



# *Annual Report*

## 2011-2012



**Helping Communities Bridge Gaps**



# Mission, Vision, and Values

## Mission

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Central Susquehanna Opportunities serves as a catalyst for economic, educational, social, and workforce development in collaboration and cooperation with the entire community to provide diverse resources that promote self-sufficiency and community prosperity.

## Vision

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We will be the leader in advancing economic, educational, social, and workforce development opportunities.

## Values

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Central Susquehanna Opportunities believes:

- That each individual is unique and should be treated with dignity and respect.
- In developing partnerships in order to re-invest in the communities in which we live.
- In creating a work environment that empowers employees to make a difference.
- In providing services to the public in the most effective and efficient manner.

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*Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. Board Officers from left to right: Greg Sacavage (Vice Chair), Bernie Swank (Treasurer), Eric Rowe (Chair), Leanne Kline (Secretary), and Douglas Diven (Executive Committee Member).*

### Officers

Eric Rowe	Chair
Greg Sacavage	Vice Chair
Leanne Kline	Secretary
Bernie Swank	Treasurer

### Low Income Representatives

Leanne Kline	Bloomsburg Hospital
Greg Sacavage	Mount Carmel Area School District
Susan Blake	Danville Area Head Start
Wendy Herrold	River Front Apartments
Douglas Diven	HandUp Foundation
Rich Kisner	Columbia County Housing & Redevelopment Authority

### Local Elected Officials or Their Representative

Harold Hurst	The Honorable Kurt Masser, 107th Legislative District Representative
Martha Milbrand	The Honorable John Gordner, 37th Senatorial District Representative
Lisa Wagner	The Honorable David Millard, 109th District Representative
Tony Rosini	Northumberland County District Attorney
Gerard Waugh III	Coal Township Commissioner
Gene Welsh	Coal Township Commissioner

### Private Sector/Other Community Representative

Bernie Swank	Swank's Salon and Hair Replacement
Mike Roberts	Keystone Staffing
Lake Randall	Mid-Penn Engineering Corporation
Eric Rowe	Wood-Mode
Daniel Lichtel	Mifflinburg Area School District
Tracy L. Gillespie	Columbia/Montour Area Vocational Technical School

# Executive Summary



Dear Fellow Community Members:

As a Community Action Agency our core mission at Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. is to provide resources that promote self-sufficiency and community prosperity. Over the past year we continued to face funding uncertainties from the state and federal level, and devastation from Tropical Storm Lee. Despite these challenges, we were able to impact the lives of many families in our communities by providing community action, workforce development and economic development services. The personal stories and information highlighted in this report are examples of our commitment to individual success and evidence of our employees' dedication to fulfilling the purpose of the programs we offer - to bridge gaps in services and empower people in need to move from poverty to prosperity.

Along with the many changes our organization has embraced in the past year, CSO added a Facebook page along with Facebook links to our youth programs "Bridges to the Future" and "Get2Work" program. In addition, we continue to update our company website to provide current information to better serve our communities as a valuable resource. As our geographical locations, program requirements and financial requirements continue to transform, we maintain our commitment to be the leader in advancing economic, educational, social, and workforce development opportunities.

In concluding 2012, we are grateful for the support of our stakeholders, donors, volunteers and dedicated employees. Your commitment helped to change and uplift the lives of people in need. On behalf of Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. Board of Directors, management and staff, we thank you for entrusting your resources to us and will continue working to improve the lives of individuals and families in our community. We look forward to your continued support in the upcoming year.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barry McLaughlin  
*Chief Executive Officer*



Barry McLaughlin

## Staff Recognition 2011



This year we celebrated milestone anniversaries with many CSO staff members:

From the Left, Bob Alwine (5 Years), Diane Bubb (25 Years), Liz Folk (5 Years), Joseph Laver (10 Years), Amy Conrad (10 Years), Agnes Scanlan (10 Years), Stacie Snyder (5 Years), Linda Van Der Pool (10 Years), Brenda Ohl (20 Years), Tammy Pursel (5 Years), Robin Rebeck (10 Years) and Harry Morgan (30 Years)

## WIA Transportation Grant

CSO utilizes the WIA Transportation Grant received from the Department of Public Welfare to provide valuable transportation services to TANF clients. Given the rural nature of Central Pennsylvania, lack of transportation is often a barrier preventing clients from working. CSO employs ten van drivers to serve Clinton, Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union county clients. The CSO van drivers provide transportation for clients to get to the PA CareerLinks® for job readiness activities, daycare for their children, employment, and necessary appointments. CSO served an average of 50 clients each month through its van service from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. CSO also provides valuable driver's education training using these funds, so that clients are able to obtain their driver's license, and work towards purchasing their own car to more permanently resolve the transportation barrier. CSO provided funding for 17 individuals to take drivers education training. The van service and drivers education training demonstrate CSO's commitment to creatively and effectively addressing barriers to employment, so that clients are able to move towards self-sufficiency.

### Sunbury Van Drivers



From the Left: Norm Brouse, Brandon Hopper, Bob Berger, Jeff Marquette, Don Rich, Ralph Schenewerk  
Missing: John Kuzmick

### Bloomsburg Drivers



Tina Erb and Bob Alwine

### Lock Haven Van Driver



Ed Gedon

*“This Program is made possible through the support of the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation, the region’s leader and active partner in workforce development efforts.”*

CSO is among the many employers in the Central Region who recognize or request the National Career Readiness Certificate as part of their hiring process. This tool, referred to as WorkKeys®, is being used with more frequency in the current employment climate where hundreds of applications may be received for one or two job openings. This enables employers to quickly identify the candidates with the required skill to be successful in the position.



An NCRC is a credential that rates an applicant’s work readiness in the way that SAT scores college applicants. Applicants’ working skills are evaluated in 3 areas – Applied Mathematics, Locating Information and Reading for Information. The results are compared against the levels required for that specific job, with a match in all areas being the best fit. It can also be used by employers for incumbent workers to determine best placement within their company. Jobseekers market it as proof that they possess the needed skills for the jobs they seek.

This assessment is free to both employers and jobseekers. Upon request, a customized, detailed profile of a specific job can be completed for a fee. Currently there are well over 500 employers in the region that endorse the NCRC and over 4,500 individuals have attained this elite certificate.

## WIA participant’s success story

Elizabeth “Liz” Solomon was referred to PA CareerLink® through the PREP program. She had a limited work history and skill set due to 27 years with a single employer doing the same job assignment. Ms. Solomon expressed multiple employability issues including being over 60, limited computer skills, and lack of post-secondary education, which added to her low self-confidence in today’s job market. She also could not stand for long periods of time and desired employment close to home due to concerns over driving long distances. She was the sole wage earner for her household, required health insurance and was running out of unemployment compensation.

Liz was referred and registered with WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services where she received encouragement and support from her Workforce Specialist. She attended a varied list of workshops to improve her skills and overcome her interviewing fears. Through an Experience Works referral, she was placed in a work experience at the PA CareerLink® Lycoming County. Liz embraced this opportunity and learned new computer skills, networked with on-site employers, and built a strong list of references.

Her persistence paid off when she obtained employment at Quality Collision as an Office Associate. This employer is utilizing the NEG/OJT program to allow Liz to bridge her skill gaps. Liz is excited to be starting a new phase in her career path and loves her current position. Her supervisors at Quality Collision have been pleased with her performance. Both have expressed that this job is the perfect fit.

Hard work, exceptional commitment and willingness to utilize all of PA CareerLink’s programs and resources have allowed Liz to not just overcome many obstacles but to excel and succeed. She represents what can be achieved when dedication and motivation meet valuable, proven resources.



## Grand Opening PA CareerLink® Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties — January 18, 2012



## PA CareerLink® Lycoming County Grand Opening Ceremony — April 19, 2012



## Grand Re-Opening PA CareerLink® Columbia and Montour Counties — February 17, 2012





## Meeting the Needs of the Natural Gas Industry

ShaleNET is a coalition between Westmoreland County Community College (lead agency) and Pennsylvania College of Technology, West Virginia Northern Community College, Eastern Gateway Community College in Ohio, and Broome Community College in New York. ShaleNET brings Workforce Investment Boards, their One Stops, industry, and training providers together to build a Marcellus-wide industry-recognized uniform training and certification program aggregating and augmenting existing curricula and adopting best practices as identified.



Rig Tour, November 22, 2011 with Business Services Team

CSO has been active in serving the needs of the Natural Gas Industry through meeting with new natural gas employers, providing on site recruitment events at PA CareerLink® offices, and encouraging staff development on the demands of Natural Gas employers. The PA CareerLink® Lycoming County compiles a weekly natural gas job posting list that is shared with other PA CareerLink® offices across the state. The Central Region and CSO staff are recognized as leaders in meeting the workforce development needs of the natural gas industry.

In addition, PA CareerLink® staff at all sites have been working with ShaleNET in serving the natural gas industry. CareerLink staff regularly monitor the ShaleNET Talent Match website to identify job seekers who have an interest in working in the natural gas industry. CareerLink staff contact these job seekers to offer case management and referrals to job and training opportunities in Natural Gas.

ShaleNET also contracted the services of Diane Bubb, CSO employee at PA CareerLink® Lycoming County, to assist staff of local workforce investment board (LWIBs) and One-Stops in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and West Virginia in working with job candidates and the natural gas & oil industry. Tailored to the specific workforce needs of each region, Diane's presentations focus on the workforce expectations of the industry, identification of skills that get noticed by employers, how the workforce system can position itself to be a community resource for employers, and how staff can incorporate the functionality of ShaleNET's Talent Match System website into the delivery of service.

## Fit 4 Careers Series

### *FIT 4 Health Care*

33 individuals participated in the FIT 4 Health Care Program held at two PA CareerLink® sites throughout the Central Region. PA CareerLink® sites that hosted the trainings were State College and Sunbury. Program participants received job readiness training, earned a WorkKeys® credential and participated in industry specific training delivered by Bloomsburg University and the American Red Cross. Graduates were recognized and met employers at exclusive networking events. Program participants worked with a Workforce Specialist to assist with career goals and next steps.

### *FIT 4 Building & Construction and FIT 4 Advanced Manufacturing*

Thirty three individuals were enrolled in a grant that provided training in either Building & Construction or Advanced Manufacturing. The programs were hosted by PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties, PA CareerLink® Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties at Sunbury, PA CareerLink® Mifflin County and PA CareerLink® Lycoming County. Program participants received job readiness training, earned a WorkKeys® credential and participated in industry specific training. Building and Construction training was delivered by Associated Builders and Contractors along with classes covering three modules of the NCCER curriculum. Advanced Manufacturing was delivered by Tooling U (online training), Pennsylvania College of Technology, and the IMC. Both training programs offered green training components. Graduates were honored and met employers at exclusive networking events. Program participants worked with a Workforce Specialist and Program Job Developer to assist with job placement.



FIT for Building/Construction Graduation Ceremony March 28, 2012, Sunbury CareerLink.

## Job Fairs — What a great way to Network!

Each year the CareerLink® sites hold job fairs to give the employers and the job seekers an opportunity to connect. This year the PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties held their job fair at the Columbia Mall in May. Over 300 people attended and had the opportunity to meet with 31 vendors. The PA CareerLink® Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties held two job fairs, one at the Shikellamy High School and one at Massers Banquet Hall in Paxinos. Between the two events, 58 vendors and over 600 job seekers attended.



## Youth Programs

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth programs were redesigned during Program Year 2011.

The Bridges to the Future Youth Program is designed for youth who are at least 16 years of age and are current sophomores or juniors in high school. Youth need to meet WIA eligibility guidelines, as well as suitability by demonstrating employability and academic skills, and a commitment to graduating from high school. Youth participants will be guided through a series of activities designed to help youth learn about themselves, their interests and skills, gain work experience, and develop an action plan to prepare for life after high school. Using the Pennsylvania Career Guide, seniors will be guided through monthly activities to prepare them for graduation and their post-high school goal of employment, post-secondary education or the military. Sophomores and juniors will meet with Youth Staff quarterly and participate in career exploration and awareness activities. Youth who are not placed within one quarter of graduation will transition to the Out of School Youth Program, GET2WORK, for more intensive services.





## The GET2WORK Youth Program



The GET2WORK youth program is for Out-of-School Youth between the ages of 17-24 who have earned a High School Diploma or GED or are committed to earning a GED. GET2WORK is designed for youth who want support in developing a plan that may include career exploration, work experience, job search preparation and/or occupational skills training. Activities are scheduled regularly at the PA CareerLink® offices and allow youth to network with other young adults, learn about employment opportunities available, and connect to other valuable PA CareerLink® services. Youth will be placed into one of four tracks, based on goals, work history, and other information. The tracks include: Unsubsidized Employment, On-the-Job Training, Paid Work Experience and Post-Secondary Education. Youth will receive a guided handbook to assist them as they work through the steps towards getting a

job or entering post-secondary education. Upon exit from the program, youth will receive follow up services for one year.



Michael Craig was enrolled in the GET2WORK youth program in December 2011. Michael was a parent to a young child, homeless, a high school dropout, long term unemployed, a food stamp and cash recipient and did not possess a driver's license. His goal was to get his GED, and gain employment that would enable him to find an apartment and bring his family together again. Michael began attending CareerLink workshops, obtained a Gold WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate, and scored very high on the GED pre-test. The only tutoring the GED instructor thought he needed was on the essay portion of the test, and Michael was enrolled and actively participated in GED tutoring. Michael had a limited work history and needed some help getting his foot in an employer's door. He began a paid work experience at the Gatehouse Shelter as a maintenance person. Michael was also able to use some of his carpentry skills while on the job by installing a new drop ceiling in their laundry room. Michael was rated "excellent" in

all categories on his evaluations and was highly praised by his supervisor. Michael also achieved his GED shortly after the work experience began. Michael stated he was the first person in his immediate family ever to achieve a High School Diploma. During his work experience, Michael met with the Employer Services Representative and was referred to several job openings which were within walking distance of the homeless shelter in which he lived. Steve Shannon Tire and Auto Center in Danville was very interested in Michael and an On the Job Training opportunity. Michael was interviewed and offered a Tire Technician job, with the condition that he get his PA Driver's License. After several attempts Michael was able to secure his driver's license and started an On the Job Training as a Tire Technician at Steve Shannon Tire and Auto Centers in April 2012. During his training period, Michael is being trained by a former GET2WORK participant. He is currently completing that assignment and receiving very good comments from his supervisor. Upon successful completion of the OJT, Michael will be employed full time. He is currently working with the Director of the Gatehouse developing a budget and looking for an apartment.

## Tropical Storm Lee — Flood Efforts

2011 proved to be a trying year. In September, Tropical Storm Lee poured down on an already soaked landscape. Hundreds of roads were closed across Pennsylvania forcing evacuation orders for more than 100,000 people from the Susquehanna River's worst flooding in nearly 40 years. The PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties building office was affected by the flood waters. The building was under four foot of water, damaging it and destroying office equipment. Employees who could make it through the flood waters helped clean out the building so the construction team could start their repairs. The flood water may have destroyed the building but what the waters couldn't wash away was the staff's will to continue to serve the public. Staff were assigned to other sites to continue connecting business and job seekers. CareerLink® employees also helped staff a Federal Disaster Relief Center along with nine other agencies. They operated nine hours, a day seven days a week, to help flood victims. CareerLink® employees were able to hold recruitment events as well as PREP sessions at a temporary location along Route 11 in Bloomsburg. The CareerLink® building was reopened for business on November 7, 2011.



PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties was under water.



Destroyed office equipment.



Most items were unsalvageable.



Gutted and ready for Drywall.



Conference Room after the waters receded.



The entrance after the repair.

## Tropical Storm Lee — Flood Efforts

While PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties was underwater. Flood Relief Community Action Agency was hard at work with the Red Cross helping with the Disaster Relief Center that was set up in the Northumberland County Career and Arts Building which houses the CSO, Inc. offices. There were 130 People dislocated from their homes that stayed at the disaster center the first night. The Red Cross responded quickly bring food, clean-up kits, Clorox, and coolers. FEMA and PEMA also responded quickly setting up representatives for people to file their damage claims. The CSO staff helped coordinate the efforts. They checked people in, gave them clean up kits, directed them to where meals were being served and were a shoulder to cry on for people who were devastated by the disaster. The community banded together, dropping off donations of food, cleaning products and personal hygiene items.



## Flood Relief Grant

In order to address the long-term impact of flooding caused by Tropical Storm Lee in September of 2011, CSO received relief workers through a National Emergency Grant, ready administered by the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation (CPWDC).

Kathie O'Grady, Ann Stahl, Andrew Fox, and Joann Palachick served as humanitarian relief coordinators for Columbia, Montour, and Northumberland Counties. Services were available for individuals and organizations.

CPWDC received Disaster National Emergency Grant (NEG) funding through the US Department of Labor to address the impact of flooding caused by Tropical Storm Lee in September 2011. The plan was to deploy crews of dislocated workers to provide flood clean-up and humanitarian support to public and non-profit agencies in Columbia, Lycoming, Montour Northumberland, and Snyder Counties. Outreach was conducted with the Emergency Management Departments and Conservation Districts of all the affected counties to identify the specific sites in need of clean up. A total of 37 projects were approved for flood clean-up work. Those projects include flood affected areas such as townships, boroughs, municipal buildings, parks, recreation areas, libraries, and other public areas.



All projects have been completed except for three crews that are currently working on the remaining projects which should take them until the end of December. Those three projects are the Boy Scout Camp Lavigne, Old Lycoming Township and the City of Shamokin.

## As Featured on the USDOL e-newsletter

Michael Walter has a chance to aid his community and earn a paycheck thanks to a National Emergency Grant provided by the department to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Walter had been unemployed for three years after losing his job with a fiber board manufacturer. But a grant to help dislocated workers in his state led to his being hired to perform local cleanup work following Tropical Storm Lee last September. Walter now heads a crew removing debris, repairing damaged structures and maintaining public grounds. At the same time, the grant is helping Walter receive career advice and seek full-time job opportunities. He said the funds are a “win-win” for providing him with employment and the community with much needed support.



Michael Walter



Barry McLaughlin, CEO of C.S.O. throws out the opening pitch during an opening ceremony at the Northumberland Park. Mike Walter, Crew Leader for Flood Cleanup, left.

## Area Agencies Join Forces for the Long Haul

Recognizing the on-going need for flood relief services, CSO joined forces with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), Northumberland County Adult Services, United Methodist Church Susquehanna Conference (UMCOR), Hope Ministries, and Marty Sinopoli, local business owner. CSO Community Action Director Gale Zalar serves as the Chairperson for the committee.

Known as the **Northumberland County Long Term Recovery Committee**, the mission statement of the group reads:

***“The mission of the NCLTRC is to work together to address the needs of the residents within Northumberland County in response to the September 2011 flood. We will strive to:***

- 1. Respond to the needs not met by other disaster relief and recovery programs.***
- 2. Provide long-term assistance to individuals affected by the disaster who do not have adequate personal resources needed for recovery as a result of the disaster.***
- 3. Advocate for those people most vulnerable to having their needs overlooked in the recovery process.***
- 4. Provide collaborative leadership in the discernment of long-term needs for recovery and rehabilitation.”***

NCLTRC meets bi-weekly. If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, volunteering your services, or donating materials or funds, please contact Gale Zalar at 570-644-6575, ext. 136.

# Community Action Programs

## Flood of 2011 Relief Efforts

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During the aftermath of the Flood of 2011, CSO was designated as the lead agency for flood relief efforts in Northumberland County. We were, and are, instrumental in assisting Columbia and Montour Counties, as well. As a result of the intensive efforts of CSO and its partners, the Northumberland County Long Term Recovery Committee (NCLTRC) came into existence, headed by Community Action Director Gale Zalar.

Funding for CSO's flood relief program came in the way of private and business donations, as well as grants. The agency applied for and received a National Emergency Grant (NEG) and a grant from the Central Susquehanna Community Foundation. Additional monies were provided by a contribution by the Shell Oil Company via the Lower Anthracite Region United Way, the largesse of the United Methodist Committee of Relief (UMCOR), Northumberland County Area Agency on Aging, and Northumberland County Behavior Health Intellect Disorder.

As of June 25, a total of 433 households received some type of service from our Flood Relief Program, including home inspections, mold treatment, removal of damaged goods and materials, dehumidifiers provided, heating energy assistance, and skilled labor and materials provided.

## Area Needs Assessed by CSO

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CSO, Inc. completed its annual Needs Assessment in February. Area deficiencies were identified by staff as well as public survey. According to the study, the Central PA region is most worried about employment and adequate, affordable housing. Other reasons for concern are lack of public transportation, the need for health care, and the infiltration of illegal drugs/drug addiction.

Based on the findings of the needs Assessment, CSO is able to formulate a Community Action Work Plan for the year. Specifically, the Community Action Agency (CAA) requests funding based on the number of services provided directly and indirectly to individuals and families through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

Customers are eligible for CSBG services if their family income is at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines. The family is defined as those individuals residing in the home who are related by blood or marriage. Typical services begin with a thorough assessment of the family situation, conducted by a Case Manager. An action plan is formulated with the goal of self-sufficiency.

Along the way, clients may take advantage of numerous services, always provided free of charge. They may include, but are not limited to: financial literacy workshops, savings programs, employment referrals (through CareerLink services), help with public assistance applications and utility bill management, to name a few.

It is easy to see why CSO is recognized as the "Go To" Agency in the area!



## CSO C.A.R.E.S. for Savings Program

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It's not too early to think about saving for winter 2013! CSO CARES for SAVING is a 100% match savings program. To date, there have been ten graduates with a savings match of \$2,940!

Save up to \$300 in six months and we will match your \$300, paid directly to your heating provider. Participants must complete three workshops, including PPL E-Power Wise, Winterization, and Conserving to Save. It's that simple!!

Program openings are limited, so call today at 570-644-6575.

## Program Highlights

### *Self Sufficiency Award Winner*

CSO's Self-Sufficiency Award Nominee and Winner, **Adrienne Purcell**, was recognized at the **Annual CAAP Conference** in Harrisburg on April 18. Adrienne was chosen as an award winner based on her outstanding accomplishments in life. She was a former CAA customer and, through her efforts and the help of CSO, is now a gainfully employed homeowner!

When Adrienne first came to CSO's Community Action, her most pressing need was employment. Through the assessment and supportive service process, Adrienne was able to get the training she needed to become a Certified Nurse Assistant. She received career development counseling and help getting a job.

State Representative Kurt Masser was on hand to present the award to Adrienne.



State Rep. Kurt Masser and CAAP Award Recipient Adrienne Purcell.

## Financial Guidance

CSO Financial Literacy Instructor, Lari Thomas, encourages local agencies and individuals to take advantage of FREE workshops designed to help you save money!

Lari has had another successful year for financial literacy, serving over 900 individuals in Columbia, Montour and Northumberland Counties. She facilitates workshops ranging from Basic Budgeting and Financial Goals to Winterization and other energy saving programs.

Lari will also come to your workplace by appointment. If you would like to receive a copy of the monthly workshop calendar or set up a workshop at your site, please contact Lari via email at [lthomas@censop.com](mailto:lthomas@censop.com).

Don't miss out on this opportunity to provide your clients with a valuable service at no charge!

## The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program offered free tax preparation to low-to-moderate-income individuals and families at 15 sites in Northumberland, Columbia and Montour Counties. Our 14 Volunteers were trained and certified by the IRS, and prepared and e-filed Federal and state income tax returns at no cost to the client! This program ended on Tuesday, April 17, 2012.



These volunteers who were certified and knowledgeable about special tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, helped to obtain \$206,245 in Earned Income Tax Credits and \$20,535 for Child Tax Credit for our clients.

Together we filed 526 Federal Tax returns and 508 Pennsylvania State Tax returns. In addition, to those totals we serviced an estimated 75 other clients that were not in compliance to file either Federal or State Taxes. An estimated total of 601 people were served in our CSO VITA program. For 2012 tax purposes, the total refund amount for these clients was \$522,108.00.

During the tax season our IRS contact Mr. George C. McGriff Jr., Sr. Stakeholder Relationship Tax Consultant Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC)-Philadelphia Territory, paid us a visit to confirm that our Central Susquehanna Opportunities Inc. site in Shamokin was in compliance with the IRS SITE Requirements. Mr. McGriff was very pleased with our organization of the site and how well we kept our records.

We actually received word that our region filed more than 126,000 tax returns, up 12% from the year before and that was more than 19,000 returns ahead of the next closest territory in the entire nation. Our region also had a low reject rate of 5.1%.



## Housing Initiative

On August 29th, CSO Inc. bid successfully on a single home in Coal Township through the Northumberland County Judicial Sale. CSO has been working with various partnering agencies to put the property back on the tax rolls. Triangle Tech students (Sunbury campus) donated their time and skills to remodel the kitchen. Appliances, furniture, and other household goods were donated as well. During the flood recovery period, CSO hosted out-of-town volunteers at the home. When they were not busy helping flood survivors, the volunteers chipped in with some finish work in the house.

CSO would like to acknowledge the groups and individuals who have generously contributed time, skills, and materials to this endeavor:

- Triangle Tech (Sunbury Campus)
- Lenape Solar
- United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
- Northumberland County Juvenile Court
- State Corrections Institute, Coal Township



## Housing Assistance — Housing Specialist

During the past year, CSO partnered with the Northumberland County Behavioral Health and Intellectual Development Services (BHIDS) to create a new position called the Northumberland County Housing Specialist. This position was filled by Mr. Brian Ambrose. Brian works with numerous agencies and housing authorities to ensure decent and affordable housing for individuals with disabilities. This past year, 728 individuals received assistance through the program.

Brian facilitates monthly meetings with various agencies of the county such as: Adult Services (HPRP), Aging, Long-Term Living, area Housing Authorities, Shared Supports, Northwestern Human Services, Community Action and the Regional Housing Coordinator. The members of these meetings are what make up the Northumberland County Local Housing Options Team or “LHOT”. Brian has been successful in bringing many area landlords to the table, as well. By educating landlords and the general public, Brian hopes to remove the stigma attached to renting to those customers who have mental disabilities.

Goals of the Housing Specialist include: seeking out grants; starting up new housing projects; monitoring existing programs; and working with the LHOT in a joint effort to develop safe, decent and affordable housing options for residents of Northumberland County. Under Brian’s leadership, Northumberland County’s LHOT has been revitalized and recognized by the Maximizing Opportunities 2012 Regional Housing Summit on May 3.



Brian Ambrose, Northumberland County Housing Specialist.



Mt. Carmel Area Sophomore Faith Leaveck job shadowed with a photographer from The News-Item. This photo, taken by Faith, was published in the Saturday, December 10 edition of the daily newspaper.

Ms Leaveck hopes to pursue a career in photography and/or graphic art.

## Nutrition Help

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Since July 2007, the PA Department of Health has contracted with 13 non-profit community service agencies to assist low-income residents in applying for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps). Locally, CSO, Inc., a Community Action Agency, has been awarded this grant.

Over the past five years, CSO has had a dramatic impact in its service area— Columbia, Montour and Northumberland Counties- far exceeding its contract requirements. CSO enabled approximately 900 struggling families to put food on the table through SNAP benefits. By increasing access to food stamps for so many families, the project has generated an estimated \$1.6 million in additional economic activity, since most of the benefits are spent in the recipients' communities.

Most of CSO's customers are identified through community outreach at senior centers, low-income and elderly housing sites, community events, and food distributions. Some are referred by other agencies, and another portion of applicants contact CSO on their own. The prospective applicants are screened using state guidelines for income, assets and expenses. If the preliminary screening points to eligibility, an application is submitted through the COMPASS system.

From January 2012 through June, of the 150 applications submitted through CSO, 104 were for elderly residents and 36 were for disabled consumers. Contrary to public perception, numerous applicants are working poor who are struggling to make ends meet.

While residents may apply for benefits on their own, the paper and computer applications are often overwhelming. CSO takes the customer through the application process in a simple, non-judgmental manner in person or over the phone.

The overall impact to the service area is exponential. In addition to alleviating hunger for so many families, these benefits are spent at local grocery stores, farmers markets and other retailers, helping to pay cashiers, dairy farmers, truck drivers, store owners and many others.



## Career Development

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CSO, Inc. continues to partner with the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit Teens in Innovative Educational Structures (CSIU/TIES) to offer job shadowing experiences to sophomore students in local high schools. Each school year, students in the sophomore class of Lourdes Regional School, Mount Carmel and Shamokin Area School Districts are invited to take part in a job shadow experience. Again in the summer months, students are given the opportunity to shadow an occupation which may not be prevalent during the winter months, such as photography, golf course management etc.

By taking part in the job shadow program during the school and summer months, students are able to make a comparison between occupations. With the help of our local business community and guidance counselors, students have the ability to explore a wide range of career options. Each student is paired with an adult mentor, who provides the student with firsthand experiences. This exposure to the world of work assists the students in gaining an insight to the academic, technical, and personal skills required by a particular occupation. Pertinent feedback has been received from all our students, their parents, counselors and mentors, praising the importance and tremendous value this program provides to the future of our kids.

## The Organization of 230 Members

The Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce is a member based organization that currently has 230 members. The Chamber strives to help promote the region and its business members on many different levels.

So what are the benefits of belonging to the Brush Valley Chamber? Business contacts and exposure, communications and advertising, recommendations and referrals, seminars and workshops, group savings on health insurance, group savings on energy costs for your business, savings on your residential energy bill, communications services and copies.

Additionally, you will be exposed to a dedicated leadership and professional staff, government and business relationships, available commercial and industrial listings, the factbilt credit reporter of the area, as well as numerous monthly membership events.

From networking to your gross margin, the Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce is there, 'serving' our members.

Our Chamber is also involved in many other initiatives such as community wellness projects, economic and infrastructure development and growth, such as transportation issues and local blight issues, strategic planning, partnerships with other organizations in order to improve the quality of our life in our communities, keeping business and the community informed on current legislation and most importantly, keeping our youth in the area.

The Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce is an organizational network of several hundred valley businesses whose focus is the advancement of the area's business and economic interests.

The Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce continues to grow into one of the largest business organizations in Northumberland County, thanks to an involved Board of Directors and many dedicated and committed chamber member volunteers.

Every day our chamber is striving to help preserve and strengthen the Brush Valley's business environment and quality of life by providing programs and services which promote civic, social, business and economic growth and development.

We are a catalyst and advocate for these endeavors all while providing positive leadership throughout the region and aggressively promoting its people and thus insuring the highest quality of life for everyone. That is our mission.

Please view our Chamber website [www.brushvalleychamber.com](http://www.brushvalleychamber.com) for meetings and Chamber/Community and Member events to be held in the future.

The Chamber is striving to offer benefits for our members. For a listing of benefits, please click on "Members" and then "Member Benefits" to see how the chamber can help grow your business.



School Counts! Registration.



Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce Board.



Ribbon Cutting at KPI Technology



# Financial Statements

## Statement of Financial Activity Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2012

### Revenue:

Federal, State and Local Grant funding	\$ 5,709,802	97.44%
Fundraising	\$ 76,012	1.30%
Fees, contracts and other revenue	\$ 68,855	1.17%
Investment Income	\$ 1,169	0.02%
Restricted Grant revenue	\$ 4,200	0.07%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 5,860,038</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Operating Expenses:

#### Program Services:

Workforce Investment Act - Adult	\$ 481,975	8.00%
Workforce Investment Act - Youth	\$ 641,578	10.65%
Workforce Investment Act - Dislocated Worker	\$ 603,855	10.02%
Workforce - American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA)	\$ 334,026	5.54%
Transportation	\$ 78,761	1.31%
Department of Public Welfare - EARN program	\$ 1,437,911	23.87%
YouthBuild program	\$ 175,318	2.91%
Way to Work program	\$ 1,151,901	19.12%
Community Opportunity Grant	\$ —	0.00%
Pre-Employment program	\$ —	0.00%
Special Workforce programs	\$ 106,653	1.77%
Drexel Internship - Green Energy projects	\$ —	0.00%
Department of Public Welfare - Work Ready program	\$ 109,370	1.82%
Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)	\$ 425,250	7.06%
CSBG - American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA)	\$ 243,995	4.05%
Food Stamp Participation program	\$ 64,036	1.06%
Family Savings program	\$ 24,174	0.40%
School to Work initiatives	\$ 4,811	0.08%
CSO CARES - Emergency Energy Assistance program	\$ 16,394	0.27%
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program	\$ 942	0.02%
Other Community Action Initiatives	\$ 23,460	0.39%

Total program services	\$ 5,924,410	98.34%
General and Administrative	\$ 78,182	1.30%
Fundraising	\$ 21,650	0.36%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,024,242</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Change in Net Assets

<b>Net Assets - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$ 241,937</b>
<b>Net Assets - End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 77,733</b>

### Expense Breakdown:

Program services	\$ 5,924,410	98.34%
General and Administrative	\$ 78,182	1.30%
Fundraising	\$ 21,650	0.36%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,024,242</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# Financial Statements

## Statement of Financial Position Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2012

### Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$	236,699	30.13%
Accounts receivable	\$	516,927	65.79%
Prepaid client expenses	\$	32,085	4.08%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$	<b>785,711</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Liabilities and net assets:

#### Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$	31,533	4.01%
Unearned advances on contracts	\$	322,856	41.09%
Unearned revenue	\$	—	0.00%
Accrued expenses	\$	214,716	27.33%
Line of Credit	\$	—	0.00%
Accrued leave	\$	138,873	17.67%
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	\$	<b>707,978</b>	<b>90.11%</b>

#### Net Assets

	\$	<b>77,733</b>	<b>9.89%</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	\$	<b>785,711</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## 7th Annual CSO Golf Classic July 18, 2011

Thanks to everyone participated the 7th Annual Golf Classic! It was a great success and CSO couldn't have done it without your sponsorship and participation!

Special Thanks to the following major event sponsors:

- Wealth Professionals
- PC Works
- Nick Goretski III
- Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC
- D.G. Yuengling & Son
- M&T Bank
- The Demsko Family



## 2011 CSO Sportsman Raffle

The CSO Sportsman Raffle was held for the second year and was a great success! 2,112 tickets were sold by employees and board members and many prizes were awarded to the lucky ticket holders. Look for CSO at events in the Community to purchase this years Sportsman's Raffle tickets!



*Thank you to all of our partners who have financially supported our agency! Your contributions have enabled us to serve our communities to further our mission to serve as a catalyst for economic, educational, social, and workforce development in our communities. Thank you for your support and sharing in our vision. If you would like to support CSO, Inc. please visit [www.censop.com](http://www.censop.com) and click on the 'donate' button or contact our corporate office at (570) 644-6575 for more information on how you can help.*

*Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. Memorial Gift Program*

Give back to the community that gave you so much.

A memorial gift ensures the continuation of CSO's outstanding work in community assistance, individual empowerment, and workforce development.

Please consider making a financial gift or donation in honor or in memorial of an individual, group, or special event.

*leave a legacy...*

Please contact CSO, Inc. at 570-644-6575

Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc., a Community Action Agency, is a private non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, foundations, churches, civic organizations and the community in order to serve and assist those in need. All contributions to CSO, Inc. are eligible for Federal tax deductions. To make a financial contribution or to participate in the Memorial Gift Program visit [www.censop.com](http://www.censop.com) or contact the corporate office at 570-644-6575.

# Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. Locations



CSO Central Office and Community Action Agency  
2 East Arch Street  
Shamokin, PA 17872  
(570) 644-6575



PA CareerLink® Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties at Sunbury  
225 Market Street  
Sunbury, PA 17801  
(570) 988-7300



PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties  
351 Tenny Street  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
(570) 387-6288



PA CareerLink® Clinton County  
8 North Grove Street  
Lock Haven, PA 17745  
(570) 893-4022



PA CareerLink® Lycoming County  
329 Pine Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
(570) 601-5465



Community Action Agency  
114 Mill Street  
Danville, PA 17821  
(570) 275-3161



This Project was financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

The official registration and financial information of Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania (1-800-732-0999). Registration does not imply endorsement.



**Helping Communities Bridge Gaps**