**Connecticut Association for Community Action**
**FY 2017 Federal Policy Agenda**

Connecticut's Community Action Network provides services such as food, shelter, heating assistance, and child care to help meet the basic human needs of our disadvantaged communities. We provide these services by utilizing and leveraging **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** funding, which allows the state's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to help struggling individuals and families tackle the challenges they face and get on a path to economic stability. With CSBG support and through a variety of partnerships, our agencies effectively equip our state's most vulnerable residents with the tools, skills, and resources they need to achieve short and long-term positive outcomes toward financial sustainability.

The Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) will pursue the following federal legislative priorities in FY 2017 to continue our efforts to reduce the conditions of poverty for Connecticut's limited income families.

- ✓ **Preserve Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding at $715M.** Connecticut's CAAs serve all 169 cities and towns across the state, and know what works for their communities. People experience difficult economic situations for many reasons and, when they do, CSBG programs are there to help families keep their homes, care for their children, and prepare for and find employment. *CSBG is an investment in our future. By supporting effective, proven funding sources like CSBG that combat the complex causes of poverty through a multigenerational, holistic approach, we can continue to achieve positive results for Connecticut's limited income individuals and families—maximizing taxpayer dollars in the process.*

- ✓ **Support the Head Start model of early childhood education.** This two-generational, comprehensive, proven approach addresses the educational, social, health, and nutritional needs of our state's limited income children and families. *In 2014, 1 in 7 children lived in poverty in Connecticut, unchanged from 2013. We consistently rank as the state with one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation. Head Start gives <u>every</u> child—and their family—the support and resources they need to help them reach their full potential.*

- ✓ **Protect LIHEAP (energy assistance) appropriations at $3.39B**. Ensure that home heating fuel is affordable by strengthening and supporting the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). *On average, Connecticut's poorest families owe approximately $1,506 <u>more</u> in energy bills than they can afford to pay. With support from LIHEAP, families are better able to cover costly home energy bills. This gives them the opportunity to address other critical, basic needs, rather than having to choose between them.*

- ✓ **Invest in weatherization energy conservation and healthy homes measures at $230M.** The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is Connecticut's key resource in assisting those with limited incomes to minimize energy-related costs and fuel usage in their homes through retrofits and home improvement measures. *WAP is cost-effective, creates jobs, saves energy, and gives our state's families the ability to spend money on other things like groceries, education, or healthcare costs—helping our economy thrive in the process.*