

# This *is* Community Action In the Spotlight...

## Employment Services



Photo: Access Community Action Agency Access to Employment



**CAFCA**  
Connecticut Association  
for Community Action

Welcome to CAFCA's "In the Spotlight" where we will be highlighting programs and services offered at Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across the state. Each issue will focus on specific programs and services at three of Connecticut's nine CAAs.

Across Connecticut, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) work tirelessly to provide services to individuals and families. Every person who walks in the door of a CAA has their needs identified through a comprehensive assessment process that allows barriers to be addressed through the CAAs' integrated service delivery approach. From direct services to coordinating with partners, CAAs continue to support individuals and families so they can build capacity to achieve greater levels of self-sufficiency.

This issue of "In the Spotlight" focuses on the Employment Services provided to Connecticut residents, many who came to a CAA for the first time and many who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. CAAs in the spotlight in this issue are The Access Community Action Agency, Inc., New Opportunities, Inc., and TEAM, Inc.

Take a look at the results of those services and learn about some of the people whose lives are changed as a result.

## Connecticut Community Action Network Reach: \*Employment Services

**2,531** unemployed individuals obtained employment.

**421** youth participated in employment programs and obtained employment.

**844** employed individuals who participated in career-advancement related programs entered or transitioned into a position with increased income and/or benefits.

More than **3,030** individuals received Job Readiness training.

More than **4,000** received job search coaching, resume development and/or interview skills training services.

### Meet Luther...



Luther came to New Opportunities looking to find employment. He worked with a Case Manager to assess if there were other things he needed in addition to employment. Luther was not only referred to New Opportunities' Connecticut Manufacturing Assistance Center (C-MAC), he received emergency assistance for food and transportation, as well as an external referral for clothing. Once enrolled in C-MAC Luther participated in life skill classes and job readiness training with hands-on experience in the regional manufacturers' assembly and quality assurance work. After a few weeks Luther actively worked with a Case Manager to find a job within a reasonable geographical area and to overcome transportation challenges. Even with those barriers identified, he remained persistent. On one occasion a job interview required Luther to take the train presenting challenges for him. Staff worked with Luther throughout the planning and scheduling so that he could attend the interview. Luther had several interviews and was able to secure a full-time job with benefits in the manufacturing industry.

New Opportunities, Inc. offers two employment programs. The C-CARES program helps individuals with disabilities connect with jobs and other training opportunities to acquire different experiences with the tenacity to support consumers to build their skills and/or find permanent employment.

The C-MAC program is dedicated to individual success and the recognition that we all learn differently. This training provides each person with a foundation for advancement in employment by assisting those experiencing poverty and/or barriers to employment with solutions to reduce or eliminate those barriers. The program merges life skills and job readiness training with paid hands-on work experience serving our regional manufacturers' assembly and quality assurance needs.





## Meet Sara...

Sara, an unemployed single mom, struggled with addiction for years after losing her daughter in a tragic accident. When she was ready to make positive changes in her life, she turned to Access. Agency staff assessed Sara's needs and found that she was already receiving SNAP benefits, child support, and living in a secure setting. Sara expressed her readiness to re-enter the workforce. She learned that the Access to Employment Program (A2E) could help her find a pathway to just that. Dedicated to success, Sara made it to A2E class every week even though she had to walk to get there. The A2E Employment Navigator staff member learned that prior to 2013 Sara

had worked in the healthcare industry as a CNA and had been working towards becoming a nurse. When Sara graduated from A2E, she and a case manager worked together doing job searches, updating her resume, and applying for jobs. Thanks to Sara's determination, and the Access staff team supporting her, she recently started working at an area hospital as a Patient Care Technician with full benefits, great pay, and a very nice signing bonus!

The Access Community Action Agency's Access to Employment Program (A2E) offers a variety of programs designed to help under and unemployed people in Northeastern Connecticut find and maintain successful employment in their communities.

A2E is an 11-week job training program that teaches personal empowerment, computer and financial literacy and provides individual case management to its students.

## Meet Marissa...

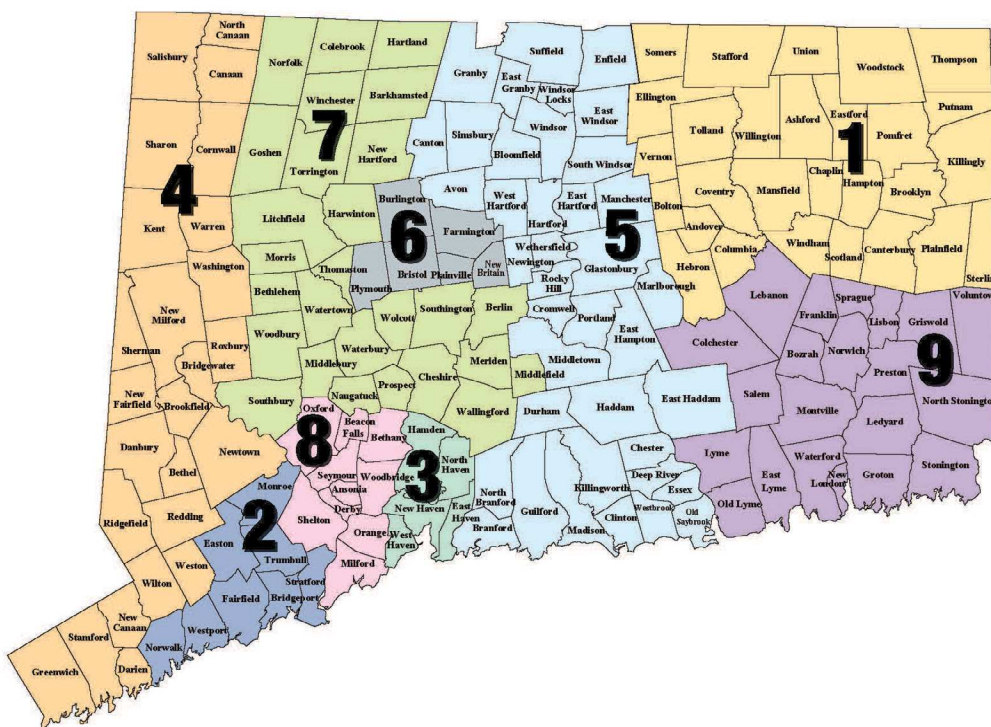
Marissa came to TEAM interested in the home visitation program for her youngest son. As part of the enrollment process, Marissa worked with a caseworker to identify other needs she might have. As a result of the screening needs were identified in areas that the agency was able to provide direct assistance including nutrition, child care, employment, and housing. In addition to the home visitation program, Marissa is now accessing the agency's diaper bank for a monthly supplement of diapers, she worked with staff to complete an application for SNAP benefits, and has been connected to local food pantries in case of an emergency. Marissa was also introduced to TEAM's Gaining Access to

Independence Now (GAIN) program as a way to re-enter the workforce to increase her income. Through the GAIN program, Marissa enrolled at LABCO School of Dental Assisting. She excelled in the program and found a part time job in the field before graduation. After graduation, TEAM assisted Marissa in licensing tests costs to become a certified dental assistant which allowed her to get a better paying job closer to home. TEAM ensured Marissa had no out-of-pocket costs for her training. She now works full time with benefits as a dental assistant and both of her sons are enrolled in TEAM's Head Start program. With a new job, Marissa is now working with TEAM staff to find a safe and affordable apartment.



TEAM's *Gaining Access to Independence Now - (GAIN)* program provides access to a variety of different certification programs including the Griffin Hospital's School of Allied Health, Dental Assistance Certification at Labco, CDL truck driving at Allstate, Real Estate training at National Real Estate Institute, Training Direct for additional medical certifications, and many more. TEAM provides support to the students throughout and after their coursework including with the purchase of coursework supplies, transportation, and childcare.

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