

SOUTH MIDDLESEX OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
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From these initial efforts by committed citizens of our MetroWest communities, SMOC has developed into the second largest Community Action Agency in Massachusetts. Based on the original mandate for Community Action Agencies as cited in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, SMOC's purpose is to advocate for and meet the needs of low-income people. Over the years, this advocacy has resulted in the creation of a continuum of programs that strike at the problems that most seriously affect poor people and keep them mired in poverty. They include programs addressing emergency shelter for the homeless, transitional and permanent housing, employment training and placement, substance abuse services, mental health services, women's protective services, nutrition, energy and weatherization, services for the elderly, day care and preschool education, youth services, as well as community organizing around housing, health care, rising energy costs and banking services

A CONTINUUM OF CARE

The multiple programs, existing in interaction with each other, constitute what is referred to as a Continuum of Care. The numerous services the programs provide address the fact that the origin of poverty for any one person or family is usually a multiplicity of factors rather than a single cause. A woman mired in poverty may be homeless but also be the victim of domestic violence, lack employment skills and even struggling with an addiction. Thus, when an individual or family enters the system through a particular point in the Continuum of Care such as seeking help with housing, an intake specialist, familiar with the resources offered by the various programs, accesses, along with the individual/family, other areas in which assistance may be needed. A service plan identifying short and longer terms goals is created resulting in providing access to and coordination of needed services available from the programs within the continuum.