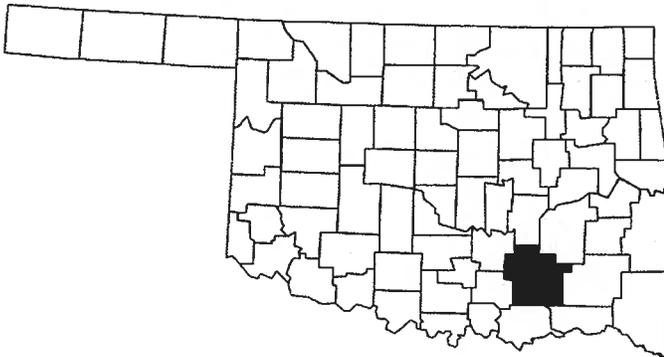


ATOKA AND COAL COUNTIES PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Established in 2001



Two counties, Atoka and Coal, were chosen for an initial Partnership for Change project because of their relatively stable and diverse population base, their high poverty rates, and their relative lack of readily accessible nutrition and other assistance program services. As an example, the poverty rate in Atoka County for Fiscal Year 2000 was 27.5 percent, while the rate of Food Stamp Program participation was 10.6 percent. In Coal County, the comparable figures were 25.1 percent and 11.2 percent, respectively. The Partnership for Change project is a collaborative effort among nutrition and related service organizations in Atoka and Coal counties. This collaborative effort is designed to meet the specific nutritional needs of eligible clients in an effort to increase utilization of existing nutrition services. The organizations providing services have established specific initiatives and coordinate these efforts with the project.

Activities

- Established a collaborative effort among nutrition and related service organizations in Atoka.
- Applied for Smoke Alarm Grant.
- Applied for Century 21 Grant in Partnership with the Atoka First Baptist Church.
- Market and promote of existing services utilizing the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service in providing 50 resource manuals for agencies in Atoka & Coal counties, billboards owned by Choctaw Nation, advertisement on public transportation vans, newspaper columns, radio, bank invoice inserts, Choctaw Nation monthly newsletters, Sonic, and other media outlets.
- Establish viable networking between the principal service providers to meet the identified needs.
- Identified and obtained state, federal, and local funds, not otherwise identified, that could be used for this project.
- Established focus groups at the client level to advise the coalition of barriers and needs from their perspective, and

to use these groups to collect data as an ongoing data collection mechanism on the success and short comings of the program and track the effect of our efforts.

- Utilize school-based social workers to identify eligible families who qualify for food nutrition services in Coal and Atoka counties.
- Provide access to food nutrition services by optimizing public transportation system in Coal and Atoka counties.

Outcomes

- Conducted a Community Needs Assessment.
- Identified Goals and Objectives.
- Developed Strategic Plan.
- Conduct annual Community Resource Rally events in Coal and Atoka counties.
- Provide Free Public Transportation for Senior Nutrition Centers and for individuals needing access to sustain food security in the home.
- Annual Community Health Fair in partnership with the Coalgate Hospital.
- Facilitate annual Community Interagency Collaborative Training (cross training between clerical staff and supervisors of over 16 agencies located in Coal and Atoka Counties).
- Conducted a blind survey of clientele and compared findings with those identified by the focus groups.
- Established a senior nutrition coalition comprised of all service organizations whose primary function is to serve the elderly. This group will best serve as a conduit for the clients' immediate and long-term nutritional needs and also provide input to the coalition's objectives.
- County wide Media Campaign on Health and Nutrition— Implemented a positive image campaign, market and promote public awareness of the food nutrition services available within Coal and Atoka counties, while also dispelling myths and incorrect beliefs about the application and certification process concerning food nutrition service application.
- Expand and enhance existing office hours of food nutrition services to maximize availability for eligible families to access service.
- Host a Nutrition Resource Rally in April 2002 to recruit eligible families, increase awareness, and administer a survey to compare findings with those identified by the focus groups.
- Have 12 agencies rotating their services in commercials broadcasted four times a day, six days a week at KHKC Radio in Atoka.

Future Plans

- Expand the partnership.
- Identify resources to support indigent drug program.
- Assess the possibility of applying for a Federally Qualified Health Care (FQHC) clinic.
- Farmers Market in Atoka County.
- Construction of a school cafeteria on campus.
- Expand trails system in Coalgate.
- Develop a three-year strategic plan.

Participants

- Big Five Community Action Agency/Sorts Transit
- INCA Community Action Agency/Jamm Transit
- Coalgate Hospital
- Senior Nutrition Center
- Atoka First Baptist Church
- Atoka & Coalgate Chamber of Commerce
- New Hope Medical Facility
- Kiamichi Technology Center

- Department of Human Services
- Coal and Atoka County Health Departments
- Coalgate Register
- American Cancer Society
- Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service
- County Commissioners
- Community members at large
- USDA
- Oklahoma State Department of Agriculture
- Choctaw Nation
- Oklahoma State Department of Health Turning Point staff
- Regional Food Bank
- Big Five Community Action Agency
- Choctaw Nation
- Dayspring Church
- Coal and Atoka counties Public Schools
- INCA Community Action Agency
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Head Start
- Girl Scouts
- Southeast Oklahoma Division on Aging (SODA)