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Ohio Association of
Community Action Agencies

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Lorain County Community Action Agency Takes Customer Satisfaction to a New Level

The Lorain County Community Action Agency (LCCAA) has created a system to not only find out what their clients really think of their programs, but also what they think about other programs in the county, and share the information with other low-income people looking for services. The system is an online referral and review program called ViewPoint.



ViewPoint is a website, www.lvviewpoint.com, that LCCAA created using CSBG dollars. Clients and social service workers can go to the website and rate the program or service. Program descriptions and contact information come from a link to Lorain County's 211 service run by the local United Way. Potential clients can view the ratings to determine if a service is right for them with easy links to 211.

"As an agency that's supposed to be the voice of low-income people, we were not seeing a way for them to say what programs work and what their experience was like," explained Jackie Boehlein, executive director of LCCAA. This program gives low-income people in the community that voice.

The system is a collaboration with 211 and does not compete against them. It is not a database, but a customer satisfaction tool. In fact, when LCCAA did a presentation on the program at a United Way community partners meeting in December, they received tremendously positive feedback. "211 is a good resource," Jackie said. "But it was designed as a service directory. ViewPoint provides the experience of the people using the 211 directory, the experience that these clients have had working with the programs."

Another advantage of the system is if the information on 211 has changed, users of ViewPoint can indicate that and United

Way will be alerted and able to update their system.

Organizations in the community interested in using the program will be able to do so for free. They will become members of ViewPoint and will be able to access the administrative side of the website to view their reviews and learn from the comments. "We're going to be using the system for our programs and decided to offer the opportunity to others to get feedback at no cost," Jackie stated. "We didn't see a reason other organizations should have to make the same investment." It also allows clients to access the information and review programs all in one place.

Negative comments about organizations will not be posted until the named organization approves them for posting. This keeps things positive. Organizations with positive reviews will be listed at the top of the website, which keeps the emphasis on helping people find programs that really work.

LCCAA has started training their caseworkers on the system and will complete all of the training by the end of the month. "The staff has already started using the program, which shows the excitement on their part to have a new system," commented Carla Rodriguez, LCCAA communications director. "It is useful to them because they do referrals and they will be able to rate their own experience as well."

"We're tapping into a frustration we all see as service providers," Jackie agreed. "If we don't offer a service, we want to send our clients somewhere where they can get help, and we want to know that it will be valuable."

The rating system uses keywords, such as caring, helpful, respectful, etc. as part of the rating process. LCCAA is going to set goals for which keywords they want to focus on and then train their staff to utilize those keywords when asking

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clients if they've met their expectations, and then asking the client to review them. This will help LCCAA to know if they are meeting the goals that they've set.

LCCAA also plans to send out certificates of achievement or recognition to those agencies ranking the highest for the different keywords. This will allow those organizations to show their clients that they are the top rated organization for certain areas, which will encourage promotion of the tool. They are also considering rewarding individuals that give the most feedback.

LCCAA is having a free seminar on February 27 to introduce other community organizations to the program and show them how to use it. They are meeting their attendance goal for the seminar and may need to schedule another one. They are also promoting the program through their website and handouts that the organizations can use.

LCCAA has been working on the concept for this program for five years. The site went live in February and they expect it to be a multi-year process to get clients and organizations fully engaged. Jackie said that she knows they're heading in the right direction with this tool because the proposed National Community Action Performance Standards included creating a consistent and reliable way to gauge customer satisfaction, which this program will do. "ViewPoint will allow the voice of those we serve to be captured and let other low-income people know what their experiences were like with services," Jackie concluded.

The screenshot shows the ViewPoint website for Lorain County Community Action Agency. The header includes the agency logo with the tagline "Helping People. Changing Lives." and the text "Lorain County Community Action Agency". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, News, Programs, Calendar, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled "ViewPoint" and includes sections for "About", "Recent Activity", and "Search". The "About" section describes the ViewPoint platform. The "Recent Activity" section shows a recent rating for "HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF LORAIN COUNTY: RESTORE" with a "Helpful" status. The "Search" section has input fields for Agency and Program, and a dropdown for All Categories. Below the search section is a table of agency programs with their respective vote counts.

Agency: Program	Vote	211
LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY: REGULAR HEAP - HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	Vote	211
HERITAGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: Food Pantries	Vote	211