrals accepted

Along with meeting a service need, the family income can't be more than 50% of State Median Income in order to qualify for tuition assistance.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Transportation:

Participants may be eligible to receive transportation services if they:

- Live more than one half (1/2) mile from the program;
- Do not have access to a vehicle;
- Do not have access to public transportation;
- Have a verified and documented disability/special need that prevents them from transporting their child(ren);
- Have a work schedule that prevents them from transporting their child(ren) to or from care.

Locations:

Beaudoin Village Early Education & Child Care Center
16 Barret Avenue
Holyoke, MA 01040
413-420-0107

Cabot Manor Early Education & Child Care Center
106 Stonina Drive
Chicopee, MA 01013
413-594-3230

Churchill Homes Early Education & Child Care Center
334 Elm Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
413-534-2480

Montgomery Street Early Education & Child Care Center
374 Montgomery Street
Chicopee, MA 01020

Mt. Carmel Early Education and Child Care Center
35 Mt. Carmel Avenue
Chicopee, MA 01013
413-533-6407

Service Area:

The Center Based Child Care Program can serve any parent in Massachusetts who has a service need, is income eligible, and wants their child to attend one of our centers located in Chicopee or Holyoke. Parents who wish to pay privately, without a subsidy, are also welcome to participate.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Family Based Child Care

Contact Information:

Jennifer Malone
Director of Early Education and Care
jmalone@valleyopp.com

Location: 300 High Street, 3rd Floor, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-552-1559

Description:

Family Child Care is a community based network of Family Child Care educators who offer early education and care to children in a home setting. Educators are licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care, and offer early care and education for children from infancy to school age. Family Child Care is currently available in Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield, West Springfield, Westfield, Agawam, Feeding Hills, South Hadley and Wilbraham.

Eligibility:

In order to be eligible for Family Child Care tuition assistance, a participant must be:

- Working 30 + hours
- Going to school full-time (12 credits)
- Attending school part-time (6 credits) and working part-time (hours must add up to at least 25 hours)
- Enrolled in a full-time training program
- The parent of a child with a documented special need
- A parent who is incapacitated
- A grandparent or guardian
- New England Farm Workers' Council vouchers and DCF referrals accepted

Along with meeting a service need, the family income can't be more than 50% of State Median Income in order to qualify for tuition assistance.

Transportation:

Participants may be eligible to receive transportation services if they:

- Live more than one half (1/2) mile from the program;
- Do not have access to a vehicle;
- Do not have access to public transportation;
- Have a verified and documented disability/special need that prevents them from transporting their child(ren);
- Have a work schedule that prevents them from transporting their child(ren) to or from care.
-



The Business of Opportunity Building

Service Area:

The Family Based Child Care Program can serve any parent in Massachusetts who has a child care voucher. Parents who are going to pay out of pocket are also able to participate.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: After School & Summer Programs

Contact Information:

Jennifer Malone
Director of Early Education and Care
jmalone@valleyopp.com

Location:

Mt. Carmel Center: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 1st floor, Chicopee, MA 01013, 413-552-1559
Montgomery Street Center: 374 Montgomery Street, Chicopee, MA 01020, 413-552-1559

Description:

The Mt. Carmel After School Program offers after school activities to children ages 5 to 12. However, if a child is 5 years old, they must be in Kindergarten in order to be eligible for the after school program.

What does the after school program offer?

- Children will receive help with homework, which helps them increase academically for success in school.
- Organized arts and crafts activities are offered to maximize the child's creativity.
- We offer activities such as foosball, board games, sports and team oriented games to help the children learn team work and develop social skills.

Eligibility:

In order to be eligible for After School Program tuition assistance, a participant must be:

- Working 30 + hours.
- Going to school full-time (12 credits).
- Attending school part-time (6 credits) and work part-time, hours must add up to at least 30 hours.
- Enrolled in a full-time training program.
- The parent of a child with a documented special need.
- A parent who is incapacitated.
- A grandparent or guardian, 65 years old and retired.
- The program accepts vouchers from New England Farm Workers' Council and private pay.

Along with meeting a service need, the family income can't be more than 50% of State Median Income in order to qualify for tuition assistance.

Transportation:

Transportation is provided during the school year as follows:

- Belcher, Barry and Streiber will be transported to: Montgomery Street After School Program
- Bowie, Stefanik and Fairview will be transported to: Mt Carmel After School Program



The Business of Opportunity Building

Service Area:

The Mt. Carmel After-School Program can serve any parent from the state that has a child care voucher and want their child to attend the program which is located in Chicopee. Parents who are going to pay out of pocket are also able to participate.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG)

Contact Info:

Jennifer Malone
Director of Early Education and Care
jmalone@valleyopp.com

Location: 300 High St. 3rd floor, Holyoke, Ma 01040, 413-552-1559

Description:

PEG offers full day/full year high-quality pre-k classrooms located in two of the Holyoke Public Schools: Morgan School and Sullivan School. Our pre-k programs prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. PEG supports strong family engagement through outreach, access and coordination of comprehensive services, assuring that young children's development is supported and advanced in their home environments, as well as in the pre-k setting. PEG builds on the work of the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI) which is a city-wide effort that brings teachers, parents and community partners together to dramatically improve the reading proficiency of our youngest readers.

Eligibility:

In order to be eligible for a PEG pre-k program, families must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Children must be 4 years old by September 1st.
- This must be their first pre-k experience. They cannot have any prior preschool or childcare experience.
- Families must be under 200% of the poverty level.

Service Area:

PEG services families living in Holyoke.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP)

Contact Information:

Faith Lafayette

Director of Energy Programs

flafayette@valleyopp.com

Locations:

- 300 High Street 2nd Floor Holyoke, MA 01040 (Main Office) 413-552-1548
- 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue 2nd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013
- 100 Elm Street (WG&E office), Westfield, MA 01085

Description: Commonly known as Fuel Assistance, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides eligible households with help in paying a portion of winter heating bills. This program provides assistance through a fixed benefit amount for the cost of the primary source of heat which includes, but is not limited to:

- Oil
- Electricity
- Natural gas
- Propane
- Kerosene
- Wood
- Coal

Eligibility: In order to be eligible for the Fuel Assistance Program you have to live in Hampden County (except Springfield) and your family income has to be at or below 60% of Estimated State Median Income. Families that live in Public Housing are not eligible because they are state or federally aided. Families who have heat included and meet income and residence eligibility are eligible. For those families that have heat included and have a subsidy, there may be assistance if they pay 30% of their income towards rent.

Service Area: LIHEAP services all of Hampden County except Springfield



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: GREENING THE GATEWAY CITIES (GTGC)

Contact Information:

Melissa White
Director of Programs
mwhite@valleyopp.com
413-552-1554

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, Chicopee, MA 01013

Description: We work closely with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the community to plant trees within the Willimansett neighborhood of Chicopee. Gateway Cities are midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state, there are 26 Gateway Cities in Massachusetts. Since 2015, GTGC has planted 991 trees in Chicopee. Trees provide many benefits to individuals and the community including: decreased energy costs, improved air and water quality, reduction in pollution, and increased property values. All trees are planted by DCR Foresters.

Eligibility: Any home, business, park, or other property within Willimansett is eligible. Depending on property size, multiple trees could be planted.

Service Area: Willimansett neighborhood within Chicopee



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: HEARTWAP

Contact Information:

Faith Lafayette
Director of Energy Programs
flafayette@valleyopp.com

Location: 300 High Street 2nd Floor, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-552-1548

Description: Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP) provides heating system repair and replacement services to low-income households. The program is administered by a network of local agencies, in most areas the same agency that administers the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or Fuel Assistance) program. HEARTWAP contracts with heating system service companies to complete the work for eligible households.

Throughout the heating season, the program is primarily an emergency-based heating system repair program that helps eligible homeowners pay to repair or replace defective or unsafe heating systems. If sufficient funds are available after the heating season, HEARTWAP will complete maintenance work (clean and tunes) and replace heating systems that are in poor condition and beyond repair. Funds are also available for asbestos abatement only as needed to enable heating system repairs or replacements to be safely completed. Some additional funds are available for chimney liners. There is a maximum amount of money that may be applied to any of these services; therefore the program may not be able to cover the entire cost.

Eligibility: Homeowners that are eligible for LIHEAP with a gross annual income that does not exceed 60% of the Estimated State Median Income are eligible for HEARTWAP services. The program is designed primarily to serve homeowners. Landlords are required to maintain the heating system for their tenants under the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code.

Service Area: HEARTWAP serves all of Hampden County except Springfield.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: United Way Basic Needs and FEMA grants

Contact Information:

Faith Lafayette

Director of Energy Programs

flafayette@valleyopp.com

Location: 300 High Street 2nd Floor, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-552-1548

Description: The United Way of Pioneer Valley funds us for additional energy and rental/mortgage assistance. These awards are through two different grants. One is the United Way Basic Needs Grant and the other is the FEMA EFSP Grant (Federal Emergency Management Association, Emergency Food Shelter Program).

The number of participants we are able to serve under these grants varies depending on how much we are funded for the year. The average award for the participant is \$500 per household for either energy assistance or rent/mortgage assistance.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Housing Management

Contact Information:

Maritza Rios
Housing Director
mrrios@valleyopp.com

Location: 516 Chicopee Street, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-594-3267

Description: For over 20 years Valley Opportunity Council has worked towards a wide range of housing opportunities for families, veterans, and homeless single adults. VOC currently owns and self-manages thirteen properties with different programs throughout the Holyoke and Chicopee area.

For Families: VOC offers 127 units for families in need of 1, 2, or 3 bedroom units in the Holyoke and Chicopee area includes 8 MRVP units are subsidized through the Holyoke Housing Authority and 12 MRVP subsidized units for homeless families through Wayfinders.

For Veterans: In the Holyoke area, VOC's Chapin Mansion location offers 15 subsidized independent rooms for sober veterans. In the Chicopee area, VOC's Maguder House location offers 6 subsidized independent rooms for sober veterans.

Single Adults-: VOC offers 21 subsidized rooms for homeless single adults that are safe and affordable and 41 units for single individuals which includes 8 MRVP and 8 Section project based through Wayfinders.

Eligibility: Based on the household income and candidates must also meet other program requirements.

Service Area: We can serve anyone from anywhere as long as they qualify and want to move to Chicopee or Holyoke.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Main Street Shelter

Contact Information:

Betty Miller

Director of Homeless and Supportive Services

bmiller@valleyopp.com

Location: 319 Main Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-534-2466

Description: The Main Street Shelter provides homeless families with shelter and service coordination.

Services include:

- Intensive Case Management
- Housing searches
- School enrollment
- Referrals to work training programs, food and clothing assistance, mental health and substance addiction counseling
- Domestic Violence counseling
- Money Management counseling
- Nutrition Classes
- Children's groups
- Stabilization services are also provided to participants for six months to one year after they are placed in sustainable housing units.

Eligibility: Placement at the Main Street Shelter is determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Participants must apply for emergency assistance with a Homeless Coordinator at the local Department of Transitional Assistance.

Service Area: Anyone who meets DHCD determination.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Scattered Site Permanent Supportive Housing

Contact Information:

Betty Miller

Director of Homeless and Supportive Services

bmiller@valleyopp.com

Location: 319 Main Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 413-534-2466

Description: VOC will provide scattered site permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless families. This program will serve 20 people in 8 units and will be for families who have had long shelter stays and are assessed as needing supportive housing in order to be able to exit shelter successfully.

Participants will receive regular case management to assist them in maintaining housing and working toward self-sufficiency. Families will each pay 30% of their income for rent.

Eligibility: Participants must meet chronically homeless standards, adult participants must meet disabled status, and 100% of participants should come directly from emergency shelters

Service Area: Any Massachusetts resident who meets eligibility criteria.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program)

Contact Information:

Melissa White
Director of Programs
mwhite@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-552-1554

Description: VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program) offers free tax preparation to low and moderate-income people (generally, \$54,000 and under). Certified volunteers receive training to help prepare basic tax returns. Here at Valley Opportunity Council we offer free electronic filing (e-filing). People who take advantage of the e-file program will receive their refunds in half the time compared to returns filed on paper – even faster when tax refunds are deposited directly into one's bank account.

Eligibility: In order to participate in the VITA program you must:

- Be a resident of Massachusetts.
- Have an individual or family income that does not exceed \$60,000 annually.

The VITA Program **cannot** serve participants who:

- Are self-employed
- Have rental income
- Received income or unemployment from a state other than Massachusetts

Service Area: All of Massachusetts



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Chicopee Farmers' Market

Contact Information:

Faith Lafayette

Director of Energy Programs

flafayette@valleyopp.com

413-552-1545

Location: The Chicopee Farmers' Market is located on Chicopee Street about 100 yards from the "Y" in the Willimansett section of Chicopee, next door to VOC's building on Mt. Carmel campus.

Description: The Farmers' Market gives local farmers and small vendors the opportunity to sell their fresh produce and goods to the community. While visiting the farmers' market you can buy fresh produce and goods such as house plants, perennials, jams, fruits, baked goods, herbs, candles, and fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables. In addition you can take advantage of free gardening advice, nutritional services, and access to all of Valley Opportunity Council services. The farmers' market usually kicks off the Wednesday after the fourth of July and ends first week of September. The market now has an EBT machine and can accept SNAP benefits and USDA/WIC Farmers' Market coupons.

Eligibility: None

Service Area: Open to all to enjoy!



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Good Food for Great Families

Contact Information:

Faith Lafayette

Director of Energy Programs

flafayette@valleyopp.com

413-552-1545

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 2nd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-552-1554

Description: VOC transports produce from one of our local Farmers' Markets one time per summer to each of our Early Education and Child Care Centers. Produce is selected and given to families based on their prior requests. This program is an effort to support our local Farmers' Markets as well as provide our participants with local, healthy food options.

Eligibility: Families must be participants of one of VOC's Early Education and Child Care Centers

Service Area: Any families who meet the eligibility criteria



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Summer Lunch Program

Contact Information:

Faith Lafayette

Director of Energy Programs

flafayette@valleyopp.com

413-552-1545

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 2nd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-552-1554

Description: The Summer Lunch Program is a federally funded program with local oversight from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program provides free meals to children ages 18 and under when school is not in session. Meals are often provided in conjunction with educational and recreational activities. No registration or identification needed, just come by it's free.

Summer Lunch sites vary from year to year but typically include:

- Rivers Park
- Sara Jane Park
- Wisnowski Park
- Lincoln Grove
- Several Chicopee Middle Schools
- 1 Chicopee High School

Eligibility: The only eligibility requirement is that you must be age 18 and under to participate.

Service Area: The Summer Lunch Program services all eligible participants with no residency requirements.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Contact Information:

Natali Flores

Holyoke/Chicopee WIC Director

nflores@valleyopp.com

Locations:

- 300 High Street 1st Floor, Holyoke, MA 01040 (Main Office) (413) 534-2460
- 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue 2nd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 (413) 612-0214
- 14 Chestnut Place, Ludlow, MA 01056 (413) 589-1551
- 70 Court Street, Suite 10A Westfield, MA 01085 (413) 568-1007

Description: Women, Infants, & Children commonly known as WIC is a supplemental nutrition program that provides nutrition and health education, healthy food and other services free of charge to Massachusetts families who qualify.

What Does WIC Offer?

- Personalized nutrition consultations
- Electronic benefits to use for free, healthy food
- Tips for eating well to improve health
- Breastfeeding support and education
- Cooking classes to help participants learn how to prepare inexpensive nutritious meals
- A Family Support Coordinator to assist participants with their needs outside of nutrition

Eligibility: You may qualify for WIC if you are pregnant or a breastfeeding woman, have a child under 5, meet USDA income guidelines, and live in Massachusetts. Father, grandparent, foster parent or other legal guardian of a child under 5 years of age may also qualify.

You may be automatically eligible if you receive TAFDC, SNAP or certain MassHealth plans. Foster kids under age 5 are also automatically eligible for WIC.

Service Area: Any resident of Massachusetts.



The Business of Opportunity Building

Name: Senior Companion Program

Contact Information:

Carol Hasenjager
Director of Senior Companion Program
chasenjager@valleyopp.com

Location: 516 Chicopee Street, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0229

Description: Senior Companions are active older adults who help other older adults live independently. Senior Companions provide support to family caregivers by assisting with grocery shopping, medical appointments (only if the elder is unable to use other transportation services), and other daily tasks necessary for maintaining independence. The goals are to help older people remain independent and living in their own homes and to provide one-on-one respite service to main caregivers. Senior Companions volunteer 15 to 40 hours per week and play a vital role in maintaining an elder's independence and quality of life. They offer socialization opportunities, moral support, information and referral services, transportation, and friendship.

Do you want to be someone's Senior Companion? Senior Companions are:

- Over the age of 55.
- Available to volunteer 15 to 40 hours a week.
- Able to meet low-income eligibility guidelines.
- People who love to help their neighbors.

As a Senior Companion, you'll receive:

- Pre-service and ongoing training.
- An annual physical examination.
- Supplemental insurance.
- Reimbursement for meals and transportation costs.
- A small stipend for those who qualify.
- The joy of helping others to live on their own.

Eligibility:

- Senior Companion Volunteers must meet Low Income Guideline (200% of Federal Poverty Level).
- An elder in need of service must be referred to VOC by a SC Volunteer Station.
- This service is free to the elder in need.

Service Area: The Senior Companion Program services Chicopee, Holyoke and Holland



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Cabot Manor After School Program

Contact Information:

Kai Devlin

Youth Programs Coordinator

kdevlin@valleyopp.com

Location: 106 Stonina Drive, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0120

Description: The Cabot Manor After-School Program provides a safe and educational environment for younger Chicopee Housing Authority residents during after-school hours, and runs from September through April. This program offers a wide variety of activities and services related to academic, career, and personal development with a strong focus on project-based, experiential, and social/emotional learning opportunities.

Participants in the Cabot Manor After-School Program will develop:

- *academically* through daily homework help and enriching classroom lessons;
- *socially* through small group activities and team projects;
- and *physically* through recreational programming.

Courteous

Accountable

Bully-Free

Open-minded

Thoughtful

Eligibility: The Cabot Manor After School Program eligibility guidelines are as follows:

- Must live in Federal Housing of Chicopee Housing Authority.
- Be age 5 to 18

Service Area: Chicopee Housing Authority Residents



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Cabot Manor Summer Camp

Contact Information:

Kai Devlin

Youth Programs Coordinator

kdevlin@valleyopp.com

Location: 106 Stonina Drive, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0120

Description: This program will provide a structured, well supervised, educational yet entertaining environment for low income at-risk youth ages 6-13 residing in Chicopee's Federal Housing Complex.

While at summer camp children will participate in such activities as:

- field trips;
- educational activities that promote science exploration and literacy;
- physical activities such as basketball;
- arts & crafts

Eligibility: The eligibility guidelines for the Cabot Manor Summer Camp are as follows:

- Must live in Federal Housing of Chicopee Housing Authority
- Be ages 5- 13

Service Area: Chicopee Housing Federal Housing Complex only



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Cabot Manor Summer Employment Program

Contact Information:

Kai Devlin

Youth Programs Coordinator

kdevlin@valleyopp.com

Location: 106 Stonina Drive, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0120

Description: The primary goal of the Summer Employment Program is to work in collaboration with two vendors, Chicopee Housing Authority and the Regional Employment Board. This collaboration helps provide a structured, well supervised work experience for low income, at-risk youth ages 14-21.

Youth ages 14-17 must have a valid work permit. Also, all youth must complete a Work Readiness Training once chosen for a position.

Eligibility:

- Must live in Federal Housing of Chicopee Housing Authority
- Be ages 14-21

Service Area: Chicopee Housing Federal Housing Complex only



The Business of Opportunity Building

Program Name: Regional Employment Board Youth Works

Contact Information:

Jaysleen Gonzalez

Summer YouthWorks Coordinator

jgonzalez@valleyopp.com

Location: 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicopee, MA 01013 413-612-0206

Description: The Summer YouthWorks Employment Program is a collaboration between Valley Opportunity Council and the Regional Employment Board. The primary function of the YouthWorks program is to help provide a structured and well supervised work experience for low income and at risk youth ages 14-21.

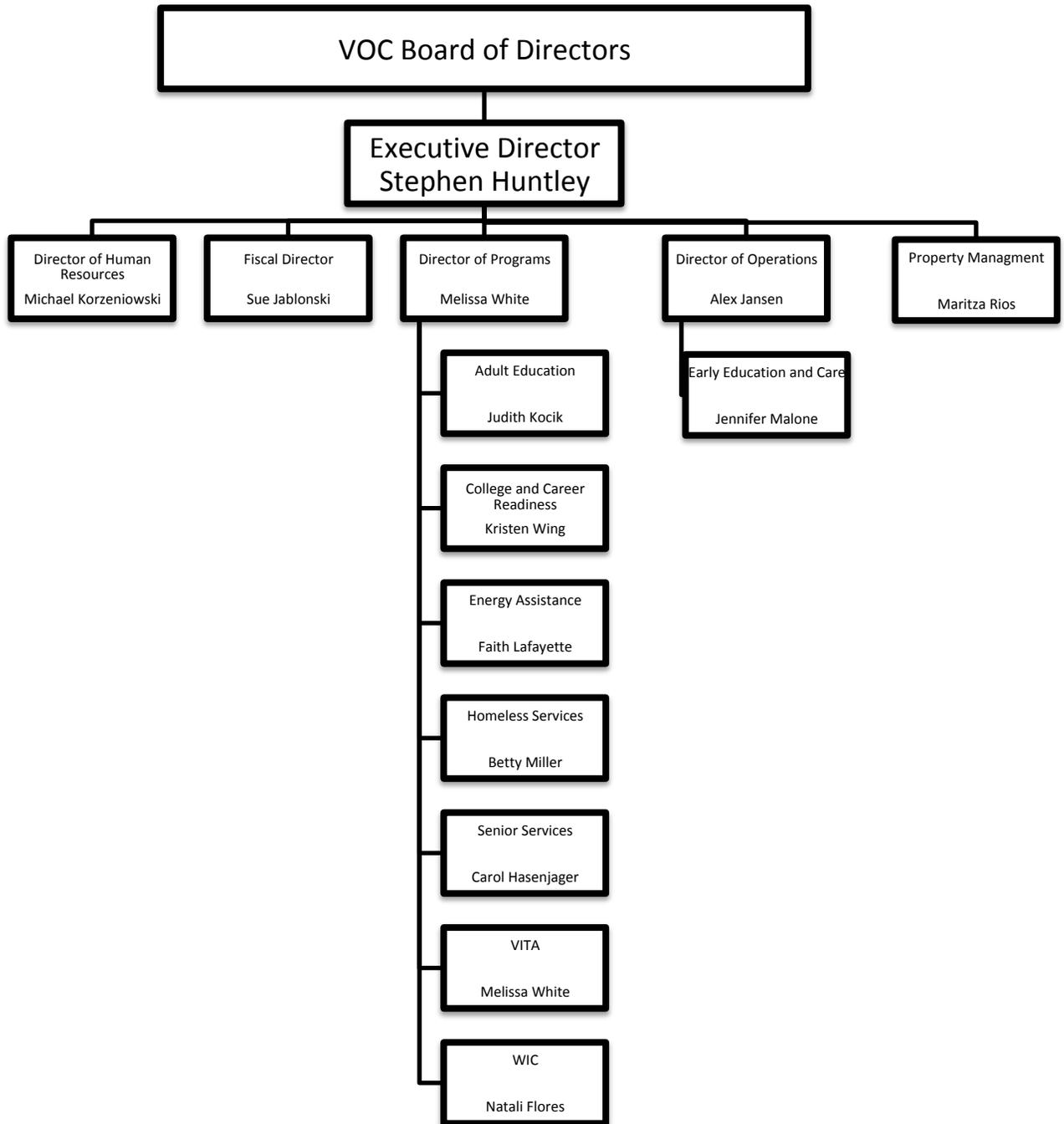
VOC partners with businesses and town offices to place youth in a work situation, where they will have the opportunity to learn from direct experience what it's like to have – and keep – a job. Through rigorous training sessions and on-site employment, the youth will gain the skills necessary to find a place in today's workforce.

Eligibility: Chicopee residents that fall under the income guidelines to qualify (200% of federal poverty levels). Also, the following risk factors are strongly considered when choosing youth participants:

- A history of juvenile delinquency; Either having the status of "court involved", in the custody of DYS, or on juvenile court probation
- Poor academic performance or a school dropout
- Homelessness or being a runaway
- Having aged out of foster care, or being close to aging out of foster care
- Being the child of a single working parent
- Having a disability or special need
- Lack of fluency in English, or being a foreign immigrant
- Being a teen parent

Service Area: Chicopee residents only

Agency Organization Chart





The Business of Opportunity Building

Agency Phone Numbers

Adult Education, College Access and Career Pathways, and VITA

413-612-0206

Cabot Manor Youth Services

413-612-0120

Center and Family Day Care

413-552-1559

Fuel Assistance, Chicopee Farmers' Market, and Summer Lunch Program

413-552-1545

Main Street Shelter

413-534-2467

Preschool Enrichment Team

413-736-3900

Property Management

413-594-3271

Senior Companions

413-552-1554

Transportation

413-594-3220

WIC

Chicopee: 413-612-0214

Ludlow: 413-589-1551

Holyoke: 413-534-2460* Main Site

Westfield: 413-568-1007