

HILLSDALE

# Accessing services

## CAA terminals added to aid people get benefits

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The Hillsdale Community Action Agency is actively working to make it easier for its clients to receive benefits.

The agency recently launched its pilot program where a computer or "kiosk" is set up at

each agency which allows the client to access online services offered by various organizations.

"Anything we can do in-house that helps to provide for our families is something we are dedicated to doing," said Jessie Murray, CAA's director of communications.

By using the kiosks, individuals can perform a variety of tasks such as apply for unemployment, Social Security benefits and food assistance or search for job postings.

Typically, those who need benefits are sent to the various agencies where they can sign up.

Murray said trained

staff are available to help individuals fill out the online applications while using the kiosks.

She said the computers, which only access the designated sites, are also useful to those who want to sign up for services but do not have Internet access at home.

Kiosks will be available for people to apply online for public benefits such as:

- FAP: Food Assistance Program through the Department of Human Services.
- Social Security benefits through the Social Security Administration Web site.
- Unemployment benefits through the State of Michigan Web site.
- Veteran benefits through the US Department of Veteran Affairs Web site.
- Insurance benefits through the Michigan Health Insurance Web site.

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## CAA

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The site coincides with the state government's Web site [www.michigan.gov/helping-hand](http://www.michigan.gov/helping-hand), which is a one-stop shop that allows participants to access a variety of agencies offering assistance.

Murray said the computers will be available at CAA as long as the state keeps the Web site active.

Murray said the kiosks should help the state which is consumed by an overwhelming amount of applications for assistance.

Although she was hesitant to say if it would speed up the process time for approval, she did say it would shorten the time required to apply for assistance be-

cause the individual would not have to drive to each separate agency.

"We do believe that the online application definitely saves the paperwork," she said.

Marsha Kreucher, chief executive officer of the agency, said "the idea of linking services isn't new to CAA, but as we assist more people in programs like Weatherization or Head Start, we can also provide Internet access to connect people with essential services right here and with trained staff on-hand to help."

Kiosks are open 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. on a first come, first serve basis and are located at the four main CAA office locations in Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale and Lincoln School at Head Start 154 Clark St. in Jackson.