



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

**December 2020**

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### **CEO's Letter**

Dear Friend,

I will be happy to see the end of 2020, a year that will long be remembered by a pandemic that ravaged the nation and a year marked and defined by so many losses: the loss of a job, the loss of academic achievement, the loss of being able to hug a friend, and the loss of seeing family members in-person. Some in our network have also lost family members and friends to the pandemic and we grieve for them. These losses have been acutely experienced by the vulnerable families with whom Community Action Agencies help and support every day. CAA staff have been on the front-lines of this pandemic, providing vital services and assistance while supporting and helping families through the trauma resulting from the pandemic. Whether it's providing food, utility assistance, engaging in activities with caregivers and children, or being there to listen, Community Action is the anchor in communities across the state.

For NYSCAA, we have experienced the loss of not being able to connect in-person with the Community Action network. Since March, we have canceled multiple in-person meetings/events. Like other associations, we have learned to do even more virtually and have

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found that we have been able to engage folks who perhaps would not be able to attend in-person events, extending our reach which has had a positive impact on the network.

Earlier this month we held our first virtual state-wide event with the New York State Weatherization Directors Association. We were pleased so many CAA staff were able to attend the event. Conference participants were able to connect with each other through discussion boards and “chatting” during sessions. It was heartening to see attendees supporting each other through what has been a difficult, stressful and demanding time for those working in human services. Thanks to all of our distinguished speakers and valued sponsors and exhibitors for sharing your knowledge and expertise.

On another note, I am happy to welcome Laura DiMarco to the NYSCAA team. Laura will serve as our Finance and HR Director. We are pleased to have Laura join NYSCAA.

I want to take this opportunity to wish all of our friends, colleagues, and supporters relaxing and joyful holidays and I look forward to working with all of you in 2021.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jackie Orr".

[Jackie Orr](#), NCRMT



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## Monthly Poverty Myth

**MYTH: Everyone looks forward to the holiday season.**

**FACT: For families living in poverty, coping during the holiday season can be the most difficult time of the year.**

Jasmine, 32, is looking forward to Christmas, a rare opportunity to spend an entire day with her twin 8-year-old boys. But she's also anxious — anxious that she'll disappoint them because she can't afford to buy them the few gifts they asked for this holiday season.

"Some days I feel like I'm failing them," Jasmine, a single mom who works two jobs, told HuffPost. "It almost makes me feel like I'm not trying as hard as I think I am."



The holiday season is in full swing. According to seasonal ads and movie classics, this should be the most joyous, magical time of year, when families exchange nice gifts and enjoy festive meals. But for low-income families and those living paycheck to paycheck, it can be the most

stressful time. There are concerns about how to scrape money together to buy gifts and pay for holiday meals. Then there are worries about lost wages for taking time off or child care costs if parents work while the kids are at home. There's anxiety about the basic expenses, too. When school or daycare is closed, that also means children don't have access to meals they typically get during the day.

[Click here](#) to read more about the struggles people may have during the holidays. Do what you can and help make this holiday season a little brighter for those who need it most in your communities.

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## **NYSCAA News**

### ***Reconnect and Recharge: NYSCAA & NYSWDA's Annual Conference - Resources Available on the Conference Website***

Thank you to all who attended, supported, tweeted about, and assisted with NYSCAA and NYSWDA's first virtual state-wide conference! We especially want to thank all of our distinguished speakers and valued sponsors and exhibitors. Your contribution helps to expand the knowledge and resources for the entire Community Action Network in New York. We hope to meet in-person in 2021!

To access recordings and presentations from the conference, [click here](#).



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### ***NYSCAA Resources on COVID-19***

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have developed an online listing of resources to support you and your agency's important work. NYSCAA has compiled a number of [state and federal resources](#), as well as [tech resources](#) to help you during this challenging time.

Please visit the [NYSCAA website](#) as we continue to update and add to the resources listings.

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## **Highlights from our Agencies**

### ***Action for a Better Community, Inc.***

## **Racism is a Public Health Crisis - Attacking the 2 Pandemics**

Virtual Signature Conference Series - January 14, 21, & 28, 2020



How do we heal our communities, boost our hurting economies and help our families thrive during a time when so much uncertainty has heightened issues related to poverty, social or racial injustice, education, and health disparities? These issues have become persistent and pervasive and remain top priorities for communities of color. Now is the time to act and demand change in attitudes, power structures and systems, policies and practices. Collectively we must be intentional about lifting every voice to “Promote Equity and Justice for All.”

This regional conference series will feature keynotes and high-quality workshops that showcase speakers with expertise in the areas of service delivery, public policy, racial equity, economic development, evidence-based research, community organizing, social determinants of health, philanthropy, corporate responsibility, healthcare, trauma, lived experience, human-centered design, education and more. ABC’s Signature Event will convene business and community leaders, providers, consumers, and stakeholders to offer strategies to counteract the disparate impact of these two pandemics.

[Click here](#) for more information and to register for ABC’s Signature Conference Series.

## ***Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County***

[Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County](#) had the pleasure of recognizing and celebrating Marie Ambrose and Penny Covey for their 35+ years of dedication and service to Community Action. Collectively, these two women have worked with CAPC of Jefferson County for 71 years! Marie Ambrose is the Head Start/PreK Director and has worked for Community Action for 35 years. Penny Covey is a Head Start Home-Based Visitor with 36 years in Community Action. Imagine the stories children and families could tell of how these two ladies have impacted their lives!



Thank you for your passion, your love of children, and your dedication to the families in your community.

[Click here](#) to read more about the amazing careers both women have had in Community Action.

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## CSBG National Partner Information

### ***Community Action Partnership - Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) Program***

As you may already know, the CCAP Program is a valuable resource that enriches Community Action by enabling top staff the ability to achieve a valuable Community Action Credential. To learn more, please refer to the [CCAP Program Brochure](#). Please take time to review the information, and if you feel the time may be right for you or other community action colleagues in your state to enroll, please use the [CCAP Enrollment Form](#) to start the journey now.



A CCAP certification benefits both you and your agency. It tells others you have achieved a nationally recognized standard, improves your professional marketability, enhances Community Action staff's credentials, and provides an edge in competing for public and private grant funds. Enrollment is open now but act soon because the deadline for submitting your Candidate Data Form (CDF) is **Friday, January 15**.

To learn more about CCAP and what it takes to become certified, [click here](#).

### ***CAPLAW - Families First Paid Leave FAQ + Refresher***

As the coronavirus spreads and intensifies, the paid leave made available by the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) continues to play a major role in the way the Community Action network is operating and responding to the pandemic. While the leave expires on December 31, 2020, CAPLAW continues to be contacted with questions about its availability and use. They have compiled [a list of commonly asked questions](#) based on the consultations they've received in an effort to help the Network more efficiently and effectively address outstanding issues relating to the leave during its final days of availability. If you have any additional questions, please refer to guidance issued by [the DOL](#) and [IRS](#), as well as the [March 2020 News Flash regarding Paid Leave under the Covid-19 Response Act](#), and feel free to [contact CAPLAW](#) for assistance.



### ***New COVID-19 Web Resources from CAPLAW***



As winter approaches and we face new and increased COVID-19 challenges across the country, CAPLAW would like to remind the Community Action Network about two online resources that we are continually updating to



assist the Network with its operations during this difficult time. These resources, initially released in spring 2020, contain in-depth information and analysis, and updates to them reflect evolving laws, regulations, guidance, and events related to the pandemic. They include:

- [Building Readiness: Planning, Prevention, Response, and Liability](#) - Guidance presented as a series of FAQs to anticipate and address many of the questions on CAAs' minds related to operating during the pandemic. The five sections addressed are Planning for onsite services, Prevention and workplace safety protocols to minimize the spread of COVID-19, Response to known or suspected cases of COVID-19 in the workplace, Liability issues, actual or potential, with respect to COVID-19 related claims, and Resources for additional guidance.
- [CARES Act Benefits for Nonprofit CAAs](#) - Provides details on certain benefits made available to nonprofit CAAs through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP loans), Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), Main Street Lending Program, Employee Retention Credit, and payroll tax deferrals.

## ***OCS Releases Dear Colleague Letter Announcing Public Comment Period on CARES and Disaster Reporting***

On December 8th, the [Office of Community Services](#) released a Dear Colleague Letter announcing that CARES and Disaster Supplemental Annual Reports have been posted for public comment in the Federal Register. The comment period is open from November 19, 2020 - January 19, 2021. The OMB Clearance is to collect CSBG CARES Supplemental Annual Report and CSBG Disaster Supplemental Annual Report from states and eligible entities for fiscal year (FY) 2020 – FY 2022.



See the [Federal Register Notice](#) and [Dear Colleague Letter](#) for more information.

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## **Additional Resources**

### ***New York State and Coursera to Provide Free Online Certificate Courses for NY Residents***

Governor Cuomo partnered with [Coursera](#) to provide online certificate classes free for NY residents.

The courses are by major US universities (SUNY, Duke, Rice, etc) and corporations (IB,M, Google), and are short classes on a myriad of topics. The courses are available for CAA clients and also for CAA staff members.

For the full press release, [click here](#). To browse and sign up for courses today, [click here](#).

## ***Community Commons - Humane Housing and COVID-19***

Safe, stable housing has long been a pressing concern among those who steward health and well-being. Humane housing is a central tenet of how much a family is able to thrive and support multi-generational health. It comes as no surprise that housing has become a central theme during the COVID-19 crisis. With so many people living paycheck to paycheck, the ability to pay rent or a mortgage has been severely hindered by the number of job losses the United States has seen.



From the onset of the pandemic, many cities and states recognized the crisis and placed a moratorium on evictions, which was then extended at the national level. The CARES Act also stepped in to give families short-term direct funds towards housing payments. However, the lack of economic rebound and no renewal of the stimulus program has led to rising rental debt, and an uncertain future for many.

[Click here](#) to see the list of resources Community Commons has compiled to assist families and individuals struggling to secure and maintain adequate housing.

## ***Urban Institute - 42 Million Parents Whose Households Didn't Move to Teleworking May Face Difficult Trade-Offs***

Despite the media focus on the challenges of telecommuting parents, 42 million American parents—including the vast majority of those with low incomes—have not had an adult in their household move to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic. These parents can face challenging trade-offs between earning a living to support their family, protecting their family from COVID-19, and ensuring their children have the care and education they need to thrive. Such trade-offs can have serious consequences for their family's health and well-being and can be even harder given many child care programs, and schools are closed or partially open.



Urban Institute produced a fact sheet that addresses challenges in finding safe, affordable child care amongst households who have not moved to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Click here](#) to access the fact sheet.



## ***Child Trends - Updated State-Level Data for Understanding Child Welfare in the United States***

Each year, hundreds of thousands of children are removed from their families and subsequently enter foster care. The newly updated data resource provides the most recent state and national data on child maltreatment, foster care, kinship caregiving, and adoption from foster care. The [resource](#) also recommends that states consider certain contextual information when interpreting and responding to data, including systemic racism and bias, economic stressors, neighborhood characteristics, and more. State leaders can use this information to ensure that their child welfare systems support the safety, stability, and well-being of all families in their states.



## ***Covid ActNow - America's COVID Warning System***

Covid ActNow is a tiny nonprofit that has been working since March to provide trustworthy COVID information. They use 5 key indicators, Daily News Cases, Infection Rates, Positive Test Rate, ICU Headroom Used, and Tracers Hired, to determine risk levels for all 50 states and over 3,000 counties. You can share real-time, local COVID data with your neighbors, friends, and family.



[Click here](#) to learn more.

## ***NY State of Health - Special Enrollment Period Extended through 12/31***

During these challenging times, NY State of Health, New York's official health plan Marketplace, remains committed to ensuring access to affordable, quality health insurance for all New Yorkers, so they can get the care they need.



NY State of Health is here to help New Yorkers who may have lost their health insurance coverage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to find and enroll in affordable, comprehensive coverage. Many New Yorkers will qualify for Medicaid, Child Health Plus, or the Essential Plan due to loss of income/employment or reduced wages. Those qualifying for these programs can enroll year-round. Individuals who lose job-based health insurance should apply within 60 days of losing that coverage.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced that the Special Enrollment Period for uninsured New Yorkers will be extended through December 31, 2020. Find out more about this Special Enrollment Period for Qualified Health Plans and updates on insurance options during the Coronavirus pandemic [here](#).

Thousands of assistors throughout the state are available to help consumers enroll by phone. Find a free enrollment assistor [here](#).

For more information, visit us at [www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov), or call the NY State of Health customer service center at 1-855-355-5777. Let us help you find a health care plan that works for you.

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## National Professional Development Opportunities

### **National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)**

2021 Management & Leadership Training Conference

February 3-5, 2021

[Registration](#) is now available!

### **National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)**

2021 Annual Convention

Pre-Convention Training: August 30-31, 2021

Core Convention: September 1-3, 2021

Boston Marriott, Copley Place

110 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02116

### **National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)**

Save the Date: [2021 Winter Training Conference](#)

Held Virtually from March 8-12, 2020

### **CAPLAW**

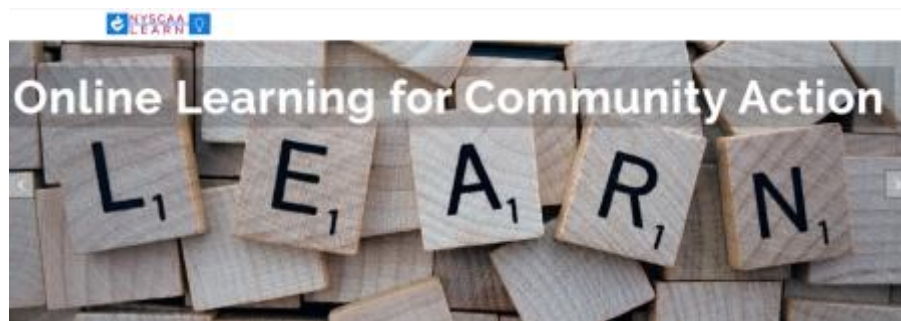
2021 Virtual Training Conference

June 29 through July 1, 2021

Registration will be available in April!

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**Are you a staff or board member of a NY Community Action Agency? Check out [NYSCAA Learn](#) – free online learning for New York’s Community Action Agencies!**



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## 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 Agencies:

Click on Name of Agency to Visit Website: [Action for a Better Community, Inc.](#) \* [Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.](#) \* [Albany Community Action Partnership](#) \* [ACCORD Corporation](#) \* [CAPC of Jefferson County](#) \* [Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Inc.](#) \* [Chautauqua Opportunities Inc.](#) \* [Columbia Opportunities, Inc.](#) \* [Commission on Economic Opportunity for the Capital District Region, Inc.](#) \* [Community Action Organization of Erie County, Inc.](#) \* [Community Action of Greene County, Inc.](#) \* [Community Action of Orleans & Genesee](#) \* [Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.](#) \* [Connecting Communities in Action](#) \* [Cortland Community Action Program, Inc. \(CAPCO\)](#) \* [Delaware Opportunities](#) \* [Dutchess County Community Action Agency, Inc.](#) \* [Economic Opportunity Program Inc. of Chemung County](#) \* [EOC of Nassau County - Hempstead](#) \* [EOC of Suffolk - Patchogue](#) \* [Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.](#) \* [JCEO of Clinton & Franklin Counties](#) \* [Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.](#) \* [Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.](#) \* [NYC Department of Youth and Community Development](#) \* [Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.](#) \* [Opportunities for Broome, Inc.](#) \* [Opportunities for Chenango, Inc.](#) \* [Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.](#) \* [Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.](#) \* [Path Stone](#) \* [PEACE, Inc.](#) \* [Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.](#) \* [RECAP](#) \* [Saratoga County EOC, Inc.](#) \* [Schenectady Community Action, Inc.](#) \* [Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.](#) \* [St. Lawrence County Community Development Program, Inc.](#) \* [Tioga Opportunities, Inc.](#) \* [Tompkins Community Action, Inc.](#) \* [Ulster County Community Action Committee, Inc.](#) \* [Warren/Hamilton Counties ACEO, Inc.](#) \* [L.E.A.P.](#) \* [WestCOP](#) \* [Wayne County Community Action Program, Inc.](#) \* [Wyoming County Community Action, Inc.](#) \* [Yonkers Community Action Program, Inc.](#)

[New York State Community Action Association, Inc.](#)

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