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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Jimmy Jones, Executive Director
Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency
(503) 585-6232
jimmy.jones@mwvcaa.org

Ashely Hamilton, Program Director
ARCHES Project (MWVCAA)
503-399-9080
ashley.hamilton@mwvcaa.org

Traia Campbell, Program Director
Energy Services (MWVCAA)
503-588-9016
traia.campbell@mwvcaa.org

Salem, Oregon--- The Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency is releasing more than \$2 million in rental and utility assistance for income-eligible residents of Marion and Polk Counties that have been effected by the COVID-19 Crisis; Community Action continues motel program for vulnerable homeless residents of Marion/Polk.

MWVCAA operates two programs that will bring COVID-19 aid to Marion County and Polk County.

1. **The ARCHES Project** at 615 Commercial Street in Salem, which is the Agency's program serving local homeless and housing unstable populations. In April the State of **Oregon Emergency Board**, chaired by **Senate President Peter Courtney** and **Speaker of the House Tina Kotek**, authorized the release of **\$8.5 million** in rental assistance to Community Action Agencies around the state. In Salem, Community Action is using our portion of this grant, in addition to other state and federal resources, to make more than \$1.5 million in rental assistance available to eligible households that have lost income and struggled to pay their rent due to the COVID-19 crisis. These resources will be available to Marion and Polk County residents, in collaboration with our partners **Polk County Family & Community Outreach** (Dallas), **Polk Community Development Corporation** (Dallas), the Independence Office of the Department of Human Services, **Love, Inc** in Woodburn and **Sheltering Silverton** (in Silverton). ARCHES also continues to operate a motel program in Salem for medically fragile and COVID positive homeless clients. To date, this program has been in operation since mid-March, serving 95 clients per night. So far we have served 216 unique individuals in 128 households for a total of 4,200 bed nights over four partner motels.

Energy Services, at 1850 45th Ave NE, Salem OR 97305, is the Agency's program providing energy assistance to income-eligible individuals and families in Marion and Polk County. Oregon Housing and Community Services has recently provided us with an additional \$540,000 for direct client energy assistance for COVID-related energy and

heating bill relief. These funds will allow us to serve an additional 1,350 households. To date we have assisted about 8,000 of the 41,000 eligible low income households in Marion-Polk under our normal allocations. Eligibility for these new funds is based on gross income received by all household members the month prior to the scheduled appointment. Other eligibility criteria may apply. Each household must have been effected by COVID-19. Eligible household income must be at or below 60% of median income. All appointments are scheduled on a first come, first served basis as funding is available. A past due notice or disconnect is not required to schedule an appointment; clients are encouraged to call prior to receiving any notices. Appointments for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are scheduled in our office or by phone. LIHEAP funding provides assistance for multiple heat types: electric, natural gas, propane, wood, oil, etc.

Jones said: “Many low-income families in Marion and Polk are struggling to make rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Marion and Polk counties reopen, many families will continue to struggle as the economy slowly recovers from the shut-down, and all of us come to terms with the projected slow recovery. These funds will allow struggling families to stay in their homes. Community Action in Salem is 52 years old this summer, and we stand with our neighbors in their time of need.”

Hamilton said: “Since COVID-19 arrived in our community, MWVCAA has been preparing; knowing that households would be greatly impacted by the economic effects of this crisis. Thanks to our partners and funders, MWVCAA is able to provide stabilization services to provide Rent Relief during this difficult time. Our hope is to prevent further homeless and economic dislocation caused by the Corona virus, a vision which is shared with our newly formed Continuum of Care, the **Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance**. MWVCAA is here to help and we look forward to playing our part in our community’s recovery efforts.”

Those interested in applying for rental assistance should contact the ARCHES Project directly by calling 503-399-9080 (extension 4003). Those needing help with energy bills should call Energy Services directly at 503-588-9016.

About Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency:

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency has served our low-income neighbors in the Willamette Valley for 52 years. We are dedicated to serving those in poverty by providing programs that lead clients to self-sufficiency, promote human dignity and address basic needs through evidence-based, trauma informed best practices in social services. We believe in the fundamental dignity, potential, and worth of every person, regardless of their circumstances. We operate eight distinct programs, including Head Start, Nutrition First (a food program for family child care), Child Care Resource & Referral (technical assistance and training for child care providers), Community Action Re-Entry (serving recently incarcerated persons), Community Action Energy, Community Action Weatherization, Home Youth and Resource Center and Taylor’s House (day and overnight shelter for runaway and homeless youth) and the ARCHES Project (services for the homeless and housing unstable).

2475 Center Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Learn more about MWVCAA at www.mwvcaa.org
And follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/MWVCommunityAction/
Or at the ARCHES Project Facebook at: www.facebook.com/SalemARCHES/