

2023 Annual Report



CAFCA
Connecticut Association
for Community Action

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 strong partnerships with 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.



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



Rhonda Evans
Executive Director



Katrina Bresnahan
Director of Social Service Programs



Tanaysia Jefferson
Coordinator of Grants & Special Projects



Kelley Hall
Interim Project Coordinator

Together, we are fighting poverty

As we reflect on this past year and Community Action's 60th anniversary, we're struck by the moments that showed unwavering commitment to the people we serve. But we're even more in awe of them: their perseverance and drive to keep going in times of hardship and struggle.

When we talk about addressing poverty, one of the biggest questions we must ask ourselves is where are the inequities, and how can we make a positive impact? The answer to that question lies in the social, economic, and health conditions in which people exist. Addressing disparities, ensuring access to employment and educational opportunities, and offering essential services such as food, housing, and energy assistance – all while keeping in mind that every person's needs are different – is vital.

And that's exactly what Community Action Agencies do. They understand that everyone who comes through their doors has their own unique set of circumstances and helps ensure each customer has equitable access to resources and opportunities that improve outcomes.

In 2023, we helped people push past barriers and move towards higher levels of economic mobility and stability. To strengthen the provision of services for customers, Community Action Agency staff and board members participated in capacity building training on a number of topics, in addition to our regional conference. We also advocated for state and federal policies that impacted the low-income population, including pushing for more Client Support Fund dollars to help those struggling to meet basic needs due to the ongoing impact the pandemic, supporting the Community Health Worker initiative, and helping advance the state's Baby Bonds program.

The people we serve are always at the forefront of everything we do, and that's the impact of Community Action – working with our customers, communities, and partners to increase equity and opportunity for all, no matter their situation.

We invite you to share in our successes of this past year and join us in the year ahead as we continue our commitment to helping people thrive.



Rhonda Evans
Executive Director



Amos Smith
Board Chair



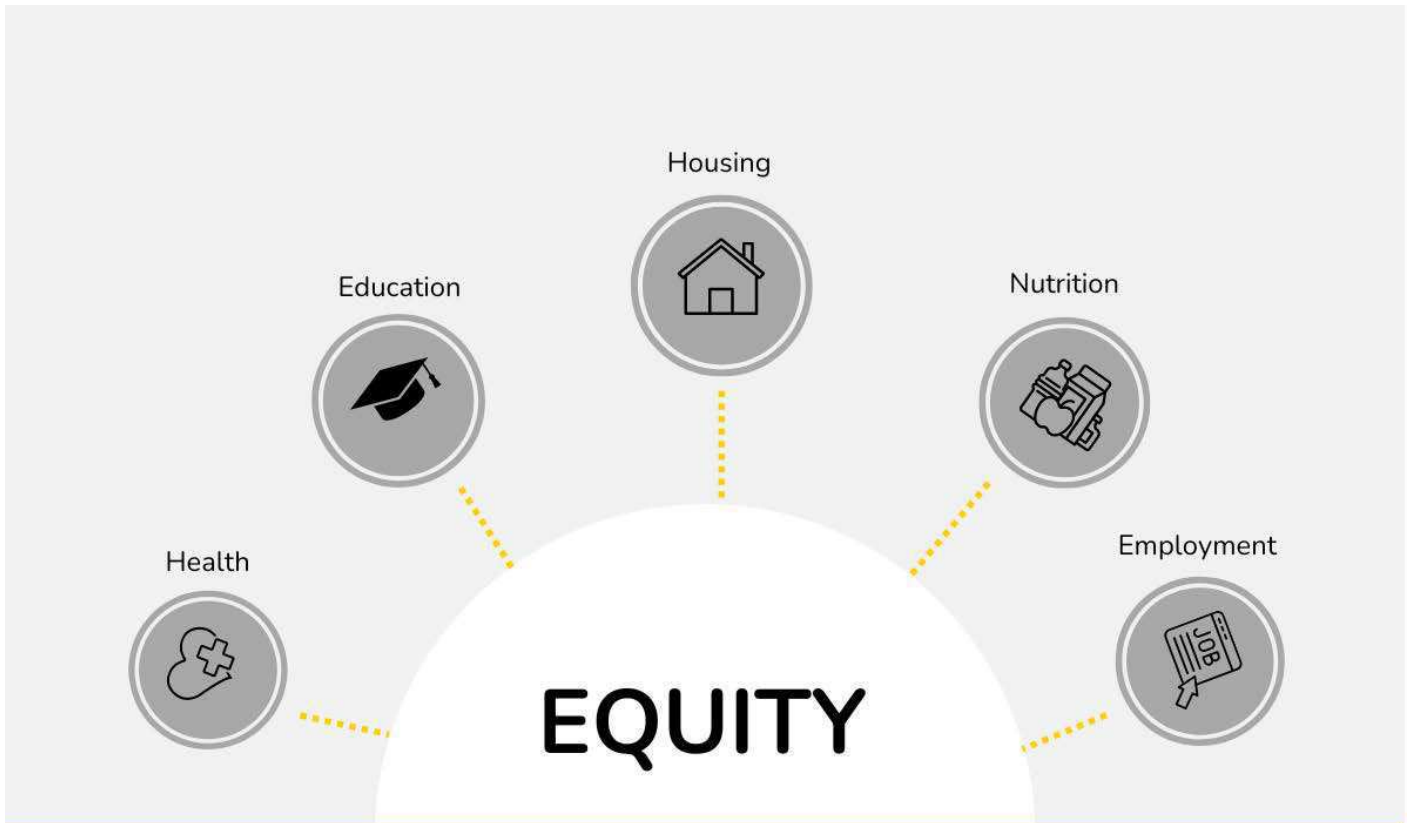
Putting people first

354,483 people in Connecticut are living in poverty and are less likely to have access to health care, healthy food, stable housing, and equitable educational opportunities.*

The Connecticut Community Action Network envisions a **just and equitable** world where socially and economically disadvantaged people thrive and realize their highest potential.

We are
committed
to placing the
people we serve
at the center of
our work
to end poverty.

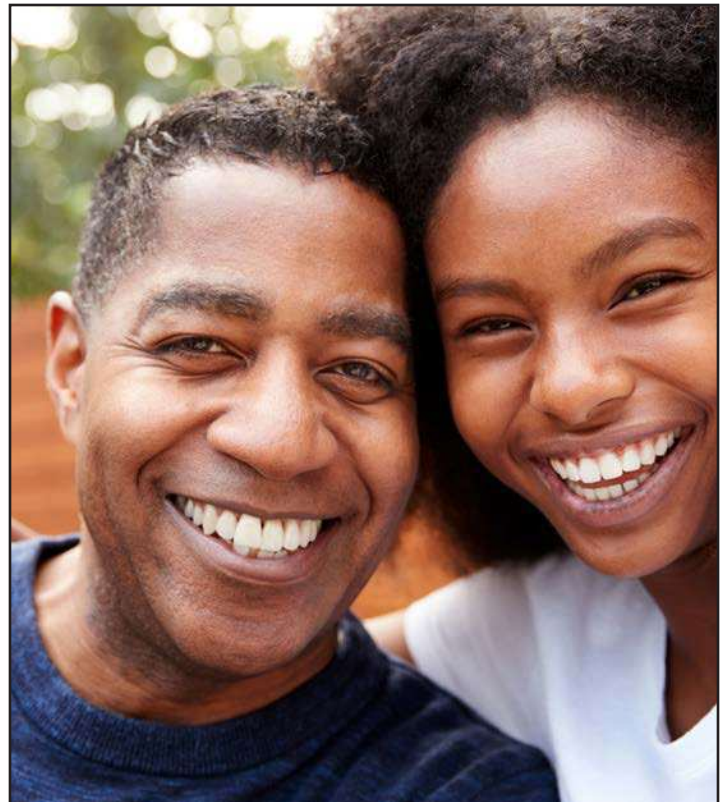
*Source: US Census Bureau



Community Action provides individuals and families equal access to opportunities and resources to move them closer to economic stability.

206,530 individuals came to a Community Action Agency for assistance and support

Community Action Agencies have over **2,600** partnerships to expand opportunities for their customers



Food insecurity = not having access to sufficient food, or food of an adequate quality, to meet one's basic needs.

Community Action response



3,244

children enrolled in a CAA child development program received a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack for healthy growth and development

6,451

older adults went to congregate meal sites for a nutritious meal and socialization with their peers



Nataliya and Ivan came to Access Community Action Agency with their two-year-old son. Without access to basic needs like food, clothing, and health services, Nataliya, five months pregnant, was struggling to get the right care and nutrition for her and her baby.

The WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) team stepped in, helping with vouchers for healthy food and a referral to a local health care facility. In just one month, Nataliya and her family had medical care and received clothes and other household necessities like a bed.

Nataliya is one of **8,100** others that received WIC, a program that improves the health of nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children.



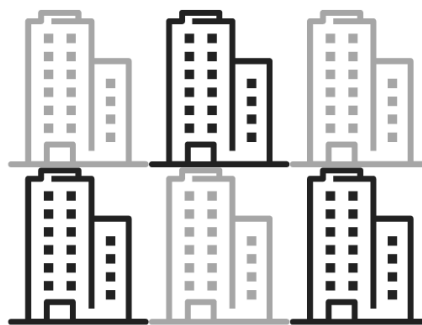
*1:10 or 380,000
Connecticut residents
struggle with hunger,
including more than
84,000 children**

HOMELESS
AND
HUNGRY

Housing insecurity = not having stable or adequate living arrangements, especially due to risk of eviction or because one lives in unsafe or uncomfortable conditions.

Community Action response

\$3.3 million
provided in assistance
by CAAs to those at risk
of homelessness



71% of our clients
rent their home



28% own
their home

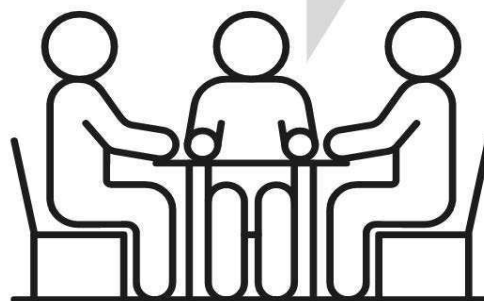


1% are unhoused

Jackie and John fell behind on their rent when their work hours were reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, an ongoing issue for many people. They received assistance from their local Community Action Agency, which allowed them to stay in their home and focus on rebuilding their savings for future emergencies.

2,229 people maintained safe
and affordable housing

More than **1,600**
people avoided eviction because of
landlord/tenant mediations



2,416 people obtained safe and affordable housing



903 unhoused individuals obtained safe and temporary shelter

73 youth live in supportive housing as they learn skills to transition to independent living

320 individuals live in housing supported by CAAs

303 individuals were rapidly rehoused with CAA intervention

Jess, a single mother, lost her job and couldn't afford rent. Forced into homelessness, she and her daughter stayed at a hotel and waited for subsidized housing. Jess started driving for Uber Eats to support them, but couldn't save up for a security deposit or rent.

She called the Community Renewal Team (CRT) for help and a case manager connected her to housing resources and a short term housing arrangement. CRT also helped her secure subsidized housing and a security deposit so the family had a safe place to live.

Jess continues working with CRT to increase her earned income, develop a household budget, and get supportive services for her daughter.



Income inequality = the uneven distribution of income throughout the population.

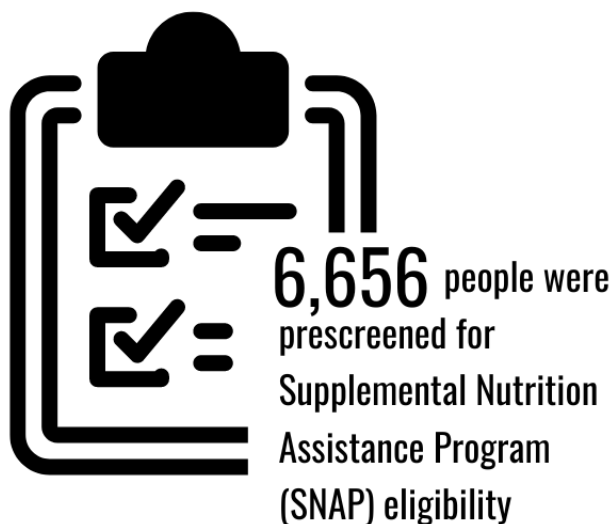
Community Action response



9,768 individuals received free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program

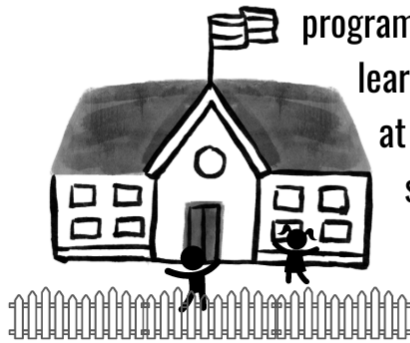


\$19.5M issued in refunds and Earned Income Tax Credits, allowing people to use that money for basic needs and putting dollars back in the economy



2,721 individuals received SNAP benefits as a result of application assistance

Educational inequality = individuals from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds often lack access to the same educational resources.



CAA early childhood education programs allowed **3,244** young learners to access services at a critical time in their skill development

Understanding that continued academic support is critical, CAAs offered **1,808** 1st-12th grade students after school and summer programs to support their academic, social, and school success skills



Looking to their future, **366** youth and young adults gained employment skills in CAA summer work placements



More than **700** people enrolled in CAA adult education classes or certificate programs, providing them a pathway to new careers, skills, increased income, and financial stability



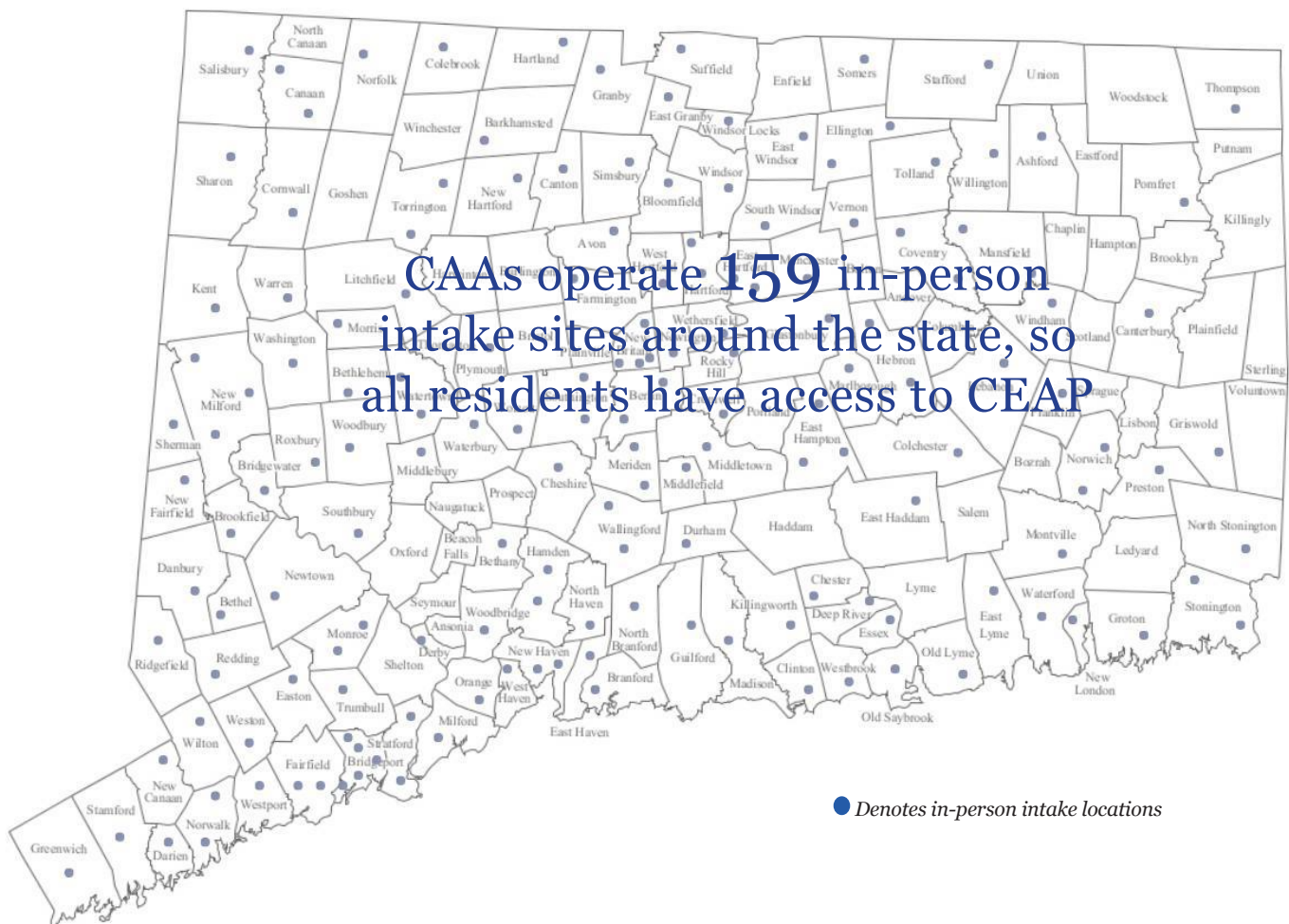
Energy Assistance and Weatherization

Community Action response

Energy assistance is the #1 reason most people first come to a Community Action Agency

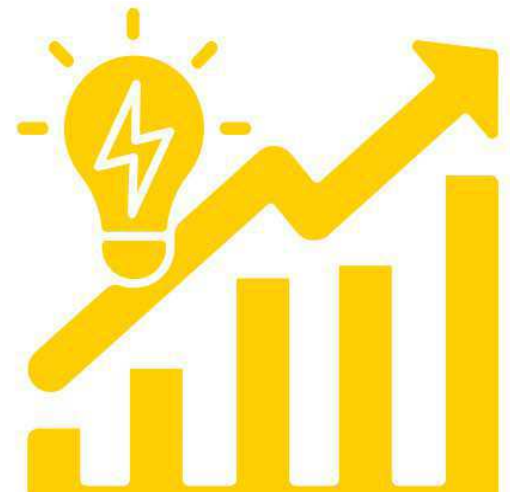
Connecticut's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) offer the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) statewide. Applications are accepted at 159 intake sites including CAAs, senior centers, community centers, town halls, social service centers, and community partner locations, as well as online and via telephone or mail.

The program is funded by the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and is administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services. CEAP helps low income households afford their energy bills and keeps their homes warm during the cold weather.



105,000 households were awarded benefits to reduce their home energy cost burden and be safe in a warm home

7,640 households were assisted with past due water bills to ensure they had running water



Over **2,000** homes are more energy efficient because of weatherization services

Maria's husband left her with 3 children, no income, and a high electric bill with a shutoff notice. Maria went to the Human Resources Agency of New Britain (HRA), and a case manager helped her apply for energy assistance. She also mediated an affordable payment plan with Maria's utility company through the Matching Payment Program.

Recognizing that she had additional needs, HRA worked with Maria to secure a part-time job, get child support, access the agency's food pantry, and referred her to its Early Childhood Education program. Maria is still working with her case manager to further her education, reboot her career, and plan for the future.





The Community Action approach

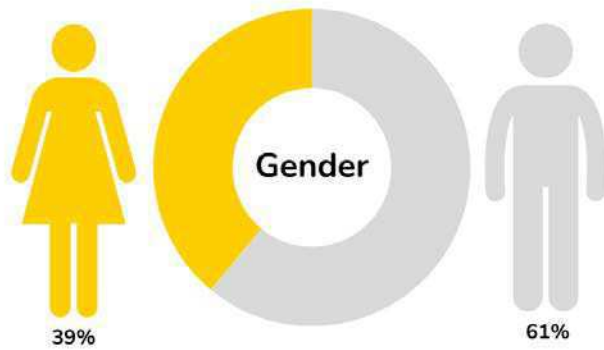
Community Action Agencies use a holistic, multigenerational, "no wrong door" approach to help people in need plan, achieve, and maintain short and long-term economic stability.

This helps ensure that anyone who comes into an agency for any reason is assessed for all programs, services, and resources they may be eligible for.

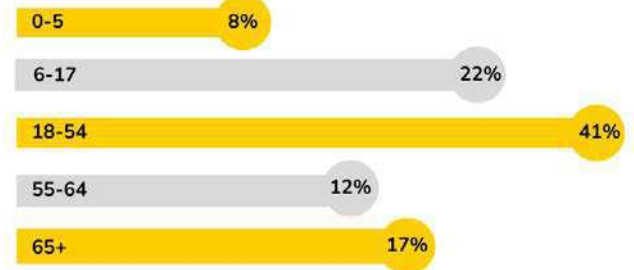


Our Customers

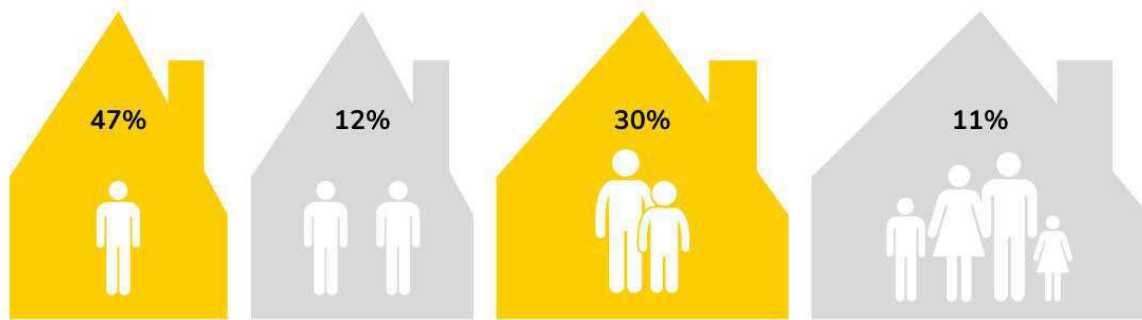
This data shows the characteristics of those served in 2023 for whom demographic information was obtained.



Age



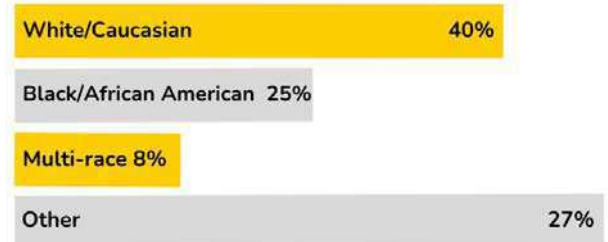
Household Composition



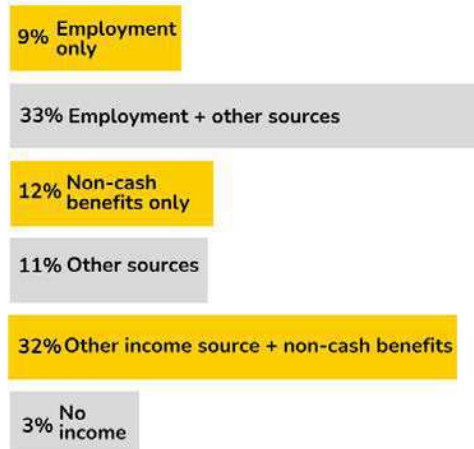
Ethnicity



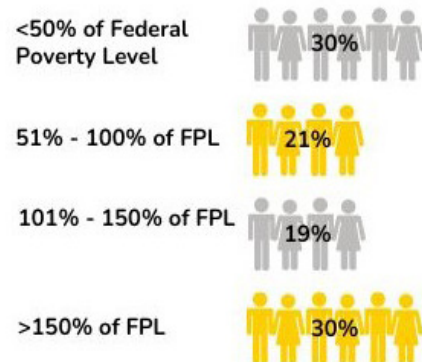
Race



Source of Income



Income Levels



CAFCA Financials for FY2023

These are unaudited financials. CAFCA FY 2023 audit was in process at time of the Annual Report completion.

Support & Revenue

	FY 2023
Grants & Contracts	\$ 3,704,610
Program & other income	34,087
Total:	\$ 3,738,697

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 422,306
Pass-through to Community Action Agencies	2,802,711
Other Sub-recipients	87,543
SSBG Housing Fund - Rental Assistance	242,006
Professional Services	65,286
Materials & Supplies	17,629
Occupancy	35,388
Conferences & Meetings	9,521
Training & Education	13,982
Other	31,660
Total:	\$ 3,728,032

Change in net assets from operating activities \$ 10,665



Community Action at work!

CAFCA Accomplishments

CAFCA empowers Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in their work by providing training and technical assistance, legislative advocacy at the state and federal level, and supporting initiatives that impact the people they serve. This critical support equips CAAs to better respond to the needs of their customers and allows for equitable access to the right programs, services, and resources for everyone who comes through their doors.

Training & Technical Assistance

To help Community Action Agencies enhance their ability to effectively fulfill their mission and improve customer outcomes, CAFCA provides capacity building support for all levels of staff. This includes everyone from direct service, program, finance, and HR staff to upper-level management, leadership, and board members, demonstrating equity in the workplace by ensuring access to professional development across departments. This year, CAFCA partnered with the other five New England states to hold the 2023 New England Community Action Partnership (NECAP) Conference, where keynote speaker Dr. Darrick Hamilton, founding director of the Institute on Race, Power, and Political Economy at The New School, inspired attendees with his discussion on baby bonds and bridging the wealth gap. Sessions included equity in programming, food insecurity, addressing homelessness, fundraising, and more. CAFCA also held a statewide Direct Service Day for agency staff to learn and connect with their peers, as well as various other training sessions to enhance agency operations on all levels and increase capacity to improve customer outcomes.



Advocacy

CAFCA advocates at the state and federal level for policies that impact Connecticut's Community Action Network and the people they serve. This includes meeting with legislative leaders, testifying at public hearings, and encouraging collective action on various issues. This year, CAFCA pushed for additional Client Support Fund

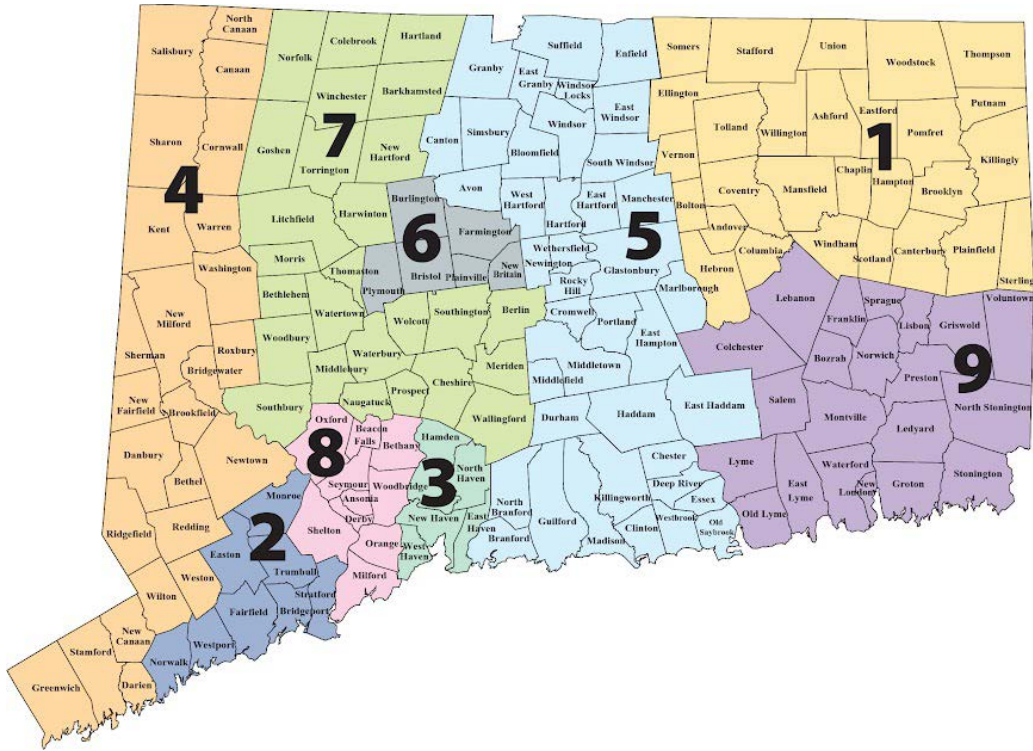


dollars, which helped customers impacted by the pandemic with urgent issues that could prevent them from meeting basic needs; for example, helping someone afford car repairs, allowing them to get to work and pick up groceries. CAFCA also continued to support Community Health Workers (CHWs), and testified in support of a bill that would make CHW services more accessible to HUSKY enrollees by connecting them to additional support services. Nearly 60 CHWs work at Community Action Agencies statewide to improve people's health, well-being, and opportunities for success. Additionally, CAFCA advocated to advance

the state's Baby Bonds program, which will increase generational wealth by creating investment accounts for just under 8,000 infants born into low-income families. And in response to a significant drop in elderly nutrition program federal funding, several CAFCA board members joined the Elderly Nutrition Task Force to identify tangible solutions, seek additional dollars, and advocate for these critical programs.



The Connecticut Community Action Agency Network



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CAFCA Board Vice Chair

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CAFCA Board Member

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CAFCA Board Member

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CAFCA Board Member



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*CAFCA is a proud member of the
National Community Action Partnership*