



## 2024 Annual Report



**CAFCA**  
Connecticut Association  
for Community Action



# 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.





# A Message from CAFCA

"Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live." For the past 60 years, Connecticut's Community Action network has committed to keeping this promise by working with people in need statewide to address and alleviate poverty at the source.

As our society and economy changed over time, so did the needs of the communities we serve—and Community Action changed right along with them. While the world looks much different today than it did in 1964, one thing remains the same: our demonstrated commitment to the Community Action Promise.

This past year was no different. Well-known and trusted in their communities, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) know there is no "blanket approach" to reducing poverty. And by understanding local needs and investing in practical, tailor-based solutions, our CAAs helped 247,034 people and 116,133 families across Connecticut reach for and maintain economic independence.

This targeted, community-driven approach is what sets Community Action apart and allows us to deliver measurable, meaningful results and impact. Job training and financial literacy programs, access to high-quality early childhood education, removing barriers to safe and stable housing, energy affordability, and improving health outcomes are just some of the initiatives highlighted in our annual report.

As Connecticut deals with record-high rates of food, housing, and financial insecurity, these programs and support services are crucial drivers in moving struggling residents toward economic stability—empowering them to build better lives for themselves and their communities.

We hope you'll join us in 2025 and beyond as we continue to keep the Community Action Promise by making sure everyone has an opportunity to thrive in Connecticut.

*Rhonda Evans*

Rhonda Evans  
Executive Director

*Amos Smith*

Amos Smith  
Board Chair



# 60 years of Community

## 1960s

In **1964**, President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Economic Opportunity Act into law, starting anti-poverty initiatives and establishing Community Action Agencies to assist people in need.



Adult workplace job training programs launch, providing opportunities to gain job skills, get connected with employers, and receive on-site support.



Head Start is piloted for 3 to 5 year-olds. The program provides early education, nutritious meals and health screenings, and incorporates parent education, home visits, and community governance.

## 1970s

Elderly nutrition programs are created, serving low-cost meals at senior centers and delivering meals to homebound older adults to help reduce hunger and improve overall health.



The Connecticut Association for Community Action is established to provide training and technical assistance and advocacy support to Connecticut's Community Action Agencies.



The Weatherization Assistance Program is established to reduce energy costs for low- and moderate-income households by making their homes more energy-efficient.

## 1980s

Emergency Shelters are opened to provide safe shelter and basic needs to people experiencing homelessness.



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is established to provide financial assistance and help offset energy costs.



Food distribution initiatives ramp up, ensuring a consistent source of food and nutrition for those in need.



# Action in Connecticut

## 1990s

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) connects volunteers aged 55 and over with organizations to address community needs.



The Individual Development Account (IDA) program allows matched savings accounts designed to help low-income families build assets and achieve financial self-sufficiency. IDAs provide a way for people to save for goals like home ownership, education, or starting a business, with their savings matched.

## 2000s

The Human Services Infrastructure approach to service delivery is put into place. This multigenerational, holistic, and outcome-focused approach helps people in need plan, achieve, and maintain short and long term goals and economic stability.

**HSi**

*Connecting People & Services*  
Human Services Infrastructure



The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax preparation and filing services for low- and moderate-income households.

## 2010s



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach services begin, helping to ensure the most vulnerable individuals and families have consistent and dependable access to food.



Governor Dannel P. Malloy proclaims May as Community Action Month.

The Community Health Worker (CHW) initiative grows, bridging the gap between health care and social services by connecting people with services and resources that improve health outcomes.

## 2020s

The Diaper Distribution Pilot Program launches, playing a crucial role in addressing diaper need. A lack of diapers impacts families' ability to access childcare, maintain consistent employment, and puts children at risk for diaper rash or infections.



COVID-19 hits, affecting communities and businesses everywhere. Community Action Agencies remained open for business, quickly adjusting to ensure the continued provision of services for their customers. From distributing food to passing out safety supplies and holding vaccination events to helping people stay safe and housed, Community Action kept its promise during the public health crisis.



## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION



Early care and education services include Head Start, Early Head Start, School Readiness, state-funded childcare, and home-based childcare

**2,468** children ages birth to 5 received early learning services, nutritious meals, and screenings for early detection and preventative services



*"Being part of TEAM has changed my life. The teaching staff communicate with me about Mariany's development and she has learned so much. I see a big difference in her development, behavior, and language. I am very grateful for all the staff. I feel safe, happy and at peace in my apartment, and am confident that I can continue to make my life better".*







**1,849** adults obtained or increased employment skills after receiving employment and training services, resulting in **1,369** unemployed adults securing employment

Nearly **400** youth participated in the Summer Youth Employment program, gaining valuable on-the-job skills, career exploration, and the opportunity to save money for their future

*"I needed to start taking care of myself and my daughter, and that included going back to work so that I could afford rent, pay for after school care, and put food on our table. It had been so long since I held a job but with the support from my case manager, I was able to write a resume, job search, and secure employment. For the first time in a long time, I feel like I can take care of my family."*





## HOUSING & ASSET BUILDING



**963** individuals experiencing homelessness obtained safe and temporary shelter

**3,434** individuals obtained safe and affordable housing

**4,503** individuals worked with a Community Action Agency to avoid eviction



**122** individuals enrolled in financial literacy classes

**1,674** individuals received coaching to build assets and increase financial skills

**9,990** households received tax assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program

**139** individuals opened a savings or other asset-building account



*"Taking a class on how to budget my money and save for emergency situations like car repairs or for my son's future was a game changer for me and my family."*



*Joe, a Navy veteran, was in a dire situation after his divorce: homeless. He "couch surfed" and relied on friends to get by, but child support obligations didn't leave enough money for housing. Even his part-time job couldn't cover basic living expenses, and he struggled with health issues compounded by his financial situation.*

*A Department of Veterans Affairs referral led him to the Community Renewal Team for assistance, which provided him with bridge housing specifically for homeless veterans. A case manager and fellow veteran also worked with Joe to help him secure an apartment and navigate various mental health and medical services.*

*Access to safe, stable housing and health care has allowed Joe to start slowly rebuilding his life. He invites his three children over, has transitioned to full-time employment, and is saving money to invest in his future.*



*"Having my own apartment has eliminated stress and anxiety so I can focus on spending time with my children."*



## NUTRITION



**214,577** individuals received emergency food supplies

**4,921** older adults received meals and a daily wellness check through Meals on Wheels, which provides nutritionally balanced meals to homebound residents

**6,470** older adults enjoyed nutritious meals and social interaction at a congregate meal site





*"Before I found this food pantry, I was worried about feeding my kids. Now, I have food to feed my family. I am so grateful for the support and kindness I have received from the staff. It has truly changed my life."*







*Ken was feeling angry and without options. After a short hospital stay for behavioral health issues, he was living on a park bench. He had no income, no identification, no food, and no home.*

*Someone told Ken to go to New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI), where he met with a case manager and immediately received food, bus passes, and a 2-1-1 referral to help meet his basic needs.*

*NOI also worked with Ken to secure proper identification, SNAP and Social Security benefits, medical care, and housing. Learning how to take the bus encouraged him to be more independent and he is now looking forward to becoming employed, moving into safe and affordable housing, and eventually getting his own apartment.*



**100,074** households were awarded benefits to reduce their home energy cost burden and be in a safe, warm home

Over **1,300** households are living in a safer home after eliminating lead, radon, and fire hazards, and repairing heating systems and appliances

**2,039** households are more energy efficient due to furnace repairs, air sealing, and/or new installation



*"Being on a fixed income is difficult when the cost of food, rent, and just about everything else is increasing. Having assistance with my heating bill gives me great peace of mind."*





The Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) is the state association for Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal-designated antipoverty agencies serving low-income people in all 169 cities and towns.

As the largest statewide safety net service provider with over 2,500 local, state, federal, and community partnerships, Connecticut's CAA network connects neighbors in need with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities.

To help Community Action Agencies enhance their ability to effectively fulfill their mission and improve customer outcomes, CAFCA provides capacity building support through:

- Training and Technical Assistance
- Advocacy and public policy at the state and federal levels
- Information dissemination
- Planning state and regional conferences and events
- Supporting initiatives that impact the people they serve
- Program administration
- Information technology assistance

This critical support empowers the state's CAAs, better equipping them with the tools, resources, and skills they need to address the complex needs of their customers.



## CAFCA Team



Rhonda Evans  
*Executive Director*



Katrina Bresnahan  
*Director of Social  
Service Programs*



Tanaysia Jefferson  
*Coordinator of Grants &  
Special Projects*



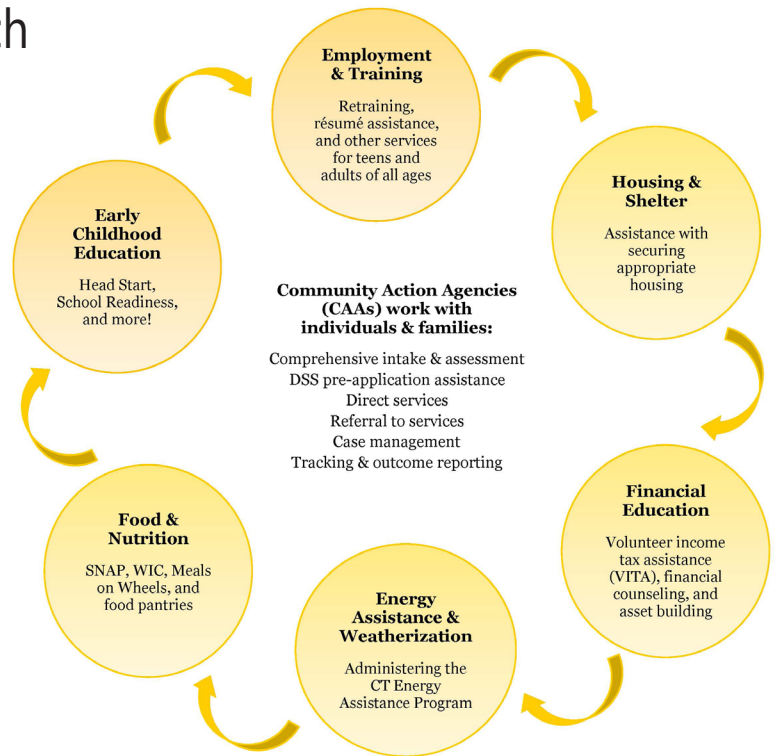
Kelley Hall  
*Manager of  
Strategic Projects*



# The Community Action Approach

Community Action Agencies have stayed committed to using a holistic, multigenerational, comprehensive 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.



## CAFCA Financials for FY2024

### Support & Revenue

Grants & Contracts	\$ 3,205,501
Program & other income	38,155
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 3,738,697</b>

### Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 377,625
Pass-through to Community Action Agencies	1,976,914
Other Sub-recipients	342,454
SSBG Housing Fund - Rental Assistance	215,619
Professional Services	143,830
Materials & Supplies	124,570
Occupancy	20,373
Conferences & Meetings	1,502
Training & Education	13,906
Other	42,374

**Total:** **\$ 3,259,167**

Change in net assets from operating activities \$ (15,511)



# Our Customers

This data shows the characteristics of those served in 2024 for whom demographic information was obtained.

247,034 individuals served

116,133 families served

## GENDER

40% Male

**60% Female**

## ETHNICITY

36% Hispanic

**64% Not Hispanic**

## AGE

8% Birth to 5 years old

22% 6-17 year old

**39% 18-54 year old**

20% 65 and older

## RACE

**43% White**

12% Black

10% Multi-race

24% Other

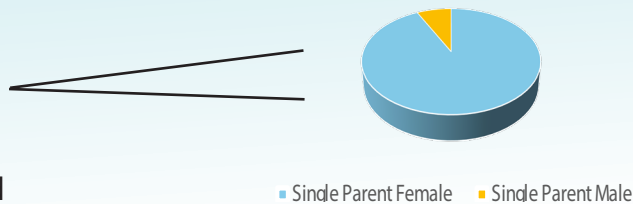
## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

**47% Single person**

27% Single parent household

11% Two parent household

3% Multigenerational household





## INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

### SOURCES OF INCOME

7% Employment  
24% Employment + other sources  
**29% Non-cash benefits only**  
10% Other income source  
28% Other income source + non-cash benefits  
2% No income



### Non-Cash Benefit Types

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
Women, Infant and Children (WIC)  
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)  
Housing Choice Voucher  
Public Housing  
Permanent Supportive Housing  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-  
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)  
Childcare Voucher  
Affordable Care Act Subsidy

### INCOME LEVELS

**40% Up to 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**

15% Between 51% & 100% of the FPL  
15% Between 101% & 150% of the FPL  
30% Between 151% and over the FPL



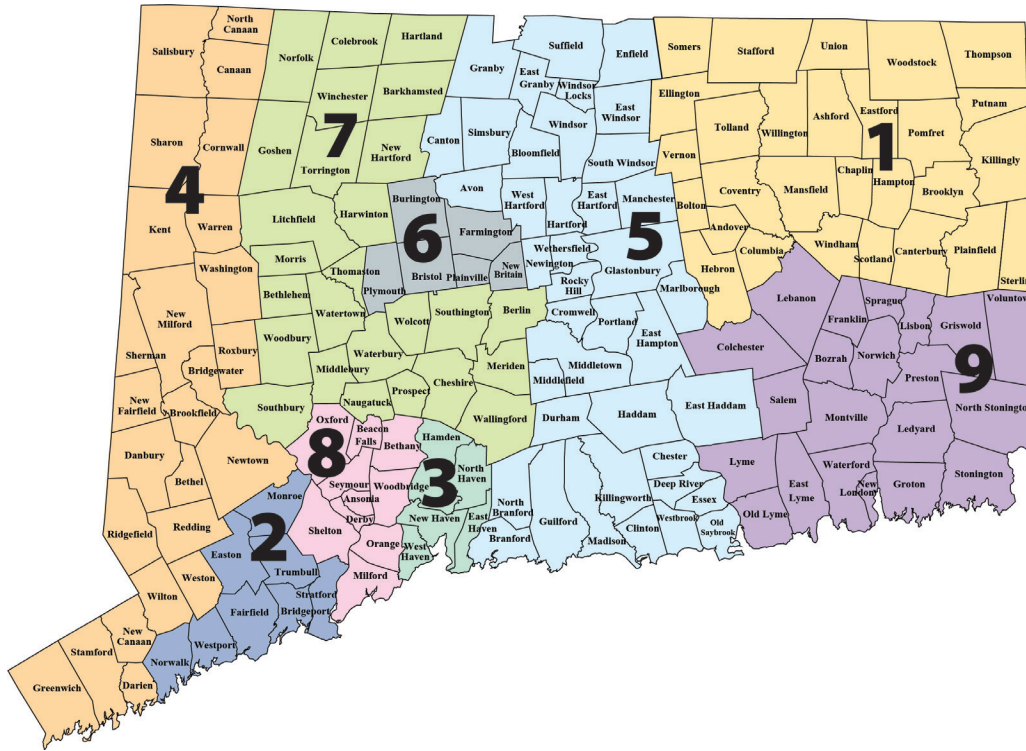


# Connecticut Community Action Agency Services

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# The Connecticut Community Action Agency Network



**1** The Access Community Action Agency, Inc. (Access)  
Peter DeBiasi  
President/CEO  
1315 Main Street, Suite 2  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
(860) 450-7400  
[www.accessagency.org](http://www.accessagency.org)



*CAFCA Board Secretary*

**2** Alliance for Community Empowerment, Inc.  
Dr. Monette Ferguson  
Executive Director  
1070 Park Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
(203) 366-8241  
[www.alliancect.org](http://www.alliancect.org)



*CAFCA Board Member*

**3** Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)  
Amos Smith  
President/CEO  
419 Whalley Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 387-7700  
[www.caanh.net](http://www.caanh.net)



*CAFCA Board Chair*

**4** The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC)  
Michelle James  
Executive Director  
78 Triangle Street  
Danbury, CT 06810  
(203) 744-4700  
[www.caaawc.org](http://www.caaawc.org)



*CAFCA Board Vice Chair*

**5** Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT)  
Lena Rodriguez  
President/CEO  
555 Windsor Street  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860) 560-5600  
[www.crtct.org](http://www.crtct.org)



*CAFCA Board Member*

**6** Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA)  
Dr. Marlo Greppone  
Executive Director  
180 Clinton Street  
New Britain, CT 06053  
(860) 225-8601  
[www.hranbct.org](http://www.hranbct.org)



*CAFCA Board Member*

**7** New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)  
William Rybczyk  
President/CEO  
232 North Elm Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
(203) 575-9799  
[www.newoppinc.org](http://www.newoppinc.org)



*CAFCA Board Treasurer*

**8** TEAM, Inc.  
David Morgan  
President/CEO  
30 Elizabeth Street  
Derby, CT 06418  
(203) 736-5420  
[www.teaminc.org](http://www.teaminc.org)



*CAFCA Board Member*

**9** Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)  
Joshua Kelly  
CEO  
1 Sylvandale Road  
Jewett City, CT 06351  
(860) 889-1365  
[www.tvcca.org](http://www.tvcca.org)



*CAFCA Board Member*





# CAFCA

Connecticut Association  
for Community Action

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