Community Action ~
Making a Difference!

Partnerships that work
Results that matter
Community Action: Making a difference

Who We Are

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

Our Mission

The mission of the Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) is to strengthen the capacity of its members to empower people in need and improve the communities in which they live.

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

CAFCA Staff

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2014 Annual Report designed and written by Susanne Kenney
Editor: Edith Pollock Karsky
The year 2014 was one of great challenge among hope and reflection. As our Community Action Agency (CAA) network commemorated the 50th year of Community Action and President Johnson’s War on Poverty, we thought of the thousands of families we helped over the years to move out of poverty and into jobs, the ones we assisted in finding safe housing and home heating assistance, the seniors who were given nutritious meals and homemakers services and were therefore able to remain in their homes, and the children who were given a healthy and positive educational experience in Early Childhood Education.

However, the stark reality of how poverty is impacting our families and communities today begs for our continued focus on how best to address the causes and conditions of poverty. As a state and as a country, we cannot afford to turn our back on those who need us most. And, as the statistics below make clear, the work that remains to be done to improve the lives of low-income individuals and families will take a multi-pronged approach and likely be multi-generational.

The most recent U.S. Census poverty data estimates tell us that the poverty rate in Connecticut in 2013 was 10.7%, unchanged from 2012 and up from 9.4% in 2009 when the recession ended. The data paints an even darker picture for our state’s youngest residents. One out of every seven children in Connecticut lived in poverty in 2013—unchanged from 2012, but up from 11.9% in 2009. What’s more, as a state, we are more unequal now than we have ever been. The top 1% of taxpayers earns nearly 41 times what the average 99% do—ranking Connecticut first in income inequality in the nation. These startling figures reveal this unfortunate truth: though the recession ended nearly five years ago, many of our state’s residents are still struggling to emerge and recover from the Great Recession.

Even with the challenges of stagnant or reduced state and federal funding, our network continues to do what it has always done for the past fifty years. In times of great need and economic distress, our agencies are there for our state’s most vulnerable residents. No door goes
unopened, no call unanswered. As our agencies grapple with limited funding at all levels, they continue to be a safe haven for low-income families by providing services in every town and city in this great state to an ever-increasing number of customers. This year was no different. Once again, our agencies experienced a rise in the demand for services. More than 365,000 people across the state came to us for assistance, and critical programs and services such as heating assistance, early childhood education, supportive housing, child care, eviction prevention, financial management, and job training were needed at unprecedented levels.

Our record of proven empowerment and revitalization comes from our Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework called Results-Oriented Management and Accountability, or ROMA. This data reporting method allows our agencies to efficiently and effectively measure meaningful customer, agency, and community outcomes and results. This is what you will read about in our report. These numbers tell the story of Community Action. They show that while we help low-income individuals and families with immediate needs, we don’t stop there. We work with families to develop their own plans and way out of poverty so that they are able to see another path. A path to a brighter future, one with positive change for themselves and the economy. A path to help them grow and thrive, to make them stronger than they have ever been. This is what Community Action is. This is what Community Action does. Our values and commitment have never wavered, and Connecticut’s residents deserve nothing less.
How much did we do?

CT CAAs brought over $167 million in federal funding into CT to fight the causes and effects of poverty.

In 2013, our network reported many important partnerships:

- 1,260 partnerships to improve and coordinate services;
- 844 partnerships to improve community planning; and,
- 441 partnerships to achieve improved outcomes.

Over 461,000 volunteer hours were donated to CT CAAs.

How well did we do it?

CT CAAs leveraged funding sources and community volunteers to fight poverty efficiently.

For every $1 of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding, the CT CAA network leveraged $10.27 from state, local, and private resources, including the value of volunteer hours.

Using Human Services Infrastructure (HSI) funds, CAAs provided a statewide, one-stop center of service delivery, allowing low-income residents to connect to needed services efficiently and easily.

CAA organizations are efficient because of leveraged funding, partnerships that share resources, dedicated staff, and community volunteers.

Is anyone better off?

Over 365,000 low-income CT residents from 146,021 families are working towards improved self-sufficiency.

All CT residents benefit from taxpayer dollars that are efficiently and well-spent.
...and making a difference by our approach

The Community Action Approach

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

Through an integrated service delivery approach, customers are connected to services that will support them as they move towards greater levels of self-sufficiency and economic security. Community Action doesn’t just change lives by helping people to meet their immediate needs. It empowers individuals and families and provides them with the necessary resources to build better lives for themselves.

How much did we do?

Over 365,000 people benefited from CAA services last year.

Over 50,000 barriers to initial or continuous employment were reduced or eliminated.

How well did we do it?

With the reduction or elimination of barriers such as child care, healthcare, transportation, job skills, and education, more than 7,300 people went back to work.

Is anyone better off?

More than 14,900 people engaged in services that allowed them to obtain employment skills/competencies that resulted in obtaining or maintaining employment.
This past year, Community Action Agencies across the state partnered with over 2,000 organizations. Tirelessly creating and maintaining relationships with local providers allows us to address all the needs of our customers so that they can be supported, become stronger, and look forward to a brighter future.
How much did we do?

50,000 barriers to employment were reduced or eliminated.
7,346 people obtained employment or self-employment.
15,000 people learned skills and competencies required for employment.
676 youth obtained job skills.

How well did we do it?

Over 5,200 people increased their earned income and/or benefits from the previous year.

Is anyone better off?

Over 7,300 adults moved closer to self-sufficiency by going to work.
Children of parents who improved their employment situation as a result of employment and training services are more likely to emerge from poverty, and will likely earn, on average, 39% more than the median income. ¹

¹ The Cost of Doing Nothing: The Economic Impact of the Recession-Induced Child Poverty. First Focus. December 2008
How much did we do?

Over 6,100 people obtained or maintained safe and affordable housing.

More than 2,300 people received emergency shelter.

Emergency rental/mortgage payments prevented 3,163 individuals from becoming homeless.

Nearly 7,500 households improved home safety through lead removal and other services.

How well did we do it?

Over 3,100 households avoided eviction through mediation.

Over 5,600 housing units in the community were preserved or improved through weatherization or rehabilitation achieved by Community Action activity or advocacy.

Is anyone better off?

Families who live in safer, more stable housing can better manage their daily lives and their children’s nutrition, health, development, and academic performance.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING  Homeless Prevention/Rapid Re-housing

EMERGENCY SHELTER  Eviction Prevention & Mediation

Affordable and/or Subsidized Housing  Emergency Rental/Mortgage Payment
How much did we do?

676 youth obtained job skills.
1,140 youth improved social/emotional development.
463 youth avoided at-risk behavior for at least 3 months.
396 youth reduced involvement with the criminal justice system.
Over 1,500 youth increased their academic, athletic or social skills by participating in after-school programs.
485 fathers participated in classes and activities to strengthen their parenting skills.

How well did we do it?

For every dollar invested in early childhood and youth development, an average of $16 in benefits is returned to the economy.²

933 children at risk of DCF placement remained with family because of improved family functioning.

Is anyone better off?

Kids gained a stronger foundation for an economic, self-sufficient life.

Kids did better in school—socially, emotionally, athletically, and academically.

Families stayed together and functioned better.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS  Summer Camp
SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

How much did we do?

Over 37,500 seniors remained active in their communities by participating in community programs.

Over 16,800 seniors maintained independent living through support services including home meal delivery, home health, or homemaker services.

4,787 seniors citizens avoided institutionalization through support services.

How well did we do it?

Over 4,700 senior citizens avoided institutionalization, saving about $598 million in nursing home costs in 2013. 3

Is anyone better off?

Over 37,500 senior citizens maintained an active, independent lifestyle.

3 Based on the National average per diem nursing home rate of $249, per the MetLife Market Survey of Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, Adult Day Services and Home Care Costs, 2012 survey, www.metlife.com
How much did we do?

304 people opened savings accounts and accumulated $46,758 in savings.

11 people purchased homes, 14 people funded education, 4 capitalized small businesses, and 10 purchased other assets such as vehicles through Individual Development Account (IDA) programs.

Over 6,900 tax returns were filed free of charge.

Over 2,400 people learned how to better manage their income.

2,477 people operated within an established budget for at least 90 days.

How well did we do it?

For every dollar invested in the 2013 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), $92 was returned to the community.

Volunteers donated over 10,400 hours, saving over $1 million in tax preparation fees.

Is anyone better off?

Families with assets are better able to weather economic storms.

In 2013, over $11.7 million was returned to our state’s economy with volunteer tax preparation assistance.

Nationwide, nearly 85% of IDA savers, purchasing homes with conventional fixed rate mortgages, fared well during the subprime mortgage crisis due to financial education and home ownership counseling. 4

FINANCIAL COUNSELING  Free Income Tax Preparation

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS (IDA)

4 Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED); “IDA Program Survey on Home Ownership and Foreclosure” 2008
How much did we do?
Over 5,600 children participated in preschool activities that develop school readiness skills.

Over 8,900 children obtained immunizations, medical, and dental care.

How well did we do it?
Over 8,900 children participated in preschool activities and demonstrated improvement in school readiness.

In 2013, research noted that every dollar invested in early childhood programs returns 7% to 10%, per child, per year, for the life of the child through productivity and costs.  

Is anyone better off?
Over 5,600 children are better prepared to start and succeed in school.

Almost 9,000 children are healthier because they received medical and/or dental care.

Children in well-functioning homes who receive quality pre-school care are less likely to get into trouble in school, get involved in crime, have difficulty learning, or need other supportive services, all of which cost taxpayers.

These programs lead to increased worker productivity, increased wages for parents, and lower long-term costs for law enforcement, welfare, health, and special education.

Making a difference with Energy Assistance and Weatherization

**How much did we do?**

Over 141,600 households avoided crises with energy assistance.

Over 5,600 homes were weatherized, decreasing energy cost and use.

Over 37,300 people demonstrated increased knowledge of energy conservation.

**How well did we do it?**

For every dollar invested, $2.97 was saved over the lifetime of the measure.  

**Is anyone better off?**

Low-income people avoided utility crises, resolved vendor disputes, improved environmental safety, and learned how to save money through energy conservation measures.

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**ENERGY ASSISTANCE & EMERGENCY FUEL**

**Matching Payment Programs**

**WEATHERIZATION/HOME ENERGY SOLUTIONS (HES)**

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Making a difference with Nutrition Services

**How much did we do?**

Over 87,200 people received emergency or supplemental food from our food pantries.

Over 12,000 seniors participated in congregate meal programs or received home-delivered meals.

Over 9,100 children and youth benefited from congregate meals.

10,714 people received emergency vouchers for food, formula and/or diapers.

**How well did we do it?**

An investment of $10 per person, per year in proven community-based programs to increase physical activity, improve nutrition and prevent smoking and other tobacco use could save the country more than $16 billion annually within 5 years. CT’s ROI is 6.6 for every dollar spent. 7

**Is anyone better off?**

People of all ages stayed healthier by eating more nutritious meals.

Pregnant women had healthier pregnancies and healthier babies.

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7 Trust for America’s Health: “Investment in Disease Prevention could Save America More Than $16 Billion in Five Years” July 17, 2008
How much did we do?

Over 6,700 people obtained access to needed health care.
Over 2,900 youth improved physical health and development.
463 youth learned how to avoid at-risk behavior.
Over 396 youth reduced involvement with the criminal justice system.

How well did we do it?

2,613 participants improved their family functioning and/or behavior because of counseling.
4,434 parents/caregivers improved family functioning as a result of classes or supportive services.

Is anyone better off?

Thousands of low-income people statewide lived healthier lives because of access to health care they received.
Children in well-functioning homes are less likely to get into trouble in school, get involved in crime, have difficulty, or need other supportive services. Our programs help strengthen families, keep communities safe, and save tax payers money.
Our CAA Network served more than 69,000 customers in the 55 + age range this year – an increase of 5,540 customers.

More than 3,300 customers with a 2 or 4 year college degree were served this year than last year.
The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is $23,850 for a family of 4.

Over the past year, the number of customers living in severe poverty increased by 7%.

Income levels were documented for 133,894 families.

- >150% FPL: 30%
- 101-150% FPL: 21%
- 51-100% FPL: 24%
- <50% FPL: 25%

Families/Households Receiving Services

- Single Parent Female Head of Household: 64%
- Single Parent Male Head of Household: 5%
- Two Parent Household: 31%

Ethnicity

- Non-hispanic/Latino: 67%
- Hispanic/Latino: 33%

Race

- White/Caucasian: 42%
- Black/African American: 23%
- Multi-race: 15%
- Other: 19%
- Asian: 1%
CAFCA Commemorates 50 years of Community Action

On May 15th, CAFCA and Connecticut’s Community Action Agency (CAA) network held a press conference at the Legislative Office Building entitled, “Connecticut Community Action: 50th Year Commemoration of the War on Poverty” to commemorate 50 years of Community Action in our state.

Awards were given to prominent state leaders including Senator Bob Duff, Senator Donald E. Williams, Representative Toni Walker, and New Haven Mayor Toni Harp. Several Connecticut residents attended and shared their story about how community action has positively impacted their lives, and CAAs around the state held additional events to commemorate the anniversary.

Working with National Partners

In March, CAFCA staff and Board attended the 2014 National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) conference in Washington, D.C. CAA leaders met with Connecticut’s congressional delegation to discuss the importance of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and programs and services such as Head Start and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

CAFCA staff and members attended the Community Action Partnership’s 50th Annual Convention, also held in Washington, D.C. The conference commemorated 50 years of Community Action and President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty, and focused on where we have been, where we are, and how far we need to go to continue improving the lives of low-income children and families for the next 50 years.

Data Warehouse Initiative

In partnership with four CAAs, CAFCA applied for and received funding from the Office of Policy and Management to improve its data reporting capabilities. The Nonprofit Collaboration Incentive Grant Program (NCIP) will allow CAFCA to improve and streamline its Data Warehouse, a statewide client database that stores demographic, program, service, and outcome information for more than 625,000 individual clients. This award will enable CAFCA to integrate client information from most data collection systems throughout the CAA network into the Data Warehouse. Agencies will be able to more accurately measure goals, outcomes, service delivery improvements, and overall reporting enhancements.
Strengthening our Member Agencies with Training and Technical Assistance

Each year, CAFCA works with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action (NIQCA) to ensure that Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) is offered to our member agencies to secure and strengthen their organizational capacity. In 2014, this support focused on the areas of human resources, case management, conflict resolution, and improved outcome reporting. More than 100 staff were trained on Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA), an outcome-focused management system used to promote and ensure greater effectiveness and better results on the family, agency and community levels.

CAFCA holds bi-monthly meetings with the CAA network planners group and quarterly meetings of the CAA Finance Directors to address new and changing agency requirements, guidelines and program or contract obligations. CAFCA and DSS have also formed a Data Users Group, which will focus on data reporting challenges and best practices within the network.

Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia (RPIC)

CAFCA continues to be the lead grantee for the Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia (RPIC) for New England. CAFCA works in close partnership with the State Associations and the state CSBG officials in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to continue to implement this important initiative and prepare for the next two years. This includes capacity building, strengthening exemplary practices, and involvement in the development and implementation of community action organizational standards.

Building Opportunities

The 2014 Southern New England Community Action Conference, *Addressing Challenges, Creating Opportunities* was held September 18-19 in Providence, Rhode Island. Community Action representatives and State Association staff from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island offered trainings and workshops around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), Organizational Standards, Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA), Health Impact Assessments, the OMB Super Circular, and much more. Keynote speakers included Susan Dreyfus, President and CEO, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities; David Bradley, Executive Director, National Community Action Foundation; Seth Hassett, Office of Community Services; Department of Social Services Commissioner Roderick Bremby; and, University of Gene Nichol, Director of the Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity at the University of North Carolina.
Support & Revenue

Grants and Contracts

Federal $1,052,801
Program and other income $61,880
Total: $1,114,681

Expenses

Salaries and benefits $319,215
Professional fees & contractual services $615,878
Materials & supplies $27,653
Other $43,799
Conferences and meetings $13,297
Occupancy $27,348
Travel and transportation $25,811
Total: $1,073,001

Change in net assets from operating activities $41,680


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 ($7,679,209 in FY 2013), CAAs are able to leverage additional funds, create partnerships, conduct local assessments and planning, and organize volunteers.

Connecticut CAAs utilize diverse funding sources in their anti-poverty work. Through mostly competitive, private, state and federal grants, Connecticut’s Community Action Agencies directed over $200 million toward fighting the effects and causes of poverty in 2013.

2013 Funding Sources for Connecticut CAA Network

Federal (non-CSBG) $241,993,563
Federal-CSBG $7,679,209
State $48,974,626
Local $2,427,114
Private $24,103,093
Total: $325,177,605
# Community Action: Making a difference with programs & services

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<th>Programs/Service Area</th>
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Community Action Agencies in Connecticut...

**Access Community Action Agency, Inc. (Access)**


**Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)**


**Bristol Community Organization, Inc. (BCO)**

Towns served: Bristol, Burlington, Farmington, Plainville, Plymouth.

**Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)**

Towns served: East Haven, Hamden, New Haven, North Haven, West Haven.

**Community Action Agency of Western CT, Inc. (CAAWC)**


**Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT)**

Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA)

Town served: New Britain

Lower Fairfield County
(Grantees to be awarded)


New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)


TEAM, Inc. (TEAM)

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

Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)

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<td>TEAM, Inc. (TEAM)</td>
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</table>
**Access Community Action Agency, Inc. (Access)**  
President/CEO: Peter DeBiasi  
1315 Main Street, Suite 2, Willimantic, CT 06226  
Tel. (860) 450-7400  
www.accessagency.org

**Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)**  
Executive Director: Charles Tisdale  
1070 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604  
Tel. (203) 366-8241  
www.abcd.org

**Bristol Community Organization, Inc. (BCO)**  
Executive Director: Thomas Morrow  
55 South Street, Bristol, CT 06010  
Tel. (860) 584-2725  
www.bcoct.org

**Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)**  
President/CEO: Amos Smith  
419 Whalley Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515  
Tel. (203) 387-7700  
www.caanh.net

**Community Action Agency of Western CT, Inc. (CAAWC)**  
(Formerly CACD)  
Executive Director: Michelle James  
66 North Street, Danbury, CT 06810  
Tel. (203) 744-4700  
www.caawc.org

**Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT)**  
President/CEO: Lena Rodriguez  
555 Windsor Street, Hartford, CT 06120  
Tel. (860) 560-5600  
www.crtct.org

**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  
www.hranbct.org

**New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)**  
President/CEO: James H. Gatling, Ph.D.  
232 North Elm Street, Waterbury, CT 06702  
Tel. (203) 575-9799  
www.newoppinc.org

**Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)**  
Executive Director: Deborah Monahan  
1 Sylvandale Road, Jewett City, CT 06351  
Tel. (860) 889-1365  
www.tvcca.org

**TEAM, Inc. (TEAM)**  
President/CEO: Richard Knoll  
30 Elizabeth Street, Derby, CT 06418  
Tel (203) 736-5420  
www.teaminc.org
Empowering People & Improving Communities

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