



"TAKING ACTION, ONE NEIGHBOR AT A TIME"

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut provides social services and programs directly and through partnerships to vulnerable and low-income individuals, families and communities in Western Connecticut to help them achieve self-sufficiency and to improve their lives.

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A MESSAGE FROM CAAWC

Many people have moved towards reaching “normalcy”; the year 2022 was a year of restoration and new beginnings. The coronavirus has become less of a disruption in our everyday lives, making it possible to resume activities like travel, attending large events, going to school in-person and being unmasked as well as increasing existent disparities for those that are low-income and people of color. We have learned a new “normal” or adaptation to life with the experiences gained as COVID-19 survivors.

In Connecticut, inflation topped at 7% in all of 2022 and eclipsed at 9% in June, the largest increase since 1981, forcing some deeper into poverty and introducing itself to many more. We helped clients defy their challenges in the midst of hardships. However, what we do is not uncommon as one of nine Community Action Agencies in the State of Connecticut, we ensure the most vulnerable in our communities can find support.

Through the Action Early Learning Center, Case Management, Community Food Rescue, Energy Assistance, Housing Support Services, Diaper Program, Elderly Fuel Program, Employment and Education Services, Food Pantry, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, information and referrals, and more, we completed our mission daily. We consistently strive to offer resources to those that walk through our doors in crisis despite the unpredictable trajectory they are experiencing. Many have recreated themselves with the help of our programs, services and partnerships.

This report highlights some of the work CAAWC has been able to accomplish throughout 2022. Our catchment area is diverse, from cities to towns, rural to suburbs, we supply services to help Western Connecticut residents improve their lives.

We are grateful to all of our clients for trusting us to address their concerns and needs. To our partners for toiling diligently beside us. Thank you to our funders and donors for your financial supports. Lastly, a huge thank you to our Board Members and staff for their leadership and motivation to remain optimistic towards the future.

As we continue to be the anti-poverty agency for 25 towns within Fairfield and Litchfield counties, we are reminded once again, we are stronger together than apart, as we continue to change lives for the better, “Taking Action, One Neighbor at a Time.”



Creighton W. Lee, Sr.
Board Chair



Michelle H. James
Executive Director

ADAPTING TO CHANGE



A 58 year-old Hispanic woman with a 25 year career in the business industry lost her job due to COVID-19. She was surviving on personal savings and temporary contract work. She had been looking for

permanent work for several months and did not have much success, so she decided to sign up for the following Job and Life Skills workshop classes: Virtual Training for Employment Trends, Planning and Executing Your Job Search, Preparing for the Interview, and Mock Interviews. After attending our Job and Life Skills workshops, she received an employment offer and accepted a position in management.

She attributes her success to the information received from the workshops. She states, “the classes helped me realize that I needed to adapt to the many changes in the workforce since my previous employment.”

A RESOURCE TO PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Action Early Learning Center held the 2022 Early Childhood and Community Resource Fair at the Danbury Sports Dome on May 5th in collaboration with DPS, United Way and PLTI. Over 500 people attended the fair and around 50 community organizations and partners shared their information with the attendees. Information on childcare providers, sports and summer camps, Kindergarten registrations, Special Education services, health and wellness, and much more was shared. AELC’s goal was to facilitate greater connection between resource providers, educators, community organizers and community members.

IGNITING JOB-READINESS SKILLS



CAAWC served a 61 year-old client experiencing financial difficulties due to COVID related job loss. Needing surgery during this period further exacerbated her situation. She was receiving unemployment

benefits, but the funds barely paid her monthly expenses. The client worked with the Community Services Specialist aiding her in the processing of applications for SNAP benefits, health insurance coverage, Energy Assistance, and rental assistance.

After completing the aforementioned, the Client was also helped by our Employment Coordinator, with job search and improve her job-readiness skills to increase her chances of obtaining long-term employment. Her résumé highlighted her accomplishments, professionalism and brand. The client attended eight weeks of workshops through the Jobs and Life Skills Program such as: Onboarding: What Companies are Looking for Post Pandemic, Work Culture, Preparing for an Interview, Mock Interviews, and Emotional Intelligence. The completion of these workshops increased her confidence. After exhaustive job searches, the client was able to obtain a position working in her field and remain employed.



CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

A female client came to CAAWC seeking assistance for housing as she was facing an eviction at that time. The client had fallen ill with COVID-19 causing her to miss a substantial amount of work, ultimately leading to a decrease in her household income. This loss of income led the client to fall behind on her rent and accumulating a balance of \$12,000.

Through the collaborative efforts of the client and our Community Services Specialist, a plan was developed to ensure that the client could remain housed. The plan included creating and maintaining a budget of her finances, mediation services and financial assistance from the CSBG-CARES Program. As a result of the mediation services provided by our

Community Service Specialist, a resolution was achieved prior to the scheduled court date. The client received the maximum allotment of \$10,000 and the remaining \$2,000 would be paid in increments of \$200 until the debt was satisfied.

The client diligently fulfilled her payment agreement, successfully clearing the balance and restoring her good standing. Inspired by her triumph, the client sought to accomplish another goal of becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). CAAWC was able to assist the client with a scholarship through the Job and Life Skills Program to help her complete her vocational training and state certification requirements.

THE LINK TO HEALTHY FOOD



A resident of a senior living complex in Danbury was in need of healthy food to manage her Diabetes. Living on a fixed income and as a new resident to the area, she was relieved to receive the box of nutrient rich foods one week and health and beauty aids the next week through the Senior Boxes Program. The client stated,

“I was so worried I would not have enough money to buy my groceries. This box was right on time!” The client expressed concern due to the rising costs of both food and non-food items when shopping. She said she spends a great deal of her income on canned food. She was ecstatic when she received the fresh fruits and vegetables. She was also grateful for the home delivery of the boxes since she no longer drives and does not want to burden her adult daughter with her needs. In addition to participating in the Senior Boxes Program, she received help through the Energy Assistance Program and Case Management services.

pantry that specific day so nothing is wasted because of the quick turnaround to clients. We serve 14 local agencies with food.

In November of 2021 we started the Senior Boxes Program, which is delivering food boxes to four low-income senior housing complexes in Danbury. We received an average of 100 senior clients a month. The boxes contained dry items such as pasta and tuna and health and beauty aids items such as soap and deodorant.

We changed our strategy so that we could give the seniors more healthy options. We now deliver to five low-income senior housing complexes. We have also gone mobile, setting up tables and putting a large assortment of produce, frozen meat and fish, personal care items and dry food items out on the tables for seniors to “self-shop” and select what they would like. We have doubled in attendance and are now feeding over 200 senior households a month.



We received a grant from the Buck Family Foundation to purchase a truck and the Community Food Rescue started rescuing food in October of 2020. We have two drivers that rescue food from seven to nine stores daily. The food goes directly to the agency that has a food



In calendar year 2022 we rescued 1,010,720 pounds of food!

It has been a great success!

The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut

Statement of December 31, 2022 and 2021

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS 2022 2021

Revenues, gains and other support:

Federal and state grants	\$13,031,739	\$11,371,999
Childcare program income	623,473	382,802
Local grants and contributions	305,418	18,652
In Kind Contributions	493,743	198,097
Bond debt service funding	16,709	24,643
Other income	4,550	25,576
Net assets released from restrictions	413,402	8,638
Total revenues, gains and other support	14,889,034	12,030,407

Expenses:

Specific assistance	9,487,085	7,841,915
Salaries and benefits	3,655,713	3,239,724
Occupancy	303,248	242,752
Professional and contracted services	284,379	289,009
Materials, supplies and other consumables	259,900	188,449
Depreciation	95,390	79,888
Repairs and maintenance	79,657	66,735
Other	25,204	44,930
Conferences and training	19,368	15,812
Interest	7,902	5,400
Total expenses	14,217,846	12,014,614

Changes in net assets without donor restrictions	671,188	15,793
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Changes in Net Assets with Donor Restrictions

Support and revenue:

Contributions	345,478	142,000
Net assets released from restrictions	(413,402)	(8,638)
Changes in net assets with donor restrictions	(67,924)	133,362

Changes in Net Assets	603,264	149,155
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Net Assets - Beginning of Year	1,144,398	995,243
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Net Assets - End of Year	\$1,747,662	\$ 1,144,398
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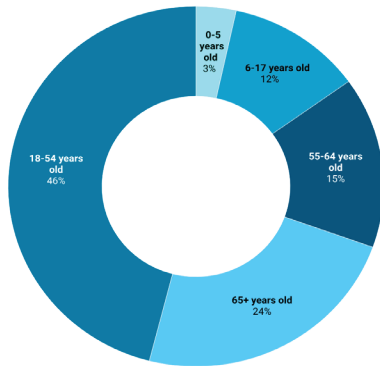
IN 2022 WE HELPED

13,838 INDIVIDUALS | 9,656 FAMILIES | 67% FEMALES AND 33% MALES

Client Assistance by Age in 2022

Percentages from a total of 13,838 individuals

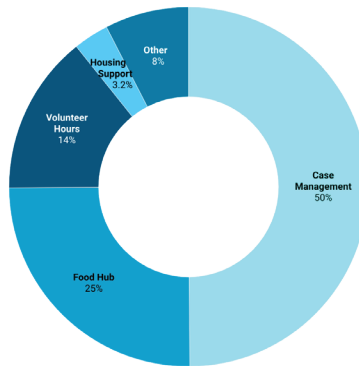
0-5 years old 6-17 years old 18-54 years old 55-64 years old 65+ years old



Client Services by Program in 2022

Percentages from a total of 13,838 individuals

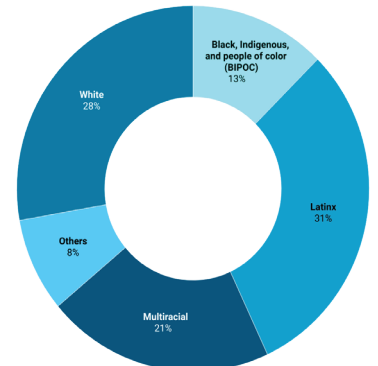
Case Management Food Hub Volunteer Hours Housing Support Other



Race identified by Client in 2022

Percentages from a total of 13,838 individuals

Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Latinx Multiracial Others White



2022 HIGHLIGHTS

4,505 households served through our Food Pantry, helping families with food insecurity

225 households received Thanksgiving Food Baskets to celebrate their holiday

2,579 volunteer hours served

153 children received early childhood education, equipping them with skills for kindergarten

480 households served through our Diaper Program, helping families bridge the affordability gap for basic needs

575 households received housing support services

6,440 households received Energy Assistance to stay warm during the winter months

286 tax returns were filed through our VITA Program, returning over \$334,049 to CT's economy, including \$94,069 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC)

8,975 households received case management services

OUR PROGRAMS

Action Early Learning Center (AELC)
Case Management Services
Community Food Rescue Program
Diaper Program
Energy Assistance Program
Elderly Fuel Program
Employment & Education Services
Food Pantry
Housing Support Services
SSBG Case Management
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Bethel	New Fairfield	Salisbury
Bridgewater	New Milford	Sharon
Brookfield	New Canaan	Sherman
Canaan	Newtown	Stamford
Cornwall	North Canaan	Warren
Danbury	*Norwalk	Washington
Darien	Redding	Weston
Greenwich	Roxbury	*Westport
Kent	Ridgefield	Wilton

* only SSBG Program

MANY THANKS

TO ALL OUR STAKEHOLDERS, FUNDERS, DONORS, AND VOLUNTEERS. WE COULD NOT DO THE WORK WITHOUT YOU.

OUR OFFICES

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