

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Levin meets with CAVA officials

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Rewer families signed up for an all-day federal childcare program at the Jackson Community Action Agency this year because of an eligibility requirement: Parents must be employed or taking classes.

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin told a group of Community Action Agency officials Wednesday that the Head Start program's employment requirement is one example of an "excessive

regulation" he would like to eliminate.

Levin met with CAA officials to see how the organization utilizes its federal dollars and to listen to some of its concerns stemming from the economy's downward tailspin. The visit marked Levin's only stop in Jackson County in his most recent string of Michigan visits.

Last month, the CAA heard it would receive \$5.5 million in federal stimulus money to help low-income families make their homes more en-

ergy efficient.

"It's very encouraging to see the stimulus package ... put to such good use," Levin said.

Marsha Kreucher, CAA executive director, said Levin's interest in the organization's energy programs and concern about some federal regulations impressed her.

"He was very responsive to the problems that we're facing in Head Start with rules (and that) our extreme unemployment is creating for us," Kreucher said. "He did

ask me before he left to just write up anything that we felt was a regulation slowing up our work, and he would take a look at it."

Officials spent about 30 minutes presenting data on the city of Jackson's unemployment, home foreclosure and poverty rates before taking Levin on a guided tour of Partnership Park — the neighborhood bound by Francis, Morrell and Blackstone streets, and Washington Avenue.

The CAA is involved in

a revitalization plan for the neighborhood, including rehabilitating rental properties and purchasing foreclosed properties.

Toby Budd, CAA's neighborhood development director, said she hoped the tour showed Levin the importance of his vote.

"It's always important for the senators to get an on-the-ground view to see how the decisions they make in Washington can make a difference in the community," Budd said.