

# Annual Report

2019 - 2020



**Gaston Community Action, Inc.**

*Providing services for low income families, and low income individuals since 1964*

# Table of Contents

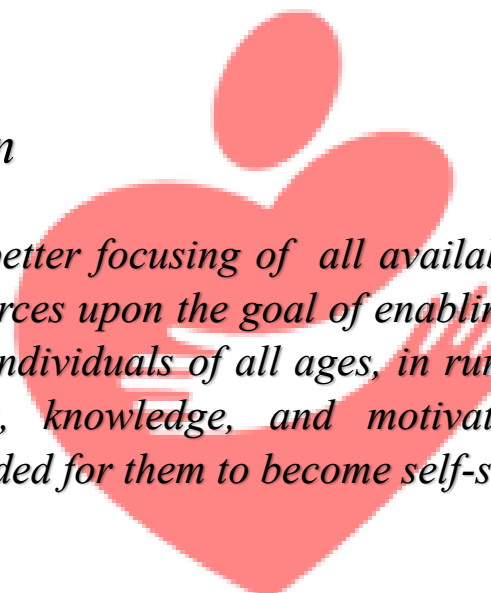
Our Vision, Mission and Community Action Promise	<b>3</b>
About Us	<b>4</b>
Board of Directors	<b>5</b>
Letter from Executive Director	<b>6</b>
Head Start	<b>7-16</b>
Community Service Block Grant	<b>17-22</b>
Financial Information	<b>23</b>

## *O*ur Vision

*“To diversify funding to empower the agency to maintain and grow its programs and services”*

## *O*ur Mission

*“To stimulate a better focusing of all available local, state, private and federal resources upon the goal of enabling low income families, and low income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivations and secure the opportunities needed for them to become self-sufficient.”*



## *C*ommunity Action Promise

*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*

# About Us

## ***The Beginning of GCA***

*Gaston Community Action, Inc. is a private non-profit corporation chartered by the State of North Carolina to operate anti-poverty programs in Gaston County on October 22, 1964. Structured in accordance with standards and requirements of the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and subsequent amendments, "the basic purpose of community action is to stimulate a better focusing of all available local, state, private, and federal sources upon the goals of enabling low-income families and low-income individuals to obtain skills, knowledge, and motivations, and secure the opportunities for them to become fully self-sufficient"*

## ***Agency Overview***

*The agency administers programs in Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln and Stanly Counties. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services of Economic Opportunity. GCA employs a staff of about 120 and operates on an annual budget of over 6 million.*

*GCA has continuously provided services and advocacy on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged since its inception and charter. Our programs are planned after holding public hearings to solicit community input. Head Start educates 431 preschool children in Gaston and Lincoln Counties. The CSBG program is directed toward making low-income residents of the four counties self-sufficient by providing help with employment, housing, education and transportation.*



# Board of Directors

**MICHAEL LANE —Chairman**  
**DEBORAH OATES—Vice-Chair**  
**EMILY WINFREY —Secretary**  
**JOYCE COLEMAN—Treasurer**  
**VONTINA MCGRANT—At Large**  
**LABONNIE KNIGHT**  
**MARY GIBSON**  
**SONYA LEWIS**  
**NANCY MAYNOR**  
**WILLIAM LINDSAY**  
**LAWANZA MOORE**  
**CHERIE FEEMSTER**  
**OLA MAE FOSTER**  
**GEORGIANNA HARTGROVE**  
**DELORIS CHAMBERS**  
**ROBERT POPE**

**GCA's Board of Directors**  
**is comprised of 18**  
**members representing**  
**three sectors;**

- **Public** (appointed by the county commissioners)
- **Citizen** (elected by the low-income residents)
- **Private** (appointed by civic groups)

**CONSULTANT TO THE  
BOARD**

Wanda Wyont

# Executive Director

From our administration offices and program departments, this year 2020 has offered an unexpected and an unknown challenge for Gaston Community Action, Inc. (GCA) operations. The onset and impact of the COVID-19 virus causes all human to simultaneously face the unfamiliar. Rethinking the way we live our lives and the way we do business.

The Governor of North Carolina shut down the state and only allowed essential employees to work. Gaston Community Action, Inc. is considered an essential organization. Therefore, the staff of GCA continued to provide services for our clients.

We appreciate Gaston Community Action, Inc. Board of Directors and the staff for coming together, to develop and to create a workable plan. A GCA plan that assures continuous service for our clients in Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, and Stanly Counties. In addition, policies have been developed to ensure the quality of services and safety for our clients and our GCA staff.

During the onset of this new virus, our Head Start Program met the challenge to operate a Head Start Program. GCA Head Start applied for a Federal Grant from the Health and Human Service (HHS) and was approved to operate a much needed Summer Program. Our Head Start completed the required safety guidelines to provide a safe environment for both students and teachers. CDC guidelines were met. Having the centers cleaned and sterilized daily, before the return of the children. Plus the wearing of masks, social distancing and the regular washing of hands were a part of the routine.

Additional funding has been received from the CARES Act to assist families affected by COVID-19 by providing assistance concerning housing, food, will continue to meet the needs of individuals and families in in our communities as we navigate how live and interact with one another. Rethinking the way we live our lives and the way we do business.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Dixon, MSW

Executive Director





# HEAD START



**Annual Report School Year 2019—2020  
In fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Preparing Head Start for School Readiness  
Act of 2007(644(a)(2)(B))**

*Copies of this report are available at  
[www.gastonca.org](http://www.gastonca.org)  
or upon request*

This report is prepared to comply with the reauthorized Head Start Act of 2007. This Act, specifically Section 644 (a) (2) (B), and states:

Gaston Community Action, Inc. is committed and dedicated to ensure the Head Start children will be prepared to succeed in school and life. The Gaston Community Action School Readiness team is comprised of parents, staff, community partners, and the local school systems. The responsibility of the team is to make certain the school readiness goals align with the Head Start Early Learning Framework, the North Carolina Early Learning Guidelines and the local school system expectations. We will focus on implementing projects and activities that bring about the most efficient use of resources that will positively influence the lives and environment of the children and families we serve.

Each Head Start agency shall make available to the public a report published at least once in each fiscal year that discloses the following information from the most recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent:

- The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source
- An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year
- The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment
- The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams
- Information about parent engagement activities
- The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten
- Implementing School Readiness goals for preschoolers





## **GCA'S APPROACH TO SCHOOL READINESS GOALS FOR CHILDREN**

Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school, for later learning and life. The Head Start approach to school readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

Gaston Community Action, Inc. Head Start is committed to ensuring that children who leave our Head Start program are prepared when they enter the kindergarten program in the public schools. The teaching staff use various strategies including the Classroom Learning Assessment System (CLASS) observation tool to enhance best practice to ensure all children enrolled are working toward meeting goals in all domain areas. These domain areas are assessed daily. The five essential domains are:

- Approaches to Learning and Play
- Social-Emotional Development
- Cognition and General Knowledge
- Language Development and Literacy Knowledge and Skills
- Physical and Health Development

With the implementation of these domains GCA HS will ensure that children (including those with disabilities) are fully equipped with the necessary skills to successfully transition to kindergarten. The training and mentoring of teaching staff is critical in meeting school readiness goals. Parents are included in goal setting in order to help the child's progress.

### **FAST FACTS**

- Head Start Employs 95 employees
- Contracts with local agencies to provide preventive health, nutrition, disability and mental health services to children: 7:30 AM—2:15 PM
- Operates 7 Head Start Centers (3 in Lincoln County 4 in Gaston County)
- Serves children 3 and 4 years of age with birth date by August 31 of that year
- Operates five (5) NC Pre-K classrooms three (2) Highland Charter Head Start 324 N. Highland Street, Gastonia, NC two (3) Lincoln Park Head Start Center 140 Industrial Park Rd. Lincolnton, NC
- Serves children breakfast, lunch and snack
- Operates 7:30 AM – 2:15 PM each day in conjunction with Gaston and Lincoln County school calendars
- Total enrollment is 431 at all times. Children who drop/add are replaced timely.
- Number of three year olds served—221
- Number of 4 year olds served—270

## FUNDING SOURCES

The Head Start Program received funding from the following sources in FY 2019 2020

Funding Source	Amount		
	7/1/19 - 3/31/20	4/1/20 - 6/30/20	TOTAL
Head Start, OHS, DHHS	3,822,196	980,424	4,802,620
GCA Non-federal share	1,101,717	20,192	1,121,909
Gaston Pre-K	71,777	32,400	104,177
Lincoln Pre-K	132,876	63,581	196,457
USDA	251,392	0	251,392
Other	<u>1,027</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,027</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>5,380,985</b>	<b>1,096,597</b>	<b>6,477,582</b>

## BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

BUDGET EXPENDITURES			
	7/1/19 - 3/31/20	4/1/20 - 6/30/20	TOTAL
Personnel	1,808,619	517,665	2,326,284
Fringe Benefits	628,689	214,506	843,195
Travel			
Equipment	237,575		0
Supplies	79,023	67,178	146,201
Contractual	371,857	2,388	374,245
Facilities/Construction			0
T&TA	61,832	8,351	70,183
Other	614,639	116,441	731,080
Indirect Costs	477,034	149,876	626,910
GCA Non-federal share	<u>1,101,717</u>	<u>20,192</u>	<u>1,121,909</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,380,985</b>	<b>1,096,597</b>	<b>6,477,582</b>



## Head Start Annual Report Budget Justifications Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Personnel	2,326,284	Includes compensation for all Head Start employees for services rendered to the program.
Fringe Benefits	843,195	Includes FICA, health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, workers comp insurance, SUTA and retirement paid on behalf of eligible staff.
Equipment	237,575	Includes purchase of three school buses and two cargo vans.
Supplies	146,201	Includes janitorial supplies, office supplies, disabilities supplies, program supplies & medical/dental supplies.
Contractual	374,245	Includes child dental treatment, child medical treatment, equipment rental/ lease, child audiology contract, child mental health contract, school lunches, contract food & delivery, & nutrition consultant.
T&TA	70,183	Includes employee development and training & technical assistance for staff.
Other	731,080	Includes all other expenditures necessary for Program function such as communications, storage rental, postage, local travel, space costs, field trips, translation, dues & registration, publications, printing, advertising, policy council & parent activities, equipment maintenance & repair, liability insurance, transportation costs, professional services, facility repairs & licensing, & technology costs.
Indirect Costs	626,910	Includes all allowable expenditures within the indirect cost pool to administer the Program.
GCA Non-federal share	<u>1,121,909</u>	Includes property or services that benefit the Head Start program and are contributed by non-Federal third parties without charge to the grantee.
Total	6,477,582	

*Financial Audit Results: For the year ended June 30, 2019, the auditor issued an unmodified opinion. There were no financial statement findings and no questioned costs.*

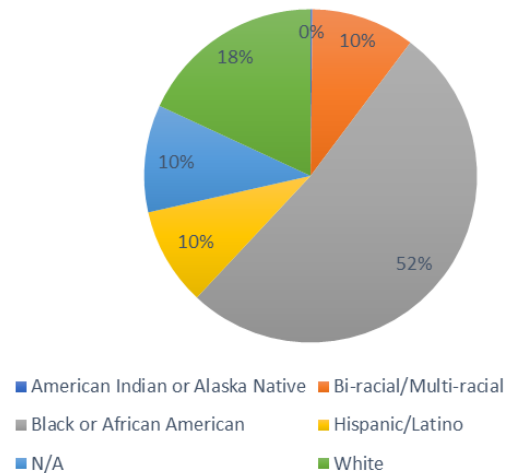


## 450 Families Served

Gaston Community Action, Inc. Head Start served 450 families. 350 are single-parent families; 100 are two-parent families; 14 are homeless and 8 foster families.

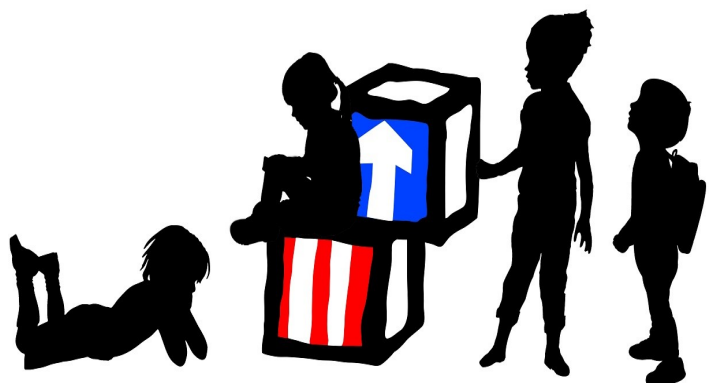


Ethnicity & Race



Gaston Community Action, Inc.'s Head Start is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start. Our funded enrollment is 431 children. Children who leave the program are replaced by those on a waiting list.

## 491 Children Served



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT/MALE ENGAGEMENT

Gaston Community Action, Inc. Head Start strongly encourages parent participation. Parents are their child's first teachers, and are the key to the design and success of the program. Parents are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities, including:

- Parent/staff meetings and trainings
- Policy Council meetings
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Home Visits
- Classroom volunteer
- Parent/Staff Trainings held monthly
- Special Programs for male involvement

The program provides newsletters and a monthly calendar to parents that include upcoming events. The menus are posted weekly, breakfast, lunch, and snack. The center news and other items of interest are also posted on the parent information board

## TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

### *Preparing Children for Kindergarten*

270 children transitioned to Kindergarten in May 2019. Transition meetings are held in April of every year to assist parents of children who are moving on to kindergarten. Tours of the local public and charter schools are scheduled to familiarize the families of the setting, routines, and make choices. Parents are given opportunities to ask questions of kindergarten teachers and school administration. Parents are encouraged to participate in transition activities. Transition includes sending documentation containing all the health developmental and educational information for the child to their assigned school.

### *Collaboration Agreements*

Gaston Community Action, Inc. collaborates with two LEA's (Gaston and Lincoln) in our service area. These agreements help coordinate disability services for children who required needed services from these local school systems.

## **PROGRAM NOTICE AWARD FOR FIVE YEAR HEAD START PROJECT PERIODS**

The Office of Head Start (OHS) is moving from indefinite project periods to five year project periods for all Head Start grantees. This requires changes on OHS funding practices and oversight of Head Start Programs. Changes in oversight will include improved communication between federal staff and grantees, as well as ongoing analysis of data to determine the type of support needed by grantees. The main purpose of improved oversight is to demonstrate the quality of program services, the effectiveness of management systems, and the achievement of outcomes for children, families, and communities. This is our agency's first (2) year of the five (5) year period beginning July 2019. We are in

We are monitored by our funding sources regularly. Monitoring visits are to ensure program compliance in Health and Safety; ERSEA and Fiscal.

## **OHS APPROACH TO SCHOOL READINESS FOR GCA's HEAD START PROGRAM**

The Head Start School Readiness encompasses three major frameworks that promote an understanding of school readiness for parents and families. The three frameworks provide the foundation for implementing a systemic and integrated comprehensive child development service including family engagement. Grantees must ensure that frameworks are implemented and reports are generated after each complaint.



## MEDICAL AND DENTAL

### *Medical Homes*

100% of enrolled children have an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care.



30 are eligible to receive medical services through child care insurance.

469 children are enrolled in Medicaid 30 are enrolled in private health insurance plans. Head Start works cooperatively through both County Health Departments, Gaston College, Highland School of Technology and our Nutrition Specialist to perform heights, weights, blood pressure, dental screening, fluoride varnish, blood lead screenings, and review of immunization records.

### *Dental Exams*

100% enrolled children have continuous, accessible dental care.



### *Nutrition*

Menus are provided in English and Spanish for parents and public review.

We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). During our school year we serve approximately 112,060 meals.



## Serving Gaston & Lincoln Counties

The Head Start center has a central office in Gastonia and (7) Head Start Centers in Gaston and Lincoln counties.

### CENTRAL OFFICE

223 N. Morris Street

Gastonia, NC 28052

(704) 866-8721

[www.gastonca.org](http://www.gastonca.org)



### ***Gaston County***

#### **Cherryville Head Start—4 Star**

203 Elm Street

Cherryville, NC 28021

(704) 435-8946

40 Students—2 Classrooms

#### **Highland Charter Head Start—5 Star**

324 N. Highland Street

Gastonia, NC 28052

(704) 866-9874

119 Students—7 Classrooms—2 NC Pre-K Classrooms

#### **Rankin I—5 Star**

714 Rankin Ave

Gastonia, NC 28052

(704) 861-2285

60 Students—3 classrooms

#### **Rankin II—5 Star**

304 N. Highland Street

Gastonia, NC 28052

(704) 866-6345

68 Students—4 Classrooms

### ***Lincoln County***

#### **Oaklawn Head Start—5 Star**

410 Linden Street

Lincolnton, NC 28092

(704) 735-4702

38 Students— 2 Classrooms

#### **Deaton Head Start— 5 Star**

101 Deaton Ave

Lincolnton, NC 28092

(704) 732-3201

18 Students—1 Classroom

#### **Lincoln Park Head Start—5 Star**

140 Industrial Park Road

Lincolnton, NC 28092

(704) 732-1216

119 Students—6 Classrooms

2 NC Pre-K Classrooms





# Community Service Block Grant



## 2019-2020 Outcomes

## CSBG Narrative

Brenda Smith, Director

Funding through the Office of Economic Opportunity enabled GCA to operate the federal Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) in the form of the Total Family Assistance Program (TFAP). The CSBG grant provides funds to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.

GCA's TFAP promotes self-sufficiency by providing services to meet individual needs such as employment, housing, and crisis prevention through collaboration with community partners in the counties we serve, Gaston, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Stanly. The program carries out activities that enables low-income families to move out of poverty. The number of families enrolled in the program from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 was 139, resulting in 403 individuals benefiting from services provided.

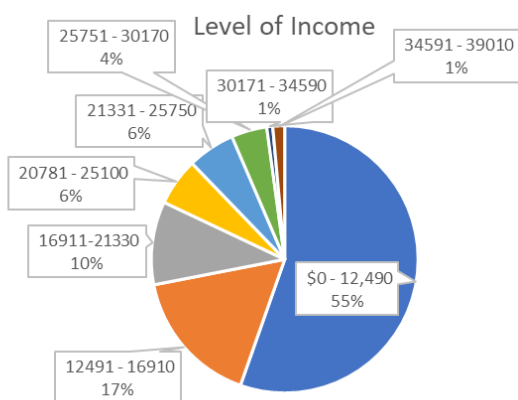
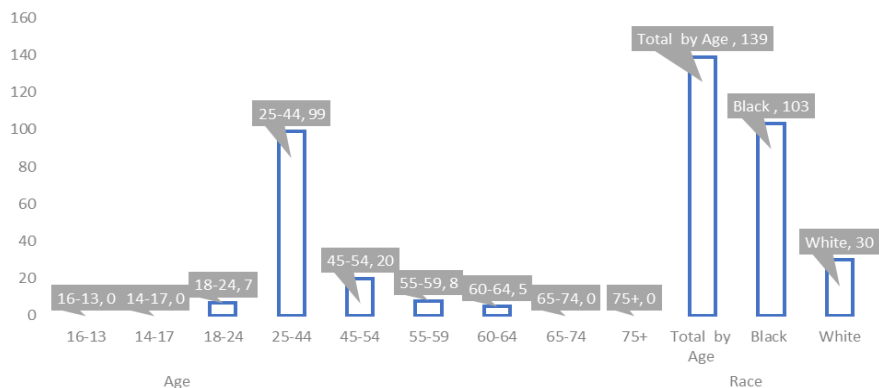
For this program year the following results were achieved:

<b><u>Outcome Measures</u></b>	<b>Target</b> (Expected to achieve the outcome in reporting period)	<b>Achieved</b>
The number of participant families served	170	139
The number of low-income families rising above the poverty level	23	15
The number of participant families obtaining employment	20	9
The number of participant families obtaining employment better employment	12	10
The number of participant families obtaining jobs with medical benefits	3	4
The number of participant families completing education/training programs	14	9
The number of participant families securing standard housing	16	13
The number of participant families provided emergency assistance	80	64
The number of participant families provided employment supports	49	27
The number of participant families provided education supports	13	7

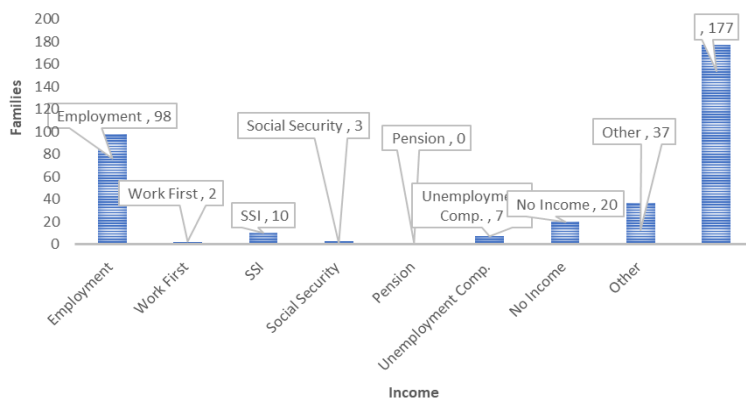


# Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Demographic Synopsis

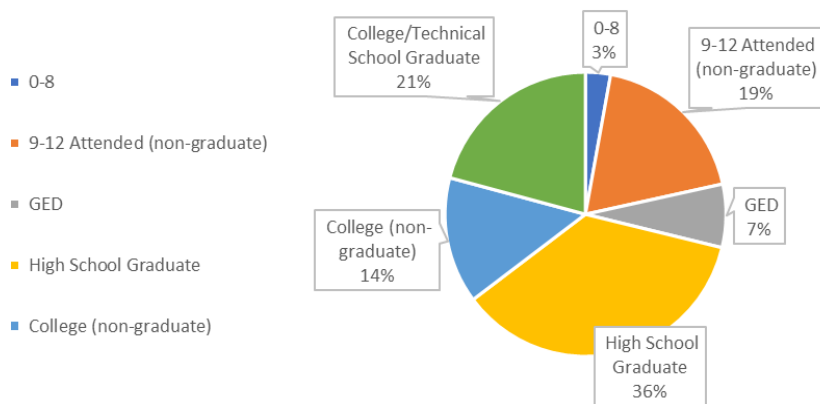
Customers Active In the Program  
7/2019 to 6/2020



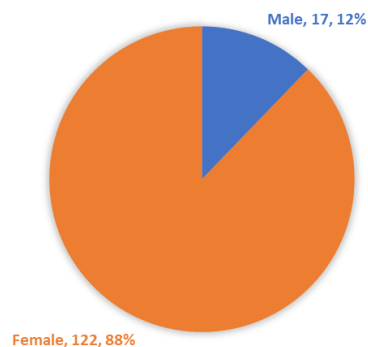
## SOURCE OF INCOME



## Education

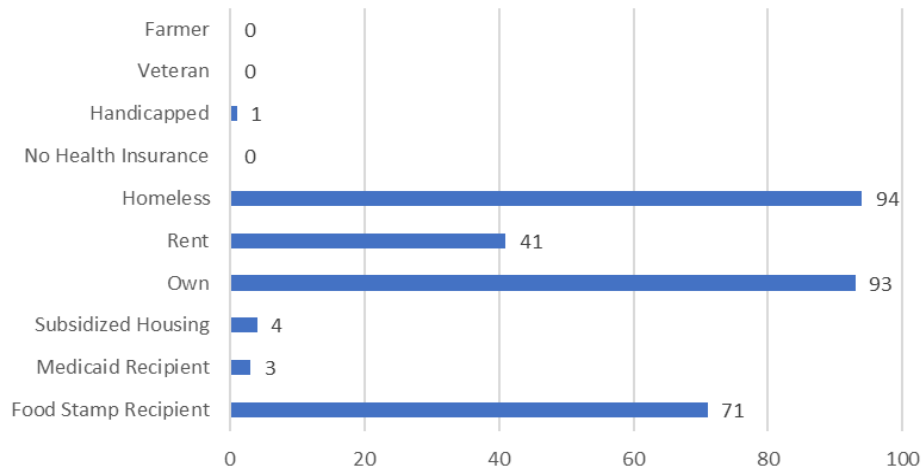


## GENDER

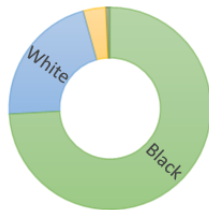


# Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Demographic Synopsis Continued

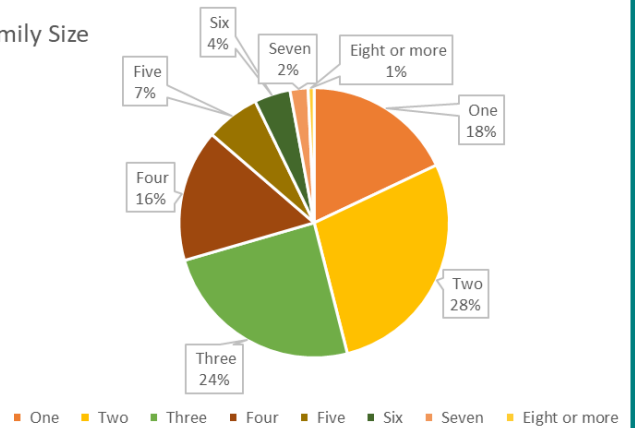
## Other Characteristics



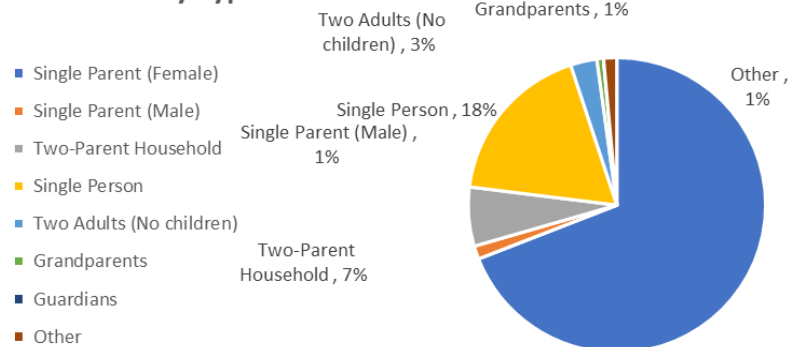
## RACE



## Family Size



## Family Type



# Success Story!

A single male living in his vehicle, 46 years old, a felon with no family members living within Gastonia with yearly income of \$9,997 was enrolled in the TFAP. He earned his GED while in prison. On December 7, 2019 he began working as a temporary employee at Amazon earning \$15 an hour with no benefits. He had been unsuccessful in securing housing due to his criminal background and bad credit history. Meanwhile, his girlfriend was living in Charlotte in a home for women with newborns and had been recently released from prison. He wanted to be responsible for her and their newborn child, so he started paying for hotel rooms.

Housing was secured for client by partnering with a landlord who sometimes house individuals with criminal backgrounds and poor credit. Using CSBG funds his deposit and the first month's rent was paid to secure housing enabling him to secure visitation with his baby. He was also assisted with the purchase of household needs and groceries in the absence of food stamps. With this assistance he was able to save money for his upcoming rent and utilities.

On March 1, 2020 he gained permanent job status with Amazon still earning \$15.00 an hour, which placed him over the poverty guideline, with employee health care coverage, employee time off with pay, and with an employee retirement plan. His new yearly income, \$31,176.

## **Serving Gaston, Cleveland, Lincoln, and Stanly counties**

The CSBG has a central office in Gastonia and offices in Cleveland, Lincoln and Stanly counties.

### **CENTRAL OFFICE**

**223 N. Morris Street**

**Gastonia, NC 28052**

**(704) 866-8721**

[www.gastonca.org](http://www.gastonca.org)

### ***Gaston***

**Brenda Smith**

**Robin Conner**

**Leslie Lowery**

**Sandra Dunlap**

### **Cleveland**

**827 S. Washington Street**

**Shelby, NC 28150**

**(704) 480-0722**

**Jackie Thompson**

**Shirley Suggs**

### **Lincoln**

**124 East Main Street**

**Lincolnton, NC 28092**

**(704) 748-9744**

**Cynthia Vinson**

### **Stanly**

**507 Old Charlotte Road**

**Albemarle, NC 28001**

**(704) 985-1928**

**Davidia Brown**

# Financial Information

**July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020**

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>GRANT SOURCE</u>	<u>FUNDING</u>
Head Start	US Dept. of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families	4,802,620
	USDA	251,392
	Pre-K Gaston & Lincoln County	300,634
	Non-Federal Share	1,121,909
CSBG	NC DHHS - Division of Social Services	803,912
CSBG CARES NC	NC DHHS—Division of Social Services	274,480
Other Revenues		<u>142,614</u>
Total		7,697,561



## Notes



## Notes