



Connecticut Association for Community Action *FY 2020 Federal Policy Agenda*

Who we are

The Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) is the state association for Connecticut's 9 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal designated antipoverty agencies.

What we do

The Community Action Agency Network provides limited income people in all 169 cities and towns with essential health and human services like food, heating assistance, employment and training, housing, and child care. They also administer Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Case Management and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach services. Well-known and trusted in their communities, CAAs served 293,840 people last year. By leveraging **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** funding, Connecticut's CAAs effectively equip our state's most vulnerable residents with the tools, skills, and resources they need to reach short and long term economic stability.

CT's Community Action Agency Network will pursue the following federal legislative priorities in FY 2020 to continue our efforts to address and reduce the causes and conditions of poverty for Connecticut's limited income communities:

- ✓ **Increase the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to \$775.** Connecticut's CAAs are the state's safety net. Whether someone needs child care, help finding a job, or can't afford to eat, CSBG funds are crucial in leveraging support for programs that can help. *By investing CSBG into the specific, local needs of their communities, CAAs maximize taxpayer dollars and create opportunities for those they serve in the process. Effective, efficient funding sources like CSBG to address poverty is a smart investment in continuing to achieve positive health and economic outcomes for Connecticut's most disadvantaged individuals, children, and families.*
- ✓ **Support and Promote the Head Start Model of early childhood education.** Head Start takes a two-generational, comprehensive, proven approach to school readiness that focuses on working with the whole family. By effectively addressing children's educational, social, health, and nutritional needs while helping their family achieve goals for education, employment, and stability, Head Start encourages a learning environment and sets families up for success. *Breaking the cycle of poverty depends on things like access to high-quality, early childhood education programs. With nearly 14% of Connecticut's children in poverty, programs like Head Start are critical to providing every child with the support and resources they need to help them reach their full potential and improve educational outcomes.*
- ✓ **Protect LIHEAP (energy assistance) appropriations at \$3.8B.** The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is essential in helping to ensure home heating fuel is affordable, and in reducing overall energy insecurity for limited income households. *On average, Connecticut's poorest families—many with children or elderly adults on a fixed income—owe approximately \$1,404 more in energy bills than they can afford to pay. These high costs threaten a family's ability to pay for other critical basic needs, forcing them to choose between paying their energy bill and paying for food, child care, health care, or housing. LIHEAP helps them cover high home energy bills and stay healthy and safe.*
- ✓ **Invest in weatherization energy conservation and healthy homes measures at**

~~Annual Weatherization Energy Conservation and Healthy Homes Program~~

\$270M. The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is Connecticut's most important resource in helping limited income families reduce energy costs through improved energy efficiency, and ensuring their health and safety. *WAP is cost-effective, creates and supports jobs, saves energy, and enables families to afford other necessary household costs like child care, food, health care, and housing.*