



CAFCA

Connecticut Association
for Community Action

2022 Annual Report



About Us

Incorporated in 1974, the Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) is the state association for Connecticut’s nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federally designated antipoverty agencies, established by President Johnson to help fight the War on Poverty.

Through our strong partnership with the state and federal agencies, community-based organizations, and other state, regional, and national partners, we work to address the causes and conditions of poverty in Connecticut.

MISSION To support, strengthen, and promote the work of the Community Action Agencies statewide to advance economic, racial, and social justice.

VISION A just and equitable world where socially and economically disadvantaged people thrive and realize their highest potential.

Notes of Gratitude



Connecticut’s Community Action Agencies (CAAs) provide hope, assistance, and resources to tens of thousands of families across the state each year.

Over the past few, very unusual years, Community Action Agencies have been steady hands – meeting the changing needs of people across the state, some of whom have never needed our help before. Their nimble, compassionate, and holistic approach has allowed them to provide energy assistance, case management, SNAP Outreach/Enrollment, Meals on Wheels, child care, housing assistance, and more, on a continuous basis throughout the pandemic.

The robust response of our network is due to the commitment of CAA staff, leaders, and Board members to meet the needs of their communities in these difficult times. Each day with their neighbors in mind, they have tackled enormous challenges brought by the continuing impact of the pandemic. They have continued providing long-running services, while implementing new, innovative ideas – like new job training opportunities, a flexible Client Support Fund, and partnerships with local businesses.

So, on behalf of the team at CAFCA, **thank you** to all of you in the Community Action Agency network. You often are the difference between despair and hope. It is an honor to work with and for such dedicated individuals and teams – as we meet our mission to support, strengthen, and promote your work.

We look forward to our continued partnership with you, as we bring new trainings, collaboration, opportunities, and needed programs forward – all towards our shared vision of a just and equitable world where socially and economically disadvantaged people thrive and realize their highest potential.

With gratitude,

Deb Polun
Executive Director

Dear Fellow CAFCA members:

For the past 25 years, I have had the privilege to sit at the CAFCA Board table with a variety of executives, CEOs and Presidents of the Community Action Agencies across Connecticut.

It has been a very unique and rewarding experience.

Some of the consistent qualities that I have seen, across those years, are the dedication, commitment and passion that all of you and those before you brought to the table. Your passion for the people who need the services our agencies provide is second to none. You speak out and fight for the disadvantaged of our state and our nation. You are not shy about letting legislators, funders, and other decision makers know what is needed to bring economic security to those struggling to achieve it.

The past seven years as Chair of the Board have been an honor. I thank each of you for your trust as I served.

I also want to thank you for all the times, together, we addressed challenges and celebrated successes.

I wish CAFCA and all the CAAs much success and good work going forward.

I will miss you but will carry fond memories with me.

Deb Monahan
Board Chair



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 TEAM



Deb Polun
Executive Director



Rhonda Evans
Deputy Director



Katrina Bresnahan
Director of Social Service Programs



Alexis Soucy
Director of Communications and Special Projects

Access Agency's Mobile Food Pantry brings food into hard-to-reach and underserved neighborhoods for easier access to its residents. Tanya, a mobile food pantry customer visited the pantry once a month for three years. She was enrolled in a medical assistant degree program and shopping at the Pantry was "*one way I could take care of my family while I was in school*". Now working full time at a hospital Tanya, as a display of her gratitude for this valuable service, came to the pantry with a car full of food to donate.

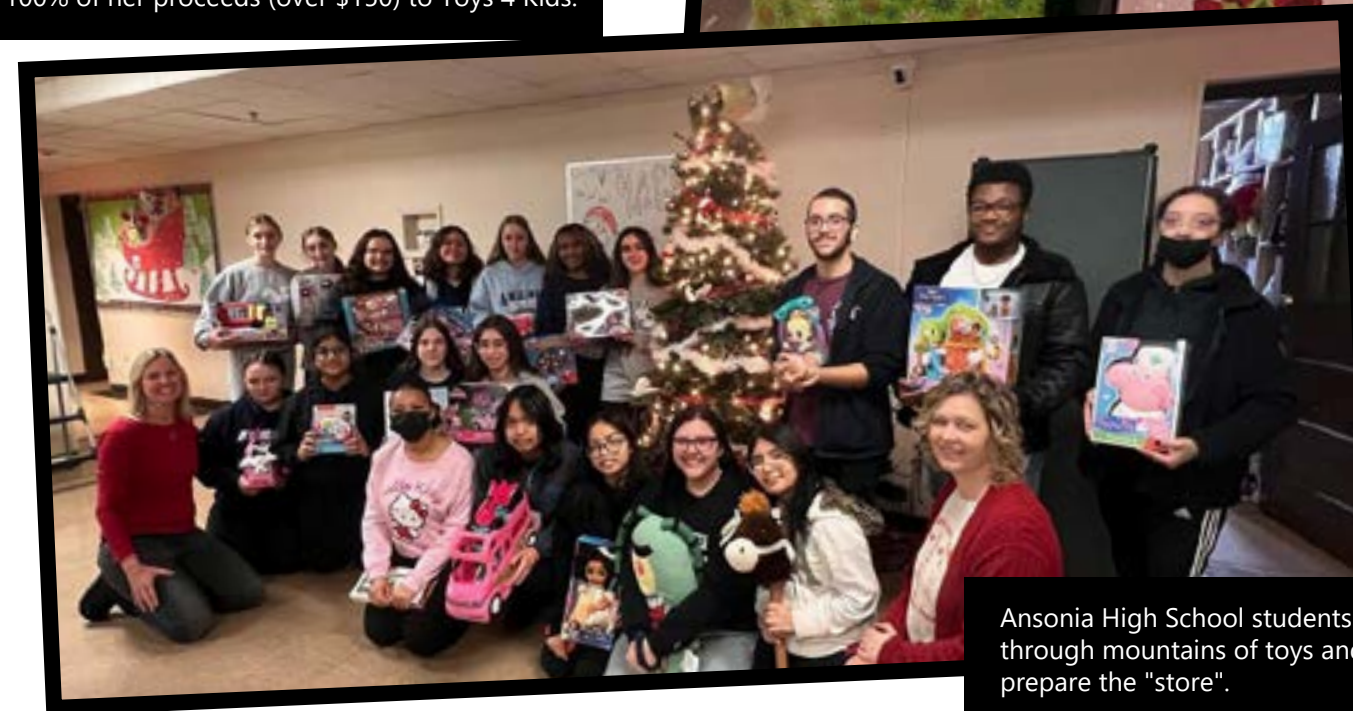


Community Outreach

Community Collaboration



12 year old Cali spent an evening selling her handmade jewelry at a local event and donated 100% of her proceeds (over \$150) to Toys 4 Kids.



Ansonia High School students sort through mountains of toys and helped prepare the "store".

TEAM, Inc.'s Toys 4 Kids event made the magic happen again this year for **1,746 children!**

9,614 holiday toys were collected with support from several community members and organizations including **115 volunteers** who provided **817 hours** to pick up, sort, and distribute toys!

125 businesses stepped up and served as collection sites and **23 businesses and organizations** provided sponsorship support!

Strengthening the workforce



Alliance for Community Empowerment's Early Childhood Education Workforce Development program is a paid 12-week training program that provides a career path opportunity. It also provides prepared candidates to fill the demand for qualified staff in the early childhood education field.

This year, two cohorts were completed which provides the participants with early childhood education credentials and certifications allowing them to move directly into a career in the field.

Ensuring basic needs are met



New Opportunities, Inc. works with thousands of individuals and families each year to provide assistance with their home energy needs. Mary, 75 years old and living on a fixed income, was hesitant to ask for help but her situation became impossible. A utility bill of \$250 each month, a rent of \$700 a month and an income of \$875. Mary choose to keep her heat off because she could not afford to pay the bill. Mary said, "When I worked with **New Opportunities** and was approved for Energy Assistance I was like a kid in a candy store."

"*Thames Valley Council for Community Action's* Little Learners program is awesome and very high quality. Without the teachers and administrators and staff, my kids wouldn't be where they are today. Their communication skills are excellent. They get a warm smile when they walk into the building and they are so well taken care of - that's what is important to me and my wife. *We can go to work and not be worried about our sons*". -Josh P., Little Learners Parent



Providing a safe, nurturing, caring & culturally sensitive environment

Our Impact



185,704 individuals were served



88,139 families were provided services



92,180 households benefited from Energy Assistance



9,773 individuals received free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)



Over 600 landlord/tenant mediations were conducted to maintain housing



50,407 individuals received emergency bags of food and over 10,874 received prepared food through Meals-on-Wheels



2,700 children participated in Head Start, School Readiness, and other Early Childhood Education programs



Mr. DesRosiers moved into The Retreat, the **Community Renewal Team's** affordable assisted living facility, after a brief experience being homeless. An Army veteran, he is recovering from a stroke, heart attack, and cancer. At The Retreat Mr. DesRosiers is provided with support for personal care, three meals each day and daily activities. He says, *"I have my freedom here and the people are very nice. Everybody is willing to help you. I like to go outside after lunch and talk with the guys and girls."*

Providing affordable & safe housing option for a vulnerable population



Community Action Agency of New Haven's New Haven Heal: Health Literacy program worked to increase the health literacy for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, vaccination/or other mitigation measures to community members.

More than **10,806 calls** were made to community members, **8,160 people** were engaged, **539 test kits and masks** were distributed through an extensive outreach effort, **264 vaccinations** were administered at one of the **24 clinics** held, and **78 outreach events** were held to provide education and resources.



Building a healthier community

The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc.'s (CAAWC)

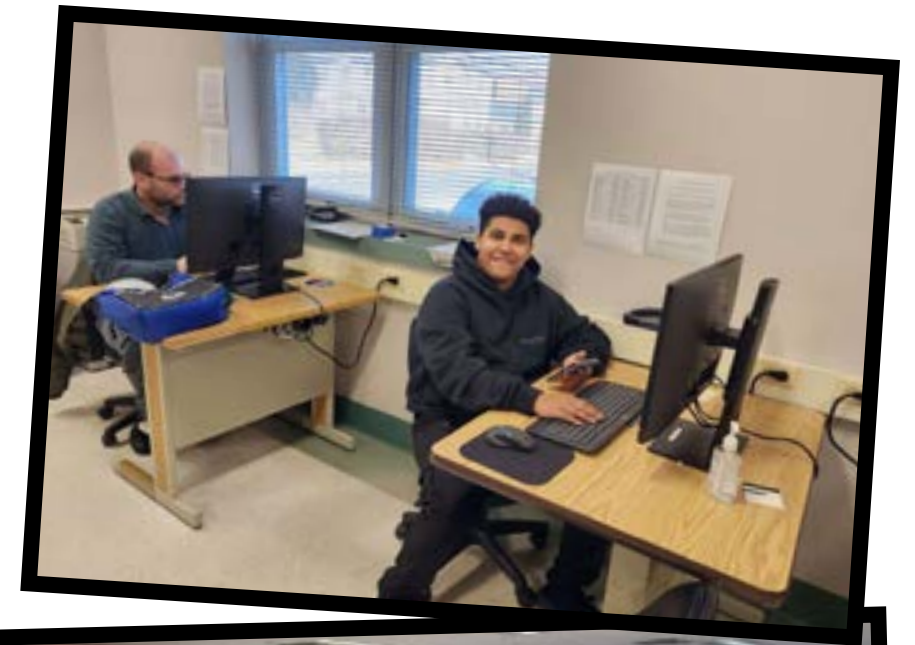
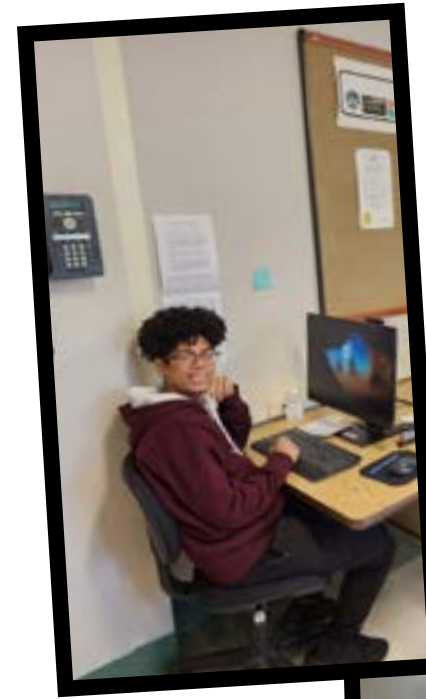
Community Food Rescue program is serving **140 clients every week** at food pantries located at five low-income housing complexes. CAAWC is averaging **30+ new visitors** every week with over 1,200 pantry visitors the last six months.

Community Food Rescue has continued to grow to meet the increased demand by now offering a senior mobile pantry.

Pantry selections range from cereal to seafood to produce and is a welcome service to the residents at the housing complexes. *"I am so happy you are letting us choose our own food and there are so many choices".*
- Sophia, Food Pantry Visitor



Battling Food Insecurity



Empowering People Financially



Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA) provides income tax return services to qualifying individuals through its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

HRA provided assistance to more than **6,600 individuals** with the support of trained volunteers (including youth) who donated more than **5,000 hours** preparing tax returns.

"I feel this program helps myself and others because the program provides the community with more than just free income tax preparation. This program also provides great budgeting skills and a visual on how we should maximize our tax money and save on the things that are important. The customer service skills that your volunteers have are very good and they're very pleasant to work with!" -Helen B., HRA VITA customer



Support & Revenue

	FY 2022*	FY 2021
Grants & Contracts	\$ 4,014,246	\$ 3,595,335
Program & other income	368,929	62,447
Total:	\$ 4,383,175	\$ 3,657,782

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 437,923	\$ 468,498
Pass-through to Community Action Agencies	2,074,007	1,651,803
Other Sub-recipients	970,453	934,933
SSBG Housing Fund - Rental Assistance	220,051	220,654
Professional Services	297,444	289,458
Materials & Supplies	20,400	16,321
Occupancy	25,708	28,964
Conferences & Meetings	39,074	1,872
Training & Education	12,329	3,705
Other	38,017	41,200
Total:	\$ 4,135,406	\$ 3,657,408
Change in net assets from operating activities	\$ 247,769	\$ 374



These financials are for CAFCA, the state association that works with the nine Community Action Agencies in Connecticut. Each Community Action Agency is its own nonprofit organization, with its own financials.

CAFCA's revenues and expenditures are related to:

Training and technical assistance for the Community Action Agencies;

Social Service programs, such as Case Management and SNAP Outreach; and,

Other programming designed to assist the Community Action Agencies - and ultimately, their customers.

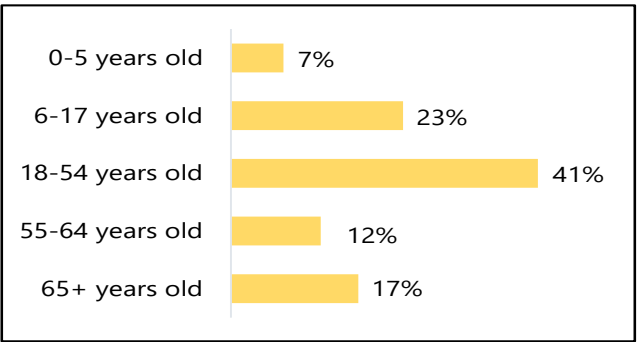
For a full review of CAFCA's funding, please visit [CAFCA's](#) website and review our 990.



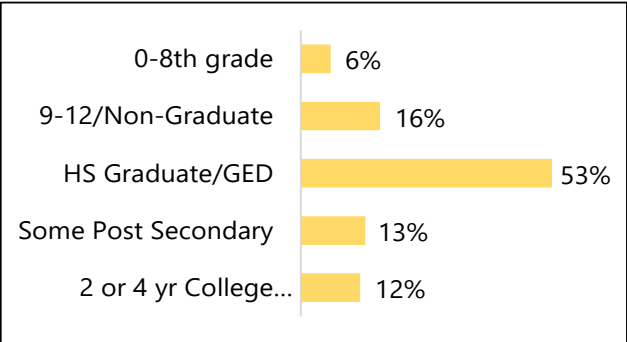
Our Customers

The following data demonstrates characteristics of those served in 2021 for whom demographic information was obtained.

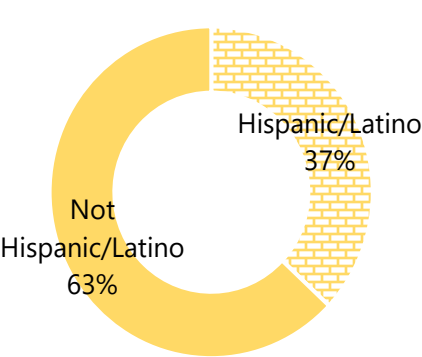
Age



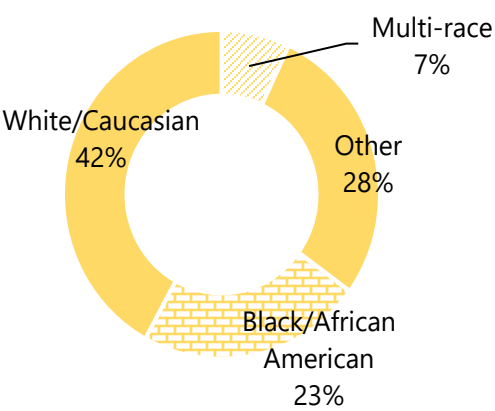
Education Levels Individuals age 25+



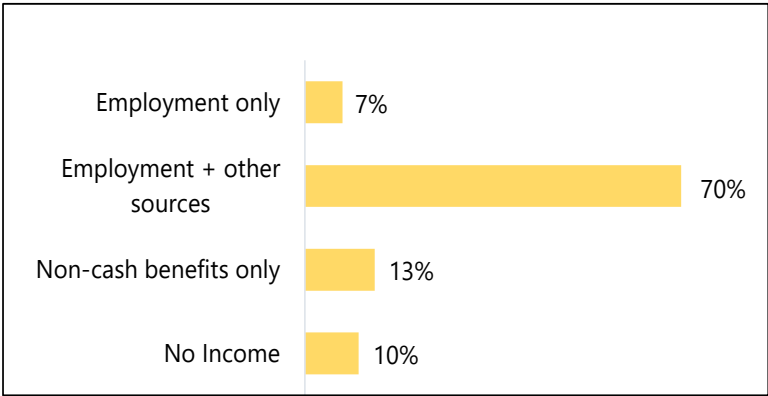
Race



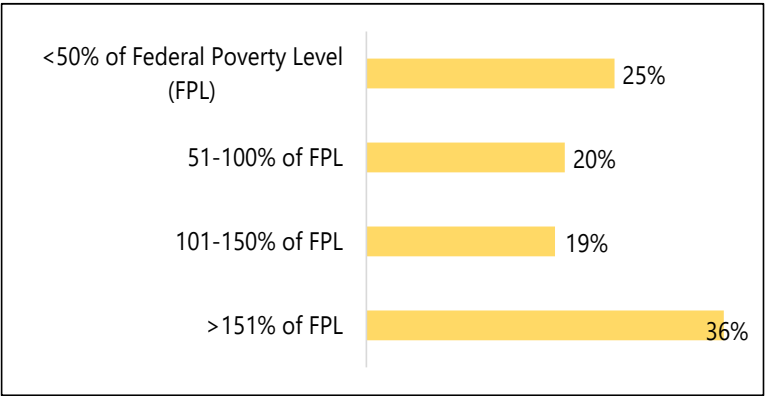
Ethnicity



Sources of Income

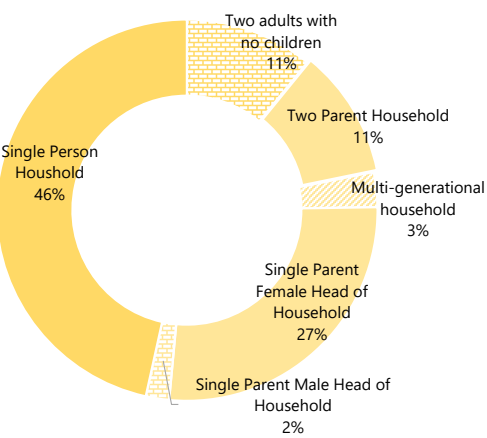


Income Level*



*In 2022, 100% of the FPL was \$13,590 for a single person, \$18,310 for a family of two, and \$23,030 for a family of three.

Family Composition



*Unaudited

CAFCA Impact on Public Policy

CAFCA advocates on the state and federal level for policies that help achieve our VISION of a just and equitable world where socially and economically disadvantaged people thrive and realize their highest potential.

We also meet with legislators and members of the administration to bring forward concerns raised by Community Action Agency leaders, Board members, staff, and customers - helping to amplify their voices. CAFCA provides data, stories, and expertise on poverty-related issues.

In 2022, CAFCA provided written and/or oral testimony on 22 state legislative proposals, including in the following priority areas:

Increase program eligibility levels and alignment

To the extent possible, help more CT residents receive the services that support high quality lives. Aligning program eligibility levels could streamline application processes for SNAP, LIHEAP, Housing Assistance, Child Care, and other programs.

Provide tax relief for low-income residents

Permanently raise the State Earned Income Tax Credit to 41.5% of the federal credit. Establish a state child tax credit.



Support Nonprofits

Support enhanced state funding for nonprofits, to address rising costs, the increased minimum wage, wage compression, and staff retention.

Increase rates for Meals on Wheels & Child Care

Allow for continued access to nutritious foods for older adults by increasing third party rates for Meals on Wheels. To cover the cost of high-quality early learning for our children, increase child care reimbursement rates, particularly in child care deserts.



Address the housing crisis

Keep people housed by building on existing initiatives like eviction and foreclosure prevention. Extend protection for renters until the end of 2022, while providing ongoing needed support for landlords.

All of CAFCA’s testimony is available on our website.

CAFCA CSBG CARES

CAFCA provided a number of supports to the nine Community Action Agencies around the state to assist them in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This support included resources to be distributed to COVID impacted families and Training & Technical Assistance directly to the agencies.

Families across Connecticut continued to feel the impact of COVID-19 in many ways; this included the reduction or loss of wages and increased prices for basic need items such as groceries or clothing. As a result of CAFCA CSBG CARES resources **999** families that were impacted by



COVID were provided with basic needs assistance at the start of the school year. These resources allowed these families to purchase back-to-school clothing, backpacks, and groceries.



Additionally, CAFCA provided Training & Technical Assistance to the nine Community Action Agencies in the state to strengthen their ability to offer seamless services and support to their customers in the wake of any future emergency or disaster. The Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) project allowed CAFCA and all nine community action agencies to develop or refine their response plan that would be activated due to an emergency, natural disaster, technology breaches, or planned and unplanned disruption. These plans will ensure that each agency is quickly able to resume essential functions in the wake of an emergency and that client services continue as seamlessly as possible.

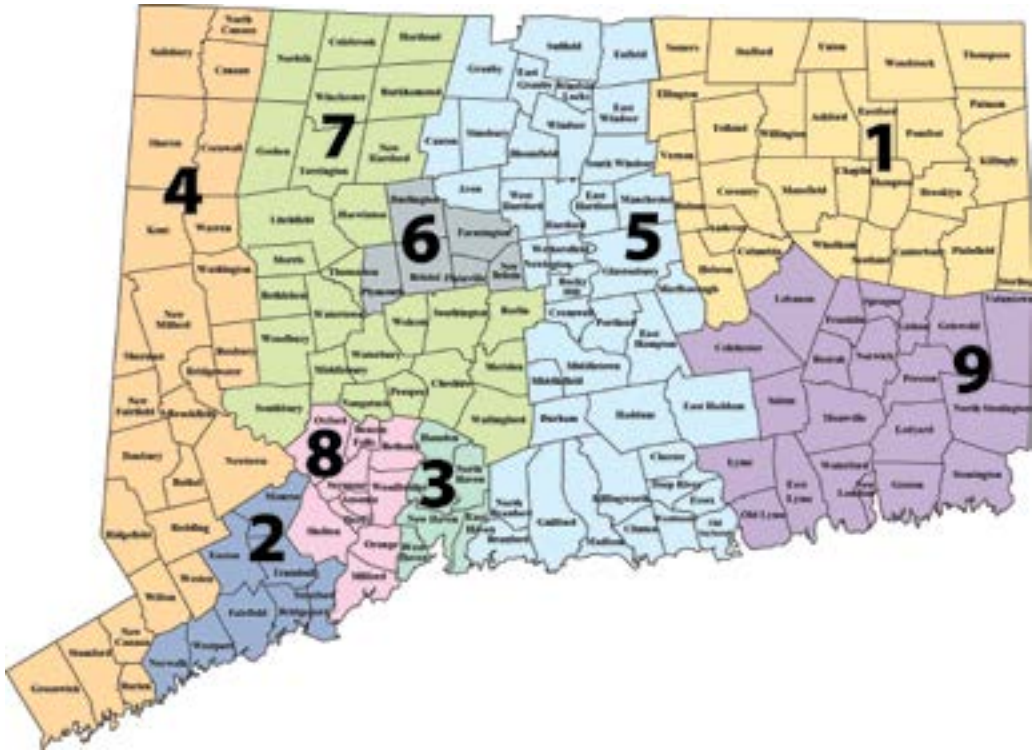
A custom-built statewide staff training, *The "Three C's" of Crisis Communication - Care, Control, and Communicate* was provided that focused on best practices in managing and communicating through a crisis. Participants were trained in how to identify when an issue has risen to a crisis level and actions needed to ensure the right messages are delivered to all stakeholders and to ensure that the proper communication steps are taken to manage the crisis. All nine community action agencies participated in this training opportunity.



Services Provided by Connecticut Community Action Agencies


	ACCESS	ALLIANCE	CAANH	CAAWC	CRT	HRA	NOI	TEAM	TVCCA
Financial Literacy & Asset Development									
Individual Development Accounts					X	X			X
Financial Counseling	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Free Income Tax Preparation		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Child Care & Youth Development									
CT Child Day Care & School Readiness		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Head Start		X				X		X	X
Infant-Toddler/Early Head Start		X			X	X	X	X	X
Specialized Care & Education					X	X			X
Youth Dev- After School & Summer Programs		X	X		X	X			
Community-wide Services									
Clothing Drive		X			X	X			X
Food Drive		X		X	X	X	X		X
Toy Drive		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Criminal Justice									
Halfway Houses & Re-Entry					X		X		
Employment & Training									
Adult Education		X		X		X	X		
One-Stop Employment									X
Youth and Young Adults	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Vocational & Skills Training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Energy Assistance & Weatherization									
Energy Assistance & Emergency Fuel	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Matching Payment Programs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Home Energy Solutions/Weatherization		X			X		X		
Health									
Adult Incontinence Supplies		X					X	X	X
Counseling: Individual and/or Family					X	X			
Diaper Bank		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Health Care Access/Medical Transportation					X		X	X	
HIV/AIDS Prevention & Counseling					X	X			
Substance Abuse Prevention & Counseling					X	X			
Housing & Shelter									
Affordable and/or Subsidized Housing	X				X	X	X		X
Emergency Rental/Mortgage Payment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Emergency Shelter	X				X		X		
Eviction Prevention & Mediation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Homelessness Prevention/Rapid Rehousing	X	X	X		X		X		X
Supportive Housing - Adults	X				X	X	X		X
Supportive Housing - Youth	X								X
Nutrition									
Children & Adult Care Food Program	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Food Pantries	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Meals on Wheels/Congregate Meals					X	X	X	X	X
Summer Food Program					X				
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)	X								X
Seniors									
RSVP & Senior Volunteer Programs					X		X	X	X
Senior Support Services	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
Strengthening Families									
Family Development/Parenting Education		X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Holistic Case Management/Info & Referral	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The Connecticut Community Action Agency Network



1


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CAFCA Board 2nd Vice Chair

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National Community Action Partnership*