



NYSCAA

New York State Community Action Association
Helping People. Changing Lives.



NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION

— ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2023 - SEPTEMBER 2024

2024

www.nyscommunityaction.com



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“Community action is about making the community accountable for its own development, growth, and future. It's about giving people the tools to effect change from within.”

– **Sargent Shriver,**

Architect of the War on Poverty and Founder of the Community Action Network

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO & BOARD PRESIDENT



The New York State Community Action Association

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we look back on the past year at the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA), we're grateful for the hard work of NYSCAA's team and the dedication of every Community Action Agency (CAA) across New York.

Since 1987, NYSCAA has been a steadfast partner with New York's CAAs, the backbone of our fight against poverty and the challenges it brings. In every county and every community, CAAs have stepped up, bringing resources, compassion, and hope to those who need it most. Whether helping families access housing, training opportunities, food security, or critical resources, your work goes beyond services; it changes lives and empowers entire communities.

This year, we celebrated key milestones together. We commemorated 60 years of Community Action in September during our 2024 Annual Conference: Purpose & Passion in Action, held in Lake Placid, New York. The conference brought together representatives from Community Action and Weatherization Agencies to learn, be inspired, and discuss strategies for meeting new challenges. We continued our "Shine the Light" campaign to highlight the dedicated CAA staff from all over New York and their stories about the work they do in Community Action.

In these times of rising need, our shared efforts are more vital than ever. To support this increased demand, NYSCAA prioritized providing professional development opportunities for CAA staff, offering webinars and access to our learning management system, NYSCAA Learn. These resources are designed to ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to meet the growing challenges in our communities.

These accomplishments remind us that real change happens when we come together, united by our vision of a more equitable and just New York. None of this would be possible without you—our CAAs, partners, and advocates. You are the heartbeat of this work, bringing it to life in ways that inspire and uplift. Your dedication and resilience remind us all that hope is alive and well and that our combined efforts can create the brighter future we all envision.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission. Together, we have made a difference, and together, we will continue to build a stronger, more resilient New York for every family and individual who calls our state home.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Jackie Orr *Maureen Abbot*

Jackie Orr

Maureen Abbot



Maureen Abbot
President of NYSCAA



Jackie Orr
CEO of NYSCAA

OUR TEAM

Jackie Orr, CEO

Charles Barbay, Program Director

Heidi Barcomb, Program and Communications Director

Alexis Rivera, Program and Technology Director

NYSCAA'S OFFICERS

President: Maureen Abbott, *Tioga Opportunities, Inc.*

Vice President: Diane Hewitt-Johnson, *Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.*

Secretary: Amy Turner, *Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.*

Treasurer: Diane Cooper-Currier, *Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.*

AT LARGE

Shelly Bartow, *Delaware Opportunities, Inc.*

Neenah Bland, *Albany Community Action Partnership*

Mike Bobbitt, *NYC Department of Youth and Community Development*

Lesley Gooch Christman, *ACCORD Corporation*

Renee Hungerford, *Community Action of Orleans & Genesee*

Nicole Laurin, *JCEO, Inc.*

Eric Poulson, *Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County, Inc.*

Charles Quinn, *Regional Economic Community Action Program*

Greg Richards, *Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.*

Laura Rossman, *Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.*

Tanya Shalor, *Opportunities for Otsego*

Tina Sharpe, *Columbia Opportunities, Inc.*

Elizabeth Spira, *Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County*

Andrew Studley, *Connecting Communities in Action (CCA)*

Nancy Turo, *PEACE, Inc.*

Jerome Underwood, *Action for Better Community, Inc.*

Denis Wilson, *Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.*

New York State Community Action Association



A LEGACY OF COMMUNITY ACTION

NYSCAA



The New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) was established in 1987 to support and strengthen the work of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across New York State. These agencies, first created in 1964 through the federal Economic Opportunity Act as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, were designed to empower communities by addressing poverty through locally-driven solutions. Recognizing the need for a unified statewide organization, NYSCAA was formed to provide resources, advocacy, and opportunities for collaboration that enhance the effectiveness of CAAs in their fight against poverty.

Since its inception, NYSCAA has served as a vital network for New York's CAAs, equipping them with the tools and support needed to tackle the root causes of poverty and promote economic security and social equity. Through technical assistance, professional development opportunities, and innovative resources, the association has strengthened CAAs' capacity to deliver critical services such as housing assistance, workforce development, food security, and educational programs. NYSCAA also fosters collaboration across the Community Action Network, amplifying the impact of its member agencies through partnerships and shared strategies.

Today, NYSCAA continues to adapt to the evolving needs of communities while staying true to its mission of equity and empowerment. By strengthening CAAs and fostering grassroots innovation, the association ensures that local solutions remain central to its efforts. NYSCAA's enduring commitment to its members and the communities they serve makes it a cornerstone of New York's ongoing efforts to build a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

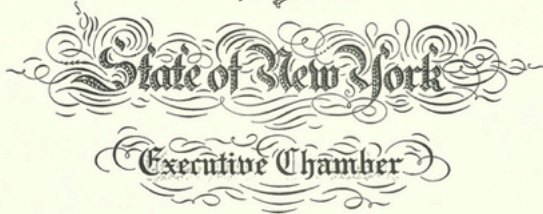
Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Our Values

- NYSCAA supports a network that promotes and values inclusion, diversity, equity, and justice.
- NYSCAA works with all people with respect and sensitivity and fosters a community of safety and trust.
- NYSCAA believes in the power of compassion, collaboration, advocacy, agitation, and the power of systemic change to overcome poverty.
- NYSCAA believes all individuals need hope and opportunity to succeed.
- NYSCAA is committed to excellence, accountability, and innovation in all that it does.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF COMMUNITY ACTION

THE WAR ON POVERTY AND THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT: COMMEMORATING 60 YEARS OF COMMUNITY ACTION



Proclamation

Whereas, New York State joins to commemorate milestones of progress in our nation's commitment to strengthening families and communities; this year marks the 60th anniversary of passage of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964 which created Community Action Agencies that increase access to education, training, and employment opportunities for individuals and families facing economic and employment challenges; and

Whereas, the national network of Community Action Agencies continues to enhance the capacity of communities to use innovative approaches in addressing the root causes of poverty, to maximize the participation of individuals served, and to broaden the availability of resources dedicated to the elimination of poverty; and

Whereas, over the past six decades, Community Action Agencies have provided vital services to low-income New Yorkers, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and have helped families in difficult times through programs for housing, emergency assistance, child and adult care, food and nutrition, energy cost assistance, immigration integration services, as well as education and employment training that help families achieve financial independence and economic stability; and

Whereas, we recognize the New York State Community Action Association and its network of Community Action Agencies, along with their dedicated employees whose work and service are the driving force behind building opportunities and increasing access to programs, services, and activities that support many New Yorkers in realizing their goals of self-sufficiency and economic stability; and

Whereas, New York State joins in this observance of the 60th Anniversary of the EOA – an important catalyst for bringing change and improvement to peoples' lives and which led to the creation of the Community Services Block Grant, today a foundation of support for non-profit organizations that continue to help low-income and poor families across our state and nation; and

Whereas, National Community Action Month celebrates the successes of Community Action and honors the dedicated staff and volunteers, as well as the individuals who have benefited from the diverse Community Action programs; New York State values and appreciates the entire network of Community Action Agencies for their extraordinary efforts and service to our State and their contributions to strengthening and enhancing the lives of countless New Yorkers;

Now, Therefore, I, Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as

COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

in the Empire State.



G i b e n under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-ninth day of May in the year two thousand twenty-four.

Kathy Hochul
Governor

Karen Pensicilli Keogh
Secretary to the Governor
Karen Pensicilli Keogh

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson launched the War on Poverty, a bold and transformative initiative aimed at eradicating poverty and creating economic opportunity for all Americans. This national effort was born out of a belief that the root causes of poverty—lack of education, unemployment, and inadequate access to resources—could be tackled through coordinated federal, state, and community-based programs.

At the heart of this endeavor was the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964, which established a framework for initiatives designed to empower low-income individuals and families to break the cycle of poverty. The EOA created the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), which oversaw several groundbreaking programs that targeted different aspects of poverty. These programs included Head Start, which provides early childhood education; Job Corps, which offers vocational training for young people; and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a national service program designed to alleviate poverty through volunteer efforts.

Perhaps one of the most enduring legacies of the EOA is the creation of Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which have been at the forefront of local efforts to combat poverty for the past six decades. CAAs were established to ensure that communities had a voice in identifying the specific needs and challenges they faced and to create locally tailored solutions. These agencies are governed by tripartite boards, ensuring that residents, local officials, and private sector representatives collaborate to design programs that address the unique conditions in their areas.

Over the last 60 years, Community Action Agencies have provided critical services—ranging from housing assistance and job training to health care and educational support—that empower individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency. CAAs continue to be a pillar of hope for millions of Americans, building stronger communities and lifting families out of poverty.

As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of Community Action, we reflect on the vision that gave rise to the War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act, and we celebrate the progress made through collective action and community empowerment. Today, the fight against poverty continues, and the principles laid out in 1964 remain as relevant as ever—strengthening communities, expanding opportunity, and ensuring that every individual has the tools to thrive.

This commemoration is not only a look back but also a call to action for the future as we continue to build on the legacy of the War on Poverty.

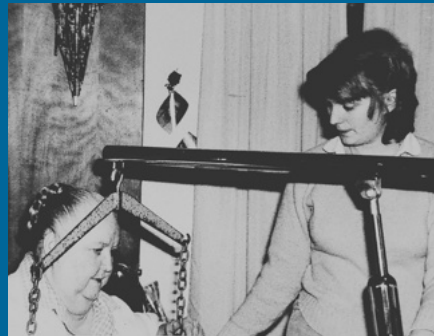
LOOKING BACK

New York State Community Action Association

60 YEARS OF COMMUNITY ACTION

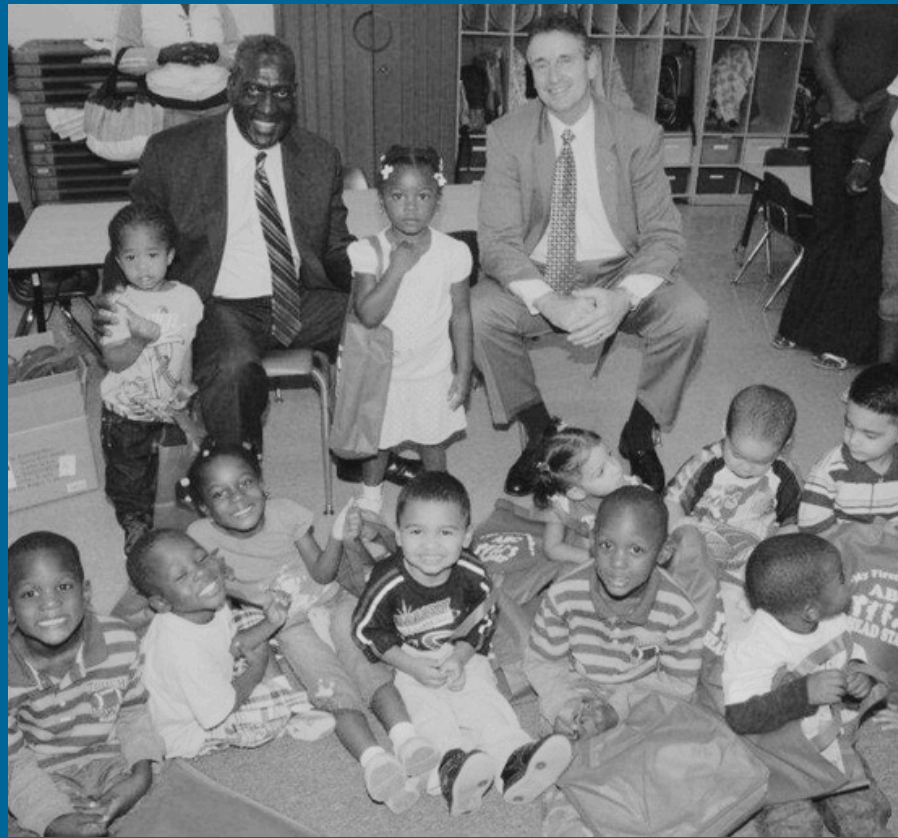
As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Community Action movement, these photos offer a glimpse into the remarkable journey of empowering individuals, strengthening families, and transforming communities. Each image reflects the dedication, resilience, and impact of the Community Action Network over the decades.

Together, we honor this legacy and look forward to building a brighter future for generations to come.



LOOKING BACK

New York State Community Action Association



THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY NETWORK

With a network of 47 organizations throughout the Empire State that can reach every New Yorker, Community Action Agencies form a statewide service delivery system that connects individuals and families to the services they need to achieve economic security. When it comes to moving folks from poverty to self-sufficiency, Community Action Agencies know what works. Community Action Agencies achieve positive results that change lives and strengthen communities.

NYC, LI, & MID-HUDSON REGION

- Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County
- EOC of Nassau County
- EOC of Suffolk County
- New York City Department of Youth and Community Development
- Regional Economic Community Action Program (RECAP)
- Ulster County Community Action Committee, Inc.
- Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.
- Yonkers Community Action Program, Inc.

CENTRAL & SOUTHERN TIER REGION

- Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.
- Community Action Programs Cayuga/ Seneca (CAP)
- Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO)
- Delaware Opportunities, Inc.
- Economic Opportunity Program of Chemung & Schuyler Counties
- Finger Lakes Community Action
- Greater Opportunities for Broome And Chenango, Inc.
- Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA)
- Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.
- PEACE, Inc.
- Pro Action of Steuben & Yates, Inc.
- Tioga Opportunities, Inc.
- Tompkins Community Action, Inc.

NORTH COUNTRY REGION

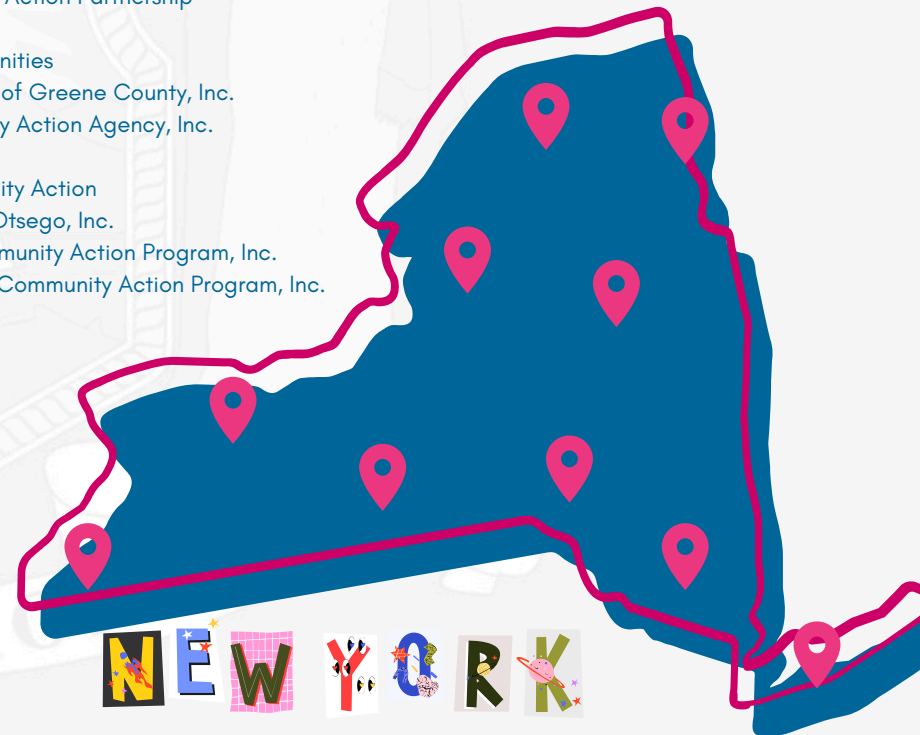
- Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.
- Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc.
- JCEO of Clinton & Franklin Counties, Inc.
- Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.
- St. Lawrence County Community Development Program, Inc.
- Warren-Hamilton Counties Community Action

WESTERN REGION

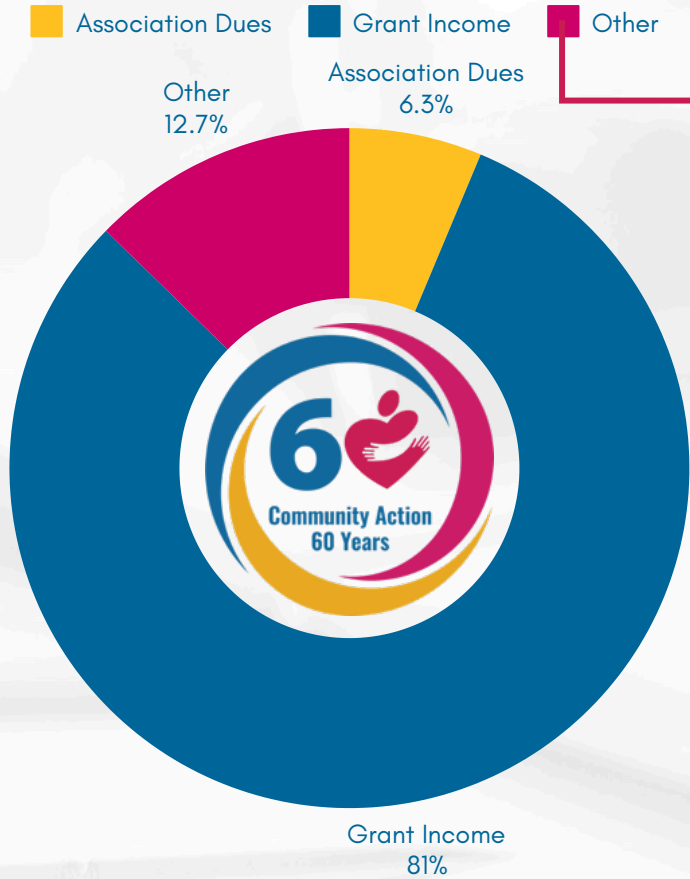
- ACCORD Corporation
- Action for a Better Community, Inc.
- Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
- Community Action for Wyoming County
- Community Action of Orleans & Genesee, Inc.
- Community Action Organization of Western New York
- Connecting Communities in Action
- Livingston County Office of Workforce Development
- Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.
- PathStone

CAPITAL DISTRICT REGION

- Albany Community Action Partnership
- CEO
- Columbia Opportunities
- Community Action of Greene County, Inc.
- Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.
- LEAP
- LifeWorks Community Action
- Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.
- Schenectady Community Action Program, Inc.
- Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.



FINANCIALS



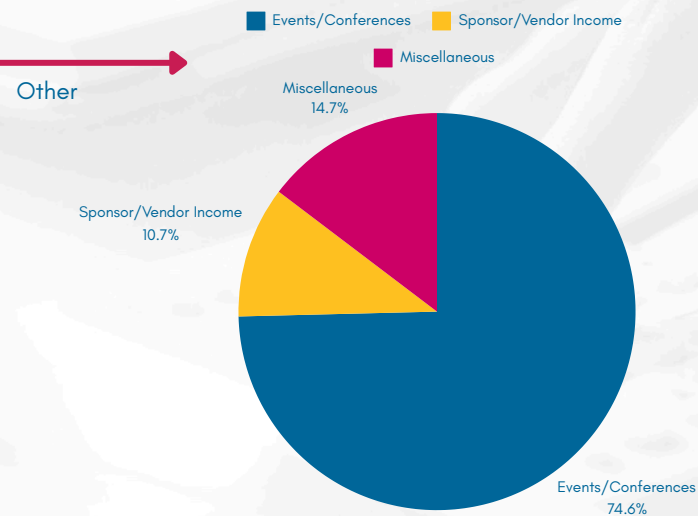
Financial Stewardship: Supporting NYSCAA's Mission

NYSCAA's mission is made possible through diverse and reliable funding sources, enabling us to drive meaningful change in communities across New York. Our primary funding partners include:

- **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families** (RPIC & DDDRP)
- **New York State Department of State, Division of Community Services** (Community Services Block Grant - CSBG)

With a steadfast commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship, we carefully manage every dollar to directly empower individuals and families across the state. These funds allow us to support Community Action Agencies, strengthen grassroots efforts, and create sustainable solutions for combating poverty.

NYSCAA deeply values the trust our funding partners place in us. Their support fuels our mission to build resilient, inclusive communities and ensures that together, we can continue to create opportunities and improve lives across New York.



These graphs represent all revenue that was generated beginning October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024



TOOLS & RESOURCES

New York State Community Action Association

NYS POVERTY REPORT

The **New York State Poverty Report** offers a comprehensive look at poverty across the state, providing critical data for Community Action Agencies, policymakers, advocates, and the public to drive informed actions.

Key Features of the 2024 Report:

- **State and County Poverty Profiles** – Detailed insights for each county and the state as a whole.
- **Key City Data** – Focused profiles for major urban areas.
- **Expanded ALICE Data** – Updated metrics on working households struggling to meet basic needs.
- **Income and Child Poverty Trends** – Analysis by race, ethnicity, and age.
- **Housing and Food Security** – New data on housing affordability and food insecurity.

The report is designed to be an essential resource for addressing and reducing poverty across New York State.



TOOLS & RESOURCES

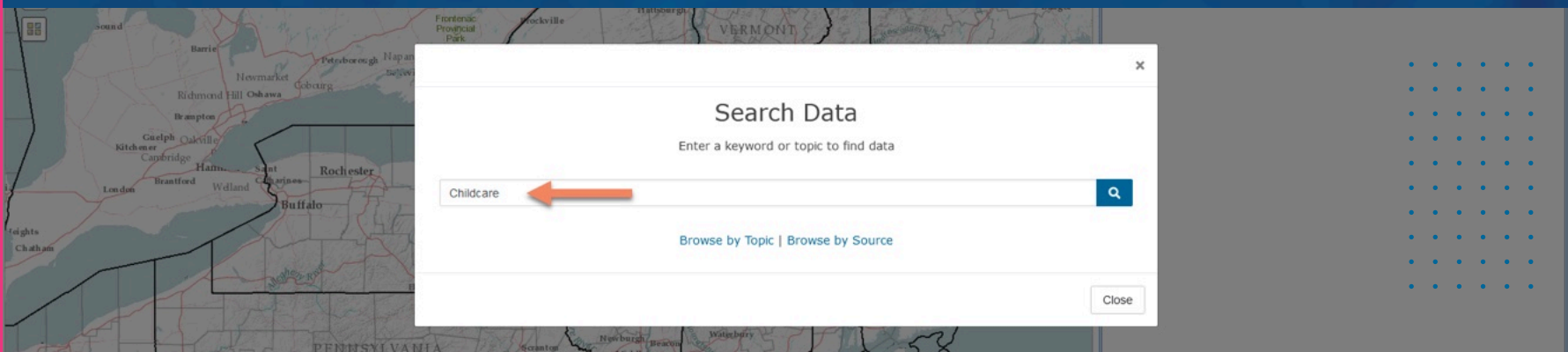
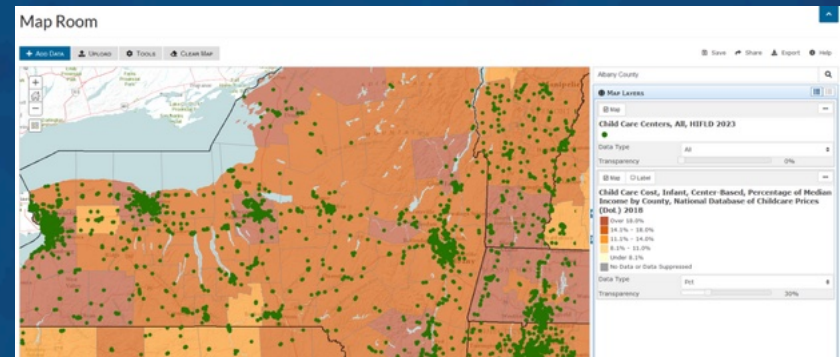
NYSCAA DATA HUB: Empowering Community Action with Comprehensive Data

The **NYSCAA Data Hub** is an essential resource that consolidates data from state and federal sources into a single, user-friendly platform. It offers downloadable and editable reports covering all NYSCAA member agency service areas and New York counties, facilitating informed decision-making and strategic planning.

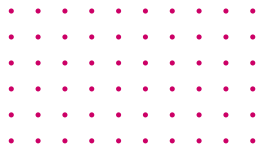
Key Features of the Data Hub:

- **Community Needs Assessment Data:** Provides detailed insights to support targeted service planning and resource allocation.
- **Poverty Reports:** Offers comprehensive data on poverty levels across various regions, aiding in the development of effective anti-poverty strategies.
- **Broadband Access Metrics:** Includes information on internet accessibility, highlighting areas in need of digital inclusion efforts.
- **Community Action Resource Guide:** Supplies a collection of tools and resources to enhance community action initiatives and support agency operations.

By integrating these features, the NYSCAA Data Hub serves as a vital tool for understanding and addressing community needs statewide, empowering agencies to implement impactful programs and services.



TOOLS & RESOURCES



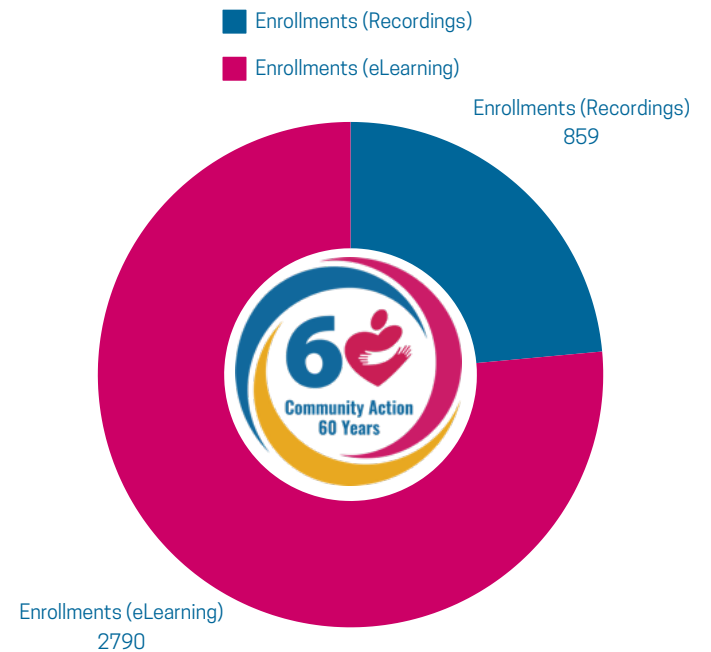
NYSCAA Learn is an innovative online learning hub designed to provide free courses and resources for Community Action professionals. With over 70 courses and 85 hours of training, it covers essential topics such as poverty, technology, and diversity. This platform empowers Community Action staff, board members, and volunteers across New York to enhance their skills and knowledge. Currently, **NYSCAA Learn has engaged 3,649 users**, reflecting its impact and commitment to professional development within the community action network.

New Courses in 2024

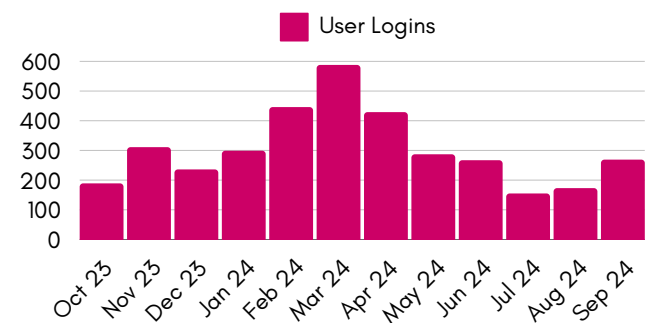
- Updated NYS Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (eCourse)**
 This updated course provides essential guidance on recognizing, preventing, and addressing workplace harassment, ensuring compliance with New York State regulations.
- The Art of Writing Good Case Notes (eCourse)**
 This course offers practical strategies for writing clear, accurate, and effective case notes, enhancing communication and service quality for case managers and social service professionals.
- Home Visit Safety: Strategies for Frontline Workers (recording)**
 A comprehensive guide to safety practices for frontline workers during home visits, covering risk assessment, personal safety strategies, and emergency protocols.
- Supporting Young Learners (recording)**
 This course focuses on techniques and resources for supporting young children's development, equipping educators and caregivers with tools to foster early learning and growth.

BY THE NUMBERS

3,649 Total Enrollments 10.1.23 - 9.30.24



User Access by Month 10.1.23 - 9.30.24



CONTINUED INITIATIVES

New York State Community Action Association

Diaper Distribution Demonstration and Research Pilot Program (DDRP)

In 2024, the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) completed the first year of the Diaper Distribution Demonstration and Research Pilot Program (DDRP), funded by a \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services.

Collaborating with regional partners—including the **Central New York Diaper Bank, Every Bottom Covered of Buffalo**, and four Community Action Agencies (Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Cortland County Community Action Program, Community Action for Wyoming County, and Community Action Programs Cayuga/Seneca)—NYSCAA facilitated monthly diaper distributions. These efforts were complemented by wrap-around services aimed at enhancing financial sustainability for families.

By September 2024, the program had **distributed 53,500 diapers** and **9,780 pull-ups to families in need**. These distributions not only addressed immediate needs but also connected families to essential support services, reinforcing NYSCAA's commitment to holistic community support.



Affordable Connectivity Program

In June 2023, NYSCAA received a \$500,000 grant from the FCC for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Partnering with CAPCO, Connecting Communities in Action, and Community Action Program for Madison County, we successfully educated families about the Affordable Connectivity Benefit, offering vital internet bill discounts.

While the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), funded through the Federal Communications Commission, played an important role in helping bridge the digital divide, it has unfortunately been suspended as of April 1, 2024, due to a lack of additional funding from Congress. This program provided significant discounts on broadband service for qualifying low-income households, and its impact was deeply felt by underserved communities throughout New York. We remain hopeful that funding for the ACP will be renewed to continue these critical efforts in the future.



ENGAGING THE NETWORK

Lights, Camera, Community Action Podcast



Lights, Camera, Community Action Podcast

The **Lights, Camera, Community Action** podcast provides in-depth conversations with Community Action professionals about transforming communities and alleviating poverty in New York State. Join us to hear about innovative programs and services, stories of success and challenges, and the Association's role in strengthening the New York Community Action Network.



nyscaa.podbean.com



COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH'S SHINE THE LIGHT CAMPAIGN

The New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) proudly launched the "Shine the Light" campaign as part of Community Action Month to recognize and celebrate the dedicated staff of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across New York State. This initiative shines a spotlight on the inspiring individuals who work tirelessly to uplift their communities, combat poverty, and create meaningful, lasting change.

Through powerful stories shared by CAA staff members, the campaign highlighted their unwavering commitment and the profound impact of their efforts. These narratives not only honored the invaluable contributions of these community heroes but also inspired others to engage in the mission of equity and opportunity. NYSCAA remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting and celebrating the individuals who drive positive change and form the heart of New York's Community Action Network.

Available Episodes:

- Creating a Trauma-Informed Organization (**season 2**)
- New York's Housing Challenges (**season 2**)
- Affirming Fatherhood (**season 1**)
- Addressing Food Insecurity (**season 1**)
- NYSCAA's Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI) (**season 1**)
- Housing Problems and Solutions (**season 1**)
- Getting to Know Community Action (**season 1**)

Shine the Light Campaign Winner!

Becky Bennett-Tears

Agency: Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

Shine the Light Campaign Winner!

Chari Jones

Agency: Schenectady Community Action Program

Shine the Light Campaign Winner!

Jane Folts

Agency: Connecting Communities in Action

Shine the Light Campaign Winner!

Timothy Birdsall

Agency: Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.

Shine the Light Campaign Winner!

Julie Hinkle

Agency: Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.



NYSCAA supports collective learning

Sharing best practices, and resource identification for New York's CAA staff through Communities of Practice (CoP), Affinity Groups, and the ROMA Alliance. Sharing promising practices and discussing current issues with colleagues strengthens the Community Action Network to change lives and transform communities.



01 2024 Regional Meetings

In 2024, NYSCAA hosted virtual Regional Meetings that brought together staff from **NYSCAA**, the New York State Department of State (**DOS**), and Community Action Agencies (**CAAs**) across the state. These gatherings provided a platform for meaningful networking, collaboration, and the exchange of innovative solutions to common challenges.

A highlight of the meetings was the participation of representatives from the **Court Modernization Action Committee** and the **Permanent Commission on Access to Justice**. Their insights into meeting the legal needs of low-income consumers enriched the dialogue and underscored the importance of cross-sector collaboration in addressing poverty.

These Regional Meetings exemplify **NYSCAA's** commitment to fostering a cohesive and responsive Community Action Network, dedicated to empowering individuals and families throughout New York State.

02 Affinity Groups

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- CAPTAIN & CAP60
- Executive Assistants
- Finance
- Human Resources (HR)
- Information Technology (IT)

03 Communities of Practice

- Data Management
- Trauma-Informed Care Agency



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS: NY'S CAAS WELCOME OCS LEADERSHIP

In March 2024, New York's Capital District Community Action Agencies (CAAs) proudly hosted Dr. Lanikque Howard, Director of the Office of Community Services (OCS) at the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and Debra Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of ACF. Their visit underscored the importance of strong partnerships between federal, state, and local organizations in addressing poverty and empowering families.

During their tour, Dr. Howard and DAS Johnson visited four CAAs—LifeWorks Community Action, Albany Community Action Partnership, CEO of Troy, and Schenectady Community Action Partnership. They witnessed the innovative programs and dedicated efforts that are driving change in the region, from groundbreaking food service initiatives that combat food insecurity to professional development classes designed to strengthen economic self-sufficiency. They also met with staff, board members, and community participants, gaining valuable insights into the unique challenges and successes of New York's CAAs.

This visit reaffirmed the critical role of Community Action Agencies in creating pathways out of poverty and highlighted the transformative impact of their work. Dr. Howard and DAS Johnson's engagement with New York's CAAs reinforced the shared commitment to advancing equity and opportunity across the state, inspiring continued collaboration and innovation in the fight against poverty.



PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

In Their Own Words



This training was very informative! I learned how important it is to be trauma informed with clients and coworkers.

-Trauma-Informed Care: Supporting People Affected by Substance Use



Beyond the keynote, the overall connection and energy, passion, and dedication felt throughout the event was amazing. The best NYSCAA conference I've ever attended.

-NYSCAA's 2024 Annual Conference: Purpose and Passion in Action



The most valuable part of the event was being together and sharing failures and successes as a network. Funders can make it seem like you're alone in missing certain targets, these events shake up that notion.

-NYSCAA's 2024 Annual Conference: Purpose and Passion in Action



Understanding how unconscious bias can have an effect on others was eye-opening. There was so much great information and examples to take back to share with our whole agency.

-Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace - Unconscious Bias Awareness on NYSCAA Learn



I will be more vocal in supervisory meetings when creating programs or applying for funding. I've encountered many instances of asking for money now and coming up with outcomes/services later, and I've always thought that this process doesn't help our teams truly learn or become passionate about the work. We should be doing the reverse, where we pilot programs or collect information from the community and then apply for grants that reflect the proven needs of the families we serve.

-Introduction to ROMA Training

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New York State Community Action Association

Trainings & Events

NYSCAA provided training to all New York State Community Action Agencies. We partnered with a number of resource providers, state and federal agencies, and private organizations to provide high-quality trainings on relevant topics for the network.

995 Individuals participated in NYSCAA Webinars & Trainings



Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI)

The Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI) is a year-long leadership development program designed to prepare the next generation of leaders within New York's Community Action Network. ELI participants engage in targeted training and mentorship, gaining skills in strategic planning, communication, and results-driven leadership.

Graduates of ELI 1.0, the program's foundational year, have the opportunity to continue their growth in ELI 2.0. This advanced program builds on the skills learned in the first year, offering deeper leadership training, collaborative learning, and project-based development to further enhance their ability to lead and innovate.

Through ELI, NYSCAA is equipping future leaders to drive meaningful change and strengthen the impact of Community Action across New York State.

44 New ELI Graduates in 2024
9 GRADUATES FROM THE 2.0 COHORT



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New York State Community Action Association

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE

Elevating Voices, Driving Innovation



Recognizing the vital role of young professionals in shaping the future of Community Action, NYSCAA launched the Young Professionals Committee (YPC) to ensure their perspectives and priorities are integrated into the association's mission.

The YPC is committed to advancing NYSCAA's efforts to strengthen, promote, and sustain Community Action while fostering a culture of innovation and excellence. By elevating the voices of emerging leaders, the committee helps NYSCAA become a more equitable, inclusive, and responsive organization.

The YPC focuses on addressing both current and emerging challenges and opportunities within the Community Action Network. The committee's goals include providing input on innovative programs, planning young professional training sessions, hosting networking events, and raising awareness of Community Action career pathways.

Through these efforts, the YPC is building a community of experts prepared to lead at all levels within the network. With 22 members representing 12 Community Action Agencies, the YPC is already making a meaningful impact, ensuring that young professionals are empowered to shape the future of Community Action.



CERTIFIED COMMUNITY ACTION PROFESSIONAL (CCAP):

Fostering Leadership and Collaboration

The Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) credential recognizes leadership excellence within the Community Action network, honoring individuals who demonstrate mastery of the movement's history, vision, and values. Earning a CCAP credential signifies a deep commitment to addressing poverty and empowering communities.

In 2024, NYSCAA staff, along with Renee Tuggle from Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA), facilitated a CCAP study group for New York candidates. Meeting monthly from November to May, the group provided structured support, with participants studying source materials, leading discussions, and holding each other accountable. This collaborative effort deepened understanding and fostered a sense of shared purpose among candidates.

Through initiatives like this study group, NYSCAA strengthens leadership within the Community Action network, empowering CCAP-certified professionals to drive innovation and create lasting change across New York State.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New York State Community Action Association

NYSCAA'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This year's Annual Conference in Lake Placid brought together representatives from Community Action and Weatherization agencies across New York for an inspiring and collaborative event. Set against the beautiful backdrop of the Adirondack Mountains, attendees participated in engaging workshops and heard from diverse speakers, gaining valuable insights on innovative strategies to address emerging challenges and strengthen community impact.

The conference also provided an opportunity for networking and idea-sharing, fostering connections among participants who exchanged best practices and success stories. From exploring workforce development initiatives to addressing poverty's root causes, attendees left energized and equipped with tools to create lasting change in their communities.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NYSCAA's Annual Conference



RECORD ATTENDANCE OF 340
COMMUNITY ACTION,
WEATHERIZATION, & NYS STAFF

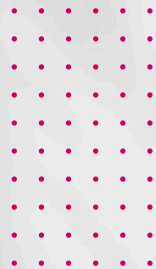
TELLING OUR STORIES

THE POWER OF NARRATIVE IN COMMUNITY ACTION

At NYSCAA, storytelling is more than a tool—it's a way to inspire change and connect with communities. This year along with the Community Action Associates & CAA's in New Jersey & Puerto Rico, we partnered with The Goodman Center to equip our network with storytelling skills through dynamic training sessions and workshops, empowering members to share their impact in meaningful ways.

Highlights included *Storytelling: Tapping the Power of Narrative*, a four-week online course where participants learned to craft compelling stories and apply them to their work. We also hosted *Change the Story, Change the World*, a workshop focused on creating memorable narratives that combine data with emotion.

With ongoing coaching and advanced training opportunities, participants refined their skills and created impactful stories that showcase the transformative power of Community Action. By investing in storytelling, we amplify the voices of those we serve and strengthen the reach and impact of our mission. Together, we're changing the story—and building a brighter future for all New Yorkers.



CAA SUCCESS STORIES: TRANSFORMING LIVES, BUILDING FUTURES

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across New York State are at the heart of transformative change, empowering individuals and families to overcome challenges and achieve stability. From providing critical resources during natural disasters to helping families access housing, job training, and educational opportunities, CAAs deliver innovative solutions tailored to the needs of their communities.

This year, CAA success stories showcased resilience and determination. Families found hope through emergency assistance programs, individuals achieved financial independence with workforce development support, and entire communities thrived thanks to collaborative efforts addressing housing and food insecurity. These stories exemplify the power of Community Action to create meaningful, lasting impact.

By sharing these success stories, we celebrate the dedication of CAA staff and the strength of the individuals and families they serve. Together, we're building stronger, more equitable communities across New York State.

STORYTELLING

The Power of Narrative in Community Action

RESPONDING TO CRISIS: MVCAA'S COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY AFTER THE ROME TORNAO

On July 16, 2024, a category E-2 tornado devastated the City of Rome, NY, destroying numerous buildings in the downtown area, leaving thousands without power for days, and displacing residents due to hazardous conditions. Amid the chaos, Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA) immediately mobilized to support their community. By the next morning, staff from across the Agency sprang into action, purchasing and distributing essential supplies such as tarps, flashlights, bottled water, hygiene products, and clothing. With their Rome office rendered unusable and without power, MVCAA staff set up a table on the sidewalk to provide critical items to those in need. Additionally, one of the Agency's nearby Head Start sites was opened over the weekend as a cooling shelter to support those affected.

In the days following the disaster, MVCAA staff remained in constant communication with city leadership, partner organizations, and community members to assess rapidly changing needs and coordinate their response. Staff worked tirelessly to replenish supplies, deliver them directly to residents, and establish a temporary downtown "home base" after their Community Action Access Point was deemed unsafe. Many of the staff assisting in the recovery were Rome residents themselves, balancing their professional responsibilities with addressing damage and cleanup efforts in their own homes and neighborhoods.

In the weeks and months that followed, MVCAA's support improved the living conditions of over 50 community members through services that included assistance with rent arrears, moving and storage needs, car and appliance repairs, hygiene and household supplies, clothing, laundry support, and gift cards for immediate expenses. The Agency also provided long-term case management to help displaced residents secure housing or arrange for home repairs. MVCAA remains a trusted and reliable resource as the community continues to recover, demonstrating the resilience and strength of Community Action in times of crisis.



SUCCESS STORIES

Community Action Works!

SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN CRISIS: JOHN'S JOURNEY

When John reached out to the Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO), he and his family were navigating one of the most difficult times of their lives. A medical condition had kept John out of work for several weeks, leaving him and his wife struggling to provide for their family of four. Although John had recently returned to work, the financial strain from weeks without income had left them overwhelmed with overdue bills and unmet essential needs.

CAPCO's Emergency Assistance Program stepped in immediately, providing the lifeline John's family needed to regain stability. The program covered the cost of John's prescription medication, ensuring he could continue his recovery and maintain his health. CAPCO also provided critical assistance with overdue heating and electric bills, relieving some of the financial pressure and offering peace of mind during a stressful time.

Beyond addressing the family's immediate needs, CAPCO connected John to additional resources that would ease their financial burden moving forward. Through the Family Essentials program, John was able to access free clothing and household items for his family, meeting critical day-to-day needs. The family also enrolled in CAPCO's Diaper Distribution Program, which now supplies them with free diapers on a monthly basis, ensuring their youngest child has this essential necessity without further straining the household budget.

John's journey is a testament to CAPCO's holistic and compassionate approach to supporting families in crisis. By addressing urgent challenges while connecting families to sustainable resources, CAPCO helps build resilience and restore hope. For John and his family, CAPCO's support provided not just relief but the foundation for a more stable and secure future.



Photo does not depict actual individuals mentioned.



SERVING THE CORTLAND NEW YORK
COMMUNITY SINCE 1974

SUCCESS STORIES

Community Action Works!

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND INSPIRING GROWTH: **NATALIE'S SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE**



This year, Tioga Opportunities, Inc. (TOI) brought the magic of summer camp within reach for local youth through its “camperships” program, providing more than just a week of fun. For many children, it was a gateway to self-discovery, confidence-building, and memories that will last a lifetime. Natalie’s story beautifully captures the impact of TOI’s commitment to empowering young people.

Before this summer, Natalie had never been to camp. Thanks to the financial support from TOI’s camperships, she was able to experience her first-ever week away from home—an experience that quickly became a milestone of personal growth and unforgettable adventure.

“Natalie had a great time at camp!” shared her mother, Katie. “Her favorite part was participating in activities she’d never tried before. She chose arts and crafts, tower climbing, and swimming. She learned to make new kinds of crafts, and each day she pushed herself to climb higher on the tower, facing her fears and surprising herself with her own courage. This experience helped her build confidence, and she’s already hoping to return next year!”

For Natalie, camp was also her first time spending nights away from home, apart from family. In just one week, she experienced a world of growth, embracing independence and tackling challenges with resilience.

Katie expressed her gratitude, saying, “Without the funds provided, Natalie would never have been able to enjoy such an amazing experience. This opportunity truly made a difference in her life.”

Natalie’s camp adventure is a testament to the transformative power of TOI’s camperships program. Beyond giving children access to fun activities, the program opens doors to self-discovery, resilience, and empowerment. TOI is investing in the potential of youth, ensuring they have opportunities to explore, face challenges, and grow in ways that will shape their futures for years to come.



Tioga Opportunities, Inc.

SUCCESS STORIES

Community Action Works!

HOME-BASED SERVICES + FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER = A PATH TO SUCCESS: SAVENNA'S JOURNEY

In 2023, Savenna Carey began bringing her 16-month-old daughter, Naveah, to the Jennie Mose Family Resource Center (FRC) in Addison, seeking opportunities for her child to play, learn, and grow. What Savenna didn't anticipate was how this connection would spark profound changes for her family's future.

Heather, the FRC Coordinator, quickly formed a trusting relationship with Savenna, uncovering the challenges she faced: limited resources, no internet access, few community connections, and the fact that Naveah had not received the vaccinations required for school enrollment. Savenna also confided a personal dream—to earn her GED—but felt unsure of where to begin. Seeing her potential and determination, Heather encouraged Savenna to explore Pro Action's Home Visiting program. Though initially hesitant, Savenna found herself welcomed with open arms by Deanna, a dedicated Home Visiting Program staff member. Together, Heather and Deanna built a network of support around Savenna and her daughter, providing personalized guidance every step of the way.

With their help, Savenna secured internet access through the Affordable Connectivity Program, caught up on Naveah's overdue medical appointments and vaccinations, and got her daughter on track to enroll in Pre-K. With newfound confidence, Savenna began working with a supported education specialist at the Family Resource Center to prepare for GED classes, building the skills she'll need to succeed in a classroom setting. Now expecting her second child, Savenna is enrolled in Pro Action's Prenatal Early Head Start and Early Head Start Home-Based services, participating in weekly visits to strengthen her parenting skills, boost her self-esteem, and ensure a bright future for her growing family.

Savenna's journey is a testament to the life-changing power of compassion and connection. At Pro Action, we know that it takes just one caring individual to change a life—and in this case, Savenna was fortunate to have two: Heather and Deanna. Their unwavering support helped her overcome obstacles, achieve milestones, and find hope for the future. Stories like Savenna's are why hope and resilience remain at the heart of Pro Action's mission. Together, we're empowering families, building brighter futures, and proving that with the right support, anything is possible.





EMPOWERING VETERANS TO OVERCOME HARDSHIP: MARTIN'S STORY

Martin Wirth, a proud U.S. Air Force veteran, faced profound loss and hardship when his wife tragically passed away due to COVID-19. Overwhelmed with grief, Martin also found himself struggling financially, with mounting rent arrears that threatened to strip away the one place he could still call home—his apartment in West Sayville. Despite his efforts to make partial payments, his situation grew increasingly precarious, leaving him at serious risk of homelessness.

Determined to find stability, Martin turned to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, hoping for a lifeline. Through this connection, he was introduced to the Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) of Suffolk's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, which provides targeted assistance to veterans facing housing insecurity.

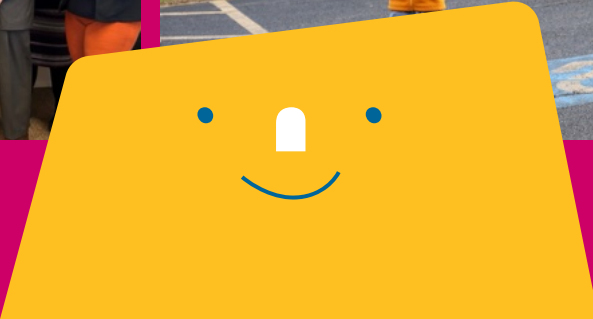
The dedicated SSVF team at EOC of Suffolk immediately stepped in to assess Martin's needs, offering compassionate and comprehensive support. With their help, Martin was able to clear his rental arrears, secure a HUD-VASH voucher, and start anew. Within just one month, he successfully transitioned into permanent, stable housing, restoring not only his sense of security but also his hope for the future.

Martin's story is a powerful example of the life-changing impact that Community Action Agencies like EOC of Suffolk provide for those who have served our country. Through tailored support and unwavering commitment, they help veterans like Martin not only survive times of crisis but rebuild their lives with dignity and resilience.



COMMUNITY ACTION WORKS!

New York State Community Action Association



COMMUNITY ACTION WORKS!

New York State Community Action Association



2024 COMMUNITY ACTION AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence



SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

2024 Recipient: Wendy Robords, Director of Culture & Workforce Development, Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

The Social Justice Award recognizes the exceptional and innovative contributions of Community Action Agencies, their staff, and programs in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) throughout New York's Community Action Network. The award is presented to the individual, agency, or department that has advanced knowledge and scholarly engagement, fostered collaborations and partnerships, advocated for justice and equity, promoted learning and education for inclusivity, and created transformative organizational change.



PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

2024 Recipient: Cody Abbatoy, Program Participant & Volunteer, Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO)

This award recognizes a current or former Community Action participant or customer who has achieved significant personal accomplishments. The individual demonstrates a genuine commitment to persevere despite obstacles or disability. They work hard, are a positive influence, show appreciation, and are dedicated to helping themselves and others. This award is not intended for staff persons. The winner of the Personal Achievement award will be reimbursed up to \$300.00 for expenses related to attending the conference to accept his/her award compliments of NYSCAA.



RISING STAR AWARD

2024 Recipient: Ellie Jent, Director of Development, JCEO of Clinton & Franklin Counties, Inc.

The Rising Star Award is presented to an up-and-coming Community Action employee who has shown exceptional promise and made a significant impact. This individual exhibits excellent potential and has demonstrated remarkable talent and accomplishments early in their career. The recipient will have spent less than five years in the Community Action Network.



IMPACT AWARD

2024 Recipients: Alan Jones, Executive Director, Adirondack (ACAP)

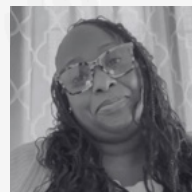
This award recognizes an existing employee of the Community Action Network who, through excellent leadership, has positively and significantly impacted a specific community or the Network at large and works to promote greater economic opportunity for children and families. The individual's leadership had transformed their CAA, department, or program and contributed to their community becoming a better place to live. Nominees for this award must be employed for at least three years by a Community Action Agency in a leadership role.



PROMISE AWARD

2024 Recipient: Penny Covey, Home-Based Visitor, Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc.

This award recognizes an individual who has contributed significantly to the Community Action Network, its programs, and activities and exemplifies the true meaning of Community Action. The recipient demonstrates the willingness to go the extra mile to help people in need, respects all people, and is dedicated to the mission and values of Community Action. This award will be given to a current Community Action Agency employee and/or a non-employee who has made significant contributions to the Community Action Network. Non-employees may include CAA board members, volunteers, CSBG State Agency staff, public officials, representatives of a corporation, or community members.



IMPACT AWARD

2024 Recipient: Ebony Jordan-Wilson, Assistant Commissioner for Community Development, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development

This award recognizes an existing employee of the Community Action Network who, through excellent leadership, has positively and significantly impacted a specific community or the Network at large and works to promote greater economic opportunity for children and families. The individual's leadership had transformed their CAA, department, or program and contributed to their community becoming a better place to live. Nominees for this award must be employed for at least three years by a Community Action Agency in a leadership role.

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

OUR VALUED PARTNERS & SPONSORS



Dear Partners and Sponsors,

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, we are deeply grateful for your invaluable support and commitment to our mission. Your partnership empowers NYSCAA to address the causes and conditions of poverty across New York, creating meaningful change for families and communities in need.

Your contributions have not only made our programs possible but have also helped us expand our reach and impact. Together, we are fostering resilience, hope, and opportunity throughout New York State.

Thank you for standing with us. We look forward to continuing our work together to build a brighter, more equitable future for all New Yorkers.

With sincere appreciation,

New York State Community Action Association
(NYSCAA)



MORE INFORMATION ABOUT US



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO DO MORE —

NYSCAA's activities in 2023-2024 were partially funded by the NYS Department of State/Division of Community Service and the Administration for Children & Families/Office of Community Services.

As we conclude this year's report, we reflect on the remarkable progress made by the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) in our mission to empower communities across New York. Throughout the year, we have strengthened our partnerships, expanded our services, and enhanced our advocacy efforts to address the evolving needs of low-income individuals and families.

Our commitment to fostering sustainable solutions has resulted in innovative programs that tackle issues such as housing insecurity, food access, and workforce development. The resilience demonstrated by our member agencies and the communities we serve inspires us to continue our work with renewed energy and purpose.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to amplifying the voices of those we serve and driving systemic change. By investing in collaboration and community engagement, we aim to create lasting impact and ensure that every New Yorker has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared vision. Together, we can build a brighter future for all New Yorkers.

With gratitude,

The NYSCAA Team

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*NYSCAA is a proud member of the
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Partnership (NCAP)*







NYSCAA

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PREPARED BY: **NYSCAA**