

ANNUAL
REPORT
2019



GREATER ERIE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

Helping People. Changing Lives.

MISSION

The Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) will eliminate poverty in Erie County through empowerment, education and community partnership.

VISION

Empowering the community to foster a better life for all.

COMMUNITY 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 are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other as they move from poverty to self-sufficiency.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

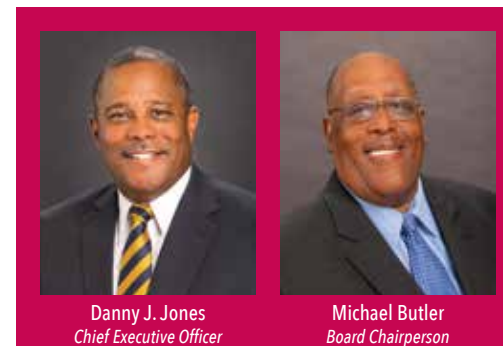
Thank all of you for your ongoing support of GECAC, our staff and the thousands of people whom we serve every year.

There is a classic saying attributed to Vince Lombardi that says "When the going gets tough the tough get going." That quote has been used countless times, mainly because it's true. When times get tight that's not the time to give up. For 54 years GECAC has done just that. As programs and funding streams have shifted or ceased to exist, GECAC has found a way to stay in the business of working to eliminate poverty. Some people have the impression that poverty can be eliminated by catchy phrases and high profile programs but we know that it takes hard work, determination and a buy in from the people with whom we are working.

During our existence we have assisted thousands of people to get through tough times. We've helped children obtain a great education, helped individuals acquire GEDs, and assisted them in their pursuit of higher education. Additionally, we have assisted senior citizens through our senior centers, Meals on Wheels, and protective services. We have provided matching savings accounts, housing counseling and other services in an effort to improve the lives of our community members.

GECAC is comprised of a few hundred dedicated people that put their boots on the ground every day to help people to improve their lives. We are the Erie County agency designated to fight poverty, and we are the Area Agency on Aging; both of these designations we wear with pride. For years very few organizations and individuals were concerned about poverty. It was looked upon as a lack of effort, character or education. As the economy began to change people began to understand what we knew all along - that poverty is a complex state of being that takes effort and support to get out of it. It is not a short term effort but a long term journey.

This past year the agency lost one of our oldest programs, Head Start. After servicing 35,000 children over a period of 54 years our time to run the program came to an end. While we are sad to see this happen, it does not mean the end of GECAC. We are still operating on a sustainable budget, and we continue to provide supports and programs to the citizens of Erie County. In the next year you will hear about some of the new initiatives that we are currently working on, and we believe that you will be impressed as we strengthen our holistic approach to supporting families.



AREA AGENCY ON AGING

EXPERTS ON ALL ASPECTS OF AGING.

The GECAC Area Agency on Aging (AAA) provides the education needed to empower Erie County's oldest citizens to live safe and fulfilling lives.



Through partnerships with other agencies, the AAA focuses on responding to the needs of seniors who:

- **remain active and involved in their community;**
- **are cared for in their homes where they are comfortable and secure;**
- **require placement eligibility; or**
- **require protection and advocacy.**

Research shows that staying physically active and volunteering in the community are two ways that seniors may remain healthier longer. Over the past year, 524 seniors were matched with local non-profit volunteer opportunities as part of our **Foster Grandparent and Retired & Senior Volunteer programs**. An additional 1042 exercised their minds and bodies by participating in 121 health and wellness events at the seven GECAC operated **senior centers**.

The senior care landscape can be confusing to navigate. To help educate our County's seniors and their families regarding their rights and

opportunities, GECAC's **Information and Referral** caseworkers and **Senior Advocate** are available. For those seniors who want to remain living at home, **in-home supports** may be provided. During the 2018-2019 program year, over 2000 seniors were helped with these supports which include activities such as bathing, dressing, housekeeping, and home-delivered meals.

To help decide if long-term care placement might be needed, GECAC's **Assessment** team assists in making this determination by using state provided screening tools. Over 4000 assessments were administered in the last year.

Despite best efforts to keep our county's seniors safe, there unfortunately are some perpetrators who prey on these vulnerable adults. **Older Adult Protective Services** investigated 786 reports of need for seniors who were potentially being physically, mentally, or financially abused in 2018-2019. Additionally, the **Long Term Care Ombudsman** helped 390 individuals living in long-term care facilities to resolve their concerns.

EDUCATION, TRAINING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

ONE OF THE ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY IS LACK OF EDUCATION.



Services within the Education, Training & Community Services (ETCS) Division focus on helping individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency through three main categories:

- education
- community services
- supportive services

One of the primary ways to better one's economic situation is through education; however, role models with a post-secondary education are not always available for youth living in families with low-incomes. **The Upward Bound** program empowers 74 high school students each year to pursue the college dream through tutoring, college tours, career awareness activities and education on the financial aid process.

Before one can focus on education or employment, basic needs must be met. This is why it is essential that emergency supports such as housing, utility and Weatherization assistance continue to be provided. During 2018-2019, 680 families were helped to avoid eviction or utility shutoff through GECAC's **housing and utility assistance** programs. An additional, 18 homes were weatherized to help increase energy efficiency and reduce utility bills.

To help stretch limited resources, GECAC continued to offer **budgeting and matched savings account** programs. Additionally, GECAC once again served as a **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** site through the Erie Free Taxes network. As Erie County's only walk-in site, GECAC's volunteer tax preparers completed 609 returns helping filers to avoid fees they would have encountered at paid preparers.

Finally, in the supportive services category, GECAC's **food services** department prepared 110,694 meals for the elderly.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

STABLE EMPLOYMENT IS KEY TO ESCAPING POVERTY.



Creating job opportunities and building a workforce that can take advantage of promising career paths is an important piece of the puzzle to end poverty in Erie County.

Recognizing that employment is an essential stepping stone out of poverty, the Workforce Development Services Division serves to provide employment supports, education and training for potential workers and to connect those workers to employers who have openings.

Recognizing that our County's youth needed more opportunities for summer employment – both to educate them on basic work skills and also to lessen their involvement in negative activities – the County of Erie, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and The Erie Community Foundation came together to fund the **Summer JAMS** program. Through JAMS, over 150 youth obtain summer employment at 59 employer partner locations.

Adults with high school diplomas have higher annual income potential than those without this degree. Recognizing that the demand for **adult education** exceeds the availability of services, GECAC reinstated its adult basic education program in 2019. In the past six months, 58 students participated in adult education classes. As the only GED testing site in Erie County, GECAC administered 806 subject area tests.

Empowering individuals who are motivated to overcome their employment barriers and pursue their employment dreams is the goal of **Career JumpStart**, **Getting Ahead**, **New Choices**, and **Work Ready**. These four programs combined to support nearly fifty job seekers in their pursuit of their career goals.

Finally, partnerships with local non-profits allowed 24 seniors to hone their employment skills as participants in the **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**.



EXECUTIVE AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

COMING TOGETHER TO DISRUPT THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

GECAC believes that people in poverty need an important element to succeed—other people.

In addition to the supportive functions provided by the many Executive departments, some special projects also are operated out of this functional area. These include the educational scholarship programs for K-12 students attending private schools and the supportive services provided by the Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA).

Partnerships with local businesses who donated \$77,500 to the **tax credit scholarship programs** allowed 160 K-12th grade youth to pursue their education at Erie County private schools.

The **Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance** continued its support to those individuals returning to our community from incarceration as well as those returning to a law-abiding lifestyle from a life of crime. Over its three year history, ECRSSA continues to maintain a remarkable 7% recidivism rate for program graduates (compared to 42% prior to program implementation) and a 77% employment placement rate for those participants seeking employment. Funded by The Erie Community Foundation and United Way of Erie County, ECRSSA also coordinates the Group/Gun Violence Reduction Strategy which has been credited with reducing the group-related homicide rate to 0 since the first GVRs event was held in April 2017.

Giving Tree Project

New this year, GECAC staff coordinated a **Giving Tree project** at Christmas time. Through generous donations from GECAC staff and local churches, approximately \$15,000 worth of gifts were distributed to 70 seniors and 90 families of GECAC programs. The stories of the families receiving these gifts remind us that there is no one “face of poverty,” but rather that each person’s story is unique. From the grandmother raising her grandchildren who only asked for bedding – to the father who when asked what he wanted for himself replied “a game to play with my children” – to the family of seven who didn’t think Christmas would come this year – to the elderly lady who simply wanted a new mop and some cat food and litter for her cat – each person helped reminds us that even the simplest items can bring hope in times of trial.

GECAC AGENCY SERVICES

Area Agency on Aging

Adult Protective Services	786
Aging Waiver	929
Assessment	4,066
Care Management	1,038
Domiciliary Care	18
Family Caregiver	75
Foster Grandparent Program	52
Health Wellness (events)	
# of events	121
# of participants	1042
Home Delivered Meals	484
Home Health	500
HomePLUS	401
Home Support	269
Legal Services	6
Long Term Care Ombudsman	390
Medical Supplies	218
Personal Care	275
Retired Senior Volunteer Program	472
Senior Centers	1,437

Child Development

Head Start	
Federal Slots	728
State Slots	78
Pre-K Counts	68

Special Projects

Erie County Reentry Services & Support Alliance	
Intensive Case Management	147
Resource Coordination	69
Tax Credit Scholarship Programs	
Educational Improvement	
Scholarships awarded	128
Dollars awarded	\$64,000
Opportunity Scholarship	
Scholarships awarded	32
Dollars awarded	\$16,000

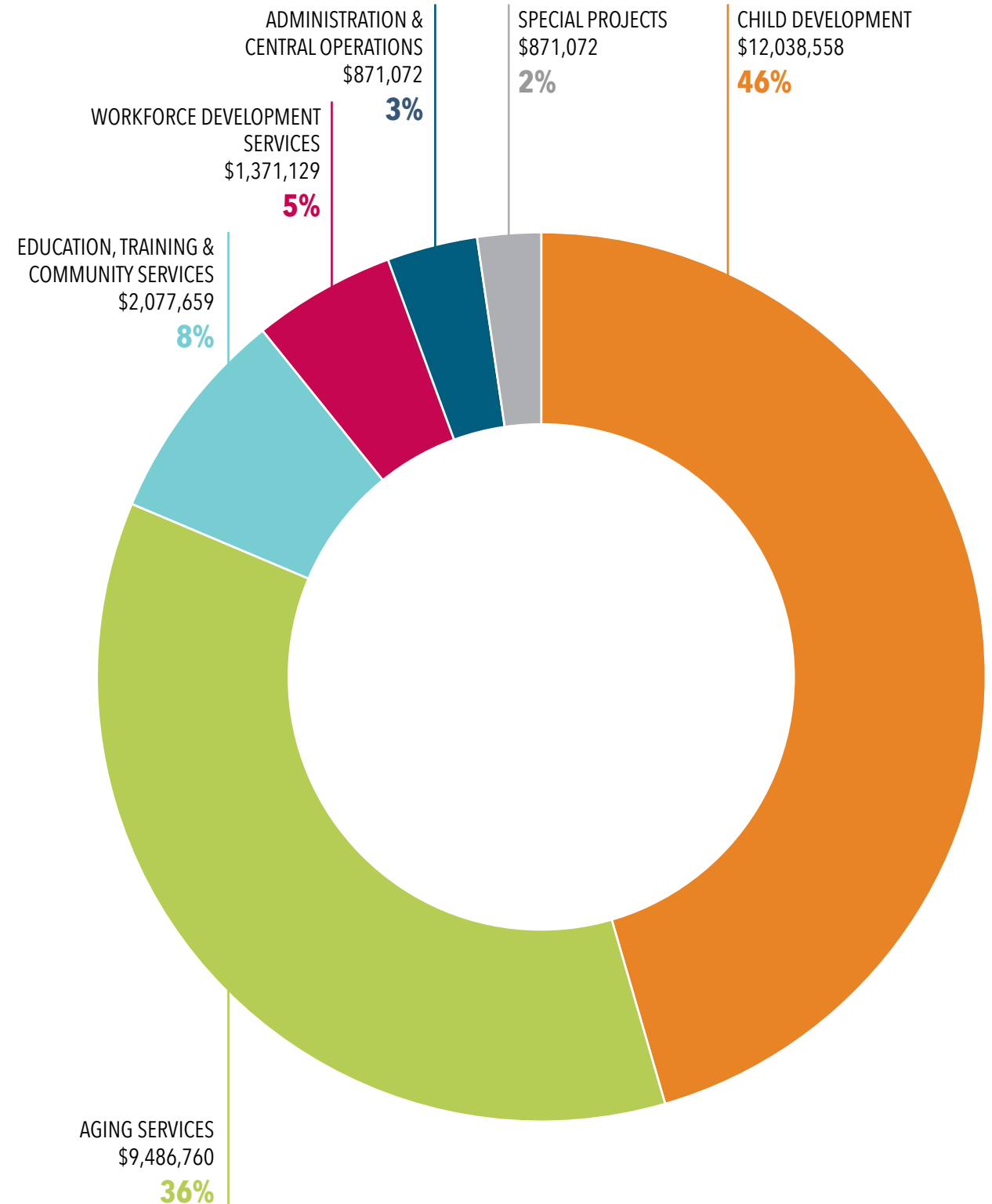
Education, Training & Community Services

Family Savings Account/ Individual Development Accounts	7
Food Services	
# meals for Elderly	110,694
# meals for Child Care	226,384
Housing Assistance	345
Money Works For You	14
Money Works For You Youth	2
PNC Home Buyers Club	1
Transportation - # of rides	207,000
Upward Bound	74
Utility Assistance	335
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance	609
Weatherization	
# of homes weatherized	18
# of clients serviced	40

Workforce Development Services

Adult Basic Education	58
Career Jump Start	113
Getting Ahead	24
GED Subject Area Tests Administered	806
New Choices Career Development	7
Senior Community Service Employment Program	24
Summer JAMS	
# of youth	151
# of employers	59
Work Ready	31
Work Ready SNAP	15

FUNDING BY DIVISION



DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS 2018 – 2019

	Total Revenue	Total Federal	Total Non Federal
ADMINISTRATION & CENTRAL OPERATIONS			
Administration and Central Operations	\$871,072	\$692,532	\$178,540
Subtotal: Administration and Operations	\$871,072	\$692,532	\$178,540
AGING SERVICES			
Aging Waiver	\$2,378,210	\$-	\$2,378,210
Area Agency on Aging	\$6,103,190	\$927,970	\$5,175,220
Foster Grandparent Program	\$253,444	\$213,734	\$39,710
HomePLUS	\$419,155	\$405,249	\$13,906
Nursing Home Transition	\$51,804	\$-	\$51,804
Retired Senior Volunteer Program	\$114,907	\$69,172	\$45,735
UPMC CBCCI	\$166,050	\$-	\$166,050
Subtotal: Aging Services	\$9,486,760	\$1,616,125	\$7,870,635
CHILD DEVELOPMENT			
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership	\$667,086	\$536,607	\$130,479
Head Start	\$10,785,972	\$7,904,984	\$2,880,988
Pre-K Counts	\$585,500	\$-	\$585,500
Subtotal: Child Development	\$12,038,558	\$8,441,591	\$3,596,967
EDUCATION, TRAINING & COMMUNITY SERVICES			
Child Care Food & Other Food Services	\$686,471	\$473,071	\$213,400
Financial Literacy and Savings Programs	\$8,673	\$-	\$8,673
Food Services (2)	\$877,813	\$-	\$877,813
Housing Assistance and Counseling Services	\$722,360	\$107,139	\$615,221
Maleno Family-to-Family Fund	\$25,056	\$-	\$25,056
Transportation (2)	\$958,634	\$-	\$958,634
Upward Bound	\$340,689	\$340,689	\$-
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program	\$15,370	\$-	\$15,370
Weatherization	\$279,040	\$265,181	\$13,859
Subtotal: Education, Training & Community Services	\$2,077,659	\$1,186,080	\$891,579
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES			
Adult Basic and Literacy Education and test administration	\$129,106	\$-	\$129,106
Career JumpStart	\$550,206	\$550,206	\$-
Senior Community Service Employment Program	\$101,458	\$71,756	\$29,702
Summer JAM	\$316,042	\$-	\$316,042
Work Ready	\$274,317	\$274,317	\$-
Subtotal: Workforce Development Services	\$1,371,129	\$896,279	\$474,850
SPECIAL PROJECTS			
Annual Fund	\$14,418	\$-	\$14,418
Erie County Reentry Services & Support Alliance	\$390,668	\$-	\$390,668
Erie Together and Career Street	\$92,950	\$50,000	\$42,950
Tax Credit Scholarship Programs	\$77,500	\$-	\$77,500
Wiley Osborne Golf Classic	\$36,260	\$-	\$36,260
Subtotal: Special Projects	\$611,796	\$50,000	\$561,796
Grand Total	\$26,456,974	\$12,882,607	\$13,574,367

FUNDING SOURCE SUMMARY

FEDERAL	
Corporation for National Community Service	\$282,906
Department of Education	\$340,689
Department of Energy	\$61,633
Department of Labor	\$621,962
Health and Human Services	\$10,499,935
Housing and Urban Development	\$526,637
United States Department of Agriculture	\$548,845
TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDS	\$12,882,607
STATE	
Department of Aging(1)	\$5,576,899
Department of Community and Economic Development (1)	-
Department of Education	\$1,144,002
Department of Human Services(1)	\$1,573,413
Department of Labor & Industry	\$1,400
TOTAL STATE FUNDS	\$8,295,714
LOCAL	
City of Erie (1)	
County of Erie (1)	\$1,355,662
Corporate/Educational Institutions/Other Agencies	\$430,250
Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority	\$144,510
Fees and Contributions	\$216,709
Foundations	\$249,075
Housing Authority of the City of Erie (1)	
In-Kind Contributions	\$2,574,507
United Way	\$207,467
Utilities (National Fuel Gas & First Energy)	\$100,473
TOTAL LOCAL FUNDS	\$5,278,653
TOTAL AGENCY FUNDING	\$26,456,974

(1) Designated Federal funds contracted from this source are reported under the originating federal funding source.

(2) Funds to operate this service are derived from purchase of service agreements with other internal programs and are not included in the grand total.

This is an unaudited financial statement

2018-2019 DONOR REPORT

Generous support from individuals, foundations, corporations and other partners make our work possible in Erie County. We rely on our donors' leadership as we pull together to give hard working, low-income families the tools they need to thrive. Thank you for helping your neighbors lift themselves up with dignity and pride. We celebrate what we, together, have accomplished.

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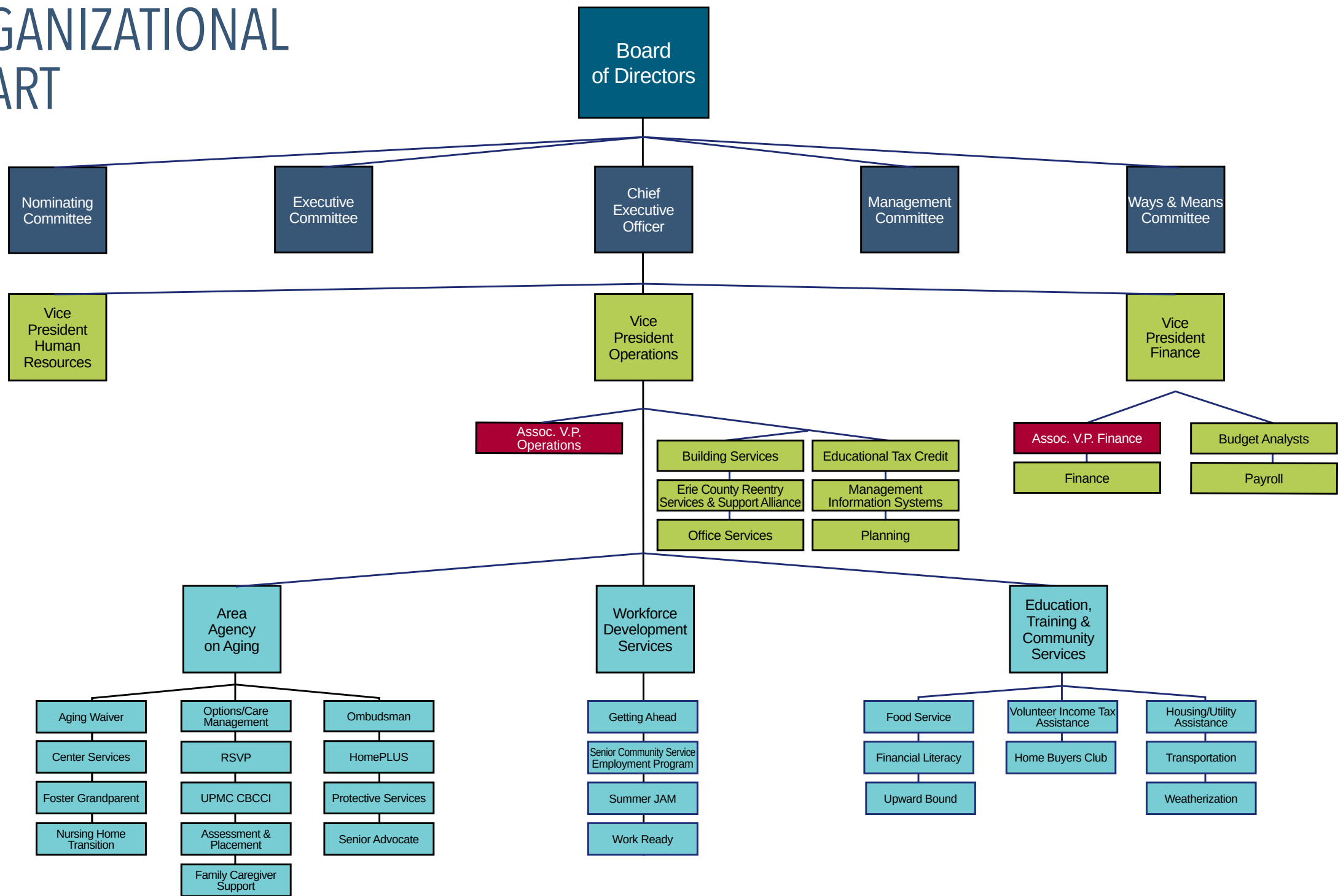
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kmccaslin@gecac.org

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