

AGENCY PROGRAMS

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Remembrance Breakfast

Held at the Tiffany's Banquet Center, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. observed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day with the MLK Day of Remembrance Breakfast. A "day on" and not a day off, we invited the community to honor the work, memory, and legacy of Dr. King while youth, Lydia Latzoo, Taleah Johnson, Nevaeh Husband reflected on how the leadership of Dr. King has impacted their lives today while Hayven Hilton encouraged guests to participate in her upcoming sickle cell blood drive in partnership with local organizations. The keynote address was given by Rev. Tyrone Steals, Pastor of Greater Mt. Zion Church of God In Christ, Farrell, PA. Janice Stewart was our 2024 Entrepreneur Spotlight, Founder, Christian Kollege 4 Kidz.

Black History Essay Contest and Luncheon

The 49th Annual Black History & Heroes Essay Contest was held throughout several local school districts in Mercer County. Fifth and Sixth grade students submitted essays on their favorite African American heroes and detailed how they have impacted the culture and society overall. First place and honorable mention winners are honored at an annual luncheon that rotates each year to a different school district. This contest provides students, parents, and the community an opportunity to learn about many civil rights leaders and African American inventors. This year the luncheon was held in the Kennedy Catholic High School cafeteria. High school students in grades 9-12 also participated in a black history essay contest with several school districts participating.

Frank J. Nagy Scholarship Fund Essay Contest

The Education Department conducted an essay contest for a \$1,000 scholarship award. High School Seniors from throughout Mercer County could submit an essay responding in 500 words to the question, "How have you demonstrated leadership ability both academically and socially and what role have you played in making a positive impact in the urban community?" Essay submissions were submitted from Mercer County high schools. After a committee of community judges read and scored the essays a first place winner was selected. Flade Elizabeth Pfadt, a Senior at Hickory High School was the 2024 recipient and winner of the Frank J. Nagy Scholarship. The scholarship fund provides financial support to a deserving Mercer County student and highlights our commitment to education.

Summer Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Summer Youth Apprenticeship Program provides Mercer County students (age 12-15) an opportunity to job shadow different career fields and earn a stipend. First beginning in the mid 1990's, this program has impacted many students, the majority of whom have graduated high school and have gone to college or military. This program operates from the end of June-mid August each summer and works with students on developing leadership skills, social skills, and life skills. Components of the program include, one-on-one interviewing, weekly enrichment group sessions, lunch with leaders series, career camp, and job shadowing. Students who successfully complete the program receive a stipend, achievement awards, commemorative t-shirt, and certificate of completion at the conclusion of the program.

Youth Participants

- Summer Youth Apprenticeship Program: 9
- African American History & Hero Essay Contest: 419
- Frank J. Nagy Scholarship Essay Contest: 17
- 9-12 grade Black History Essay Contest: 33
- Fall Into Change Health Fair: 109

HUMAN RELATIONS



The purpose of this program is to provide service to clients in Mercer County seeking human relations assistance in the areas of employment, education, public accommodation, and housing.

Total number of complaints received: 7

Total number of cities and municipalities where complaints were: 2

Program highlights:

Continue to assist the community, providing human relations services

Act as mediator to work out an amicable solution between parties involved in a complaint

Continue to provide up to date information regarding human relations issues to the general public and cooperate with the PA Human Relations Commission and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

EMPLOYMENT



The employment department addresses the job needs of the community. Resume and cover letter development, job search, and skills assessments are provided to individuals seeking full or part-time employment.

Program highlights:

- Resumes and cover letters were prepared or updated for 13 individuals
- Total number of cities and municipalities where clients resided: 2

HOUSING DEPARTMENT



HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. has been designated by the Mercer County Commissioners to administer the HAP Program. The purpose of the HAP program is two-fold. The program assists Mercer County residents in need of acquiring or maintaining rental housing. Also, the program provides funding to the Emergency Shelter Program administered by the Salvation Army.

The rent assistance component assists homeless persons with verifiable income to be placed into more permanent rental housing or for renters facing eviction and near homelessness. The program assists the renter in resolving the necessary issues to maintain their current rental housing. The types of assistance consist of rental counseling, budget counseling, and a financial grant toward their first month's rent, security deposit, or delinquent rent.

Financial assistance is only available to clients in compliance with the guidelines of the program. All applicants must have a face-to-face interview with the HUD certified Housing Counselor. Applicants must verify documentation attesting to the validity of their situation and income. The Housing Counselor contacts the landlords to validate the information and to seek the landlord's approval of the proposed housing remedy. Once a client has been assisted, the client is not eligible for financial assistance for a period of two years. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year (July-June), the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. assisted 62 individual rent cases, which supported a total of 169 Mercer County resident adults and children.

In the Emergency Shelter Program administered by the Salvation Army, emergency shelter is defined as housing individuals facing imminent crisis with temporary overnight housing up to a period of one week. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Salvation Army provided housing for 39 families. The amount of money sub-granted from the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. to the Salvation Army was \$7,741.00

Homeowner's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP)/Act 91

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. is certified by HUD (Housing and Urban Development) to provide mortgage default counseling to homeowners facing foreclosure. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. processed 12 applications to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) for emergency mortgage loan assistance through the states Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program. In October 2010, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. received a congratulatory Commendation Plaque from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency for providing 27 years of mortgage counseling service to the state's HEMAP Program.

Monitored advertising in the local media pertaining to the sale and rental of real estate

Provided fair housing education and distributed printed materials

HOUSING AND LIFE READINESS PROGRAM



Launched in 2018, the purpose of the Housing and Life Readiness Program (HLRP) is to address the issues of Mercer County Children and Youth Services families to keep children and families housed through crisis by assisting families with finding employment, finding and securing adequate housing, securing critical documents (birth certificates), and providing financial literacy with life skills education. All participants are referred by a case manager through Mercer County CYS.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, which enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Individuals referred to the HLRP program participate in life skills education workshops that cover the following topics:

- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Creative/lateral thinking
- Critical thinking
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationships
- Self awareness
- Assertiveness
- Goal setting

Target Population: Families with a parent or legal guardian age 21 +

Number of referrals: 40

Total number of families served: 40

Total number of children served: 289

**WIC & YOU:
MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES
TOGETHER**



Pennsylvania Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the sole funding source for the WIC Program, and it provides a grant used to prevent and improve nutrition-related health problems for women, infants, and children with healthy supplemental foods and nutrition services. WIC was authorized by Congress in 1972 and was implemented in Pennsylvania in May 1974.

The program is administered through contracts with county and private non-profit agencies that deliver WIC services locally in all 67 counties at about 278 sites.

SVUL Inc. provided WIC services from April 1, 1978– September 30, 2024

How WIC Help Families:

- 1.) Offers screenings and referrals to health care and other services such as, iron testing, referrals to SNAP, MA, TANF, Chip, Healthy Beginning Plus, Head Start
- 2.) Gives advice for healthy eating with nutrition materials and one-on-one nutrition education
- 3.) Supports breastfeeding even if mothers return to work
- 4.) Provides healthy food such as milk, cheese, peanut butter, whole grains, and eggs to name a few essentials

Program highlights:

Received continued funding from Pennsylvania Department of Health for the WIC and Peer Counselor Project for FFY October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024.

Provided service in Mercer, Venango & Forest counties, with an average participation of 2,800 clients per year.

Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Goals - October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024

Evaluate how staff are conducting WIC assessments in PENN system and determine needs to improve confidence, competency, and/or efficiency

To ensure all CPA's are trained on how to conduct WIC assessments using the PENN system

To ensure staff are trained on how to conduct and document breastfeeding assessments using the PENN system

WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program

“A Breastfeeding Support Program for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women”

- The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program is a support program for pregnant and breastfeeding women to help women initiate and continue breastfeeding with the help of Peer Counselors who are trained to assist by offering breastfeeding education, support and role modeling.
- The breastfeeding peer counselor are mothers who have breastfed and have personal experience with breastfeeding and are trained to provides valuable support to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates.
- The program is funded by USDA using the “Loving Support Model” to for a successful Peer Counseling Program for WIC.

To learn more about the WIC and Peer Counseling Program, check online at www.health.pa.gov or www.pawic.com, or call 1-800-WIC-WINS (1-800-942-9467).