

Board of Directors

Peter DeBiasi Access Community Action Agency, Inc.

Dr. Monette FergusonAlliance for Community
Empowerment, Inc.
(formerly ABCD)

Amos Smith Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)

Michelle James Community Action Agency of Western CT, Inc. (CAAWC)

Lena Rodriguez Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT)

Dr. Marlo Greponne Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA)

William Rybczyk New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)

David Morgan TEAM, Inc.

Joshua Steele Kelly Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA) Public Hearing Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly's Appropriations Committee

Governor's Proposed FY 2025 Midterm Budget Adjustments
Department of Labor

Rhonda Evans, Interim Executive Director Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA)

February 21, 2024

Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for holding this public hearing about the Governor's budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal year. The Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) is the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federally designated anti-poverty agencies that provide a wide variety of services to nearly 200,000 low- and moderate-income people in all 169 cities and towns across the state. More information about Community Action Agencies is included at the end of this testimony.

I am writing to discuss our concerns with the creation of Opportunity Centers proposed by Governor Lamont.

The Governor's proposal creates a coordinated service delivery model for various state agencies by co-locating staff at Opportunity Centers to deliver social services by leveraging state and local community partnerships to help residents attain self-sufficiency. It also allocates \$1M in bond funding to refurbish a space in Hartford to pilot the program.

Connecticut's Community Action Agencies already use a very similar service delivery model and can provide invaluable support in this effort.

About Community Action Agencies

For over 50 years, Community Action Agencies, the largest statewide safety net service provider, have been connecting neighbors in need with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities. By using a holistic, comprehensive, multigenerational, approach – much like the one outlined in the Governor's proposal – called the Human Services Infrastructure, or HSI, CAAs work with people in need to plan, achieve, and maintain a realistic path

to short and long-term economic self-sufficiency and success. This "no wrong door" approach helps ensure that anyone who comes into a Community Action Agency for any reason gets assessed for all programs, services, and resources they may be eligible for. These include, but are not limited to:

- Nutrition (inc. SNAP outreach, Meals on Wheels, and Congregate meals)
- Housing and shelter
- Asset development and financial literacy
- Energy and heating assistance
- Job training
- Early childhood care and education

A Profile of Services table is at the end of this testimony and shows the services provided by Community Action Agencies.

Community Action's state partnerships

Connecticut's CAA Network also partners with other state agencies like the Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Social Services (DSS) on the provision of service delivery. Our holistic model of service delivery makes us well-suited to continue partnering with DOL on current and future initiatives and programs.

Data and reporting

The Governor's proposal also includes \$2M in existing ARPA funding for MyCT, which is intended to strengthen the technology platform for intake, coordination of care, and service delivery. Community Action Agencies are experienced and well-positioned to take an active role in this project because all agencies use a service delivery intake system for their customers. This allows for common data collection and reporting to demonstrate statewide impact and results.

To be clear, we support additional funding to nonprofits that will enable them to provide services and resources efficiently and effectively. But rather than reinvent the wheel and duplicate efforts, we ask that Connecticut's Community Action Network be included in the conversation. Let's talk about how we can use our statewide reach and partnerships with state agencies like DOL to best serve Connecticut residents in need and help them reach their full potential.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions at rhonda@cafca.org or 860-305-2937.

	ACCESS	ALLIANCE	CAANH	CAAWC	CRT	HRA	NOI	TEAM	TVCCA
Financial Literacy & Asset Development	AUUESS	ALLIANGE	CHARIT	CANTO	ORI	nka	NOI	IEAM	IVOUR
Individual Development Accounts									-
-	 _	_	-		×	X	_		x
Financial Counseling	¥	X	x	¥	x	X	X	X	X
Free Income Tax Preparation		X	X	¥	x	X	x	X	¥
Child Care & Youth Development							_		
CT Child Day Care & School Readiness	+	X		¥	x	X	X	X	¥
Head Start		x				X		x	¥
Infant-Toddler/Early Head Start		x			x	X	X	X	¥
Specialized Care & Education					x	X			x
Youth Dev- After School & Summer Programs		X	¥	\Box	x	X			
Community-wide Services									
Clothing Drive		x		¥	x	X			x
Food Drive		x		¥	x	x	x		x
Toy Drive		x		¥	x		x	x	
Criminal Justice									
Halfway Houses & Re-Entry					x		X		
Employment & Training									
Adult Education		x		¥		x	x		
One-Stop Employment									x
Youth and Young Adults	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
Vocational & Skills Training	x	x	¥	x	x	x	x	x	
Energy Assistance & Weatherization	•	•							
Energy Assistance & Emergency Fuel	x	×	¥	X	x	x	x	x	¥
Matching Payment Programs	¥	x	¥	x	x	x	x		¥
Home Energy Solutions/Weatherization	1				x		x		
Health	•								
Adult Incontinence Supplies	T	x					x	×	¥
Counseling: Individual and/or Family	 	x	x		x	x			
Diaper Bank	+	x	¥	x			x	x	x
Health Care Access/Medical Transportation	+	_			x	x	x	x	
HIV/AIDS Prevention & Counseling	+				x	x			
Substance Abuse Prevention & Counseling	+				x				
Housing & Shelter									
Affordable and/or Subsidized Housing	x	Г			×	×	x		x
Emergency Rental/Mortgage Payment	Y	x	x	¥	×	x	x	x	Y
Emergency Shelter	Y	_	-	-	×	_	x	_	
	¥	_		¥	x	×	x	×	¥
Eviction Prevention & Mediation Homelessness Prevention/Rapid Rehousing	x	x x	x	x	×	X	x	×	
	_	X	*	-	×	x	x		¥
Supportive Housing - Adults Supportive Housing - Youth	x								x
Nutrition	*								-
		_							
Children & Adult Care Food Program	¥	X	X	¥	×	X	x	x	x
Food Pantries	x		¥	¥	×	X	x		
Meals on Wheels/Congregate Meals	+			\vdash	x	X	x	x	¥
Summer Food Program	 -			\vdash	x				
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)	¥								¥
Seniors									
RSVP & Senior Volunteer Programs				¥	x		x	x	¥
Senior Support Services	¥		¥		x	X	X	x	
Strengthening Families									
Family Development/Parenting Education		x	¥		x	X	X	x	¥
Holistic Case Management/Info & Referral	x	x	¥	X	x	X	X	X	¥