



**Ohio Association of
Community Action Agencies**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cole recognized with national leadership award

During the National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) Legislative Conference in Washington D.C., Philip E. Cole, executive director of Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA) was honored with the 2015 Charles Braithwait Leadership Award.

"This award is the highest honor our organization presents," said David Bradley, executive director of NCAF. "The award, named after Charles Braithwait, co-founder of the National Community Action Foundation, is presented annually to the individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills both at the state and local levels as well as nationally."

Braithwait is remembered as one of Community Action's most important advocates for people in poverty. In 1964, he became the President and CEO of West Central Missouri Community Action Agency where he implemented and administered programs to fight the War on Poverty. In 1976, Braithwait was appointed by President Gerald Ford to a National Commission to advocate and serve low-income people throughout the United States. His service for others continued until his death in October 2014.

"Phil Cole's work to strengthen the Community Action program in Ohio, his continual efforts at building bi-partisan support for poverty initiatives in state government, and his continuing influence in the development of a national poverty dialogue made him a unanimous choice," said Bradley. "Phil is a leader in every sense of the word."

The award was presented to Cole on behalf of the NCAF board of directors last week during the national conference. Cole has served as the executive director at OACAA for over twenty-five years. OACAA represents fifty agencies that serve all eighty-eight counties providing services to over 800,000 Ohioans while on their path to self-sufficiency.

"Mr. Braithwait was a true advocate and leader for Community Action and to have been recognized in his name is a tremendous honor for Mr. Cole and the entire Ohio network," said Tom Reed, OACAA board of trustee's president and executive director of Gallia-Meigs Community Action Agency. "We are proud of all that has been accomplished in Ohio. Phil's tireless efforts advocating issues of poverty have and will continue to keep Ohio a leader in the War on Poverty."

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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. Community Action Agencies work to alleviate poverty and empower low-income families in their communities. The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies represents 50 agencies around the state serving the needs of low-income people in all of Ohio's 88 counties. CAAs provide education and training, emergency services, and other assistance programs to over 800,000 Ohioans annually.