



FirstState
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
People Helping People Build Community

AGENCY OVERVIEW

First State was founded in 1965 as Sussex County Community Action Agency

In 1993, the agency expanded its services to all three Delaware counties and became First State Community Action Agency

Today, First State is recognized as one of Delaware's leading anti-poverty organizations helping people help themselves



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MISSION

To work towards the elimination of poverty and lessen the effects of poverty on people with low incomes



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WHAT WE DO

First State provides over 20 programs aimed at building whole, empowered families and inclusive, healthy communities equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive

HOUSING COUNSELING

Ensures families have safe, affordable housing in the communities where they want to live by providing:

- Pre-Purchase Counseling
- First Time Homebuyer Education
- Foreclosure Prevention and Mediation Support
- Advocacy





H.E.L.P.

Provides direct home improvements and education aimed at eliminating unhealthy conditions to elevate the quality of life and health of participants

- RRHACE (Repairing, Replacing Heaters, and Conserving Energy): provides heating system replacement or repair for qualifying households
- SCAP (Summer Cooling Assistance Program): provides room-sized air conditioners to vulnerable populations (families with young children, the elderly, and individuals with chronic respiratory illnesses)
- Energy Education: one-on-one education and group workshops provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and materials needed to ensure their homes are as energy efficient as possible and to make energy-conscious behavioral choices



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Supports the growth of healthy, inclusive communities by providing support in the following areas:

- Community Organizing
- Capacity Building
- Leadership Development
- Technical Support
- Advocacy





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OPIOID OUTREACH

Our Opioid Outreach Navigator connects individuals to the resources they need related to substance use disorder and other co-occurring needs

- The Navigator works to break down barriers to accessing treatment and other services – transportation, lack of insurance, knowledge of available resources, trust, language barriers, financial constraints, and others
- We work as advocates for the communities we serve to identify and address socioeconomic, behavioral and clinical factors driving vulnerabilities and risk



EARNED INCOME TAX PREPARATION

Income tax preparation for qualified families by certified volunteers

- Savings products (bonds, savings accounts, etc.) are available to encourage families to invest for the future or save for goals like homeownership, education, small business development, etc.
- Referrals for financial coaching and other supportive services



LA CASITA OUTREACH CENTER

Provides educational and supportive services to individuals and families with limited English language proficiency

This support bridges the cultural and linguistic gap between the local Hispanic population and business, service providers, and residents with the end goal of building positive community relationships

Families are empowered and become well-informed, productive residents who contribute to their overall community



EMERGENCY SERVICES

Provides assistance to stabilize families in crisis, or to prevent the family unit from falling into crisis

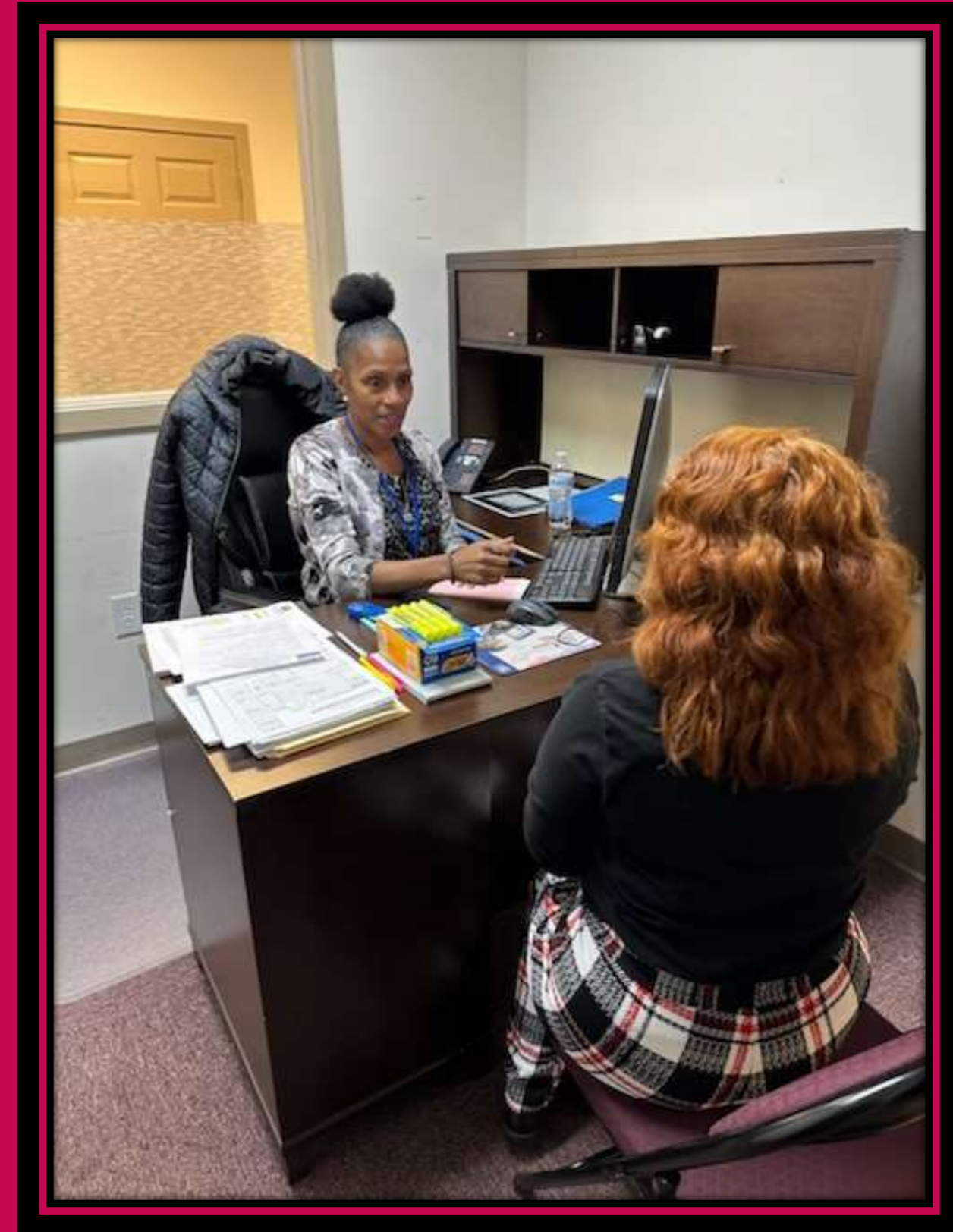
- Eviction/Homelessness Prevention
- Utility Disconnection Prevention
- Emergency Medical/Prescription Assistance
- Emergency Shelter



COMPREHENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

Provides families with holistic, wrap-around services that address barriers to self-sufficiency

- Addresses barriers to obtaining employment, income, stable housing, and access to transportation, education, and childcare
- Provides resource connections and referrals to partner organizations who address more complex barriers such as mental health providers, substance abuse treatment facilities, and domestic violence experts



A SECOND CHANCE REENTRY PROGRAM

Provides support for individuals transitioning from prison back into their communities

Offers supportive services designed to overcome the unique barriers faced by the ex-offender population

- Assistance obtaining meaningful employment
- Securing safe, affordable housing
- Obtaining education or skills needed to advance in life
- Connecting ex-offenders to intensive services to address mental health or substance abuse disorders

Coordinated reentry programs are proven to reduce recidivism, improve overall public safety, and build positive community relationships



STATE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The primary goals of the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) are to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. States are to spend most of the funding for services that address: family support, family preservation, time-limited family reunification and adoption promotion and support.



GRANT DIVERSION

Grant diversion is a way for families to choose short-term help rather than long-term ongoing cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The program is intended to help a family through a financial problem which jeopardizes transportation and employment and which, if not solved, could result in the family needing regular ongoing assistance.

Diversion assistance may be used for items and/or services such as, but not limited to:

- Transportation – repairs, down payment, tires, insurance, driver's license fee, etc.
- Clothing – uniforms, specialized clothing and footwear, or other employment-related apparel
- Tools and equipment
- Medical expenses not covered by Medicaid (such as eyeglasses)
- Union dues, special fees, licenses, or certificates
- Upfront costs of employment such as agency fees or testing fees



FOOD PANTRY

Provides nutritious food for any community member in need

Diapers and baby formula



SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Senior Companions are volunteers who provide companionship, peer support, and respite for family members of other elderly community members who have difficulty with daily tasks

This allows seniors to remain in their homes living independently as long as possible and engages their peers in volunteer service



SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

SCSEP provides part-time training opportunities to participants who are not currently in the workforce by placing them in partner agencies where they acquire or refine skills needed to obtain unsubsidized employment

Participants are offered supportive services to meet family needs and informational workshops that cover topics such as job seeking skills, personal safety, retirement planning, and other topics



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Provides training opportunities to participants to upskill or change their career path altogether

Increases participants job skills and knowledge to advance their career and be effective in the workplace

Program provides economic opportunities to individuals, businesses, and communities

Partnership with Delaware Tech and CORA Learning Institute

3 concentration areas (CDL, CNA, HVAC)



COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

- Help students prepare for college and careers
- Implemented in school districts and at youth serving organizations
- Middle and high school students
- Curriculum (DOL Career Compass & You for Youth)
- Connections to summer internship experiences
- College tours
- Job shadowing/career exploration



LEARNING PODS/AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Afterschool programs located in community centers and local schools provide homework and tutorial assistance to youth aged 5-18.

Prevention activities are a critical element in these programs and address youth risk behaviors related to ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, bullying, and peer pressure).

Cultural and social enrichment activities are coupled with academic programming with the goal of educating well-rounded youth that are empowered to make wise decisions for their futures.



FREEDOM SCHOOLS

The CDF Freedom Schools® program provides summer and after-school enrichment through a research-based and multicultural program model that supports K-12 scholars and their families through five essential components: high quality academic and character-building enrichment; parent and family involvement; civic engagement and social action; intergenerational servant leadership development; and nutrition, health and mental health.

The Freedom School:

- Provides summer enrichment through a research-based and multicultural program model that supports grades K-12th and their families.
- Empowers students to believe in their ability and responsibility to make a difference.
- Instills in students a love of reading to help them avoid summer learning loss.
- Provides high quality academic and character-building enrichment.
- Provides parent and family involvement.
- Introduce students to civic engagement and social action.
- Supports intergenerational servant leadership development.
- Supports nutrition, health, and mental health.



SUMMER ENRICHMENT CAMP

Provides recreational opportunities, educational activities, informative field trips, creative art projects, and healthy nutrition to youth during the summer months

Serves as a safety net to reduce at-risk behaviors, foster social and cultural growth among community youth, and minimize academic loss during the summer



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Kent and Sussex County youth have the opportunity to obtain a summer job that offers them career exploration opportunities and paid work experience

Youth are employed in partner organizations that give them opportunity to obtain skills and real on-the-job experience with the goal of assisting them in making informed choices on their career path

Participating youth receive support and educational workshops on topics such as resume writing, professionalism, and other pertinent topics



ADULT CULINARY ARTS

430 hours of hands-on training offering students the opportunity to master basic culinary arts skills

Instruction provided under the direction of certified chef instructors in a full commercial kitchen

Soft skills training and development

Internships with leading local restaurants

Job placement support offered to participants who complete the training successfully



NOW WE'RE COOKING

Vocational food service training program geared towards youth in grades 9-12 referred by local participating schools based on student need and interest

First rate food service training is incorporated with work readiness and life skills training

Combines mainstream students with youth with disabilities which provides a diverse and inclusive learning experience

Effectively equips students with skills needed to transition from the school setting to a work environment



COMMUNITY DINNERS

Affordable, nutritious meals served by trained culinary arts professionals to encourage family togetherness and interaction

Informative presenters provide presentations about topics and skills families can use in their everyday lives



SPRINGBOARD PALLET VILLAGE

The Pallet Village is a partnership between multiple organizations and is administered by the Springboard Collaborative. It is housed on First State property at 411 Kimmey St. Georgetown, DE

The Village is comprised of 40 cabins

Each cabin is 64 sq ft. and features a lockable door, heat, and AC.

There are shared restroom and shower facilities on site

The Village partners with a variety of specialized organizations to form Care Teams that support residents in setting and meeting goals related to substance use disorder, financial literacy, mental and behavioral health treatment, employment training and workforce development, and many other supportive services

First State provides Comprehensive Case Management services to Village residents.





THE DELAWARE NEED

11.4% of Delawareans live in poverty with 6% living in **EXTREME** poverty

24.6% of Delaware's **WORKING** families live under 200% of the Federal Poverty Line

Children in Delaware are the mostly likely of any age group to experience poverty, with a five-year poverty rate of 17.3%

Time-limited pandemic safety net programs that improved access to income and employment supports, shelter, food, and healthcare **have ended**

6.6% of Delawareans are **uninsured**

26,300 Delaware households are spending **more than 50%** of their income on housing

59% of college graduates from Delaware have **student debt**

Source:

<https://spotlightonpoverty.org/states/delaware/>

<https://udspace.udel.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/38721c6f-13ac-472c-8345-785e5b731e1a/content>



OUR IMPACT

11,877 households were served

185 unemployed adults **obtained employment**

228 children demonstrated improved **positive approaches toward learning**

67 individuals opened **savings accounts**

160 individuals **purchased a home**

292 individuals achieved and **maintained capacity to meet their basic needs**

339 individuals **experiencing homelessness obtained safe temporary shelter**

148 individuals **obtained safe and affordable housing**

1199 individuals **avoided eviction**

96 individuals **avoided foreclosure**

238 individuals experienced **improved health and safety due to improvements within their home**

238 individuals **improved energy efficiency and/or reduced energy burden**

608 individuals demonstrated **increased nutrition skills**

58 individuals with disabilities **maintained an independent living situation**

90 individuals demonstrated **improved mental and behavioral health and well-being**

88 individuals demonstrated **improved physical health and well-being**



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TESTIMONIALS

“I have cancer and Jennifer worked around my illness to help me! This lady made me cry with her kindness! Thank you so much Jennifer.”
– Anonymous, Emergency Services

“First, I would recommend the program to anyone trying to put themselves in a better position and a great opportunity which it did for me to help me further my career in culinary and a chance to put some stability, as well as social tools to remain focused and productive in society.” –Troy B., Culinary Arts Training

“When I first came to First State, I was working at Royal Farms on Route 9 in the kitchen, in need of a vehicle now I can get back and forth to work and take my child to appointments thanks to the program.” –Tyrron Tingle, Grant Diversion



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“My experience at First State Community Action Agency culinary arts class was awesome. I had so many wonderful classmates, Chef Lee was a great instructor. I could always cook, but being exposed to different cultures of cooking gave me the confidence to open up my cooking skills, even improved my teamwork skills with feeding the homeless and catering for several of First State Community Action events led to me meeting prominent people in the community and throughout the State and with the opportunities that I was given furthered my career in culinary arts. I developed a new perspective of leadership and have a skill to teach all ages and give back. Thanks everyone at First State Community Action Agency for making my future secure.” - R.H., Culinary Arts

“Miss Carla Morton, my name is David Barclay, I am calling you because in December, the beginning of December you sent a contractor out here and put a heater in my house, I wanted to tell you thank you, I don't know how many people say thank you, but I am a senior citizen. I was at the end of my rope, I needed heat. and I was even had pipes break in my house, I was doing everything I could just do the best that me and my wife could, I really was at the end of my rope, and I feel like you saved my life. We have heat in our home, and it was just one of the biggest blessings I've ever had, me and my wife have worked hard but we retired now, and we could not afford to put a heater in our home, and we were struggling, so again thank you we are very, very grateful, thank you so much, continue to be blessed and continue to be a blessing. You have a wonderful day.” – David Barclay, RRHACE



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“My name is Stephanie Napier and I’m in the SRAP program and it has helped me out tremendously I was homeless before I got the voucher and I applied for the voucher, and it wasn’t super hard, and it wasn’t really a long process and everyone who works for the program was extremely nice especially my caseworker they made everything clear and made me understand everything and helped with trying to find housing. It’s amazing Program to people like myself, who was homeless and trying to get back on their feet, so I am blessed to have participated in this program. Thank you.”
–Stephanie Napier, State Rental Assistance Program

“I am so grateful for First State and the help that I received. Ms. Allen was very kind, knowledgeable and helped me during one of the toughest times of my life. My experience with First State has been wonderful!!!” - Regina D., Emergency Services

“Jennifer Evans assisted me with Energy Assistance, she was quite knowledgeable, friendly, and understood my needs. She took my application, approved it and in a few days the bill was paid. She then referred me to the SCSEP program, and even had one of the ladies come to speak to me briefly the same day! I applied, and now I am employed, and thoroughly enjoying serving clients of the community at the Dept of Labor! Thank you First State!!” – Jennifer D., Emergency Services



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“I received very professional services from Ms. Allen. She was pleasant and helpful. Thank you for assisting with this emergency.” –Anonymous, Emergency Services

“I have received help I didn’t know I could have. Best place I have ever called for help. I got so much help. Thank you so much for all the help you have given me and my children.” – Anonymous, Emergency Services

“We needed help with emergency shelter. She was very intent at listening to what we needed. She was excellent! Mrs. Evans went above and beyond. She was very kind, compassionate, and sympathetic to our plight.” - Anonymous, Emergency Services

“Excellent compassion, empathetic, understanding, willing to assist...” –Anonymous, Emergency Services

“I appreciate you guys!”-Anonymous, Emergency Services



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*“Thank God for First State helping the community.
Keep up the great work.”* –Anonymous, Emergency
Services