



**Ohio Association of  
Community Action Agencies**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**



### **Ashtabula County Community Action Agency program awarded by Community Action Association and Ohio University's Voinovich School**

**COLUMBUS, Ohio (Feb. 12, 2020)** – The Dragon Empowerment Center program, coordinated by the Ashtabula County Community Action Agency, was honored by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies as an exemplary program at the 2020 Winter Legislative Conference on Jan. 30 in Columbus.

"All children should have the chance to come to school ready-to-learn," said Judith Barris, Executive Director, ACCAA. "We know that sometimes families need a little help meeting their basic needs. The Dragon Empowerment Center provides wrap around supports and connections to resources that help meet those needs, so that all students, families and the community can be more successful."

The Dragon Empowerment Center connects schools with communities to provide valuable services to students, parents and teachers. In addition to traditional educational services, the schools provide food distributions, basic healthcare provision, tutoring, mental health services and a variety of workshops. All services are located on school grounds, removing barriers to resource access faced by struggling families in the school district.

"Community Action Agencies throughout Ohio are developing programs that help their entire communities," said Philip E. Cole, executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. "We are proud to work with Ohio University to evaluate the best of the best and qualify them as 'exemplary.' The programs selected for this award truly shine and can serve as a model for other agencies who may face similar challenges in their communities."

The Dragon Empowerment Center was one of three honorees awarded during the conference, with nearly 300 Community Action partners, professionals, vendors, and elected officials in attendance. OACAA works with 47 Ohio agencies and over 1,000 Community Action Agencies across the country. OACAA and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs collaborated to determine the winners of this year's awards.

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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 47 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 nearly 600,000 Ohioans annually.*