



Empowering people,
improving communities

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Connecticut Association for Community Action 2017 Policy Agenda

Connecticut's Community Action Agency (CAA) network provides basic human needs services like food, shelter, heating assistance, housing, and child care to the state's limited income individuals, families, and communities in all 169 cities and towns. Through an integrated, multigenerational, customer-focused, human service delivery system called the **Human Services Infrastructure (HSI)-Community Action Program (CAP)**, CAAs efficiently and effectively provide those they serve with the tools and skills they need to achieve short and long-term fiscal stability.

The Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) will pursue the following priorities in the 2017 legislative session to strengthen our commitment to address and reduce the conditions of poverty for Connecticut's limited income individuals, families, and communities:

- ✓ **Protect and preserve the Human Services Infrastructure (HSI)-Community Action Program (CAP).** Connecticut's statewide CAA network is Connecticut's safety net. When people in crisis have nowhere to go, they turn to their local CAA for help. Agencies rely on HSI-CAP—the proven, multigenerational, customer-focused, integrated service delivery system—to connect those they serve to vital programs, services, tools, and resources. *HSI-CAP solves problems, avoids crises and saves money. This funding is critical to the CAA network, and is an effective, proven, smart investment in Connecticut's future. By connecting customers to resources that enable them to work their way toward short and long-term financial stability through HSI-CAP, we can continue to achieve positive results and grow our economy. Additionally, these funds are used as state match funds for federally funded programs.*
- ✓ **Support Community Action's role in early childhood education programs.** Investing in early care and learning that utilizes a multigenerational, holistic approach which is the hallmark of Community Action Agency child care and education is critical in addressing the mental, social, emotional, educational, and developmental needs of Connecticut's limited income children and their families, and in reducing the achievement gap. *Our child poverty rate—14.5%—remains more than three percentage points above pre-recession levels. Access to high-quality, early childhood education programs is essential in helping to break the cycle of poverty. Adults who participate in early childhood education programs are more likely to enjoy higher median incomes, graduate high school, and continue on to higher education.*
- ✓ **Invest in weatherization energy conservation and healthy homes measures and inform and protect Connecticut Energy Assistance Program clients around utility collection practices and shutoffs.** The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is Connecticut's most important resource to assist limited income families with improving the energy efficiency of their home. WAP helps them cut down energy-related costs and fuel usage through retrofits and home improvement measures, and addresses health and safety issues. *WAP creates jobs, reduces energy, saves money, and helps families afford other basic necessities—helping them and our state's economy thrive.* The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) provides heating assistance to over 100,000 low-income customers. Connecticut has one of the highest energy costs in the country and we are committed to helping our customers avoid energy crisis including utility shutoffs and bad credit due to utility debt collection and credit reporting practices.