

Family Connection Center Community Action Agency

A History

In 1964, Congress authorized the Economic Opportunity Act and created the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The purpose of the office was to fund innovative programs to “alleviate poverty” and to involve the poor in helping themselves. A core part of this effort was the funding of local private, nonprofit organizations that were called Community Action Programs (CAP) that had a Board of Trustees. The Boards were to be tri-partite or made up of one-third low-income representatives from the community, one-third from the private sector, and one-third made up of local government officials. These boards were to develop programs to solve local problems. National program funding was also available through competitive grants for demonstration projects.

Commissioner Stanley Smoot and the Health Director, Dr. Arnold Issacson, were instrumental in obtaining a Planning Grant for Davis County and created a private non-profit corporation with Dr. Issacson serving as the Board Chair. This original grant was for \$13,000. They hired Dr. James S. Milliron to design and carry out a survey of Davis County to determine the needs at that time. Dr. Milliron left just after the survey began and the Board appointed the secretary, Ann Kagie, as acting director to supervise the field workers. With the help of the School of social work at the University of Utah, the results were tabulated, analyzed, and compiled into a report and presented to the Board. From this information, the secretary was instructed to prepare a grant request to the Federal Field Office in Kansas. The grant was funded and funding continued through submission each year.

Outreach workers were hired to assist clients in obtaining needed services and to organize neighborhood councils so the clients could work positively in solving problems. A neighborhood center was opened in the Anchorage housing area of Clearfield and another in Bountiful for the South Davis area. The lack of low-income housing was one of the first problems to be addressed, followed by education, the dropout rate of minorities, and job skills.

Of the competitive and innovative programs available for funding at the national level, the CAP received funding to start the following:

- Head Start
- Adult Basic Education
- Neighborhood Youth Corp
- Aging Programs
- Manpower Training Program
- Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Counseling
- Food Supplement Program
- Emergency Food and Medical Services
- Weatherization
- Low-income winter heat assistance

- VISTA projects
- Food pantries

A comment was made in a neighborhood council meeting that adult basic education was not helping because with night classes, it would take years, and individuals still would not have any vocational training. As a result, an innovative program was developed with the Davis CAP administering a multi-CAP Vocational Improvement Program that gained national attention. Working with the Davis County School District, Weber State University, Box Elder and Cache County School Districts, Salt Lake Technical College and the Utah County Technical College, curriculum was developed to offer basic education and vocational training in tandem. The State eventually assumed this program as Skill Centers and it was the forerunner of the current technical centers.

The CAP influenced Employment Services from both Salt Lake and Ogden, and the Community Services Council from Salt Lake sent personnel to work from the neighborhood centers in Davis County. CAP also advocated for the establishment of the Housing Authority in Davis County.

Another demonstration program developed at the State level by the Davis CAP was assigned to administer it throughout the State Labor Training Agencies. The purpose was to provide work experience to single parents with mentors at different job sites. This also gained national attention as the welfare system was being revised.

In 1974, CAP changed from a private non-profit corporation to a public agency under Davis County. In Washington, the Office of Economic Opportunity had been changed to the Community Services Office, with funding coming through the State. In 1997 Davis County decided to divest itself of the CAP, and the State Office recommended that the Family Connection Center receive the funding. From that the Family Connection Center became the Community Action Agency for Davis County.

The Center had been in operation since 1984 as Davis Family Support Center. The Center began as an outreach of the Ogden Family Support Center with the help of funding from the Division of Child and Family Services.

The Center became a 501 (c)(3) private non-profit in 1985 and was located in Layton where Lowe's Home Improvement currently is. At that time the center was only offering crisis/respice nursery care, counseling, and shelter.

- In 1987 the center moved its location to Clearfield, and later built an addition to it. In 1996 the Center changed its name from Davis Family Support Center to the Family Connection Center.
- In 1997 the Center became the Community Action Agency for Davis County and changed its name to Davis Family Support Center dba Family Connection Center.
- In 2001 the Center implemented a Homeless Services Program, and also that year opened its Bountiful location.
- In 2002 the Center implemented the Member Organized Resource Exchange Program.

- In 2003, with the help of Kevin Garn and Community Development Block Grant funds from the County, the Center purchased a 15,000 square foot building to house the Food Bank and Therapy Programs.
- In 2004 the Center began offering Emergency Motel Vouchers to homeless individuals and their families.
- And finally in November of 2005 the Attic Connection Thrift Store opened its doors to the public and is currently being run out of the warehouse of the Food Bank in Layton.
- A building was purchased at 780 South State in Clearfield for the Thrift Store and it opened at the Attic Connection in 2007.
- The Attic Connection Center closed in April of 2008 and reopened as a Parent Education Center.
- Davis Family Support Center dba Family Connection Center changed its name to Family Connection Center in January of 2008.