



## LOCATIONS

### Portage County

#### Administrative Office

2900 Hoover Road  
Stevens Point, WI 54481  
715-343-7500

#### Program Office

1608 West River Drive  
Stevens Point, WI 54481  
715-343-7100

### Marquette County

#### Early Learning Center

222 South Franklin Street  
Oxford, WI 53952  
608-586-4404

### Outagamie County

#### Program Office

400 N Richmond St, Suite F  
Appleton, WI 54911  
715-318-8896

### Waupaca County

#### Program Office

101 Tower Road  
Waupaca, WI 54981  
715-258-9575

### Wausara County

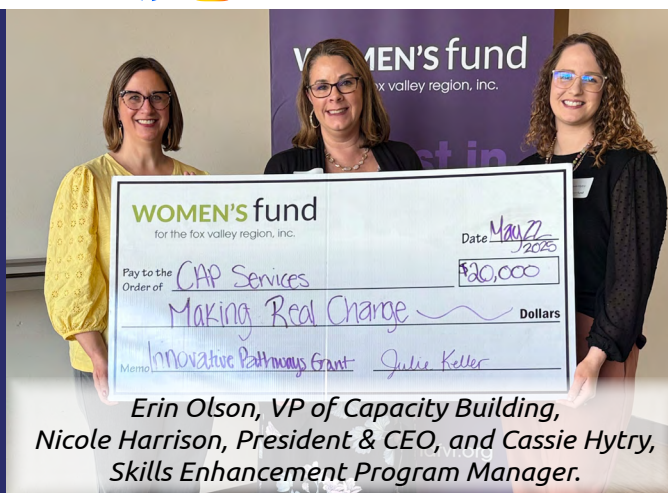
#### CAPsell Center

205 East Main Street  
Wautoma, WI 54982  
920-787-3949

844-314-8004

[capservices.org](http://capservices.org)

CAP Services is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.



*Erin Olson, VP of Capacity Building,  
Nicole Harrison, President & CEO, and Cassie Hytry,  
Skills Enhancement Program Manager.*

## CAP Services Awarded First Innovative Pathways Grant from Women's Fund

The Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region selected CAP Services to receive their first-ever Innovative Pathways grant. The multi-year investment of \$20,000 annually for three years is intended to support big ideas that address systemic barriers and create transformative change for women and girls.

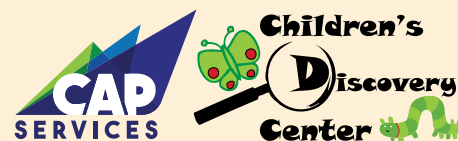
CAP will use the award to pilot a guaranteed income project within its Skills Enhancement Program. The program, which launched in the Fox Valley in 1991, has a track record of supporting women with low incomes as they pursue education as a pathway to financial security, providing them with resources, support, and financial assistance for tuition, books, and other training-related expenses as they work toward a short-term degree or credential.

"We're excited to take a bold step forward by providing a guaranteed monthly income payment to a small group of women in our program," shared Erin Olson, CAP's Vice President of Capacity Building. "We believe that providing women with a flexible stipend during their enrollment will allow them to overcome barriers and accelerate the achievement of their educational goals."

The Innovative Pathways grant gives CAP the opportunity to test and evaluate different strategies before ultimately embedding the most impactful solutions in the Skills Enhancement Program model.

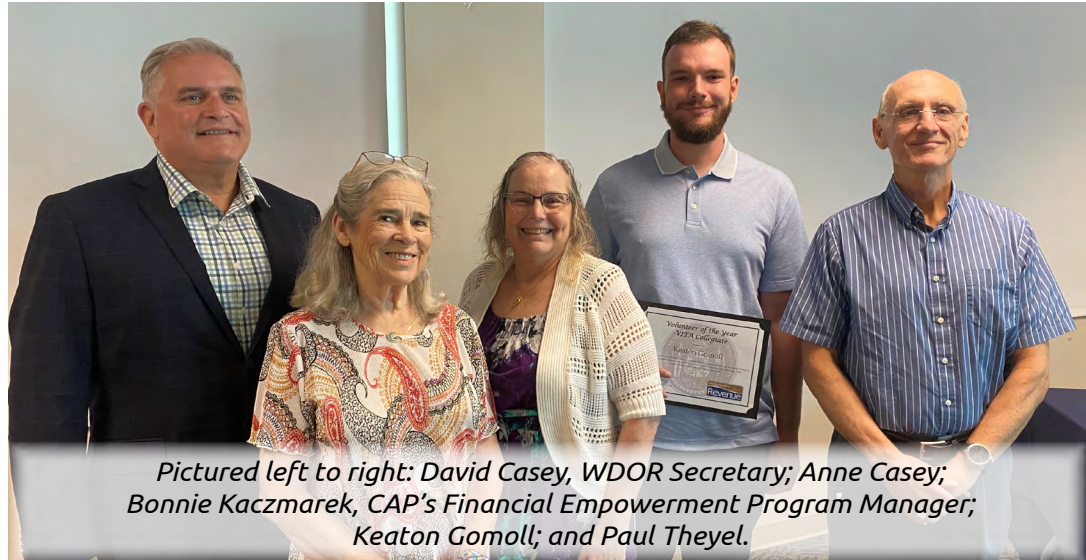
Innovative Pathways Grant	1
Open House Invitation	1
CAP Volunteers Honored	2
Community Needs Assessment	2
Thrivent Choice® Dollars	3
Partner Spotlight: Northwind Solar	3
Rethink Poverty: Simulation Promotes Understanding	4
CAP Event Highlights	4-5

*You're Invited to an*  
**Open House**  
**Wednesday,**  
**September 24**  
**4-6 pm**



3109 John Joanis Dr,  
Stevens Point

Childcare plays a critical role in the well-being and development of communities. Stop in and discover how CAP is investing in children, families, and the future of our communities.



*Pictured left to right: David Casey, WDOR Secretary; Anne Casey; Bonnie Kaczmarek, CAP's Financial Empowerment Program Manager; Keaton Gomoll; and Paul Theyel.*

## CAP Volunteers Honored at Statewide VITA Awards Ceremony

On August 6, members of CAP Services' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) team attended the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) VITA/TCE Grant Awards ceremony in Madison. The event recognized outstanding contributions from volunteers across the state—and three of CAP's dedicated team members were among those honored.

### Anne Casey – VITA Volunteer of the Year Award

Anne, a tax professional, has generously donated her time at our Waupaca site for more than 10 years. Her commitment and dedication to helping community members navigate tax season has made a lasting impact year after year.

### Keaton Gomoll – VITA Collegiate Volunteer of the Year Award

In just his second year with CAP, Keaton served at all of our VITA sites, stepping in wherever he was needed. His willingness to help in multiple locations ensured that clients received timely, high-quality assistance.

### Paul Theyel – VITA Volunteer of the Year Award

Paul has been a valued member of our Wautoma site for 11 years—and he shows no sign of slowing down. His reliability and expertise have been invaluable to both clients and fellow volunteers.

"We are so proud of Anne, Keaton, and Paul," said Bonnie Kaczmarek, CAP's Financial Empowerment Program Manager. "Their service reflects the heart of our mission—to strengthen our communities by connecting people to resources and opportunities."

Each year, CAP's VITA volunteers assist hundreds of individuals and families during tax season, helping them maximize refunds and keep more of their hard-earned income. We extend our deepest gratitude to all of our volunteers for the skill, compassion, and time they share.

## Engage with CAP

Scott Norder, CAP's Director of Community Engagement, wants to hear from you! If you'd like to discover what CAP has to offer – including more about our agency's history, program spotlights, and opportunities to support our work – contact him at [snorder@capmail.org](mailto:snorder@capmail.org).

# Community Needs Assessment

CAP Services has completed its 2025 Community Needs Assessment for our five-county service area (Marquette, Outagamie, Portage, Waupaca, and Waushara).

As a community action agency, CAP is required to issue a report every three years on the causes and conditions of poverty in our region. You can find the 2025 Community Needs Assessment and 2026-2028 Strategic Plan at our website at [capservices.org/cna](https://capservices.org/cna).

The report includes sections on each of the three key issues identified through the process:

- Lack of income and savings
- Cost of housing and transportation
- Cost of loans and debt

CAP would like to thank the community members and partners who participated in the focus groups, surveys, and discussion.

Please email Kristy SeBlonka at [kseblonka@capmail.org](mailto:kseblonka@capmail.org) with any questions or comments.

### Community Needs Assessment

As a community action agency, CAP is required to conduct a community needs assessment and issue a report every 3 years.

CAP completed this assessment in 2025. The research objective is as follows: to collect and analyze current data and report key findings on the **causes and conditions of poverty** and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity.

The full assessment can be found at [www.capservices.org/reports](https://www.capservices.org/reports).

### CAP's Priority Issues 2026-2028

After reviewing community data and the results of the household needs survey, focus groups, and partner survey, CAP selected three priority issues.

1. Lack of income and savings
2. Cost of housing and transportation
3. Cost of loans and debt

### CAP's Strategic Goals 2026-2028

Goal 1: Households increase income and savings.  
Goal 2: CAP maintains and expands affordable housing options.  
Goal 3: Households increase net worth.

The full strategic plan is included in the CNA report.



# Direct Thrivent Choice® Dollars to CAP Services

Looking for an easy way to support and strengthen CAP Services? Participate in Thrivent Choice®, Thrivent's charitable outreach program.

Through Thrivent Choice, you can contribute to organizations and causes you care about and influence how Thrivent distributes some of its charitable funding.

Thrivent Choice provides an online giving platform where you can make personal donations. And Thrivent pays the processing fees, so 100% of your donation goes to help make an impact.

Eligible Thrivent members can also recommend where Thrivent distributes some of its outreach funding by directing Choice Dollars® to any of the thousands of enrolled nonprofit organizations, including CAP.

If you previously made a donation or directed Choice Dollars to us, we thank you for your support! If you haven't yet participated in Thrivent Choice but would like to do so or learn more about it, visit [thrivent.com/thriventchoice](https://thrivent.com/thriventchoice). You can also contact your Thrivent advisor.

## Partner Spotlight: Northwind Solar

As answered by Kaitlyn Golke, Customer Service & Marketing Specialist, [Northwind Solar](#)

### What is the mission and vision of Northwind Solar?

Our mission is to encourage the adoption of renewable energy as an integral part of any long-term solution to the global energy crisis. We will accomplish this mission by:

- Providing effective, sensible renewable energy solutions to our clients.
- Helping individuals, businesses, schools, and community organizations understand the benefits of renewable energy through education, community outreach, and philanthropy.
- Dedicating ourselves personally and professionally to supporting sustainable local economies and communities.

### What are some of the services offered by Northwind Solar?

Northwind Solar is a full-service solar electric system provider specializing in everything you need to make your solar PV installation successful, including site evaluation, system design, incentive application and grant writing, utility interconnection, permitting, installation, and system commissioning. We also offer home electrification, EV charging installations, and energy storage solutions. Since 2007, we have successfully installed 13 megawatts of small-scale, distributed solar generation.

### What is your favorite part about being a member of Northwind Solar?



As an employee-owned cooperative, we have a strong camaraderie built on respect, collaboration, and dedication. It's energizing to work

alongside fellow employee-owners who take deep pride in workmanship, service, and teamwork—and to help Central Wisconsin residents adopt clean energy, save on utility bills long-term, reduce energy burden, and take ownership of their energy.

### How does Northwind Solar partner with CAP Services?

We've partnered with CAP Services, whose mission is "to transform people and communities to advance social and economic justice," on two solar projects. In 2020, we designed and installed a 13.3 kW rooftop PV system at the Family Crisis Center. In 2025, we delivered a high-performance 41 kW rooftop PV system at CAP's Stevens Point headquarters. The latest system offsets 74% of annual electricity use and is projected to save \$273,596 over 30 years, freeing up funds for community programs and strengthening energy independence. We've also explored ways to bring solar to low-income households in our area, and with the upcoming PowerUp program in Wisconsin, we look forward to exploring this opportunity further.

### If you had to eat one meal everyday for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Solar-powered foods—grown or cooked with clean solar energy. Simple, sustainable, and delicious every day. We love food sourced from our solar-powered friends at Whitefeather Organics, Liberation Farms, Cattail Organics, Red Door Farm, Lonely Oak Farms (to name a few), and other partners we've helped go solar.



Share this newsletter with a friend or have them sign up on our website at [capservices.org](https://capservices.org).

# Rethink Poverty: Simulation Promotes Understanding

Throughout each year CAP's Community Resource Team conducts Poverty Simulations to help groups understand the barriers and challenges those living at or below the poverty level experience.

Participants role-play the lives of individuals with low incomes. Some are single parents, some are disabled, and others are senior citizens on Social Security. They have the stressful task of providing for basic necessities and shelter on a limited budget during the course of four 15-minute "weeks" as they interact with human service agencies, grocers, bill collectors, employers, healthcare providers, and others.

Norys Pina, Community Resource Program Manager, recently led a group of approximately 60 participants through a simulation in Appleton.



Participants were divided into "families" of roughly five people each and soon discovered how hard it was as the simulation threw various roadblocks at them as they tried to balance both routine needs and unexpected demands. Despite their best efforts, their resources often ran out before the end of the month.

Poverty is a reality for many individuals and families, but unless you've experienced it personally it's difficult to truly understand. Poverty Simulations bridge that gap from misconception to understanding, sensitizing community participants to the realities of poverty.

The simulation is not a game. It is based on real life situations with the objective to not only increase understanding, but also to inspire local change, and perhaps most importantly— to shift the paradigm about poverty away from being seen as a personal failure and toward the understanding of poverty as structural.

"Poverty is often seen as a standalone issue, but the simulation illustrates how complex and interconnected the issues of poverty really are," says Norys Pina. "Our debrief conversation after each event gives participants the opportunity to reflect on their experience over the hour-long simulation and to consider the realities facing families with low incomes."

CAP Services has been facilitating Poverty Simulations since 2004. If you would like to participate in a simulation or host an event at your workplace, place of worship, or other community setting, contact Norys at [npina@capmail.org](mailto:npina@capmail.org).

## CAP Event Highlights



[Hmong Week 2025](#) was held over three days in Portage County, with events starting on Thursday, May 15 and ending with a concert on Saturday, May 17. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Hmong Community's arrival in the United States.

On Thursday, success stories were shared via social media at [Hmong Week Central WI](#). Ann Vang, Executive Director of Central Rivers Farmshed, shared "[Success Looks Like Me](#)," an overview of her many accomplishments. Vietnam

War veteran Nor Sue Yang shared his [powerful story](#) about what life was like in Laos during the war. There was also a [Hmong dance video](#) to enjoy.

Friday, May 16, was Hmong Food Night with hands-on demonstrations. Attendees learned how to prepare and cook delicious cultural dishes.

Saturday's concert was held at the Moose Family Center in Stevens Point, with Hmong performances and dancing celebrating culture and heritage.



Thank you to the sponsors, volunteers, and participants who made our 21st Annual [Community 2000 Make Miracles Happen Golf Outing](#) on June 5 a tremendous success.

Community members came out in full force to enjoy a day of golf at Crystal Springs Golf Course in Seymour. The day started with a variety of games, bucket raffles, and pre-round friendly ribbing, and concluded with a delicious buffet dinner, awards, prizes, and a live auction. A special thank you to Les from Van Eperen Auctions, LLC for donating his time and expertise.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, June 4, 2026, when the 22nd annual golf outing returns to Seymour. We look forward to seeing you there!



On Friday, June 20, our Portage County community came together to celebrate [World Refugee Day](#). The evening started with a welcome from Janice Watson, Executive Director of the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) - Multicultural Center, followed by CAP's VP of Capacity Building, Erin Olson, presenting a proclamation from Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza.

Entertainment included dance groups Ntsais Ci Laim and Nangfah Seev, and a sing-along of "We Are the World" led by Phong Vang, CAP's Assistant Director of Multicultural Engagement. The main feature was a youth panel discussion led by Patrick Kabangu, CAP's Refugee Support Coordinator, that gave young refugees the opportunity to share their powerful stories. The evening concluded with a delicious potluck meal and networking.

Thank you to all the organizations, performers, volunteers, and attendees who came together for this powerful evening of connection, culture, and celebration to honor the resilience and strength of refugees.



Perfect weather, delicious food, and incredible community spirit made this year's 2nd Annual [Summer Brat Fry](#) a huge success! Held at CAP's Stevens Point Administrative Office on August 21, the event brought together community members, families, and friends to enjoy a classic summer lunch while supporting CAP's programs.

This event would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, board members, and volunteers, whose time and energy ensured everything ran smoothly.

A very special thank you to our sponsors, whose generosity helped make the Brat Fry a success: Delta Dental of Wisconsin, Simplicity Credit Union, Old National Bank, First Business Bank, Kwik Trip, Point Supply, LLC, Frito-Lay | North Central Wisconsin, Duraclean Specialists, and Festival Foods.

