

Foreclosure coalition gets \$35,000 grant for counselor

The Jackson Community Foundation recently awarded a \$35,000 grant to the Community Action Agency to support efforts of the Community Foreclosure Coalition of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties.

The award will cover part of the cost of hiring a counselor who specializes in post-foreclosure counseling.

The counselor will be housed at the agency's Community Solutions Center, 511 S. Jackson St.

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Community Solutions Center opened by CAA

In response to increasing community need, especially property foreclosures, Community Action Agency has opened the Community Solutions Center in downtown Jackson near the central business district at 511 South Jackson Street. The center will serve as the primary location for foreclosure prevention services including HUD and MSHDA certified housing counseling, transitional housing, and homeless services.

Marsha Kreucher, CEO of Community Action Agency said "all these services are free to the community. We want people to know that they don't

have to pay to talk with someone about modifying a mortgage or the foreclosure process and that there are certified professionals, not scammers, available to help."

In addition, the Community Solutions Center offers mediation services to help resolve disputes between two parties in a private and confidential setting. With help of a neutral person, people can work out a solution and avoid expensive legal fees. Other services include financial education which works to assist with budgeting and creating a savings plan, establishing and repairing credit, avoiding preda-

tory lending, and basic banking skills. The site will also provide for the coordination of more than 50 volunteers working this season to prepare and file income taxes.

"We have tax sites around the county, we partner with multiple community agencies such as area senior centers, we visit with employers on-site who have at least 35 employees who are eligible to get their taxes done, we work days, evenings, weekends - it's quite an operation every year," said Chris Kilmer Director of Community Programs at CAA.

The all-volunteer tax program served nearly 3,000

households and returned over \$3.4 million to Jackson taxpayers last year; CAA is expecting to see those numbers rise this year. The location, across from Partnership Park also allows CAA's Community Organizer to be in the neighborhood and working to increase capacity of the Downtown Neighborhood Association.

For more information about CAA services at the Community Solutions Center please call 517-788-6495. If you would like more information about the Community Solutions Center please contact Toby Budd, community development director at 517-784-4800 x 278.