Who We Are

The Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) is the umbrella organization of Connecticut’s Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the federally designated anti-poverty agencies empowering people throughout Connecticut's 169 cities and towns.

Our Mission

CAFCA strengthens the capacity of its members to foster economic self-sufficiency, and the stability of families and communities.

Our Vision

CAFCA engages all sectors of the community, including lower-income families, in a comprehensive, accountable, and culturally competent approach to empower struggling families to work toward their American Dream.

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*Special thanks go to all the CAA staff who helped submit outcome data, stories and photos.*
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Message from CAFCA’s Chair and Executive Director</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFCA’s Accomplishments in 2012</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering People &amp; Building Communities...keeping hope alive</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut Community Action Customer Demographics</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Report of CAFCA, Inc.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Agencies in CT</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile of Services by Agency</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of CAA Service Areas</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Message from CAFCA’s Chair and Executive Director

This year has been one of continued change, challenge, and hope as the Connecticut and American economy slowly move out of the Great Recession that has plagued the citizens of our state and country for over four years.

Here in our great State, we continue to face serious challenges. Recent state deficit budget projections for the next few years remind us that the challenge to protect and enhance the safety net of health and human services will be great. Together, we must work to ensure that our Community Action programs and services thrive and continue to help families across Connecticut receive assistance where they need it most.

In turn, this year, CAFCA partnered with the Department of Social Services, the University of Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, and BWB Solutions to produce a Connecticut Poverty Report. This report tells the real story of poverty in Connecticut and reveals the tremendous impact it has across the many facets of life in our State. In January, CAFCA will share this informative and comprehensive state-wide report with its CAAs as well as with its local, state, federal, and community partners. It is our hope that the Connecticut Poverty Report will result in recommendations for action and an increased awareness of this important issue among all citizens.

Unfortunately, while we face these challenging circumstances at home, we also face them on the federal level. Polarized government and heightened deficit concerns are grave threats to programs that help low-income Americans work their way out of poverty. Although our country saw the re-election of President Barack Obama, a president committed to preserving the social safety net, the funding outlook for CAAs is unnerving. Spending cuts are on the horizon, and we can only hope these cuts are not as deep as previously anticipated. Connecticut’s Congressional delegation is actively involved in protecting critical programs such as energy assistance, senior nutrition, and child care: They are fighting the good fight and we must stand with them. Now more than ever, the families we serve need our programs that address poverty through employment, education, nutrition, and health services.

We draw our hope today not only from our proven record of effective empowerment, but also from the hundreds of thousands of Connecticut families who have seen the troubling disparities in education, health care, income, housing, and many other areas — who understand that justice and equality are not served by the status quo. We join in the effort not to tear down those at the top, but to equitably empower those still working toward their American Dream.

Indeed, this is the story of Community Action. It is the story of people getting jobs and working toward their dreams. It is the story of strategic, leveraged public investment, of equitable recovery. It is the story of a brighter future for our state’s families and economy. And Connecticut deserves nothing less.
Keeping hope alive
....by working with Community Partners

Community partnerships help us connect our customers to much needed support and services. Working together we help strengthen our families and keep their hope for a brighter future alive.

In 2011/12, our network of Community Action Agencies reported 2,364 partnerships.
CAFCA’s Accomplishments in 2012

Here are some of the highlights of CAFCA’s work in 2012 to assist our agencies to empower people and build communities.

Engaging Leaders

**2012 Southern New England Community Action Conference: Bold Vision & Best Practice: Community Action Moving Forward** was held on September 27-28 in Providence, Rhode Island. The conference, a collaboration between the CAA State Associations in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, was attended by more than 200 CAA representatives. The conference offered a special governance track as well as seminars related to Administration, Workforce Development, and Weatherization Plus Health.

![Rhonda Evans and Julie Ackerman receive their Certified Community Action Professional credential.](image)

**Leading the Way**

In August 2012, Rhonda Evans, Deputy Director of CAFCA, and Julie Ackerman, Director of Planning, Research and Communications at Community Renewal Team (CRT), received the Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) credential at the Partnerships Annual Convention in New York.

Community Action managers and leaders from across the country earn the CCAP designation after demonstrating their Community Action expertise by completing a detailed assessment of their knowledge of poverty theories, causes and remedies, ability to help low-income people achieve economic stability, and comprehension of the mission, vision and values of Community Action.

Connecting Families with Needed Work Supports

CAFCA launched the effective, user-friendly Automated Benefits Calculator, or “ABC,” in December 2010 with continued improvements and updates in 2011 and 2012. ABC has been accessed by thousands of online users at [www.cafca.org](http://www.cafca.org). ABC was also integrated into CAAs’ case management and energy assistance software to better equip CAA staff to connect customers to the appropriate services. ABC has received recognition at local, state and national levels as an innovative step in using technology to maximize assistance.
Strengthening our Member Agencies with Training and Technical Assistance

Each year, CAFCA takes on the important role of ensuring that technical assistance and training is offered to its member agencies so that they can strengthen their organizational capacity. In 2012 this support focused in on the governance and fiscal areas of the Community Action Agencies, as well as training on Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) and Customer Service.

To strengthen CAA governing Boards, CAFCA partnered with Community Action Program Legal Services (CAPLAW) to provide a day-long training session that focused on board roles and responsibilities. Each agency was provided with access to a number of CAPLAW toolkits and other resources as a part of this training opportunity.

Strengthening fiscal operations - specifically on cost allocation - was the focus of another day-long training session sponsored by CAFCA, and was attended by fiscal and programmatic representatives from each agency.

Throughout the year, more than 100 staff around the state were trained on Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA). ROMA is an outcome-focused management system used within the Community Action network to promote and ensure greater effectiveness and better results on the family, agency and community levels.

This fall, more than 70 staff in the CAA network had the opportunity to improve their customer service skills by participating in the Complete Customer Care training. The training complimented the holistic service delivery model in use within community action agencies, and focused on communication styles and understanding the customer.

Strengthening Partnerships and Providing Leadership

With CAFCA’s leadership, we have re-established the regional community action association: the New England Community Action Partnership (NECAP). CT’s CAA representatives to NECAP are Amos Smith, CAANH President/CEO and Vice Chair of CAFCA, Edith Pollack Karsky, Executive Director of CAFCA, and Rocco Tricarico, Executive Director of HRA-NB and CAFCA Treasurer. Amos Smith was recently elected as NECAP President.

CAFCA has once again been awarded the Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia for New England. The U.S. Office of Community Services is leading national reorganization of its provision of Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA). Part of this reorganization is the formation of Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia (RPIC) to coordinate T/TA and strengthen exemplary practices as well as performance standards. CAFCA has been selected as the RPIC lead agency on behalf of Region I. CAFCA is now working in close partnership with the state associations in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to implement this exciting initiative.
Empowering People & Building Communities...  
Keeping hope alive for CT!

Poverty is often closer than people may think and there is no surefire way to avoid it, even if someone works hard and “plays by the rules.” No one wants to need help, but when they do Community Action is there for those people who fall on hard times.

“About one in three American adults say that if they lost their job they would not be able to afford their housing, mortgage, or rent payment for even a month. About one in four Americans say they have no emergency savings at all and would have to beg or borrow from family and friends if faced with an emergency car repair, medical bill, or job loss.”¹

The rise of financial insecurity is a problem that no longer effects an isolated group. Its effects are being felt now more than ever by both the working poor and the middle class. Many of the same concerns are felt by both— investments in education, good jobs, and asset building. For the working poor, financial security means an individual or family’s ability to move upward economically is not only restricted, but cut off. In an August 2012 survey conducted by PEW Research Center, “Eight-five percent of middle-class adults reported that it’s now more difficult to maintain their standard of living than it was just a decade ago. Three-quarters of Americans do not have the recommended six months of emergency savings in their bank accounts.”²

Here’s a story of one CT resident whose life took an unexpected turn.

Bob’s Story  
CAANH, Inc. Program Participant

Bob worked for a local school system for more than a dozen years, providing guidance to adolescents with severe behavioral problems and mental health challenges. After being laid off and spending two years searching for work, he was referred to CAANH for assistance applying to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Though he sometimes felt trapped and betrayed, having exhausted his Unemployment Insurance and losing health care critical to addressing his diabetes, he maintained his sense of humor and remained determined to find work.

Bob was referred to CAANH’s Passport to Prosperity Program™. With comprehensive case management, he was connected with a community partner to obtain an interview for an entry-level position. At this point, Bob was willing to start over and even agreed to join the Multi Family Group, which is a support group for persons struggling with long-term unemployment.

It’s not how Bob had envisioned spending his early fifties and it’s not the full extent to which CAANH would like to have been able to help—but, the struggling economy has challenged many expectations across Connecticut over the past few years. Neither individuals nor Community Action Agencies can do everything that must be done, but working together ensures that we accomplish everything possible.

² Ibid
NEON, Inc., in coordination with the Greater Norwalk Social Services Emergency Operations Center and the City of Norwalk, opened its **24 Haviland Street Boutique** in Norwalk on Wednesday, Nov 7, 2012 to distribute clothing free of charge to individuals and families who are in need due to the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy.

The 5th Annual **Men Who Cook** event sponsored by TEAM, Inc. was held in April. The event featured men from the community who cook up their own specialty dishes, and proceeds benefited services offered at TEAM to the Lower Naugatuck Valley region.

CACD, Inc., in conjunction with General Electric of Danbury, conducted a can drive in the form of a contest called the **Can-do Can Contest**. Ten teams were formed and challenged to build a themed sculpture out of the donations. Over 5,000 cans and food items were collected.

For 17 years, the **Santa Anonymous Boot Project** has been sponsored at TVCCA, Inc. TVCCA has assisted hundreds of children in Southern New London County keep warm during the winter months. This event is made possible with the hard work of seniors in the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, the Gemma Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, L&M, Stonington Health Services, and the new London Police Department. Last year, over 966 children received a warm pairs of boots.
Empowering People & Building Communities...

A Second Chance for Kendra
NOI Program Participant

This past year, Kendra came to the Family Development Center in need of assistance. Recently out of jail, she could not find an employer that would give her a chance due to her past. With assistance from a Family Development Specialist she developed a plan and enrolled into the In-The-Making (ITM) program. Kendra worked with a case worker to identify the personal barriers that were keeping her from moving ahead in her life and becoming self-sufficient. Among these barriers was her criminal background and not having her GED. Many employers will not entertain the possibility of hiring someone with a criminal history and/or without a degree equivalent to a GED. Determined, Kendra completed the twelve-week program and received her GED. She continued to meet with her case worker to build a resume and look for her next opportunity. Her personal goal was to continue taking classes and to prepare to get into a CNA program. With the assistance of our ITM case worker, Kendra applied at the local Workforce Investment Board (WIA) and received partial WIA funding to enroll in a certificate program at the local community college. As a result, Kendra began classes this past fall at Naugatuck Valley Community College. She is currently awaiting a decision from the State Board of Expungement, so that she will have more job opportunities in the future.

The In-The-Making job (ITM) training program offered by NOI is a twelve-week job training program for unemployed, or under-employed, women in the greater Waterbury area. The ITM program is designed to help participants develop the work and living skills needed to become self-sufficient, while addressing barriers to employment.

How much did we do?
2,845 people obtained employment or self-employment.
3,078 people learned skills and competencies required for employment.
Over 40,000 barriers to employment, including child care, housing, food, transportation, and health care, were reduced or eliminated.
746 youth obtained job skills.

How well did we do it?
At least 473 people increased their earned income from the previous year.

Is anyone better off?
Over 3,800 CT residents have learned job skills that will help them obtain, maintain or advance in their employment paths.
Keeping hope alive
...By strengthening the workforce & preparing youth for careers

Breaking the Cycle....Bishop’s Story
BCO, Inc. Program Participant

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of poverty is that it traps families who experience it - not just for one lifetime, but for generations. Community Action is committed to breaking the cycle of poverty. When seventeen-year-old Bishop was referred to BCO, he had just returned from living with family out-of-state to be with his mother, who was a single mother living in public housing. His only identification was a report card from a school where he had lived. Poverty had grabbed hold of his family. He needed job skills—and life skills—to break free.

A BCO case manager was impressed with Bishop, who had walked two miles just to enroll in BCO’s Summer Youth Employment and Training program. The young man was a reliable worker, went in every day, and did his job well. Working together with his case manager, Bishop was able to get identification from the Department of Motor Vehicles, a bank account, and a course in money management. Bishop found a part time job, has returned to high school to complete his senior year, is learning how to drive in order to get his license, and is saving for a car.

Belinda’s Story
Access, Inc. Program Participant

When Belinda arrived at Access’s Crossroads Supportive Work, Education and Transition Program, she had spent years bouncing back and forth between the homes of family and friends until she had “burned her bridges” and had nowhere else to go. “Crossroads was my last resort. I would have continued on my path of self-destruction if I hadn’t gotten to Crossroads,” she remembers.

Crossroads is a community-based transitional living program for adolescents. Participants are referred to the program by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) because they are close to aging out of the department’s system and need support to transition into adult lives. The program offers youth opportunities to overcome the barriers and learn critical independent living skills needed to succeed as adults.

Belinda is grateful for the learning she accomplished during her time at Crossroads. “It helped me with my education—not only with school—but with knowledge of time management skills and financial literacy. It helped me learn the basics such as grocery shopping and opening a bank account. Crossroads helped alleviate the struggle of being independent at a young age.” Today, Belinda is a junior at Eastern Connecticut State University, majoring in Social Work with a minor in Women’s Studies.
Ahmed’s Story
TEAM Program Participant

Ahmed, his wife, and three children arrived in the United States during the spring of 2012. Prior to arriving in the United States, he worked with the US Army in Baghdad, Iraq as an interpreter and special cultural/societal communications expert. Before the Iraq War, he was an executive chef at a 5 star hotel in Baghdad and was studying for his advanced degree in economics and tourism.

For the safety of his family, the US government arranged their relocation to the United States. The International Institute assisted Ahmed with housing and his relationship with TEAM began in May when he attended the Bank on Connecticut session. Ahmed wanted to learn more about the US banking system and how to set up accounts needed to pay bills for his household. As a result of attending that workshop, he has opened up a checking and savings account as well as a safe deposit box for his valuable papers. Ahmed has since found a job as a chef at a local hotel, his wife is learning English as a second language, and his children are enrolled in the public school system. TEAM was able to connect Ahmed and his family to services and assistance that will help them transition to life in America.

Ahmed’s words of thanks...

“TEAM is here for my family; we had no prior experience living in America. TEAM is my “go to” place for questions about financial programs, heating, food (WIC), clothing, housing, job assistance, and advice about living in the US. Without TEAM, my life in the US would be very difficult. I greatly appreciate all the help TEAM provides to my family. We say, thank you TEAM!”
Keeping hope alive
...By Training Families For Financial Success

With the challenging job market, now more than ever before families must be smart with their money. Connecticut’s Community Action Agencies are dedicated to helping families build their financial knowledge so that they can acquire assets, have money to live, and save for the future. This may mean learning how to create and manage a household budget, learning how to invest money for retirement, or participating in programs like the Individual Development Account (IDA) program to learn how to buy a house, start a business, go to college, or simply open a savings account.

Whatever the need is, Community Action is there helping families be prepared for financial success!

How much did we do?

367 people opened savings accounts and accumulated at least $42,235 in savings.
Over 2,952 people learned how to better manage their income and increase savings.
Over 5,100 tax returns were filed free of charge.

How well did we do it?

Volunteers donated 5,215 hours, saving over $1 million in tax preparation fees.

Is anyone better off?

367 people enrolled in the IDA program were able to save money this year.
Over $4 million was returned to our CAA Clients in credits or savings with volunteer tax preparation assistance.
Empowering People & Building Communities...

ABCD’s **Total Learning Initiative** is a community-based birth to age nine initiative that will change the way low-income children are educated. It will prepare parents of very young children to support their children’s cognitive, language and emotional development. It will also prepare parents to support their children’s academic progress and it will reduce the achievement gap that exists for so many children living in impoverished and disadvantaged households.

The Total Learning Initiative is a collaborative effort between ABCD, the Bridgeport Board of Education, Head Start, Arts Education IDEAS, Music Together, and the Michael Cohen Group.

**Maria’s Story**  
**NEON Program Participant**

Three years ago, Maria came to NEON to enroll her oldest child in the Child Development Program. Little did she know then that she would receive more than an opportunity for her son to develop and prepare for kindergarten. After conducting a full assessment, NEON’s Family Outreach workers identified numerous needs. From that point on, Maria worked with the Family Outreach Workers to identify other needs that existed for her and her family. Maria was linked to counseling to help her with the problems she was experiencing with her husband who suffers from alcoholism. She was able to get clothing and shoes for her children and food to put on the table from the Emergency Food Pantry. Maria also took ESL classes, and says she is happier and more confident now that she has learned English.

Despite her success, Maria’s hardships were not over. This fall, she was faced with eviction from her apartment and went directly to the people who could help—the Family Outreach Workers. Despite not having a child currently enrolled in the program, staff were happy to help Maria and her boys. She was connected to a local shelter until more permanent housing could be arranged. Today, Maria is forever grateful to the staff who made time to work with her and provide a brighter future for her and her two sons.
Keeping hope alive…
...By giving our children a brighter future

Korilyn’s words of thanks
TVCCA Program Participant

“I would like to start by saying thank you so much to the TVCCA Little Learners program, especially the Bayonet Street site in New London. This program has really aided in the development of all three of my children. Not only has the staff been wonderful to my children in their classrooms, but they have been an amazing assistance to myself as well. Being a single mother, raising three children can sometimes be a difficult task, but the staff at the Bayonet site were always there to help in any way they could. A very special thank you goes out to Jonathan for all of the help and support that he gave me. Jonathan informed me on the resources that would have other wise been overlooked, and made it so that my children not only received quality care but affordable care as well.”

How much did we do?
Over 6,850 children participated in preschool activities.
6,183 children obtained immunizations and medical care.
4,720 children received dental care.
11,845 children benefited from congregate meals.
4,161 people received emergency vouchers for food, formula and/or diapers.

How well did we do it?
82% of children (4,095 out of 5,005) who participated in preschool activities demonstrated competency according to CT State benchmarks.

For every $1 invested in early childhood education, there is a return estimated at $11 during the course of a child’s life thanks to better earnings, less public aid, and less drain on the justice system.³

Is anyone better off?
Over 6,800 children are better prepared to start and succeed in school.
Over 6,100 children are healthier because of preventative medical care.

Empowering People & Building Communities...

Emily’s Story
NOI Program Participant

Last year a family came to NOI’s Family Development Center looking for help. Emily, her husband, and their child, in fear of losing their home, came to speak with a Family Development Specialist. Only a few months away from becoming homeless, they felt they had no where to turn. Emily, who worked full time as a bank teller in a local bank, recently became unemployed. Meanwhile her husband was working a part time, minimum-wage paying job and struggled to find a full time position. Together they were having a hard time making ends meet and the stress of losing their home, along with mounting bills, was taking a toll on their family.

The Family Development Specialist began working with Emily to develop a plan to stabilize her family’s situation and keep them in their house. They worked together to develop a budget to save their house, and continued to look for employment. Emily expressed her interest in attending school but couldn’t afford to. Through one of NOI’s many partnerships, Emily was referred to a training center where she completed Business & Technology classes. Once she finished those classes she decided she wanted to become a C.N.A. Her dedication and determination to get certified and get a job pushed her to finish top of her class where she graduated with high honors.

With the assistance from NOI’s Family Development Specialist, Emily’s family received the support they needed to get back on their feet and save their house. Today, Emily works at NOI as a Family Development Specialist helping people in crisis, just as her family needed.

Over the last five years Community Action Agencies (CAAs) have witnessed an influx of families in Emily’s situation. These families are eager and willing to work hard to get back on their feet and become self-sufficient again. The integrated service approach at CAAs allow people like Emily to connect with resources and options to change their situation.
Keeping hope alive
...By addressing all of the needs of the customer

The Community Action Approach

Community Action doesn’t just save lives by helping people to meet their immediate needs - it empowers individuals and families to build better lives for themselves. Through an integrated service delivery approach, Human Service Infrastructure (H.S.I.) customers are connected to programs and services that will support them as they move towards greater levels of self-sufficiency and economic security.

There is no wrong door for a customer to enter at a Community Action Agency. At every door, individuals and families will find case managers ready to predetermine their likely eligibility for many programs and services. Every customer is offered the opportunity to have holistic case management services provided to them to help address their specific needs.

How much did we do?
At least 418,000 people statewide benefited from CAA services last year.

Over 40,000 barriers to employment were reduced or eliminated.

How well did we do it?
Low –income residents connected to the network efficiently and easily because CAAs from a statewide network provided a one-stop center of service delivery.

Is anyone better off?
Barriers such as job skills, child care, transportation, health services, and education were removed through services allowing more than 418,000 people to move towards greater personal and economic self-sufficiency.
Empowering People & Building Communities...

ABCD, Inc. Weatherization Program...

Ester and Mary’s Stories

**Ester** was faced with financial difficulty as a result of being laid off from her job. In September, she turned to ABCD in desperation because she needed a new furnace and her family had been without heat and hot water for seven months. The Weatherization staff went out to Ester’s home and accessed her situation. As a result of the assessment, she was granted assistance and a new furnace was installed. Ester expressed her thanks to ABCD by writing, “My family and I are very grateful and words could never express our true feeling of appreciation. We thank you ABCD and Weatherization team—we can now face another winter without fear.”

Like Ester, **Mary** was laid off from her job due to outsourcing and forced to take a lower paying job to keep her home. Her furnace was in disrepair and she didn’t know how she was going to be able to afford to replace it. “The financial responsibility that I was facing has been difficult to say the least. This program has been a great blessing in my efforts to keep my home safe, warm and secure.” Mary was granted assistance from ABCD to have weatherization services. With a new furnace Mary will have heat this winter and energy savings that can be used to pay her other bills.

The very poorest of Connecticut’s households spend more than 70% of their annual income on their home energy bills.\(^5\)

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5 Ibid
Keeping hope alive
...By Weatherizing Homes & Keeping Families Safe

The Weatherization Assistance Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and assists low-income people to minimize energy related costs and fuel usage in their homes. Typical weatherization measures include installing insulation in walls, floors and attics; reducing air filtration and pressure imbalances; sealing and repairing ducts; and, tuning and repairing or replacing heating and cooling units.

Low-income families save an average of $413 or more each year on their energy bills after their homes have been weatherized.

How much did we do?

Over 13,500 homes were weatherized, decreasing energy cost and use.

Nearly 500 households improved environmental safety with new heating or a/c systems.

How well did we do it?

More than 13,000 lower-income families avoided utility crises, resolved vendor disputes, improved environmental safety, and learned to save money through energy conservation measures.

Is anyone better off?

Homeowners realized an increase in the value of their homes as a result of rehabilitation.

For every $1 spent on energy efficiency, Connecticut receives electric, gas and fuel oil system benefits valued at nearly $3.6

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Empowering People & Building Communities...

**Steve’s Story**  
*ABCD Program Participant*

At 70, Steve was diagnosed with cancer and his life was never the same. As a self-employed contractor, getting to jobs everyday was an increasing challenge—and so was working in his shop to build and repair furniture. Being forced to slow down had a severe impact on Steve’s income, and his bills began to pile up. Living solely on an income from Social Security, his financial worries grew. That’s when Steve found out about the Energy Assistance program at ABCD. With the assistance he now receives each month towards his energy bill, he says, “I feel so lucky to be able to get assistance. Now I don’t have to worry about getting sick from being in a cold apartment and have a little extra money so I can buy food and pay for a couple other bills. I can sleep better at night.”

Living on a fixed income is something that many seniors like Steve face everyday. Choosing between having a warm place to sleep and putting food on the table is not a choice anyone should have to make. Thanks to programs like Energy Assistance, Steve and others don’t have to.

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**Judi’s Story**  
*TVCCA Program Participant*

Trying to make ends meet in a sluggish economy is tough and heating your home can get expensive. Judi takes care of elderly clients for a living. It puts a roof over her head, but with winter coming, it’s not enough to put oil in her tank: “Even with working full time or close to full time, I just didn’t see how I was going to be able to take that lump sum and put it toward oil.” Judi was hoping to heat her house with a wood stove, but then she fell off the wood pile both hurting her knee and her ability to utilize the stove.

Judi is among a record number of people seeking energy assistance at TVCCA. “This year we’ve got 5,700 total households that applied,” said Zack St. John, a staff member at TVCCA. “Last year at this time it was 4,000.” While most clients are on other assistance services that are offered, there is a growing number of folks who are employed but who just don’t make enough to heat their homes.

Like many people, Judi didn’t know she would be eligible for energy assistance or for any other programs. TVCCA has connected Judi, and many others in similar situations, to services that they never knew existed or were embarrassed to ask about. Judi is grateful to TVCCA and says, “When you have a place you can turn to and ask for help and be treated kindly it means the world, it means the world.”
Keeping hope alive
...By Making Energy Affordable.

The Energy Assistance Program is designed to provide economically disadvantaged households with assistance so they can keep their homes warm and safe during the winter season. With the program, residents are able to prevent other utilities from being discontinued while having available funds to provide for the basic necessities including food, shelter, medical care, and clothing.

All of Connecticut’s Community Action Agencies provide Energy Assistance and Energy Conservation. For many customers these services are their first introduction to our agencies and to a network of support and services that can help them address other needs and get them on a path of increased self-sufficiency.

How much did we do?
132,575 households avoided crises with energy assistance.
8,225 households used the Utility Matching Payment Program (MPP).
60,940 people learned more about energy conservation.

How well did we do it?
More than 22,400 lower-income households resolved issues in order to stay warm and meet their obligations to local fuel vendors.
More than 30,700 seniors were assisted under the energy assistance programs—Community Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) and Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP).

Is anyone better off?
Families avoided utility crises, resolved vendor disputes, improved environmental safety, and learned how to save money through energy conservation measures.
Empowering People & Building Communities…

**Sofia’s Story**

**NEON and ABCD Program Participant**

Six months ago, Sofia was on Section 8 housing and living in Bridgeport. As the mother of four children and going through a divorce, she wanted to live closer to the charter school her children attended. Sofia searched for a new home, but wasn’t successful in finding a new place to live that fell under Section 8. She owed $6,000 in utility bills, and her credit rating was poor. Sofia worked in retail 25 hours a week, but she just wasn’t able to catch up.

Through NEON’s *Mobility* program, along with a local real estate office, Sofia was able to find an affordable rent. She now lives in Stratford in a single family home with a yard for her kids to play in. She has received additional assistance through ABCD’s Energy Assistance program and is now on a payment plan with the utility company. Through these services she is able to provide for the needs of her children without worrying about how she is going to pay her next bill.

“Housing insecurity - doubling up with other families for economic reasons, overcrowding, or moving two or more times in a year - put children at risk of negative impacts on their health. It can also impact child health even before children are born. Recent analyses show that women who experience homelessness during pregnancy are 50% more likely to have a low birth weight baby and over 30% more likely to have a pre-term delivery than similar women who were not homeless during pregnancy.”

**Bryant’s Story**

**Team Program Participant**

“I heard about TEAM from a friend. I am unemployed and behind in paying my rent, and my landlord wanted the back rent. I didn’t have the money I needed, so TEAM helped me get current with my rent. It’s still not easy for me to get the money together to pay my rent, but I am managing and I can sleep at night again because I am no longer behind in my payments.”

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Keeping hope alive
...by Promoting Healthy Housing

How much did we do?
2,394 households/individuals moved from temporary to safe, stable housing.
1,943 people received emergency shelter.
Emergency rental/mortgage payments were made to prevent homelessness for 1,917 households.

How well did we do it?
67% of households (2,394 of 3,547) maintained safe/stable housing for over 90 days.
1,977 people obtained safe, affordable, unsubsidized, permanent housing through home purchase or rental housing.
1,022 households avoided eviction for at least 120 days through mediation.

Is anyone better off?
Families who live in safer, more stable housing can better manage their daily lives and improve their children’s nutritional, health, developmental, and academic performance.

The Rodriguez’s Story
CAANH Program Participant

The Rodriguez’s have faced more than their fair share of housing challenges. Working part-time and living in Ansonia in miserable housing conditions, the family moved only to find worse conditions in another apartment—a flea infestation. With the landlord refusing to address the issue and after filing a complaint to City Hall, the entire house was condemned and the Rodriguez’s had to move once again. While searching for a safe and healthy home, the Rodriguez’s moved in with their mother. They found a new apartment, but soon after they moved in Mrs. Rodriguez became ill with an allergic reaction and was advised by doctors that she could not return to their home. At the same time, the family found out that their food stamps were discontinued. The Rodriguez’s moved back in with family and were referred to CAANH through one of their Passport to Prosperity Partners because they were in need of safe and healthy housing conditions and food. CAANH was able to provide emergency food and contacted the Department of Social Services to help the Rodriguez’s get their food stamp award reinstated. With CAANH’s assistance, the Rodriguez’s moved into an apartment in September and Mrs. Rodriguez is working with CAANH staff to find a job. Thanks to the assistance from CAANH, the Rodriguez’s can rest easy in their new home and look towards a healthier future.
Empowering People & Building Communities...

How much did we do?
Over 3,900 people obtained access to needed healthcare.
450 non-custodial fathers increased time spent with their children.
Over 30,500 people received emergency or supplemental food from our food pantries.

How well did we do it?
4,315 parents/caregivers learn and exhibit improved family functioning skills.
434 children at risk of DCF placement remained with family due to improved family functioning.
Over 1,800 youth improved physical health and development.
4,335 parents/caregivers improved family functioning as a result of classes or supportive services.

Is anyone better off?
Over 3,900 low-income people statewide lived healthier lives because of the access to health care they received.

Parents/caregivers increased their knowledge of child development and family functioning, allowing for improved family stability and relationships. As a result, their children are better nurtured and are able to develop healthier ~ emotionally, socially and academically.

Poverty, unemployment, and low education levels can diminish parental capacity for consistent and involved parenting. When families experience these life stresses, stable and nurturing relationships necessary for a child’s healthy development can be disrupted.8

Knowledge of a child’s developmental stages allows parents to become part of their child’s learning process, and creates closer family relationships. The Family Resource Center (FRC) at TEAM was established because it recognized the importance of the family in providing stability to individuals and the community at large. The mission of the FRC is to teach parents that they are their child’s first and best teacher. Serving families with children from ages birth to eight years old, participants receive referrals to local doctors, day care centers, counselors, and job centers. Family learning playgroups and parent workshops are offered for parents, grandparents and guardians. Through the services offered at the FRC, parents become more confident in their roles enabling them to provide a safer and more nurturing home environment which, in turn, creates a safer community overall.

Denise’s Story
TEAM Program Participant

“My children and I have benefited so much from TEAM’s parent training and counseling programs. The workshops have helped us learn to make better decisions in guiding and supporting our children, and overall they have helped make us a happier and stronger family.”
Empowering People & Building Communities...

Surfing with Seniors (SWS) participants share their stories

CAANH’s Surfing with Seniors (SWS) is a computer training educational program that works exclusively with seniors. SWS allows seniors access to technology and all of its benefits in a safe and relaxed learning atmosphere. Participants are taught how to use an e-mail account, surf the internet, choose a browser, and communicate with family members using social media. This knowledge allows seniors to maintain their independence.

Claretha came to CAANH to learn how to use a computer on her own. “My 6 year old granddaughter usually does everything involving the computer, but I’ve realized that I need to know how to do these things on my own. When I started taking the class, from the moment I was able to log on with my password and go online, I was happy!”

Harvey found SWS to be a great opportunity to learn a skill and keep involved with his family. “It was very rewarding for me. I learned about the parts of the computer and how it can take me to many places without actually being there...learning the computer is a big chance for me. There is so much more to see and learn. I’m excited. I know how to go online, check my mail, and I just set up a Facebook account.”

These participants are testament that it is never too late to learn!

“Retirees who use the Internet regularly are 20% to 28% less likely to be classified as depressed because of their connection and sense of the community that the internet provides.”

Pearl and William’s Story

CRT, Inc. Program Participants

Three years ago, Pearl began noticing that her husband, William, age 81, was showing signs of forgetfulness and loss of his ability to do his day-to-day activities. Soon after, William was diagnosed with dementia. Pearl began to worry for him and for herself because she had no experience dealing with such an illness. She feared he would end up in a nursing home, and thinking about those costs was almost too tough to bear. “I was at the point where I didn’t know what to do, and I was finding it hard to deal with day-to-day life when I had to take on a lot of extra responsibility for William’s care,” Pearl said.

One Sunday afternoon, Pearl heard a presentation by Betty Padin, the Coordinator of CRT’s Gatekeeper program. It focused on the ways people can get help when a loved one might need assistance in maintaining life at home. With Betty’s assistance, Pearl and William were connected to an Adult Day Care Center where William was evaluated by medical staff and accepted for enrollment. They also applied for and received respite care benefits. With Betty’s encouragement, William also receives daily lunches through CRT’s Meals on Wheels program, something that Pearl says has reduced her stress even more.

Today, William attends Adult Day Care twice a week and Pearl gets a much-needed break from caring for her husband and tends to errands and getting things done around their house. “Caring for William can be stressful, so anytime I can get relief, it’s a huge blessing,” Pearl said. “Everything is better and I’m more confident with caring for him when he’s home with me.”

Keeping hope alive
...By Helping Seniors Maintain Their Independence.

Through support from Community Action Agencies and their partners, seniors are able to remain active and healthy. They are able to continue to live in their own community and are able to avoid costlier living expenses that come with residing in a nursing home.

Community Action recognizes that seniors can continue to play a vital role in their community because of their skills and passion. By providing nutrition programs, social and educational activities, volunteer opportunities, energy assistance and transportation, seniors are able to maintain a level of independence and continue to thrive.

How much did we do?
Over 21,800 seniors maintained an independent living situation as a result of support services.

Over 3,100 seniors volunteered their services to help others through community oriented programs.

Over 13,700 seniors participated in congregate meal programs or received home-delivered meals.

How well did we do it?
A little less than 14,000 seniors were able to maintain a healthy diet due to meals provided at congregate meal sites in the community or through home-delivered meals.

More than 30,700 seniors were assisted under the energy assistance programs—CEAP and CHAP.

Is anyone better off?
Over 21,800 senior citizens avoided institutionalization saving more than $1 billion in annual nursing home costs. 10

Who We Serve
Customer Demographics

Ages of Customers Served

Keeping hope alive for more than 414,406 individuals who benefited from CAA services in 2011. An increase of 11% from those served in 2010 and an increase of 41% of individuals served 3 years ago.

Family/Households Receiving Services

Education Levels of Customers Served

2 or 4 year College Graduates 8%
The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is $23,050/year for a family of 4.

23% of our customers (35,856 families) live in severe poverty.

23% of Connecticut low-income working families pay more than 33% of their household income on housing.”

Income amounts were documented for 158,898 families

Race of Customers Served

Ethnicity of Customers Served

Housing of Customers Served

“76.4% of Connecticut low-income working families pay more than 33% of their household income on housing.”
Empowering People & Building Communities... Keeping hope alive... Through Volunteers!

17,337 low-income people engaged in non-governance community activities or groups created or supported by Community Action this year.

2,009,345 hours were donated to Community Action this year by low-income individuals.

When valued at the Independent Sector wage for Connecticut, which adjusts for skill levels of nonprofit volunteers ($26.98/hour), the volunteers’ time was worth $54.2 million.

Over 3,100 seniors volunteered their services to help others through community-oriented programs.

CAA-recruited volunteers donated over 2 million hours of support, the equivalent of 1,257 full-time employees.

Support & Revenue
Grants and Contracts
- Federal $ 773,884
- Federal stimulus $ 191,634
- State $ 9,298
- Program and other income $ 58,268
Total: $1,033,084

Expenses
- Salaries and benefits $ 379,617
- Professional fees & contractual services $ 437,757
- Materials & supplies $ 43,212
- Other $ 90,023
- Conferences and meetings $ 44,147
- Occupancy $ 29,542
- Travel and transportation $ 21,748
Total: $1,046,046

Change in net assets from operating activities $12,962

CAFCA’s 990 can be found online at www.cafca.org

Leveraging Resources to End Poverty

Connecticut CAA Funding Sources  The core operational funding for CAAs is the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). With that funding ($7,713,979 in FFY 2011), CAAs are able to leverage additional funds, create partnerships, conduct local assessments and planning, and organize volunteers. In 2011, CT CAAs brought $32,401,479 in Recovery Act funds into the state and put these funds to work empowering people and building communities.

Connecticut CAAs utilize diverse funding sources in our anti-poverty work. Through mostly competitive private, state, and federal grants, Connecticut Community Action Agencies directed over $300 million toward fighting the causes and effects of poverty in 2011.

2011 Funding Sources for Connecticut CAA Network

Federal (non-CSBG & ARRA) $265,170,698
Federal-CSBG $ 7,713,979
Federal-ARRA (CSBG) $ 948,710
Federal-ARRA (non-CSBG) $ 31,452,769
State $ 48,671,443
Local $ 4,447,428
Private $ 23,862,593
Total: $387,267,620
Community Action Agencies in CT

Access Community Action Agency, Inc. [Access]
President/CEO: Peter DeBiasi
1315 Main Street, Suite 2, Willimantic, CT 06226
Tel. (860) 450-7400 / 860-450-7454
Fax (860) 450-7477
Email: peter.debiasi@accessagency.org
Website: www.accessagency.org


Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. [ABCD]
Executive Director: Charles Tisdale
1070 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604
Tel. (203) 366-8241
Fax (203) 394-6175
Email: william.bevacqua@abcd.org
Website: www.abcd.org

TownS Served: Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Strafford, and Trumbull.

Bristol Community Organization, Inc. [BCO]
Executive Director: Thomas Morrow
55 South Street, Bristol, CT 06010
Tel. (860) 584-2725
Fax (860) 582-5224
Email: tmorrow@bcoct.org
Website: www.bcoct.org

TownS Served: Bristol, Burlington, Farmington, Plainville, and Plymouth.

Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. [CAANH]
President/CEO: Amos Smith
419 Whalley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515
Tel. (203) 387-7700
Fax (203) 397-7475
Email: asmith@caanh.net
Website: www.caanh.net

TownS Served: East Haven, Hamden, New Haven, North Haven, and West Haven.
(Many contracts extend beyond these towns).

Community Action Committee of Danbury, Inc. [CACD]
Interim Executive Director: Phyllis Kinlow
66 North Street, Danbury, CT 06810
Tel. (203) 744-4700
Fax (203) 790-9693
Email: kinlowp@cacd-caa.org
Website: www.cacd-CAA.org


Community Renewal Team, Inc. [CRT]
President/CEO: Lena Rodriguez
555 Windsor Street, Hartford, CT 06120
Tel. (860) 560-5600
Fax (860) 527-3305
Email: lenar@crtct.org
Website: www.crtct.org

(Many contracts extend beyond these towns.)
Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA)
Executive Director: Rocco Tricarico, J.D. 180 Clinton Street, New Britain, CT 06053
Tel. (860) 225-8601 Fax (860) 225-4843
Email: roccot@hranbct.org Website: www.hranbct.org

Town Served: New Britain

New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)
President/CEO: James H. Gatling, Ph.D. 232 North Elm Street, Waterbury, CT 06702
Tel. (203) 575-9799 Fax (203) 755-8254
Email: info@newopportunitiesinc.org Website: www.newopportunitiesinc.org


Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON)
(Now serving lower Fairfield County)
Interim President/CEO: Patricia Wilson Pheanious
Tel. (203) 899-2420 98 South Main Street, S. Norwalk, CT 06854
Fax (203) 899-2430 Website: www.neoncaa.org

Towns Served: Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.

TEAM, Inc. (TEAM)
President/CEO: Richard Knoll 30 Elizabeth Street, Derby, CT 06418
Tel. (203) 736-5420 Fax (203) 736-5425
Email: rknoll@teaminc.org Website: www.teaminc.org

Towns Served: Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Milford, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, and Woodbridge.

Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)
Executive Director: Deborah Monahan 1 Sylvandale Road, Jewett City, CT 06351
Tel. (860) 425-6503 Fax (860) 376-7015
Email: exec@tvcca.org Website: www.tvcca.org

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<tr>
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