

This *is* Community Action

In the Spotlight...

Energy & Housing Services



Photo: CRT's Generation Housing



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 Energy Assistance & Housing Services provided to Connecticut residents, many who came to a CAA for the first time in 2021 and many who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. CAAs in the spotlight in this issue are The Community Action Association of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC), Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT), and Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH). 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:

*Energy & Housing Services

138,767 individuals maintained a safe living environment with energy assistance services.

3,566 individuals were provided assistance with utility bills in arrears.

1,732 individuals received rental assistance, including emergency rental payments.

1,466 individuals were able to maintain their housing due to services such as rental assistance and/or landlord-tenant mediation.

465 individuals received housing assistance resulting in permanent housing.

Meet Catherine...

Catherine, a college graduate and mother of five, with a 6th on the way, came into the agency to seek assistance with overdue rent, energy assistance, budgeting, and employment. Catherine was working regularly up until December of 2021 when she was laid off as a result of the COVID pandemic and was now behind two months rent and fearing eviction. Keeping up with rent, bills, and providing food for her family was difficult. CAANH's case manager was able to take the necessary information needed for an application for CSBG CARES funds to assist her with the back rent. Catherine's application for the emergency funding was approved. Next was applying for assistance for her energy needs. Once the immediate need to secure safe housing was set, Catherine worked with her case manager to look for a job. Given Catherine's educational background, she was able to obtain remote employment with an insurance company. She was extremely grateful, as this job will provide income and health benefits for her and her family of 5 children. Catherine plans to return to meet with her case manager to create a budget so that she can open a savings account so that she will have money to ensure she can provide what her family needs.



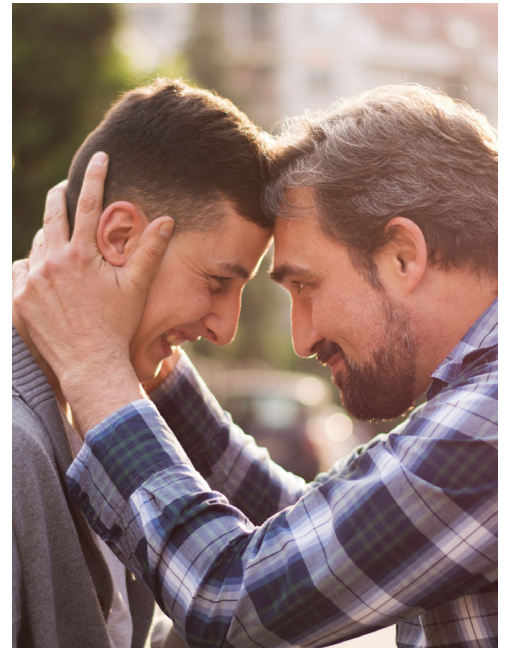
CSBG CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) funding first became available to Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH) in the height of the pandemic to provide emergency assistance to individuals and families who, as a result of COVID-19, were affected financially. The impact of a reduction or loss of employment or an increase in medical expenses due to COVID put a financial strain on many CT households. CSBG CARES funds allow individuals to stabilize their situation and receive CAA services and assistance that will allow them to have a more secure future.

Meet Rafael ...

Rafael relocated to Hartford from Bridgeport to gain custody of his young son, Jayden, 5 years ago. When his plans to live with family fell through, he and Jayden found themselves homeless, living in the Salvation Army's Marshall House Family Shelter. Jayden has autism and craved consistency. Moving was difficult and life in a the shelter was difficult. Homelessness was taking a toll on their family. That same year, Rafael and Jayden entered CRT's Permanent Supportive Housing program, and Rafael secured an apartment where Jayden enrolled in a school that specialized in the services he needed.

CRT connected Rafael to mental health services, energy assistance, emergency food assistance, and help managing his finances. Rafael was approved recently for a Housing Choice Voucher and moved with now 15-year-old Jayden to a community that offers all the amenities they could dream of having. Rafael no longer needs supportive service and the two live together independently.

"Our family went through such a traumatic experience and CRT helped us become stable, said Rafael. "We are truly thankful to CRT for all their programs, but especially for Permanent Supportive Housing."



Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT) offers a multitude of Housing Services including Emergency Shelters, Affordable housing, housing for grandparents raising their grandchildren (CRT Generations), Veteran's Crossing Transitional Housing for homeless male vets, and Permanent Supportive Housing. Supportive housing for homeless adults and families is offered on a permanent basis. As is the case with all of CRT's housing programs, participants have access to the agency's full range of services and programs. In permanent housing, a caseworker helps plan and access services, including: getting help with job training and placement, helping teach life skills and budgeting, and safety planning for survivors of domestic abuse.

Meet Jocelyn...

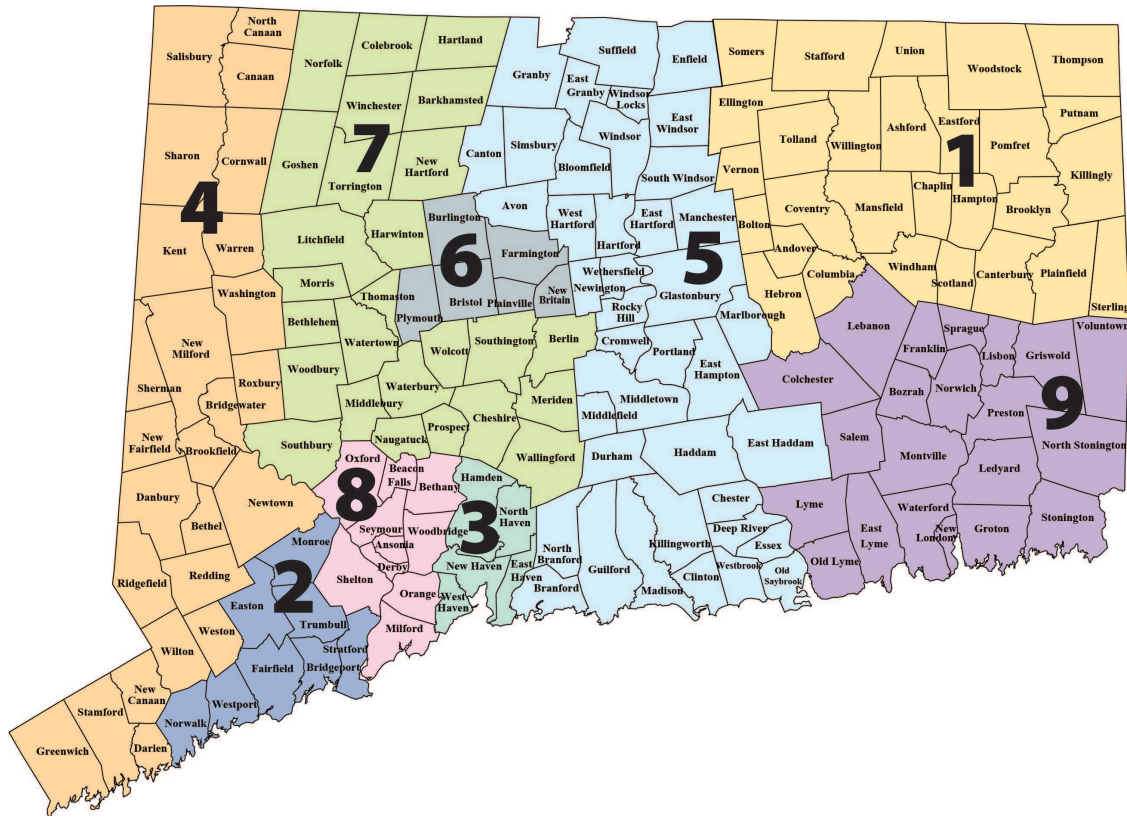
Most think of the need for energy assistance in the colder months of the year but for Jocelyn, the notice from her energy provider to disconnect her services in the middle of the summer was an emergency. This single-mother of two came to CAAWC's Stamford office very upset about being in her home with no electricity. Jocelyn had limited income and was not able to pay her electric bill. Staff recognized the need to keep her electricity on and contacted Eversource, the energy provider. They mediated the issue with the provider as well as helped her complete an Operation Fuel application to cover the balance on the account allowing her service to remain on. CAAWC staff also worked with Jocelyn on budgeting and application assistance for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) services.



Jocelyn maintained a healthy and safe home for her family with the help of CAAWC's application assistance, CEAP and Operation Fuel Programs.

The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC) operates the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a Federally-funded program that helps low-income households with their home energy bills. LIHEAP can help you stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. By doing so, you can reduce the risk of health and safety problems (such as illness, fire, or eviction). The CT CEAP program is available from November through May each year and may be able to offer you one or more of the following types of assistance: bill payment assistance, energy crisis assistance, weatherization, and energy-related home repairs. Operation Fuel provides emergency energy and utility assistance to households in Connecticut that are facing financial crisis.

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