



C A F C A

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Connecticut Community Action: Partnerships that work. Results that matter.

CT's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are the federally-designated network of anti-poverty agencies in Connecticut. CT CAAs are foundational partners in CT's Human Services infrastructure (HSI) and form a Results-based statewide service delivery system. With services benefiting more than 266,000 people annually, CT CAAs achieve positive results that change lives and strengthen communities.

The CT Community Action network has successfully implemented a statewide Results-based Accountability system called the Human Services Infrastructure (HSI).

CT Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are foundational partners in Connecticut's Human Services Infrastructure (HSI) along with the Department of Social Services and 211 Infoline.

HSI is an integrated, statewide, results-based service delivery system that achieves positive results. Every person that walks through our doors receives a universal intake and pre-assessment to identify their needs. Services are coordinated to address those needs and achieve the best possible outcomes for the family.

There are four key areas that our agencies addressed in order to implement our results-based system:

- 1. Utilize a holistic and comprehensive approach to working with customers and families:** Our CAAs adopted Principles of Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) to guide development and implementation of staff training and data collection systems and to break down the program "silos" that existed.
- 2. Outcome-based framework that links programs and services with our mission and goals:** CT CAAs utilize a common Outcome Catalog that integrates and aligns all of the outcomes of our programs and services into a unified outcome reporting framework. CT CAAs can report outcomes both from a programmatic/performance viewpoint and an agency-wide viewpoint. This enables us to analyze data and understand how multiple programs impact common outcomes and align with our federally-designated mission and goals to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower low-income people to become self-sufficient.
- 3. Commitment to Training and Staff Development:** In order to implement this successfully, significant staff training was required. Over the course of implementation, we have trained more than 500 Community Action front-line and program staff on our results-based systems.
- 4. Data system integration:** Due to program requirements and management needs, CAAs, as multi-service providers, must utilize multiple data systems, which creates "data silos," duplicate data entry, and inefficient use of staff time. To address these problems, CT CAAs have developed the **Human Services Data Bridge**, a system that will connect our main HSI case management system with our other data systems, such as the Head Start data system HSFIS. It will collect and share data from multiple systems and is geared towards:
 - Creating a more cost-efficient service delivery system.
 - Helping us track the outcomes of holistic and comprehensive approaches to helping families move out of poverty.
 - Provide improved outcome data that enables providers and policy makers to more effectively coordinate services toward improved client outcomes and self-sufficiency.

Utilize the expertise of the Community Action network in the next phase of the Results-based Accountability initiative.

- **CAAs have implemented a statewide results-based accountability system.** Our system is aligned with the General Assembly's Results-Based Accountability Initiative and CAAs have the expertise to assist in piloting this important effort. The Human Services Infrastructure-Community Action Program line in the state budget is aligned with RBA.
 - HSI is an integrated, statewide, results-based service delivery system that achieves positive results. Every person that walks through our doors receives a universal intake and pre-assessment to identify their needs. Services are tailored to the individual.
 - Those that are identified with multiple barriers are referred to case workers and a full assessment in up to 17 dimensions is conducted. On follow up visits, case workers conduct the same assessment with customers in order to measure progress in addressing the identified barriers and their overall progress towards self-sufficiency.
 - The CT CAA Outcome Catalog provides a common approach for all CAA programs and services to report their results. The outcome catalog has been incorporated into the CAA's Human Services Infrastructure contracts with the Department of Social Services and provides a framework for determining the return-on-investment.
- **Focus on customer outcomes (individuals and families) as well as program outcomes:** While program outcomes are essential to tracking program performance, it is equally important to focus on individual and family outcomes. "Silos" between programs must be broken down so that services can be properly targeted and coordinated to support customer progress towards self-sufficiency. State government must play a leadership role to ensure that policies, regulations, and contracts do not needlessly interfere with using holistic best practices to serve customers.
- **Achieving results takes time:** Additionally, some customers come to our agencies with immediate needs that can be addressed quickly; others face multiple barriers that take time to address, sometimes years. The state should implement multi-year contracts with non-profit service providers so that providers have a fair opportunity to achieve the results desired. Also, target outcomes should be set based upon research and experience and the state must acknowledge the role that adequate funding plays in the achievement of desired results.
- **CT CAAs have experience aligning multiple programs and services into a unified results-based system.** CAAs provide a diverse array of services, including employment and training, early childhood education such as school readiness and Head Start, energy assistance and weatherization, financial literacy and individual development accounts, eviction prevention, transitional housing and homeless shelters, food pantries and emergency services, case management, alternatives to incarceration, and AIDS and substance abuse prevention. All of these services and more are able to report their results utilizing our system.
- **Results-based systems need strong management infrastructures.** CT CAAs utilize the Quality Community Action Self-Assessment and Peer Review process to ensure high standards in governance and management. Being accountable means adhering to high standards. CAAs in CT, MA and RI are using a standards-based self-assessment that supports continuous improvement of agency management and operations.
- **For more detailed information, visit our web site (www.cafca.org) and click on our annual report, *Connecticut Community Action: Partnerships that work. Results that matter.***